



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 9 November 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills .....	9143
Integrity Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9143
First Reading .....	9143
Second Reading Speech .....	9143
Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Private Native Forestry) Bill 2022 .....	9145
First Reading .....	9145
Second Reading Speech .....	9145
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9147
First Reading .....	9147
Second Reading Speech .....	9147
Government Sector Audit and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9150
First Reading .....	9150
Second Reading Speech .....	9150
Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022 .....	9155
Second Reading Debate .....	9155
Third Reading .....	9169
Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9169
Second Reading Debate .....	9169
Committees .....	9170
Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption .....	9170
Reports .....	9170
Public Accounts Committee .....	9172
Reports .....	9172
Committee on Children and Young People .....	9173
Reports .....	9173
Visitors .....	9175
Visitors .....	9175
Announcements .....	9175
Legislative Assembly Photographs .....	9175
Members .....	9175
Representation of Ministers Absent During Questions .....	9175
Question Time .....	9176
Port of Newcastle .....	9176
Health Services .....	9177
Asset Privatisation .....	9178
Rural and Regional Economic Investment .....	9178
Asset Privatisation .....	9179
New South Wales Future Focus .....	9180
Cashless Gaming Card .....	9181
Rural and Regional Health Services .....	9181

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Teacher Shortages.....	9182
Local Community Infrastructure .....	9183
Teacher Shortages.....	9184
Parramatta Light Rail.....	9185
Canterbury Hospital.....	9186
Seniors Services.....	9187
Murray Cod and Blackwater Events.....	9188
Affordable Housing .....	9188
Visitors.....	9189
Visitors.....	9189
Committees .....	9189
Public Accounts Committee .....	9189
Government Response.....	9189
Petitions .....	9189
Petitions Received .....	9189
Business of the House.....	9189
Business Lapsed.....	9189
Reordering of General Business .....	9190
Bills.....	9191
Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2022 .....	9191
Second Reading Debate.....	9191
Third Reading .....	9195
NSW Reconstruction Authority Bill 2022.....	9195
First Reading.....	9195
Second Reading Speech.....	9195
Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Amendment Bill 2022.....	9199
First Reading.....	9199
Second Reading Speech.....	9199
Animal Research Amendment (Right to Release) Bill 2022 .....	9203
Messages.....	9203
Community Recognition Statements .....	9203
Sri Om Care .....	9203
St Brigid's Primary School.....	9203
Brian White Award for Radio Journalism Winner Clinton Maynard.....	9203
Public Interest Debate.....	9203
Asset Privatisation .....	9203
Community Recognition Statements .....	9209
Shoalhaven River Festival .....	9209
Community Service Legend Ken Ryan .....	9210
Scone Rugby League Football Club .....	9210
Oxi Day Memorial Service .....	9210
Sutherland District Hockey Club.....	9210

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Conservationist Peter Pigott .....	9211
Race Walker Heather Lee, OAM.....	9211
Century 21 Co-Directors Domenic Bonfiglio and Henry Fernandez .....	9211
Journalist Ruby Pascoe .....	9211
Central Coast Group Training Awards .....	9211
Riding for the Disabled Mudgee.....	9212
Belmore Boys High School .....	9212
Seniors' Stories.....	9212
Football Star Zoe Karipidis .....	9212
Mayor's Local Hero Award Winner Ditte Kozak .....	9212
Members .....	9213
Valedictory Speeches.....	9213
Community Recognition Statements .....	9220
Fashion Business of the Year Category Award Winner Wolfgang Muse .....	9220
Sir Ronald Wilson Human Rights Award .....	9220
East Hills Charity Car Show .....	9220
Ourimbah United Football Club .....	9220
Mountain Biker Ryan Gilchrist .....	9220
Tomaree Headland Heritage Group.....	9221
Beth and Ivan Hodge Sixty-Third Wedding Anniversary .....	9221
Not-So-Scary Halloween.....	9221
Cootamundra Mobile Donor Centre .....	9221
Maitland Electorate Art Exhibitions .....	9221
Waratah Highlands Retirement Village Spring Fair .....	9222
Day of the Dead .....	9222
Shooting Enthusiast Peter Holzigal .....	9222
NSW Local Hero Amar Singh.....	9222
Private Members' Statements.....	9222
Davidson Electorate Police Area Commands.....	9222
Mount Druitt Hospital Fortieth Anniversary .....	9223
Cootamundra Electorate Infrastructure.....	9224
Cashless Gaming Card.....	9225
Mental Health Services.....	9226
Bungendore Infrastructure .....	9226
Heathcote Electorate Projects .....	9227
Federal Budget and the Entrance Electorate.....	9228
Warnervale Business and Education Precinct .....	9229
Lake Macquarie Electorate Health Services .....	9229
Coalmining Industry .....	9230
Westmead Hospital and Ambulance Staff.....	9231
Canterbury City Community Centre.....	9232
Coffs Harbour Regional Boat Ramp Precinct .....	9232

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Martins Creek Quarry .....	9233
Member for Barwon .....	9234
Bilpin Fruit Bowl .....	9235
Early Childhood Education Sector .....	9236
Wollondilly Electorate Mental Health Services .....	9236
Mulgoa Electorate Infrastructure and Services .....	9237
Medowie High School Proposal .....	9238
Oatley Electorate Health Infrastructure and Services .....	9239
Community Recognition Notices .....	9240
Polish Club 50th Anniversary .....	9240
Punchbowl Public School .....	9240
Opening Ceremony of the Annual Canterbury-Bankstown Children's Festival .....	9240
Paula Townsend .....	9240
Bill and Margaret Sanders .....	9241
Parkes College for Seniors .....	9241
Kiama Locals Jack Alexander and Taylor Hudson from Hungry Monkey and Their New 'lazy Daze' Business Venture .....	9241
Kiama Heights Resident Mr Alan Woodward Receives Australian Mental Health Prize .....	9241
Joanne Murrell .....	9241
Wagga Wagga's Frocktober Event .....	9242
Cromehurst School Fundraiser .....	9242
Northern Suburbs Football Association .....	9242
Champion of Champions Tournament .....	9242
Tiny Forest Initiative .....	9242
Shellharbour Football Club Champion of Champions .....	9243
Jewish International Film Festival .....	9243
Our Big Kitchen .....	9243
Corowa High School Students Selected in the Riverina Australian Rules Team .....	9243
Dancers Beat Out Peers to Claim City Honour .....	9243
Diwali Celebrations in Albury 30 October 2022 .....	9244
Chantelle Gauci .....	9244
St Gregorys College Campbelltown Basketball .....	9244
Seta Berbari .....	9244
NSW Touch Association Golden Jubilee Team .....	9244
Tori Mccombe – WorldSkills Competition .....	9245
Colton Craig .....	9245
Cupitt's Estate .....	9245
Temora Little Athletics Committee .....	9245
Coolamon and Ardlethan SES .....	9246
Cowra Christmas Festival .....	9246
Vale John Moore .....	9246
North Sydney Girls High School Students Complete the Australian Science Olympiad Exams .....	9246

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

108th Anniversary of HMAS Sydney I – Sms Emden .....	9247
Nepean Belle & the Riverboat Bar .....	9247
Terrigal Trojans Win Premiership .....	9247
Bouddi Art Awards.....	9247
Bidhal Elders .....	9247
Lionel Stein Justice of the Peace 50 Years' Service .....	9248
Kenneth Gray Justice of the Peace 50 Years' Service .....	9248
Big Yellow Umbrella.....	9248
Giorgio "george" Callegher .....	9248
Caringbah High School 2022 and 2023 Student Leaders .....	9248
De La Salle Catholic College Caringbah Student Leaders .....	9249
De La Salle Catholic College Cronulla Student Leaders.....	9249
Donna Renfrey .....	9249
3Bridges Community Youth Zone.....	9249
Early Learning Matters Week Sdn Riverwood.....	9249
Paul Nash.....	9250
Congratulations to the Gillieston Public School P&c.....	9250
2022 Young Volunteer of the Year, Hayley Johns .....	9250
Light the Night for Leukaemia .....	9250
Farmer Tim Houston Awarded Nuffield Scholarship .....	9250
Dante Lloyd – 2022 Rural Youth Ambassador .....	9251
John Gill – 50 Years of Service to Bingara Fire and Rescue .....	9251
George Gooley Menswear – A Timeless Treasure in Lismore .....	9251
Art on Bundjalung Kyogle.....	9251
Aziah Phoenix-Cox - NSW Premiers Spelling Bee Finalist.....	9252
Sporting Success for Ss Peter and Paul Catholic School Students .....	9252
Edna Hayes .....	9252
Photos2archive.....	9252
Baptistcare Hopetree Windale Networking Lunch .....	9252
Koori Netball Tournament.....	9252
Under Construction Choir.....	9253
Jewish Museum 30 Years .....	9253
Don't Block the Rocks .....	9253
Auntie Selena Blakeney.....	9253
Paul Mason .....	9253
The Lakes SLSC .....	9254
Rhiannon Iffland .....	9254
Gumnut Presc Hool Bowral 50th Anniversary .....	9254
Wingecarribee Women's Writers.....	9254
Southern Highlands Water Polo 40th Anniversary Celebrations .....	9254
Willoughby Faith Leaders Forum.....	9255
Australian War Widows NSW.....	9255

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

St Thomas' Art & Craft Show.....	9255
Peter Ramm .....	9255
Goulburn High School Fundraising.....	9256
Assyrian Sports and Cultural Club 50th Anniversary .....	9256
Mazu Parade and Luna Double Ninth Festival.....	9256
100th Anniversary of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia.....	9256
Rally for Recovery.....	9256
Ms Chakinta Jones.....	9257
Mr Ewan Mcash & Oceanfarmr.....	9257
Bringing Country Values to the City .....	9257
West Bexley Methodist Sunday School Picnic on 19 October 1957, A 15-Year-Old Boy Saved A Child's Life .....	9257
Vivian Ngo, Dancer from Activ Elite Performers Nominated for HSC Callback.....	9257
Asian Australian Women Association 5th Anniversary .....	9258
Volunteers in Policing .....	9258
Bungendore Pre-School .....	9258
A Good Drop .....	9258
Wakehurst Golf Club Life Members .....	9259
Wakehurst Gold Club 50th Anniversary .....	9259
Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery.....	9259
St Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church .....	9259
Stapleton's Quality Meats .....	9259
Chloe Taulahi.....	9259
Katie Astley .....	9260
Karen Frugtniet.....	9260
Terrey Hills RFS.....	9260
Jennifer Harris .....	9260
Alex McTaggart.....	9260
Indy Negfeldt Cathead Designs .....	9261
Robert Skomba NSW Police Officer of the Year Award 2022 Finalist .....	9261
Robert Fitzgerald Rotary Police Officer of the Year 2022 .....	9261
Amar Singh NSW Local Hero Award 2022 .....	9261



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 9 November 2022**

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

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

[*Notices of motions given.*]

## *Bills*

### **INTEGRITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport) (09:45):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government introduces the Integrity Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill proposes amendments to the Constitution Act 1902 and the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 to lay the groundwork for implementation of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. On 20 July 2022 the ICAC published a report entitled *Investigation into the conduct of the local member for Drummoyne*. The report made recommendations involving significant changes to the disclosure of pecuniary interests by members of Parliament. This Government has zero tolerance for corruption. The Government has agreed to implement all of the ICAC's recommendations directed to it in the report and is committed to overhauling the disclosure regime for members of Parliament. It should be noted that this Coalition Government introduced the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and has been a staunch opponent of any forms of corruption.

Before I deal with the amendments proposed by the bill, I will briefly describe the existing arrangements for the disclosure of pecuniary interests by members of Parliament. The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983, which I will refer to as the "disclosures regulation", sets out the pecuniary interest disclosure regime for members of Parliament. The disclosure regulation is made pursuant to the regulation-making powers in section 14A of the Constitution Act, which provides that the Governor may make regulations for the disclosure by members of either House of Parliament of certain pecuniary interests or other matters.

Currently, the disclosure regulation requires members of Parliament to lodge with the Clerks a primary return disclosing their pecuniary interests within three months of taking the pledge of loyalty and to make a return every six months. The obligations to make a return are made up of a requirement to provide an ordinary return every 12 months and a supplementary ordinary return in the middle of an ordinary return period. In addition, members of Parliament may make a discretionary return at any time.

The Clerks compile and maintain registers of disclosures that are tabled in Parliament and are made available for inspection. The disclosure regulation sets out the pecuniary interests that members of Parliament are required to disclose in their returns including, for example, interests in real property, each source of income over \$500 and interests or positions in a corporation. Members may also have a discretionary disclosure in any return, of any benefit, advantage or liability, whether pecuniary or not. I should say that membership extends beyond corporations to other organisations such as trade unions.

Members of Parliament are not currently expressly required to disclose memberships of trusts. Members are, however, required to disclose certain matters in certain circumstances, such as where income over \$500 is received from a trust. In addition, unlike the disclosures made by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to the Premier under the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct, members of Parliament are not required to disclose the interests of their family members. In the report the ICAC identified the following weaknesses and shortcomings in the New South Wales disclosure system: There are limited disclosure requirements on members of Parliament where family members use family trusts to hold investments—and that was of course an issue that arose with regard to Eddie Obeid. Members of Parliament should not be able to circumvent disclosure obligations by

arrangements where family members hold or are transferred assets; and in comparison with other Australian jurisdictions, the New South Wales disclosure system "does not reflect best practice and community expectations, and provides opportunities for hidden interests".

Due to these concerns, recommendation 1 of the report was that the disclosure regulation be amended to require members of Parliament to disclose: interests in trusts, including discretionary trusts and self-managed superannuation funds, as a standalone item; real property held by discretionary trusts where a MP is a potential beneficiary; the interests of immediate family members, noting the option to limit access to certain information for privacy reasons; and the dispositions of interests to family members or other associates. The ICAC also recommended that members of Parliament be required to update their disclosures of interests on an ongoing basis and that electronic databases be used to improve the transparency of the registers of disclosures.

Recommendation 4 of the report was that the disclosure regulation be amended to provide for the mandatory registration of conflicts of interest by members of Parliament. Currently only Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries are required by the Ministerial Code of Conduct to give notice to the Premier of any conflict of interest. The Government has agreed to implement all of the ICAC's recommendations directed to the Government in the report and has instructed the Parliamentary Counsel's Office to draft changes to the disclosure regulation to require: members of Parliament to disclose expanded pecuniary interests, including interests in trusts and the interests of immediate family members, on an ongoing basis; members of Parliament to disclose conflicts of interest; and the Clerks to publish the disclosures of members of Parliament electronically.

Although these matters could arguably be implemented by the regulation-making power in the Constitution Act on its current terms, this bill proposes a minor legislative amendment to put the matter beyond doubt. The amendment is desirable to provide clarity and certainty as to the operation of the Constitution Act and the disclosure regulation made under it. Schedule 1.1 to the bill proposes amendments to the regulation-making power in section 14A of the Constitution Act to provide that the Governor may make regulations with respect to the disclosure by MPs of "other matters", whether pecuniary or not, of a kind specified in the regulations and the pecuniary interests, or other matters, of members of the immediate family of MPs.

The proposed amendment will also put beyond doubt that a regulation may be made requiring members of Parliament to disclose their diaries, implementing the Government response to the ICAC report entitled *Lobbying and the NSW public sector—the regulation of lobbying, access and influence in NSW* following the investigation known as Operation Eclipse. As required under section 14A of the Constitution Act, the Government is consulting with the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics on these draft regulations.

I now move to schedule 1.2 to the bill. Section 9 (1) (d) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 [ICAC Act], provides that conduct does not amount to corrupt conduct unless it could constitute or involve, in the case of conduct of a Minister of the Crown or a member of Parliament, a substantial breach of an applicable code of conduct. Assistant Speaker Piper will remember that that was the provision where Nick Greiner was unlawfully found to be corrupt, which was overturned by the Court of Appeal because there had been no arguable section 9 breach.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Disgraceful.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I acknowledge the interjection; it was disgraceful. Section 9 (3) (a) of the ICAC Act defines an "applicable code of conduct" to mean, in relation to a Minister, a ministerial code of conduct prescribed or adopted for the purposes of the section by the regulations, or in relation to a member of the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, including a Minister, a code of conduct adopted for the purposes of the section by resolution of the House concerned. The ICAC Act does not expressly provide for a prescribed code of conduct in respect of Parliamentary Secretaries. Recommendation 8 of the report was that the Government introduce amending legislation to clarify that an applicable code of conduct in relation to a Parliamentary Secretary is a ministerial code of conduct prescribed or adopted for the purposes of section 9 (3) of the ICAC Act. Schedule 1.2 to the bill proposes an amendment to section 9 (3) of the ICAC Act to implement this recommendation.

The amendments proposed by this bill will enable the Government, in consultation with the Legislative Council Privileges Committee, the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics Committee and the Clerks of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, to implement significant recommendations of the ICAC to expand and improve the disclosure of pecuniary and other interests by members of Parliament. It is often said that sunlight is the best disinfectant. The Government is seeking the Parliament's support to enhance parliamentary transparency and accountability, and ultimately prevent corruption. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTRY) BILL 2022**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Dugald Saunders, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (09:57):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This Government is committed to improving environmental outcomes, simplifying processes and reducing unnecessary regulatory burden. Rural landholders, along with all members of our community, deserve to benefit from this commitment. Native forests on private land represent a significant proportion of the New South Wales forest estate, accounting for 37 per cent of the approximately 20 million hectares of native forest in New South Wales. New South Wales private native forests represent 7.8 million hectares compared to the 1.94 million hectares of State Forests.

A recent parliamentary inquiry into the long-term sustainability and future of the timber and forestry products industry found that "private native forests will be crucial to meeting timber supply needs into the future". Private native forestry, also known as PNF or renewable farm forestry, as I like to call it, is the sustainable management of native forests on private property for timber production and is conducted under the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management. Farm forestry provides for a variety of critical products such as flooring, construction timber, power poles, furniture and firewood. Farm forestry is a vital component of the New South Wales timber industry, with studies estimating the timber industry generates \$482 million and employs 835 people on the North Coast alone. The total value of New South Wales primary industries in 2021 was estimated to be around \$21 billion.

Australia is a net importer of wood products; however, by 2040 Australian demand for forestry products is predicted to increase by 43 per cent. To continue to support Australian industries, the private estate will be critical to keeping up with that demand for wood products. The PNF Codes of Practice—the PNF codes—are statutory documents that guide PNF operations in New South Wales. They set minimum operating standards for harvesting in farm forests in line with ecologically sustainable forest management. New PNF codes made in May this year by me, with the concurrence of the Minister for Environment and Heritage, include significant new environmental protections that provide additional safeguards for koala populations, revised harvesting intensity limits, enhanced stream protections for unmapped streams and provisions that address the precautionary principle, such as disaster triggers and cumulative impact controls. For example, the new PNF codes use koala habitat suitability mapping covering 2.8 million hectares of land where koala prescriptions apply.

Koala prescriptions have also been strengthened with the requirement to retain 20 koala feed trees per hectare as well as visual assessments for the presence of koalas prior to harvest operations. The new PNF codes also introduce a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to ensure the evidence base is up to date and to identify emerging evidence from monitoring and research, and opportunities for improvement. The monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework will underpin the regular 12-month checks and five-year reviews, which will be used to identify emerging evidence from monitoring and research, and opportunities for improvement of the application of the PNF codes. Those regular checks will also provide the opportunity to consider the evidence of any cumulative impacts of farm forestry to ensure harvest operations are distributed across time and space.

In its review of the PNF codes in March 2022, the New South Wales Natural Resources Commission stated that the new PNF codes meet the objects of part 5B of the Local Land Services Act 2013, the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management, and the Government's dual objectives of robust protections for koalas in high-value koala habitat and certainty and consistency for primary producers. The new codes also provide greater clarity and are easier for landholders to apply and are a substantive improvement on the previous PNF codes. The bill works hand in hand with the new PNF codes, and has been developed to address longstanding issues with the administration of PNF plan approvals and to support the long-term environmental and economic sustainability of the farm forestry industry in New South Wales.

There is a real need to support the long-term sustainability of the farm forestry industry in this State to ensure that it can support timber supply chains and markets, particularly in the context of the impacts of drought, bushfires, floods, and the health and economic consequences of COVID-19 on rural and regional communities. The bill will support the improved long-term sustainability of the New South Wales forestry industry by ensuring

that our State has a simple and consistent approach to regulating private native forestry. Rural landholders experience an unreasonable regulatory burden in navigating both the land management and planning frameworks when undergoing farm forestry practices. The current time caps on PNF approvals also result in adverse outcomes for the long-term management of private forests. That is simply not good enough. Landholders need us to make those processes simple, easy and efficient, while also ensuring their practices are environmentally sustainable.

The reduction of duplicative approval processes was recommended by the recent forestry inquiry. The Natural Resources Commission in its final report on the PNF codes stated that removing the requirement for landholders to obtain both a PNF plan and a separate and duplicative council approval will help provide landholders with the certainty and consistency required for long-term forest management. The current maximum period of 15 years that a PNF plan approval is limited to creates the perverse outcome of landholders harvesting before forests reach ecological and commercial maturity. Extending the maximum time frames for PNF approvals from 15 to 30 years will provide confidence for landholders to invest in the sustainable management of their native forests for this generation and future generations. Specifically, the bill proposes amending the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the EP&A Act, and part 5B of the Local Land Services Act 2013, the LLS Act, to address two critical areas of reform for farm forestry.

First, the bill amends the EP&A Act to reduce the regulatory burden on landholders caused by duplicative local council approvals, which vary across the State. The bill does that by making forestry operations under the LLS Act exempt from development under the EP&A Act, except in cases where development consent is required under a State environmental planning policy [SEPP] to clear native vegetation to which forestry operations relate, or in circumstances that forestry operations are prohibited under existing environmental planning instruments. While the aim of the new PNF codes is to provide landholders with certainty and consistency on how they implement forestry operations on private land, some local government authorities currently require another layer of approval in addition to that provided under the LLS Act. A study by the Department of Primary Industries in 2018 found that on the North Coast 25 per cent of farm forests require development consent from the local government authority, and across the State over half of councils require development consent for farm forestry operations.

The additional requirements vary across councils, imposing additional cost and uncertainty on landholders who already have an approved PNF plan. The bill ensures forest management on private land is regulated in a consistent manner, to the same high level of standard across the State. By doing so, it will deliver certainty and consistency for landholders undertaking farm forestry through a clearer regulatory framework that removes the need for such duplicative approvals. PNF plans will continue to be subject to rigorous assessment under the PNF Codes of Practice and planning rules imposed by SEPPs. Existing environmental planning instruments that prohibit forestry operations will still apply to ensure any necessary local environmental protections already in place are maintained. Having a sensible, non-duplicative approach to farm forestry approvals is consistent with findings 7 and 8 of the recent upper House inquiry report into the long-term sustainability of the timber industry, which state:

**Finding 7**

Dual consent requirements are an unnecessary element in the private native forestry approval process that significantly impacts the ability of landholders to diversify and improve revenue streams from their property.

**Finding 8**

On balance, dual consent requirements can be removed whilst ensuring that concerns over local road maintenance and broader community feedback are adequately addressed.

Removing that duplication around PNF plan approval processes will ensure a consistent approval statewide. It will also fulfil a key commitment by this Government under the NSW Forestry Industry Roadmap to develop a modern and simple regulatory framework for private native forestry, while maintaining environmental protections that are embedded in the PNF codes. Importantly, for any future SEPPs, the proposed bill gives the Minister administering part 5B of the LLS Act a concurrence role in the making of future SEPPs that contain a requirement for development consent on land to which a private native forestry plan applies. That will ensure that before amending or making new SEPPs that impact PNF, the impacts on PNF operations are appropriately considered.

To ensure councils are aware of farm forestry activities in their local government area, Local Land Services will also share information with councils, informing them of the approval of new PNF plans. Data shared with councils will be done in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of landholders to mitigate any potential issues. The bill will amend the LLS Act to increase PNF plans maximum approval periods from 15 to 30 years. That reform serves two important purposes: firstly, it helps harmonise PNF plan approvals with native hardwood regeneration periods; secondly, it provides farmers with the certainty and security to invest in long-term forest management. Extending the maximum PNF plan approval time frame will remove the current

perverse requirement for farmers to harvest before their forests reach environmental and commercial maturity, and will promote long-term investment in ecological sustainable forest management.

Extending PNF plan approval time frames will also assist in achieving third-party sustainability certification of the PNF codes by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification and the Forest Stewardship Council. Certification will increase market access, help to meet consumer expectations and improve community confidence in the farm forestry framework. The bill does not change the regulatory role that Local Land Services has as the approval body for PNF plans, maintaining Local Land Services as the main point of contact for private landholders looking to undertake forestry activities on their land.

The balanced approach developed through these amendments will ensure that private native forestry continues to balance the dual aims of protecting biodiversity and supporting the timber industry, while reducing regulatory burdens on landholders. The proposed changes are consistent with the Government's efforts to reduce red tape and support regional businesses that have been battling with floods, droughts, bushfires and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures will help ensure that New South Wales primary producers have the certainty and the confidence to diversify their income and undertake long-term investment in ecologically sustainable forest management for the benefit of the environment and for the benefit of rural and regional communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:11):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment Bill 2022. The bill will amend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998—which I will refer to as the PPIP Act for short—and make consequential amendments to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and the Fines Act 1996 to establish the mandatory notification of data breach scheme—which I will refer to as the MNDB scheme for short—and related reforms.

The bill establishes a scheme that will require New South Wales public sector agencies—which I will refer to as agencies for short—in the event of a suspected data breach to do the following: first, to contain the breach and assess the likely severity of harm to impacted individuals; second, if the agency assesses that the breach is likely to result in serious harm to an individual, to notify the Privacy Commissioner as well as impacted individuals; and third, where impacted individuals cannot be identified or where it is not reasonably practical to notify them, to issue a public notification. The bill will also require agencies to satisfy additional requirements relating to responsible handling of personal and health information, including a requirement to have a publicly available data breach management policy. This scheme will be the first of its kind among State and Territory governments and is further evidence of the New South Wales Government leading the way in digital governance and data integrity.

The New South Wales Government has already taken significant steps to protect citizens' data security and support those impacted by data theft. For example, in 2020 the New South Wales Government allocated \$60 million to establish and fund Cyber Security NSW across three years. Cyber Security NSW has grown rapidly to provide a range of support services and tools to enhance the New South Wales Government's holistic capability to better prevent, detect and respond to cybersecurity incidents aimed at government entities. The Government has also established ID Support NSW to support people impacted by identity misuse.

Agencies hold sensitive information about citizens, including personal, health and financial information. High profile data breaches in recent times in the private sector have demonstrated the potential harm to individuals that can result from unauthorised access to or unauthorised disclosure of personal information. Currently, the PPIP Act does not require agencies or New South Wales State-owned corporations, which are not regulated by the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, to notify the Privacy Commissioner or impacted individuals of a data breach that is likely to result in serious harm. However, the Privacy Commissioner currently oversees a voluntary reporting scheme, which encourages agencies that have experienced a serious data breach to report the details of the breach to the Privacy Commissioner so that the Privacy Commissioner can assess the breach, provide advice or investigate.

The New South Wales Government is committed to putting the people of New South Wales at the core of everything it does. That is why the scheme will introduce a legal requirement for agencies to notify individuals when their personal information has been impacted by an eligible breach. This will empower individuals who are likely to experience serious harm because of a data breach involving their personal or health information. Once notified, individuals will be able to take their own steps to mitigate the risk of harm that may arise from the breach. The MNDB scheme will be complemented by the work of ID Support NSW, an Australian-first business unit providing a "no wrong doors" support service to anyone in New South Wales impacted by identity misuse. ID Support NSW offers expert advice and assistance to protect and remediate identity credentials. This service will provide a remediation pathway for impacted individuals who are made aware that their information has been breached. Taken together, these initiatives significantly improve the State's data breach response capability.

The Government has undertaken extensive consultation during the development of the bill. In July 2019 submissions were invited from the public in response to an issues paper that sought feedback on whether a mandatory scheme should be implemented in New South Wales and, if so, how it should operate. The Department of Communities and Justice received 23 submissions from agencies, members of the public, local councils, universities and various advocacy and professional groups. All submissions supported a mandatory notification of data breach scheme.

In May 2021 public submissions were invited on a draft exposure bill proposing a specific model for the MNDB scheme. The department received 32 submissions in response, including from agencies, State-owned corporations, interested private sector entities and interested members of the public. Those submissions indicated overwhelming support for the scheme and proposed a number of improvements to the bill. As a result of this extensive consultation, the New South Wales Government is confident the bill strikes the right balance between the need to protect individuals who are impacted by data breaches and what is appropriate and workable for agencies. I am pleased to note that the Privacy Commissioner also supports the important reforms contained in the bill.

The threshold "likely to result in serious harm" has received support during public consultation on the bill. It ensures that the resources of the Information and Privacy Commission and any agencies are focused on responding to those data breaches that are likely to result in serious harm to impacted individuals. "Serious harm" inherently requires an element of seriousness to invoke the duty on the agency to take the further step of notifying a data breach. In addition, a "reasonable person" and "likely result" test needs to be satisfied. As such, where an agency facing a data breach does not consider that a reasonable person will conclude that the breach would likely result in serious harm, a duty to notify would not arise. This is a significant threshold.

As indicated in the explanatory memorandum to the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Bill 2016 of the Commonwealth in respect of the comparable threshold in the Commonwealth's Notifiable Data Breach scheme—which I will refer to as the Commonwealth NDB scheme for short:

Though individuals may be distressed or otherwise upset at an unauthorised access to or unauthorised disclosure or loss of their personal information, this would not itself be sufficient to require notification unless a reasonable person in the entity's position would consider that the likely consequences for those individuals would constitute a form of serious harm.

It is expected that a likely risk of serious financial, economic or physical harm would be the most common likely forms of serious harm that may give rise to notification.

Importantly, the bill does not define the threshold "likely to result in serious harm". However, the bill provides factors to consider when assessing whether the threshold is met. These factors include, for example, the sensitivity of the personal information and the nature of the harm that has occurred or may occur. Given the diversity of information held by agencies and the nature of data breaches that may affect them, a legislated definition may unintentionally limit the types of serious harm that could be considered when assessing a data breach. A definition of "serious harm" would also be likely to introduce inconsistency with the Commonwealth NDB threshold. This would increase the administrative and regulatory burden for agencies that may be captured by both schemes in limited circumstances.

To support agencies assessing data breaches and determining whether serious harm is likely, the Information and Privacy Commission [IPC] has committed to preparing and publishing guidelines providing more information about agencies' obligations under the MNDB scheme. This will include guidance on how agencies should assess whether disclosure or loss that occurs as a result of a data breach would be likely to result in serious harm to an individual. The IPC has also committed to develop an e-learning module and other resources for agencies for the purpose of promoting understanding of agency responsibilities under the MNDB scheme.

In 2017 the Commonwealth Privacy Act was amended to establish the Commonwealth NDB scheme. Under the Commonwealth NDB scheme, any organisation or agency regulated by the Commonwealth Privacy Act must notify the Australian Information Commissioner and impacted individuals when a data breach is likely

to result in serious harm. The MNDB scheme has been designed to adopt, as far as possible, key features of the Commonwealth NDB scheme. The schemes share the same breach notification threshold of serious harm, and similar assessment and notification time frames and requirements. This approach will ease the administrative burden for agencies that may be required to assess and notify of a data breach under both the Commonwealth NDB scheme and the MNDB scheme in some limited circumstances, such as where the breach involves Commonwealth information held by agencies, such as tax file numbers.

I now turn to the key features of the bill. The PPIP Act currently regulates how agencies manage personal information. The PPIP Act requires agencies to comply with a series of legal obligations when they collect, store, use or disclose personal information. Items [2] to [4] of schedule 1 to the bill expand the definition of "public sector agency" to include New South Wales State-owned corporations that are not already captured by the Commonwealth Privacy Act. Extending the PPIP Act, including the MNDB scheme, to capture New South Wales State-owned corporations that are not already captured by the Commonwealth Privacy Act is an important move to improve privacy protections for New South Wales citizens.

The New South Wales Government owns a number of State-owned corporations in energy, water, ports and forestry. The Government established these businesses on behalf of the people of New South Wales, as they provide services that are critical to the economy and infrastructure to the State. As New South Wales State-owned corporations handle the personal and health information of New South Wales citizens, it is important that they are subject to privacy regulation. Expanding the PPIP Act, including the MNDB scheme, to capture these entities will resolve a significant gap in privacy regulation.

Item [11] of schedule 1 to the bill provides that the MNDB scheme will require agencies to assess whether a data breach is an eligible data breach and, if so, to notify the Privacy Commissioner and impacted individuals. An eligible data breach will occur where there is unauthorised access, unauthorised disclosure or loss of personal information that a reasonable person would conclude is likely to result in serious harm to an individual to whom the information relates. Where an agency is aware that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there may have been an eligible data breach, the agency is required to take steps to contain the breach, to assess the breach and, if the breach is assessed to be an eligible data breach, to notify impacted individuals and the Privacy Commissioner.

I turn to each of these key steps in more detail. First, I will deal with containing the breach. An officer or an employee of an agency must, upon becoming aware that there are reasonable grounds to suspect there may have been an eligible data breach, report the data breach and the agency must immediately make all reasonable efforts to contain the breach. Second, in relation to assessing the breach, an assessment must be carried out of whether there are reasonable grounds to believe the data breach meets the threshold of an eligible data breach. This must occur within 30 days of the officer or employee becoming aware of the breach. While the bill does not define the threshold "likely to result in serious harm", it provides factors that may be considered by the assessor.

This includes the following: first, the types of personal information involved in the breach; second, the sensitivity of the personal information involved in the breach; third, whether the personal information is or was protected by security measures; fourth, the persons to whom the unauthorised access to, or unauthorised disclosure of, the personal information involved in the breach was, or could be, made or given; fifth, the likelihood those persons have or had the intention of causing harm, or could or did circumvent security measures protecting the information; and, sixth, the nature of the harm that has occurred or may occur.

The IPC is also preparing statutory guidelines to assist agencies when assessing whether an eligible data breach has occurred. The assessor is required to have regard to these guidelines when conducting an assessment. The bill also recognises that, in some circumstances, it may not be possible to assess a data breach within 30 days. Accordingly, the bill provides that the agency may approve an extension of time if satisfied an assessment cannot reasonably be conducted within 30 days. However, within the initial 30-day period, the agency must, first, start the assessment and, second, give written notice to the Privacy Commissioner to advise that the assessment has started and an extension of time has been approved, and confirm the extension period.

If the assessment cannot reasonably be conducted within the extension period, the agency must give a further written notice to the Privacy Commissioner to advise that the assessment is ongoing and a new extension period has been approved, and confirm the new extension period. Importantly, an extension can only be approved for the time reasonably required for the assessment to be conducted. Requiring the agency to give written notice to the Privacy Commissioner ensures that there is transparency and accountability regarding the use of extensions. It also ensures that agencies are only approving extensions of time where they are required to properly conduct an assessment.

I said that where an agency is aware that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there may have been an eligible data breach, the agency is required to take steps to contain the breach, to assess the breach and, if the breach is assessed to be an eligible data breach, to notify impacted individuals and the Privacy Commissioner.

I have now dealt with the first key step, containing the breach, and the second key step, assessing the breach. I turn to the third key step, notifying the Privacy Commissioner and impacted individuals of an eligible data breach.

If, following the assessment, an agency determines that an eligible data breach has occurred, the agency must, first, immediately notify the Privacy Commissioner and, second, as soon as practicable, notify impacted individuals. If the agency is unable to notify each individual or it is not reasonably practicable to do so, the agency must issue a public notification. Where a public notification is made, the agency must take proactive steps to publicise the notice to increase the likelihood that the eligible data breach will come to the attention of individuals at risk of serious harm.

As identified in currently available guidance prepared by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner for the Commonwealth NDB scheme, a reasonable step when publishing an online notice might include, first, ensuring the notice is prominently placed on a relevant webpage, which can be easily located by individuals and indexed by search engines; second, publishing an announcement on social media channels; and, third, taking out a print or online advertisement in a publication or on a website that is reasonably likely to reach impacted individuals.

The agency must also keep a register of all public notifications on its website. A notification must be published on the register for at least 12 months after the date the notification is published. Additionally, the notification must, if reasonably practicable, contain certain information, including the date the breach occurred, a description of the breach, and the actions that have been taken, or are planned to be taken, to mitigate the harm done to the individual.

It is important to emphasise that the requirement for agencies to issue a public notification is not the default setting. Public notifications will generally only be made as a secondary or fallback option in respect of breaches that meet the serious harm threshold and where making direct contact with affected individuals is not possible or reasonably practicable. There are some circumstances where an agency will not be required to notify impacted individuals, including where a notification could prejudice ongoing investigations and certain proceedings, or could create a serious risk of harm to an individual's health or safety.

To support the scheme, the bill will expand the regulatory responsibilities of the Privacy Commissioner. That will enable the Privacy Commissioner to work with agencies to facilitate legal compliance and best privacy practice, as well as to investigate and enforce the MNDB scheme in the case of agency noncompliance. The bill will expand the existing powers of the Privacy Commissioner to specifically enable the commissioner to investigate, monitor, audit and report on the functions of an agency under the MNDB scheme. To facilitate this, the Privacy Commissioner will also have the power to access the premises of an agency to observe its systems, policies and procedures.

The Privacy Commission will have reporting powers that will enable it to report on agency compliance with the MNDB Scheme, as it can currently do in the context of its existing regulatory functions with respect to privacy under the PPIP Act. In certain circumstances, the Privacy Commissioner will be able to provide a report to the head of the relevant agency or the Minister, or, alternatively, publish the report. This function is intended to occur in relation to issues arising from a data breach that are of a systemic, policy or practical nature. Those powers are necessary to ensure that the commissioner can work with agencies to facilitate agency compliance, investigate possible noncompliance and enforce the MNDB scheme.

In summary, the bill introduces a mandatory notification of data breach scheme covering all New South Wales government agencies. The scheme is the first of its kind for any State or Territory government in Australia. I thank the Information and Privacy Commission and all the stakeholders and community members who have engaged closely with these reforms and provided feedback during the development of the bill. The extensive consultation informing the bill ensures that it strikes the right balance between improving privacy protections for New South Wales citizens in the event of a data breach and that the scheme is practical and workable for agencies. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **GOVERNMENT SECTOR AUDIT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:34):** On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:



That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government Sector Audit and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 will make amendments to the Government Sector Audit Act 1983 and the Local Government Act 1993 to implement what are commonly known as follow the dollar powers for the New South Wales Auditor-General. I will refer to those pieces of legislation as the audit Act and Local Government Act. The bill will amend both of those Acts to implement the Government's response to the recent report of the Public Accounts Committee, report No. 10/57 from September this year, entitled *Quadrennial Review of the Audit Office of New South Wales 2022*. I will refer to the committee as the PAC and the report as the PAC report.

I will speak first about the follow the dollar reforms before turning to the PAC report and the measures in the bill to address the important work of that committee. All members will know that the Auditor-General plays a crucial role in assisting Parliament to hold both the State Government and local governments to account for their use of public resources. A key part of that role is undertaking performance audits, which are designed to assess whether particular activities of State agencies and, since 2016, local governments are being carried out effectively, economically, efficiently and in compliance with relevant laws. In this way, performance audits differ from the much more common and imposing financial audits that the Auditor-General undertakes of the financial accounts of State government agencies and local councils.

The Auditor-General undertakes around 20 performance audits annually, covering a range of important public administration topics. This year alone the Auditor-General has published performance audit reports on matters as diverse as the effectiveness of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, police responses to domestic and family violence, building regulation and combustible external cladding, local government business and service continuity arrangements for natural disasters, and the integrity of grant program administration. When carrying out performance audits, the Auditor-General is currently unable to directly examine the use of public resources by non-public sector entities that are engaged by government agencies or local councils to exercise functions or provide other public services on their behalf, such as charities and not-for-profit organisations.

In effect, the Auditor-General's and Parliament's scrutiny is restricted simply by the way in which agencies or councils deliver those services. The bill will expand the Auditor-General's mandate by providing the power to conduct performance audits of any matter where public resources are used to deliver services to the community. In this way, the Auditor-General will be able to follow the dollar. That means the Auditor-General will be able to report to Parliament about whether total public resources allocated to a particular program have been managed and applied effectively, economically and efficiently and in compliance with all relevant laws. It will no longer matter whether the body delivering those services is a government or non-government entity.

Follow the dollar powers are currently available to auditors-general in every other Australian jurisdiction. The bill will confer those powers on the Auditor-General of this State. Broadening the Auditor-General's mandate in this way will deliver more robust accountability and transparency over the use of public resources. The reform will also address gaps in external accountability arrangements that may have arisen from a shift that has occurred over time from direct service delivery by State and local government agencies to a significant level of service delivery being undertaken by non-public sector entities on behalf of New South Wales government agencies through modes including outsourcing, partnerships, grants and contractual arrangements.

The introduction of follow the dollar powers for the Auditor-General has been recommended in reports made by New South Wales parliamentary committees and other oversight bodies. In June 2022 the Government advised in-principle support to a recommendation from the Public Accountability Committee. At the same time, the Government undertook to consult with stakeholders who might be affected by the proposed reforms. The Government acknowledges all those who responded to the consultation paper issued by NSW Treasury for this purpose in August 2022.

Key features of the follow the dollar model align with those in other Australian jurisdictions, including that the Auditor-General retains its broad autonomy to select the subject matter for performance auditing; as with conventional public sector performance audits, performance audits using follow the dollar powers will assess whether a non-public sector entity has applied public resources effectively, efficiently, economically and in compliance with all relevant laws; and the arrangements which could be subject to follow the dollar performance audit powers are broad and include outsourcing, public-private partnerships, grants, subsidy or entitlement funding models, and lease arrangements where the lessee has obligations related to the maintenance or safe operation of public assets.

Further features include that the Auditor-General will formally engage with the applicable contracting agency and relevant non-public sector entity on the scope and focus of a follow the dollar performance audit and on the content of their draft report; that the Auditor-General will have power to inspect the records and to interview staff of non-public sector entities; that the existing secrecy controls applicable to information held by the

Auditor-General will be extended to protect information that the Auditor-General obtains as part of a follow the dollar audit; and performance audits undertaken using follow the dollar powers will be tabled in Parliament, as all performance audit reports are.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. There are four substantive schedules to the bill. Schedules 1 and 2 deal broadly with the amendments related to the follow the dollar reforms contained in the bill. Schedules 3 and 4, which I will address later in this speech, go to the Government's implementation of recommendations made in the PAC report. I will deal first with the follow the dollar reforms. The Auditor-General's capacity to conduct performance audits in relation to New South Wales government agencies is contained in the audit Act and for local councils in the Local Government Act. The bill will amend both Acts in similar ways.

Schedule 1 to the bill contains amendments to the audit Act to insert a replacement division 2A into the Act, which will provide for performance audits of activities. Sections 38A, 38B, 38C, 38D and 38E of the replacement division 2A will define key terms used in the replacement division and provide for other interpretation matters. Section 38EA reproduces the existing power of the Auditor-General to conduct a performance audit of an auditable entity to determine whether that entity is carrying out its activities effectively, economically, efficiently and in compliance with all relevant laws. It will now also provide for the Auditor-General to include an audit of the relevant activities of a relevant entity for the auditable entity, if the Auditor-General considers it appropriate to do so.

Section 38EA confirms that a performance audit using follow the dollar powers may be conducted only to the extent that it assesses the operations of the relevant entity in relation to achieving the State purpose. "Relevant entity" is defined broadly in section 38C to be an entity that "receives money or other resources, whether directly or indirectly, from or on behalf of an auditable entity for a particular purpose" which is referred to as a State purpose—for example, a not-for-profit organisation on behalf of a New South Wales government agency. In addition, to be a relevant entity, an entity must also have received that funding or other resources because it agrees to use it in achieving the State purpose or has entered into a contract that relates to the State purpose. The "relevant entity" term has been carefully drafted to ensure that the follow the dollar powers focus on non-public sector entities that use public resources to provide goods or services to the public.

The focus of a follow the dollar audit is on the particular activities of those entities. It is not an audit of the entire entity. That is made clear in the definition of "relevant activities" in section 38A, which provides that those activities are the activities of the relevant entity that relate to achieving the State purpose, with two exceptions. Those exceptions relate to the purchase of goods and services for the direct and exclusive use or benefit of a New South Wales government agency or an arrangement of a class that might be prescribed by the regulations. There is no present intention to prescribe any relevant matters.

Where a performance audit includes a follow the dollar audit, section 38EB requires the Auditor-General to report the results of the performance audit to the governing body of the relevant entity, the accountable authority for the relevant entity's auditable entity—most usually, the agency that engaged the relevant entity—and the Treasurer and the responsible Minister for that agency. First, the Auditor-General must provide those bodies and the Treasurer and Minister with a summary of any findings and proposed recommendations in relation to the performance audit. The Auditor-General is to include in the report any submissions or comments made by the relevant entity or the agency that engaged the relevant entity or a summary of those in an agreed form.

Section 38EB also provides that the report of the Auditor-General may include whatever other information the Auditor-General thinks desirable in relation to the activities that are the subject of the audit, as well as setting out the reasons for opinions expressed in the report and any recommendations the Auditor-General thinks fit to make. Section 38EC requires the Auditor-General to present the report of a performance audit made under section 38EB to each House of the Parliament or, if the House is not sitting, to present it to the Clerk of the House concerned. Those reporting and tabling provisions reflect the existing reporting and tabling arrangements for conventional performance audits, with appropriate modifications, to recognise the involvement now of non-public sector entities.

The bill also amends schedule 4 to the audit Act to insert new part 10, clause 28, to empower the Auditor-General to conduct a performance audit in relation to activities of a relevant entity that are carried out before the commencement of these amendments. These amendments will ensure that the Auditor-General is not artificially restricted to examining public expenditure that takes place, or contractual arrangements that are entered into, after the enactment of these amendments. If there is ineffectiveness or inefficiency occurring in particular programs now, regardless of who has been involved in delivering them, the Auditor-General should have the power to call it out.

Schedule 2 to the bill also amends the Local Government Act with respect to the follow the dollar reforms. The Auditor-General was given the power to undertake performance audits of local councils in 2016 through

amendments to the Local Government Act. As with New South Wales government agencies, a significant amount of the service delivery work of local councils is performed by non-public sector entities. It is therefore appropriate that the amendments proposed to the Local Government Act by the bill substantially mirror the amendments that will be made to the audit Act.

This includes the power to inspect the records of relevant non-public sector entities and interview staff, as well as the requirement for the Auditor-General to ensure consultation with affected parties on their draft findings and to include comments in the final report of the performance audit. The report of the performance audit will then be tabled in the Parliament. Similar to the amendment to the audit Act, this bill also amends schedule 8 to the Local Government Act 1993 to insert new part 43, clause 136, to empower the Auditor-General to conduct a performance audit in relation to activities of a relevant entity that are carried out before the commencement of these amendments.

I will soon describe in detail the provisions to be included to respond to the issues raised in the PAC report. However, before I do so, I first outline the background and context to the PAC report. As members would be aware, the Public Accounts Committee is a statutory committee of this place constituted under the audit Act. I acknowledge at the outset the important work of the member for Lake Macquarie in chairing that committee over the life of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. The member is in the Chamber today. I also put on record my pride in previously having served as a member of this important committee under the leadership of the member for Lake Macquarie.

The PAC is required to cause a review of the Audit Office to be undertaken at least every four years under section 48A of the audit Act, known as the quadrennial review. The review is conducted by a reviewer that is appointed by the PAC, with the most recent review undertaken by the accounting firm O'Connor Marsden and completed in the second half of this year. The PAC report encloses the report of the quadrennial review conducted by O'Connor Marsden as an appendix. Both the quadrennial review and the PAC report contain recommendations for reforms in a number of areas. The PAC made two recommendations directed to the Government. The first is that the Government implement recommendations 1 and 5 of the report on the quadrennial review. The first of those recommendations made in the quadrennial review contains six separate bullet points, each of which is itself a substantive reform matter. The second recommendation from the PAC is to amend the legislation regarding the conduct of future quadrennial reviews.

For the benefit of members, when talking through the provisions of the bill, I will deal with them thematically rather than sequentially. Schedule 3 [1] and [2] will provide that the Auditor-General is an independent officer of Parliament. The bill will also clarify that there are no implied rights, obligations or immunities that arise from the designation of the Auditor-General as such an officer. There is currently only one officer of Parliament in New South Wales, which is the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This new provision for the Auditor-General is consistent with the provisions found in the Parliamentary Budget Officers Act 2010.

In other relevant jurisdictions, "officers of Parliament" are typically established by an Act that expressly provides for their independence; lead integrity agencies and exercise compulsory powers to keep the Executive Government under scrutiny; are appointed and dismissed by Parliament or, alternatively, Parliament is involved in those processes; report to a parliamentary committee, which considers and advises on the funding needs of the agency established to support the officer; and perform employer functions in respect of staff employed to assist them in the performance of their statutory duties.

The New South Wales Auditor-General has many of those characteristics, including that the Auditor-General is an independent statutory appointee, who may only be removed from office upon the address of both Houses of the Legislature; exercises compulsory powers to scrutinise the activities of the Executive Government; reports to the PAC, which also has a right of veto on the proposed appointee; and employs the staff of the Audit Office. Schedule 3 [4], [5] and [6], as well as schedule 4 [4], [5] and [6] will remove the current provisions that mean that the Auditor-General is not entitled to access information that is Cabinet information or subject to legal professional privilege. The provisions will allow the Auditor-General to access this confidential information but will prohibit the publication or disclosure of this confidential information.

The legislation will also allow the Executive Government to continue to claim legal professional privilege and public interest immunity in relation to information, notwithstanding that it has been accessed by the Auditor-General. This statutory framework is both appropriate and important because the recognition of the Auditor-General as an independent officer of Parliament is inconsistent with that officer having an unconstrained right to access and disclose material over which the State holds privilege. The approach taken allows the Auditor-General broad powers of access to ensure the highest levels of scrutiny and oversight, but it also balances that right of access against the legitimate public interest in the State being able to maintain and assert privilege in other forums such as in litigation before a court.

The statutory framework around access to confidential information will also provide for the Premier to provide a certificate that certain information is Cabinet information. The effect of such a certificate is that it will be conclusive of the fact that the information is indeed Cabinet information, meaning that it cannot be disclosed by the Auditor-General. Similar certificate provisions are already found in a number of statutes in New South Wales regarding powers to access information. In recognition of the role of the Auditor-General as an officer of Parliament, the bill will increase the oversight of the Audit Office that is exercised by the PAC.

Schedule 3 [11] will amend the functions of the PAC at section 57 of the audit Act to require the PAC to both examine and, importantly, to report to the Legislative Assembly on the annual and other reports of the Auditor-General. This provision will bring the functions of the PAC into alignment with other parliamentary oversight committees such as the Committee on the Independent Corruption Against Corruption and the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission.

The bill will also amend the way in which future quadrennial reviews are conducted. Consistent with the recommendations of the PAC, a final report will be required to be provided directly to the PAC and not to the Auditor-General. This is a sensible recommendation and welcomed by the Government. It was an odd circumstance to have the PAC, which oversees the Auditor-General, be responsible for conducting a review but then have the report on that review provided to the entity that is under review. It makes more sense that the final report be provided to the PAC. It is important to acknowledge that this change will not exclude the Auditor-General from the quadrennial review process. The Auditor-General will still be required to be provided with a draft of the report and afforded an opportunity to make submissions on it prior to it being finalised. The provisions found at schedule 3 [7] and [9] to the bill will fix this anomaly.

In addition, schedule 3 [8] will require that for future quadrennial reviews a reviewer appointed by the PAC must provide an opportunity for auditable entities to make submissions about the auditing practices and standards of the Auditor-General. The Government considers it sensible to include a statutory requirement for a submission process to ensure that quadrennial reviews benefit from the views of all of the Audit Office's stakeholders. In concluding my description of the provisions of the bill, it would be remiss of me to not acknowledge, for completeness, the amendments at schedule 4 [1] to [3]. Those amendments are minor housekeeping amendments to modernise the drafting of section 423 of the Local Government Act by introducing a defined term.

The Government has not implemented all of the recommendations that were made during the quadrennial review process. The Government has already made significant reforms to the funding model for integrity agencies for the New South Wales budget 2022-23 and in the future. The Government has made clear that it does not consider it appropriate to provide the Parliament or any parliamentary committee, including the PAC, with a role in considering or advising on the funding proposed to be allocated to the Audit Office prior to a decision being made by the Executive Government of the day. This is to preserve the fundamental principles of Cabinet confidentiality and responsible government. Similarly, the Government does not accept that the mere existence of what are referred to as "request audits", being audits conducted at the request of the Parliament or a Minister, inherently compromises the independence of the Audit Office.

The capacity to request or refer matters is a standard feature of the jurisdiction of integrity agencies in New South Wales. While the Government has not accepted removing request audits, it has, however, proposed a requirement in the bill that they be subject to a consultation obligation before being initiated. This illustrates the balanced and good-faith approach that the Government has adopted in dealing with the entirety of the PAC report and the report of the quadrennial review. I encourage members to consider the legislative proposals as a whole and the balance that they strike between the acknowledged and critical independence of the Auditor-General, and the conventions and legitimate practical issues faced by the Executive Government in managing the State's finances.

I now turn to offer some concluding remarks on the follow the dollar reforms contained in the bill. They are another important step in enhancing the accountability and transparency of both State and local government operations in New South Wales, and it is in the general public interest. I acknowledge the efforts of the Auditor-General and her officers in assisting with the development of this legislation, and I look forward to them continuing what is very significant work that they undertake on behalf of the people of this State. I also once again acknowledge the work of Mr Greg Piper, the member for Lake Macquarie, and the leadership that he has provided as the chairperson of the PAC. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (ENFORCEMENT POWERS) BILL 2022****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:59):** On behalf of the Opposition I lead in debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. From the outset I disclose that we do not oppose the bill and are amenable to possible amendments that will be moved in the other place. The bill addresses issues raised in a recent District Court judgement that resulted in changes to the way in which certain search powers under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 are interpreted and therefore exercised by fisheries officers. That also affects powers under the Marine Estate Management Act 2014, as authorised officers under that Act derive their powers from the Fisheries Management Act.

I will go into detail about why we have come to this particular point, but I start by quoting those famous comedians Laurel and Hardy and their classic line, "Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into." In this case, the "me" refers to the people of New South Wales. This Government has failed to enact the last step in the process of cultural fishing under section 21AA, which was intended to protect Aboriginal people from compliance actions for fishing offences if they were undertaking cultural fishing. This has been a very expensive exercise of procrastination by the Government. For seven years, in my role as the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, I have been talking to Aboriginal communities about the fact that this provision has not been enacted. People should know that it is costing New South Wales taxpayers dearly.

In one case, Fisheries NSW has pursued 72-year-old Kevin Mason up hill and down dale. He has served some jail time and faced a whole range of things. His case resulted in the District Court delivering a judgement on the definition of "premises", which has caused the need for this legislation. In September, the case against Kevin Mason was dropped again and the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] was forced to pay \$20,000 in court costs. A bit of research shows that in the previous six months alone DPI was forced to pay \$500,000 in legal fees to Indigenous fishers relating to charges that have been withdrawn or dismissed. In not bringing forward this provision, which the Parliament actually passed some 13 years ago in 2009, this Government is costing New South Wales taxpayers by chasing Indigenous people who are exercising rights that the Parliament extended to them.

The Government has got us into what is really an outrageous situation. Most coastal MPs, such as the member for Wollongong, who is seated behind me in the Chamber, know the importance of the court's judgement. Without those search powers, our coastal areas, particularly coming into summer, would be vulnerable to people denuding our coastlines of sea life. The Opposition supports the bill, but at the same time we condemn the Government for not enacting those provisions that were brought forward in 2009. It is interesting that this bill coincides with the tabling of the report last Monday by the upper House Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Customer Service and Natural Resources entitled *Commencement of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009*. The report is absolutely scathing. I will read onto the record the findings of the committee:

**Finding 1**

That the NSW Government has failed to effect the will of the Parliament by not commencing Schedule 1 of the *Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009* to make special provision for cultural fishing.

**Finding 2**

That the NSW Government's implementation of a local management approach to make provision for cultural fishing has been to be too slow and lacks the full support of stakeholders.

**Finding 3**

That the regulatory and policy settings applied by the NSW Department of Primary Industries Fisheries mean it is unable to differentiate between trade and barter, as part of cultural fishing practice, and being in possession of fish for the purpose of a commercial activity without a licence.

**Finding 4**

That the compliance activity and prosecutions against Aboriginal people for practising cultural fishing, particularly on the South Coast of NSW, are unacceptable and creating perverse outcomes inconsistent with the NSW Government's commitments to the Closing the Gap Agreement.

Those findings are backed up by the evidence contained in the report. The committee examined a wide range of witnesses and legal professionals. The evidence showed that the Government has absolutely failed when it comes to the idea of cultural fishing. More importantly, it is costing taxpayers money on cases that keep getting thrown out of court and it is aiding the persecution of Aboriginal people who are engaging in their cultural rights. In many ways, it is also putting at risk the whole concept of the will of the Parliament. A bill was passed by the Parliament and this Government has decided, for a whole range of reasons, that it will not enact that particular provision. The

Government keeps coming up with pilot schemes—I hear there is going to be another pilot scheme up on the North Coast—but we just need to get this done.

The Government needs to recognise what this is costing the community, with Aboriginal people being forced through the legal system and, in some cases, into incarceration. It needs to come to terms with those facts and get on with it. It is something that can be done. Last week I met with the chairman of a committee of stakeholders that is more than willing to do what needs to be done in terms of the necessary compliance to make sure that people are doing the right thing. These compliance measures should not include sending Aboriginal people through the court system. Interestingly, the Opposition went to the legal profession for an opinion and a barrister came back to us with the following:

It is certainly the case that Aboriginal people are very over represented in these prosecutions ... There is certainly a very valid Aboriginal perspective on this, even though the laws obviously apply to everyone. Not least because there is a general native title right to fish, gather, hunt, etc in section 211 of the Native Title Act 1993.

...

The basic issue (as set out in the minister's First Reading Speech) is that until a recent decision of the District Court fisheries thought they had certain powers to search that the decision significantly curtailed by interpreting the legislation in a certain way. The bill seeks to 'restore' the more generous operation of the law to allow compliance activities to occur in a range of places where they have been occurring ... and to clarify that ...

The problem with giving back those broad powers is that there is nothing in the bill that seeks to protect Aboriginal people from accessing their rights, which was the intent of the bill passed in 2009. Once again the Government had the opportunity with the bill before the House to put in place a provision that recognises those Aboriginal rights, but it has not done so. One has to question whether the Government is committed to cultural fishing. It keeps saying it is but we are still waiting 13 years later. We now have another bill. The court has thrown out another case and all that money has to be paid out in compensation and legal costs to Aboriginal people. Once again the Government is failing to bring forward the intent of this Parliament, and clearly the upper House report reflects that.

I also received correspondence from the NTS Corp and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. They were scathing about the Government's treatment of this issue. They equate it to a form of racism. In 2009 the Parliament said it wanted this legislation to be introduced and the Government's reluctance to put it through is clear discrimination against Aboriginal people. They also noted all the rhetoric about the Premier's commitment to Closing the Gap and not putting people through the legal system et cetera, but here is another missed opportunity. They say that Aboriginal people are constantly put through the legal system for no other reason than the Government's lack of action. I cannot understand why it has not been done. Labor will certainly make a commitment that if we are elected in March it will happen. We will do it. In 2009 a Labor Government passed the original legislation. The Parliament at the time made a clear commitment and, for whatever reason, this Government under many Premiers and Ministers has failed to get this done.

Sadly, 80 per cent of the people being prosecuted are Indigenous and the majority of people being sent to jail are Aboriginal people. One has to question why. The Minister in his reply might be able to tell us why—given all the reports, research, consultation and everything else that has gone on over 13 years—we are debating a bill that addresses an important issue when the Government could finally put in place provisions to protect the cultural rights of Aboriginal fishers, but it has failed to do it again. The report of Portfolio Committee No 4 into the Commencement of the Fisheries Management Act 2009 made clear recommendations and the Government will have to respond to them. Recommendation 1 states:

That the NSW Department of Primary Industries immediately, and until Schedule 1 of the *Fisheries Management Act 2009* is commenced:

- cease all surveillance, compliance actions and prosecution actions against Aboriginal cultural fishers
- review and withdraw any penalty infringement notices issued to Aboriginal individuals on the South Coast who were practising cultural fishing.

The Minister is in the Chamber. I challenge the Minister in his reply to give a commitment that the Government will implement that recommendation that was made after the upper House committee considered all the submissions and, although the legislation has not been enacted, at least make sure that it will cease the persecution of Aboriginal people. Recommendation 2 states:

That the NSW Department of Primary Industries review and implement a comprehensive training program for all Fisheries compliance officers, to be delivered in partnership with key Aboriginal stakeholders, covering Aboriginal cultural fishing practices (including the trade or barter of fish for other items) and native title rights.

That is a matter of policy. It does not need legislation. The Minister can send out an edict to his department tomorrow to ensure that Fisheries compliance officers get that training. This is not a criticism of the Fisheries officers because they do not have any clear direction at the moment. They are conflicted because legislation deems

that cultural fishing should be recognised, but they also have to implement the Fisheries Management Act. They are in conflict with one another. The Government is all over the place on this issue. It has not put out a clear direction for those Fisheries officers to follow. Recommendation 3 states:

That the NSW Government conduct an independent review of the culture and regulatory practices of the compliance division of the Department of Primary Industries Fisheries, to identify any systemic cultural problems and implement changes which will lift the cultural capability of the organisation.

We cannot argue with that; it is called education. That recommendation is very easy to follow. Recommendation 4 states:

That the NSW Government commence Schedule 1 of the *Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009* by 30 June 2023, and take immediate steps to develop a supporting regulation in consultation with Aboriginal communities and peak bodies, and other stakeholders.

It has taken 13 years. We will find out whether it will take them 14 years. It just beggars belief why the Government is being so resistant. Recommendation 5 states:

That the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Department of Regional NSW and Department of Aboriginal Affairs proactively work with the Aboriginal community on the South Coast to support the community make an application to the Aboriginal Fisheries Business Development Program, or other programs, to give them greater opportunities for commercial fishing businesses, for the broader benefit of the local community.

Last Thursday the member for Bega and I met with one of those groups in Narooma. We heard about their plans and what they are putting forward, which we certainly support. It is inherent on the Government to help them to progress what they wanting to do down there—to create jobs and economic activity to support the local community. That will go towards Closing the Gap. When Aboriginal people are economically independent, they are able to achieve better health and education outcomes right across the board. We can fix many problems by making sure that we support them in developing their own business activities. There are two other recommendations as well around commercial fishing industry. We are supporting this bill because it is necessary to protect resources along the coastline, but we would have preferred the Government to take the step of commencing section 21AA of the Act to recognise cultural fishing.

I have spoken to other members of the Liberal-Nationals Government who support this legislation. They have told their communities that they support it, so let us get it done. If the Government wants to move an amendment, we will support it. There will probably be an amendment in the other place, and we will support that. The Hon. Mick Veitch has been a long-time fighter for these rights. He has been absolutely committed. In fact, it was the Hon. Mick Veitch who asked for the inquiry in the first place.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You looked after him, didn't you?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Yes, I did. We are good mates and I did look after him, I can tell you.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Yeah, you have looked after him lately.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** He certainly got my vote. As the Hon. Mick Veitch said, Labor successfully moved to review all fishing offences for Aboriginal fishers to ensure that genuine cultural fishing is not wrongly prosecuted. Any such instances of prosecutions or fines should be withdrawn. The Government can do that. I outlined the figures earlier. It is ridiculous that in the past six months to September, DPI has had to pay \$500,000 in court costs for charges that were withdrawn or dismissed. Surely the courts are sending a message to the Government about the social impact of people having to go through the court system. Kevin Mason is 72 years old. How many times have they gone after him? I shake my head. It is absolutely incredible. That is why Aboriginal people say, "We have to suspect that we are being targeted," as they constitute 80 per cent of prosecutions.

We know how many people hit our coastlines over the summer period and we often see people doing the wrong thing, but 80 per cent of those people are not Aboriginal and yet they constitute 80 per cent of prosecutions. That problem is backed up by evidence. People in the legal profession cannot believe that continues. Information that has been sent to me reveals that 563 charges have been brought against Aboriginal fishers since the legislation was passed in 2009. Some 563 charges were made in those 13 years, and one-third of those charges were later dismissed or withdrawn, which is more than double the rate for non-Indigenous people. As I have said, First Nations people account for 80 per cent of jail terms. People are being sent to jail because they are doing what the 2009 legislation said they should be doing. I get very passionate about Aboriginal Affairs because I see so much injustice.

The Government can fix this low-hanging fruit problem but, for some strange reason, it will not get it done—members can hear the frustration in my voice. The Government has done some good things in Aboriginal Affairs, but this is a no-brainer; it does not make sense. Some 80 per cent of jail terms is absolutely crazy. As

I have said, there is a road map. The upper House conducted an inquiry and the committee released its findings and recommendations. Today the Government can commit to accepting at least the first three recommendations in that report, though I think it could commit to the first four. It can get that done before Christmas. We must stop the terrible practice of targeting First Nations people who are carrying out activities involved with native title and cultural rights. Some 13 years ago the Parliament determined that those practices were lawful, but the Government has failed to enact the legislation.

The bill is a result of the Government's 13 years of inaction. We would not need this legislation if Indigenous people had not been pursued. The courts have sent a message that they are sick and tired of hearing those cases. Their response was, "Let's have a closer look at your definitions", as they found the search powers in the legislation to be lacking. While Labor supports the bill for the reasons I have outlined—including to protect our coastlines over the summer period—the real reason the bill is before the House is the persecution of First Nations people. The Government has the opportunity to fix its 13 years of inaction with this legislation. It must finish what the Parliament started in 2009.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:24):** I support the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. Before I contribute to debate, I must address the contribution of the member for Wyong. I understand his passion, commitment and deep desire to achieve change. I am also pleased that in the next few weeks another trial of cultural fishing will commence in my area. I have a very close rapport with our local Indigenous people and the land council, in particular. We are the first area that has allowed Aboriginal people to become the land managers of our headland. I was present at the symbolic smoking ceremony. A lot of the older Elders told me they had been campaigning for the past 50 years to see that happen. They have rehabilitated the headland and other areas. They said thank you to the Government for allowing them to do that. That was the first Crown Lands pilot in this State. The emotion on the day was sensational. The people were so appreciative.

On the day I also discussed cultural fishing. Like many coastal areas, the Tweed has a large percentage of Indigenous commercial fishers. They spoke to me about cultural fishing and how the land council will issue a pass or card that allows them to fish. They said that this has been a long time coming because they had to get their own thoughts in gear on what it actually meant to them and how they could achieve their aims. I could not speak more highly of the Fisheries officers who briefed me, and we walked through it with the land council. They were so understanding. I know there is a lot of passion in this debate, but on the ground—not in this Chamber—my local Indigenous land council and my local Indigenous fishers are quite happy with the outcome. That is what it is all about. We can rant, rave and carry on in the Chamber but, at the end of the day, that is theatre and drama. What is important is what is happening on the ground. I acknowledge the issues raised by the member for Wyong. We must always work for the betterment of all people.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** How long is it going to take to close the gap?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I was quiet during the contribution by the member for Wyong. I expect the same respect.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Tweed will come to order. I maintain order in the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** The bill is crucial to ensure that New South Wales fisheries have plentiful, sustainable stocks and healthy habitats. That is why the New South Wales Government is taking action to address the issues raised in a recent District Court judgement, which had significant implications for the ability of Fisheries officers to exercise their powers which, in the process, compromises their ability to do their job. In July this year the District Court judgement raised issues about the search powers of Fisheries officers under the Fisheries Management Act 1994. Following the judgment, Fisheries officers are now significantly limited in their capacity to exercise powers under the Act. This relates to where search powers can be used and the extent of those powers. Fisheries officers perform a number of critical duties to ensure compliance with fishery laws in New South Wales. They spend many hours patrolling New South Wales communities, detecting and preventing illegal fishing that is damaging to aquatic habitats.

Fisheries officers need appropriate and practical search powers to carry out their compliance enforcement activities effectively and efficiently under the Act and, in the process, protect New South Wales fisheries resources. The Government is committed to ensuring that Fisheries officers have the investigative powers necessary to fulfil their compliance functions. Efficient compliance is necessary to deliver management objectives, ensure the sustainable management of our fishing resources and protect our aquatic environments. However, the issues raised in the District Court judgment significantly affect the ability of officers to search and examine fish, fishing gear and other things, including in situations where there is reason to believe those things are connected to fishing offences.



Those issues also affect compliance powers under the Marine Estate Management Act 2014, as authorised officers under that Act derive their powers from the Fisheries Management Act. Both the Fisheries Management Act and the Marine Estate Management Act are critical pieces of legislation, and it is important that the powers available to Fisheries officers under those Acts are fit for purpose and enable efficient, proportionate compliance operations. Unless action is taken, that gap in powers could lead to overfishing and a significant increase in illegal fishing. That could have a significant detrimental impact on the sustainability of the New South Wales fisheries sector, and for all of us in this State who enjoy our beautiful aquatic environments.

The District Court judgement highlighted issues with section 250 of the Act—that is, the power of a Fisheries officer to enter and search a premises for anything connected with a fisheries offence. The judgement found that the term "premises" did not include areas like beaches, rock platforms or even boat ramps—setting out that the way the term was used indicated some form of structure. In effect, that means Fisheries officers do not have powers to search fishing locations within structures such as beaches, piers, jetties, foreshores, wharfs, rock platforms and riverbanks. Those are locations where fishing offences are found to occur, and officers need to be able to exercise their powers. To give a practical example, the judgment means that Fisheries officers can no longer exercise their search powers on a crowded rock platform to check that fishers who are taking intertidal invertebrates like cockles are not committing bag limit offences.

In peak times, some rock platforms can have many fishers on them accessing the resource at any given time, or where hundreds of beach fishers are targeting the annual tailor run or the whiting run at The Entrance. Fisheries officers are no longer able to use their powers to check fishers for bag and size limit offences on the beach. In the examples given, Fisheries officers would be unable to take the action needed to protect New South Wales fisheries resources. That is why the bill is so critical. The Government is taking action to address the issues with search powers raised by the judgement because they present an unacceptable risk to the sustainability of the fisheries sector. New South Wales is renowned for some of the best fishing locations anywhere in the country, and recreational fishing is enjoyed by one million anglers every year.

The Government recognises that the recreational fishing industry is extremely valuable to our coastal and inland communities, generating about \$3.4 billion of economic activity in the New South Wales economy each year—and that does not even begin to capture the benefits provided to regional employment, to the seafood-consuming public and to the commercial fishing sector. Nor does it capture the social and cultural benefits of fishing, including to our Aboriginal communities. That is why the bill is so important. The bill is a deterrent against illegal fishing activities to protect our fisheries resources for all who access them—now and into the future. Fisheries officers encounter many fishers in the types of locations where search powers are significantly limited following the issues raised by the recent District Court judgement. Addressing those issues by amending the legislative framework aligns with society's expectations that fisheries resources are sustainably managed for the New South Wales community. It also ensures that those who break the law are held to account.

This Government is committed to action to address the issues raised in the recent judgement to ensure an effective legislative framework for the fisheries sector in New South Wales, and today we are taking that action. The bill will ensure that all fishers across New South Wales are able continue to enjoy this valuable resource in a sustainable way. The judgement also highlighted issues in the current powers that mean if a Fisheries officer has reason to believe that a person is carrying a backpack or some other thing containing illegal fishing gear, protected fish or prohibited size fish, that Fisheries officer does not have the power to stop that person and search the backpack or direct the person to put down the backpack or other thing so that it can be searched. [*Extension of time*]

I take regular trips with local Fisheries officers on the Tweed, both in the estuary and out at sea. I found them very informative. Some members might not realise that the border does not run straight through Coolangatta and Tweed and straight out to sea—it doglegs to the north by 30 degrees. Apparently, when New South Wales and Queensland were joined 140 years ago, New South Wales was the dominant State. It realised there were good fishing grounds off the fabulous Gold Coast, so it made the border dogleg to the north to encapsulate those fishing grounds for New South Wales. I found Bob Loring, one of our head Fisheries officers, very good. He explained that while the officers are out on the water conducting compliance they are also running a significant education program. The fishing laws in Queensland are different to New South Wales. In Queensland people can cast nets and use jag hooks, which they cannot do in New South Wales, and so could inadvertently breach the local laws.

Our local Fisheries officers do an excellent job. The only time I ever thought of criticising my officers was when we boarded a commercial snapper trapper—a boat designed to catch snapper—and they told me I should investigate the bait bucket at the back of the boat, which is a large wooden box. It was a greasy day on the sea and I was not feeling 100 per cent. As I lifted the lid, by jingo, I think I added extra burley for the fish. I assisted the commercial fishers, much to their amusement. If the fisheries issues are not promptly rectified, it may have significant detrimental impacts on the sustainable management of fisheries resources. The Government recognises

that the longer these issues are left unaddressed, the greater the risk of impacts on the sustainable management of New South Wales fisheries resources, particularly as we approach the busy festive season. I, like many of the salties in this Chamber with oceanfront homes, have the good people from Sydney and further afield come and stay over the festive season. The boat ramps get extraordinarily busy and our local tackle shops do an enormous trade, which puts a strain on that limited fish resource.

The bill demonstrates the commitment of the Government to ensure that we have an effective and appropriate legislative framework for the fisheries sector. The Government is committed to urgently rectifying those issues and the bill is the most efficient and effective way to do so. The powers, as understood prior to the recent District Court judgement, were based on a previous Supreme Court decision. The fact that two courts have come to two different conclusions on how the available powers operate is indicative of the need to make changes to the Fisheries Management Act to address the ambiguity—and that is what the bill does. The bill before the House today makes immediate changes to address those issues.

The amendments are sensible, proportionate and appropriate. They ensure that our Fisheries management framework can be effectively enforced and they resolve the issues that have been raised by removing any ambiguity about how the powers are intended to function. They provide absolute clarity and certainty to the community that the fisheries resources and marine environment of New South Wales will be protected by our Fisheries officers, just as they always have. This Government recognises that there is strong public interest, and an expectation that New South Wales fisheries resources are sustainably managed, both for current and future generations. To do that, Fisheries officers must be able to exercise proportionate and appropriate enforcement powers, and that is what the bill delivers.

I have been out with Fisheries officers during the introduction of SMART drumlines in our area. It was amazing to see them in operation, and in stark contrast to the Queensland Labor Government over the border, which insists on having nets. The by-product of those nets are many dead dolphins, and turtles and endangered whales get caught. The SMART drumlines, believe it or not, have a 97 per cent release factor. That is very important. Finally, we have a shark listening point off Kingscliff. I put the shark app on my phone, which I thought that was a sensible thing to do. Unfortunately, a great white shark loves to swim around that listening point at about 3.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. on certain mornings, which wakes me up. Sharks are definitely protected. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:39):** The Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill will reinstate the interpretation of enforcement powers used by Fisheries officers prior to a court ruling earlier this year so that officers can continue to search areas that are not structures, including beaches, riverbanks, ramps, eskies and backpacks. We need to protect fish and invertebrate stocks for future generations. Fishing and overfishing in no-catch areas is unsustainable and I support enforcing unlawful fishing. But unlawful fishing should not extend to Aboriginal cultural fishing, which is a part of a tradition and way of life that has been practised for thousands of years. It covers fishing from personal or communal needs to ceremonies and educational needs. The Parliament recognised that in 2009 when the Act was first introduced by including a schedule to make Aboriginal cultural fishing lawful, but that schedule was never proclaimed. I have been told that since the Act was introduced, 80 per cent of people imprisoned for fishing offences are First Nations people.

The Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 4 has just delivered a report on the failure to proclaim schedule 1. The inquiry reported stories of Aboriginal people being harassed, prosecuted and fined for practising cultural fishing. It found that the current regulatory model does not differentiate between trade and barter, which is part of the cultural fishing practice, and commercial fishing without a licence. The report recommended that schedule 1 commence after regulations are drafted. The New South Wales Bar Association and the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties have warned that going forward with this bill would result in more First Nations people ending up in prison, reducing our chances of achieving Closing the Gap incarceration targets.

The Government has said that those powers are necessary to protect fish populations and that if they are not in place, particularly over the holiday period, there will be a great risk to sustainability. That would not be a good outcome. Regarding reinstating those powers, I ask the Minister to inform the House how the Government will stop over-policing fishing practices of First Nations people and what it will do to proclaim schedule 1. Without a new approach, the bill will see more First Nations people incarcerated, which I cannot support.

I point out that at the same time that we are being told those changes are vital to protecting fish stocks, the Government has refused to expand the marine park estate, eroded existing protections with moves like authorising illegal fishing at Batemans Marine Park and indicated it might wind back no-take zones. There is overwhelming evidence that a comprehensive, adequate and representative network of protected marine parks with sanctuary zones is the best way to increase the abundance, size, diversity and overall biomass of sea life. The Hawkesbury Shelf bioregion that spans across Sydney remains entirely unprotected and a Sydney marine park has massive community support. I look forward to the Minister's reply on the bill.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:42):** I make a contribution in debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. The object of the bill is to amend the Fisheries Management Act to clarify certain enforcement powers of fisheries officers under the Act, which sets out the legislated framework for the conservation, development and sharing of the fishery resource in New South Wales for the benefit of present and future generations. Among other objects, the bill seeks to conserve fish stocks, threatened species and to promote ecologically sustainable development. That is super important because we need to support a vibrant professional fishing community and industry as well as the really popular recreational fishing pastime in this State.

In The Entrance electorate I know professional fishers who fish in Tuggerah Lake as well as offshore in the Pacific Ocean. They have been fishing in the area for generations, from family to family, in a fishery resource that is under a lot of pressure as people have moved to the Central Coast to set up a home and build a life for their families. Getting the balance right is super important. The Entrance and the Central Coast are hugely popular with tourists and recreational fishers. We must do all we can to ensure that the conservation and management of our fisheries will be done in the best possible way for commercial and recreational fishers as well as those who want the environment protected.

The bill, which Labor does not oppose, goes some way towards doing that by clarifying the enforcement powers of Fisheries officers. The bill will amend the definition of premises to make it clear that premises include land or a place, whether built on or not—for example, a beach, trail, track, wharf, jetty, rock platform, riverbank or a similar location. It also includes structures or buildings. The amendment to the definition is required due to conflicting decisions in the courts about the definition of premises, so we need to get that right. The bill will also insert proposed section 255A that provides that a Fisheries officer may search for or examine "a thing" if the Fisheries officer has reason to believe the thing is connected with a fisheries offence or considers it necessary for the purpose of investigating, monitoring or enforcing compliance with the Fisheries Management Act. As I said earlier, it is super important that we do all we can to enforce the rules.

I emphasise the effort made over the past eight years by the commercial and professional fishing community in my electorate related to the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program, which brought about tremendous changes for people working in that industry and earning a livelihood from fishing. To comply properly with very rigid rules on catch and effort, and to make sure that everybody has confidence in the system, we must make sure that any breaches of the rules are properly dealt with, which includes being able to investigate breaches in an appropriate manner. The bill goes some way towards doing that.

I note the concerns raised by the Professional Fisher's Association and the NSW Seafood Industry Council, who support the bill. I also note the Seafood Industry Council represents many professional fishing associations in the State, such as the Master Fish Merchants' Association of Australia, the NSW Fisher Men's Co-operative Association, the NSW Fishing Industry Training Committee, OceanWatch Australia, the Professional Fisher's Association and the Sydney Fish Market. The industry wants this legislation so we must ensure that we improve our fisheries whenever we can. As I have already said, the bill goes some way towards doing that.

I note the concerns raised by many people about the Government's failure to commence section 21AA of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009. The failure has created the circumstance whereby over the past 13 years most of the prosecutions for offences under the Fisheries Management Act have been brought against Indigenous people. They do not make up the majority of professional or recreational fishers in this State. The failure to commence section 21AA is an injustice—plain as day. It is really disappointing that this Government and the Minister have not addressed section 21AA in this debate. I acknowledge that other members in this debate have put it squarely on the Government that it needs to be addressed.

While Labor supports improving enforcing regulations and protecting our fisheries, we cannot leave in place an injustice that results in a very small part of our community—which this Parliament has determined has cultural fishing rights—overwhelmingly being featured in prosecutions under the Act. That is just dumb. It is a terrible injustice. The Minister must address it in his reply. Apart from those comments, the Opposition does not oppose the bill. I personally support the bill because I support proper management and conservation of our fisheries for my commercial and recreational fishers on the Central Coast in my electorate. I ask the Minister to address the point I raised.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:49):** On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill. I echo the comments of the member for The Entrance and the member for Sydney who highlighted that many elements in the bill do not deserve any opposition and are supported by the sector, but there is a glaring problem. The bill seeks to give Fisheries officers additional powers to search for a thing that they reasonably suspect has been used in connection with a fisheries offence. It also greatly increases the definition of "premises" to include areas such as jetties, beach tracks and other public places where currently the officers do not have the power to stop and search a person. I can understand that these types

of powers would be relevant to make sure that there is an ecologically sensible approach towards the management of our fisheries. But there is a serious problem and injustice with the outcome. I refer members to a letter dated 4 November 2022 from the New South Wales Bar Association to the Attorney General about the bill. The association states:

The New South Wales Bar Association writes to express its deep concern at the recent introduction of the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2020.

The Bill seeks to expand the current search and seizure powers available to NSW Fisheries officers under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 in response to the District Court decision of in *Carriage v NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment*. That decision arose from the prosecution of NSW Fisheries officers of a Yuin man and member of the South Coast People's native title claimant group.

The bill has been introduced in the apparent absence of consultation with affected stakeholders and despite the pending report—

we now have the report—

of the Upper House Inquiry into the failure to proclaim the commencement of Schedule 1 of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 concerning Aboriginal cultural fishing.

The Bar Association highlights that the Parliament made a decision to include those rights, but that uncommenced section 21AA is at the heart of the issue. The letter continues:

The Inquiry has heard extensive evidence as to the ongoing criminalisation of First Nations people in NSW engaging in cultural and native title fishing as a result of the NSW Government's delay in commencement of section 21AA of the Act since it was enacted in 2009.

We talk about Closing the Gap, addressing Indigenous disadvantage—it is big, it is hard, it is complicated. How do we do it? We start with something that is right in front of us. Here is a clear example of an injustice in the way that First Nations people are being criminalised. As the Bar Association points out:

... the expanded powers proposed by the Bill will have a disproportionate impact on First Nations people in NSW, who accounted for—

this is very important—

80% of those sentenced to imprisonment for fisheries offences between 2009 and 2021.

These Indigenous people were taken from their families and jailed. If the will of the Parliament was enacted, these people may well have been prevented from going to jail. It is staggering that we are denying people their liberty. I return to the letter:

This impact would be deeply harmful, particularly in the context that First Nations persons are already over-policed, over-criminalised and over-incarcerated in the justice system more broadly.

First Nations fishers are a small percentage of the population, as Indigenous people are throughout our country, yet they make up 80 per cent of those sentenced to imprisonment for fisheries offences. It is staggering. It is a shocking statistic. What we should be doing is introducing legislation to address that issue. Solutions have been identified, which I will mention later in my contribution. The Bar Association goes on:

... it would be inappropriate for the Bill to progress without the benefit of the Inquiry's report, drawing as it would from many expert submissions and public hearings and bearing in mind the significant and complex issues ...

We know the result of the inquiry. The report tabled by the portfolio committee that inquired into the non-commencement of section 22AA from the 2009 amendment bill states that section 22AA should be commenced immediately, without any further regulation. We have a solution to a problem which the Parliament sought to resolve by passing a bill that would provide for section 21AA. It is incredibly disappointing that we are now at this point. In the 12 years that I have been in Parliament, there have been many instances where bills have been before us that perpetrate an injustice on First Nations people and we could solve it then and there. We have the family is culture bill. We have this bill.

We have had many bills where extensive research has been done and the solution has been in front of us, but we did not grasp the opportunity. Even worse than we did not grasp it is we also did not address the injustice that has been perpetrated from 2009 to 2022. Where was the department saying, "We are criminalising First Nations people. What are we doing to address that?" Where was the department saying, "We need legislative change"? Where was the Minister? This is an injustice that should not stand; it should be addressed head on. I draw the attention of the Parliament to a letter from the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council chairperson and councillor for the South Coast Danny Chapman, which addresses the proposed amendments to the Act. It states:

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council condemns the continual criminalisation of Aboriginal People's fundamental human right to practice our culture and fish in accordance with our law and custom.

As key stakeholders in relation to land, sea, water and fisheries resources, we are the holders of specific Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Fishing Knowledge accumulated over millennia.

We wish to highlight the lack of consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders is of serious concern and demonstrates a failure of the NSW Government to uphold its commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The proposed Bill combined with the non-commencement of s.21AA of the *Fisheries Management Act* ... limits Aboriginal people's ability to continue to care for Sea Country in culturally appropriate and sustainable ways.

It calls on the Parliament not to pass the legislation until section 21AA is commenced and makes a range of other points. Again, it is another reason why we need to have clearly defined operational measures that are undertaken to defend First Nations people from incarceration for fishing. It is breathtaking that the Parliament allowed the section to be implemented, but because it has not commenced it means First Nations people are now exposed to prosecution and incarceration and not subject to the protection that formal recognition of Aboriginal cultural fishing would have provided.

There are letters from NTSCORP and others. On its face the legislation is positive and from an environmental perspective The Greens support the protection of our marine ecology and marine life. We want appropriate fishing and to make sure that it is undertaken in an ecologically sustainable way. But this is a glaring issue that must be addressed. The Minister needs to indicate in a very clear and succinct way how we can implement section 21AA immediately or what other measures can be taken to address this injustice, which shows that Indigenous people make up 80 per cent of fisheries offences who are incarcerated. It is a disgrace and it needs to change.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (11:58):** I speak in debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. The Opposition supports the bill. It is extraordinarily disappointing as someone who sat on the original upper House committee inquiry in 2009 to deal with this issue, who sat there with communities, who went through a long process, travelling across the State, to come up with this legislation in 2009, to now be in this Chamber in 2020 and know that the will of the House, the will of the people and their elected representatives, has not been enacted by the Government. The problem has been ongoing for decades, and legislation was introduced into both Houses of this Parliament to deal with it. The Government was empowered by this House to deal with it, and since 2009 it has not dealt with it. The member for Tweed said that members do not understand the reality of what is happening on the ground.

In June 2022, 13 years after the legislation was enacted, the Government managed to come up with one local management plan. That plan was not introduced in the South Coast where the largest conflict has occurred and where time and again representatives from the local Aboriginal corporation have come to us. The local management plan was introduced in Hastings where there is a huge issue of overfishing by commercial operators. It is greatly needed in the South Coast, but a local management plan was not introduced there. The member for Tweed said, "We're getting one next week." Again, that is in the north. No local management plan is being introduced in the south where this has been an ongoing problem for decades.

Another parliamentary committee was formed in 2022. We keep having parliamentary committees about legislation that this Government fails to enact. That committee found that the Government had failed to enact the will of the Parliament by not commencing schedule 1 to the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 to make special provisions for cultural fishing and that the regulatory policy settings applied by the New South Wales Department of Primary Fisheries mean it is unable to differentiate between trade and barter as part of cultural fishing practice. The committee recommended that unless and until section 21AA of the Fisheries Management Act commences, all surveillance, compliance actions and prosecutions against Aboriginal cultural fishers be ceased and that there be a review and withdrawal of all penalty infringements and notices. The reason for that is that the report highlighted the extremely disproportionate impact of the compliance regime on Aboriginal fishers, particularly on the South Coast where the Government has not bothered to introduce a local management plan.

Of the 65 people given a jail sentence or suspended sentence, 38 were Aboriginal people of which 34 were from the South Coast. That is 58 per cent. Six of the 12 people given intensive corrective orders were Aboriginal people, all of whom were from the South Coast. Of the 1,020 non-custodial sentences, 176 were given to Aboriginal people, 113 of whom were from the South Coast. That is 17 per cent. The BOCSAR figures show that the number of people who have been imprisoned has dropped significantly since COVID, with the exception of one group. That group is Aboriginal people. The other big rise is mainly among young Aboriginal boys. Members of this House talk about how we should deal with that gap and with incarceration. But we have legislation that was enacted by the Parliament over a decade ago to deal specifically with people not being put in jail, and they are being jailed. That is the reality of the misunderstanding between what the Government says it will do and what actually happens. The member for Tweed says we have no understanding of what is happening on the ground. I am afraid we have a very good understanding of what is happening on the ground. A great injustice is happening on the ground.

Everyone wants to protect fisheries, but the reality is that fish stocks are not depleted because of the actions of cultural fishers. They are depleted because of the actions of commercial fishers and the protections that needed to be put in place because of overfishing from recreational fishers. In the 1880s Aboriginal people on the South Coast first encountered whitefellas fishing. In one well-documented instance, the whitefellas generously allowed the Aboriginal people to take some of their stock, but Aboriginal people had to come back with spears and take back some of the stock because they were starving. That is the source of food that they have always relied on. For people from my generation anywhere on the coast in any of the Aboriginal communities, fishing was part of their heart and soul.

I do not remember much about my grandad from when I was a child, but I remember that if we wanted to have anything for dinner we had to go fishing. I remember grandad nailing eels to the fence to skin them. I do not like eel that much but that is what we got to eat. Fishing is part of Aboriginal people's heart and soul and their traditional way of life. There is something about the sea and the calling. Whether or not we accept that and understand that sharing is part of Aboriginal culture, we have to build that into the bill. The idea that bartering cannot be part of a cultural fishing procedure takes away a part of Aboriginal people's lives and how they live. That is the same misunderstanding when it came to Aboriginal children who did not live with their parents. People did not understand that in Aboriginal communities, aunts and uncles often looked after children, and a lot of children were taken away. This issue is the same. People are being put in prison because we fundamentally do not understand bartering and the way that Aboriginal communities work—a bit of yours is a bit of mine. That is intrinsic to their community and sharing is part of how life operates.

The Government should have enacted the legislation from 2009. It has failed by not doing that. It has an opportunity to fix the legislation and to give Aboriginal people back the rights that they have been denied. The courts, the Bar Association and communities have said that the Government has denied Aboriginal people their rights. To set up a process in 2009 and have the New South Wales land corporation and native title corporations waiting until 2016 shows the inaction by this Government, which has no will to solve the problem. If the Government wanted to solve the issue, it would have done so within 12 months of the committee being set up. The Government did nothing for years and years until the committee fell over and said, "We are throwing our hands up; it's not going to work."

In 2016 the Government was told to introduce local management plans. The one place it should have started with, which is the South Coast, was not where it started. It started at Hastings and in the Tweed in June 2022, and only a week ago according to the member for Tweed. I admire the perseverance of people on the South Coast, particularly Danny Chapman who has pursued this issue for many years. The bill is the Government's one opportunity to get this issue right. In the other Chamber members should consider any proposed amendments.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:07):** I contribute to the debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. I highly endorse my colleagues' comments on the bill, particularly the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty. The bill is the continuation of a lack of a structural and strong overview of how legislation in the primary industries and agricultural space is interacting with all the other legislation. I think it is right to call out the lack of action on section 21AA of the Fisheries Management Act 2009, which would have recognised cultural fishing. Because this Government has no leadership in ensuring that natural resources like fisheries, and the environmental and cultural aspects that go into it, are looked at holistically, we get piecemeal approaches like this bill. I thoroughly endorse the comments of the member for Auburn on the incarceration of Aboriginal people. The bill will lead to that if the Government does not properly investigate cultural fishing.

The upper House inquiry into cultural fishing has concluded. Through that, stakeholders have raised concerns about the disproportionate impact of this bill on cultural fishers in light of the Government's failure to implement section 21AA. It is now well over 12 years since the bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament. First Nations people account for 80 per cent of jail terms for fisheries offences. I have seen cockle gatherers on the South Coast—in the Illawarra, et cetera—flouting government rules to the detriment of our fisheries, but the bill does not have a space that looks after Aboriginal people to ensure that they can continue with their traditional methods of gathering food and of participating in their cultural life, which is a really important thing.

The fact that the Government has only introduced the bill in reference to the District Court's decision in *Carriage v NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment* [2022] NSWDC 283 provides a new interpretation. The Government is again reacting to outside influences and not making an agenda that says there is space for cultural fishing in our waterways and proper environmental management of that resource. The Government should not be in a situation where those influences are enforced. I want to put on record that the Opposition is very concerned about the impact the legislation will have on Aboriginal people.

The Government must act to ensure that there is a comprehensive and clear approach to fisheries in this State, which after 12 long years we are still not any closer to. Twelve minutes to midnight at the end of hopefully

the last term of this rotten Government and it is taking piecemeal approaches to legislation to respond to issues in the court. There has to be change before the summer holidays because we do not want our fisheries depleted by people taking advantage of an interpretation of the law, but restricting Aboriginal people from their birthright and cultural heritage is a disgrace and outlines everything that is wrong with this Government.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:11):** I make a contribution to debate on the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022. I start by reading the words of South Coast Yuin man Kevin Mason, whom the member for Wyong referred to in his speech, who has been charged for cultural fishing. He said:

When I fish, I am not fishing to make money, or just for food, but to practice the oldest continuous living culture on earth. I connect with the people who taught me how to fish in accordance with law and custom, and I connect with all the generations before them, and when I teach, I am connecting with all the future generations in an unbroken timeless chain of culture.

When I look at the Minister across the Chamber I think about Aboriginal brothers and sisters of which the bill takes no account. The Opposition will be supporting the legislation for other reasons, but it devastates me that this Government has had 13 years to implement an important piece of legislation that is causing our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, our First Nations people—our young Aboriginal boys in particular—to be incarcerated in the criminal justice system at a disproportionately high rate. As parliamentarians it is our responsibility to do something about that.

The system is broken when 13 years after a Labor Government introduced the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 some measures have still not been implemented. The inquiry into the commencement of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act, which was referred to Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Customer Service and Natural Resources by the Hon. Mick Veitch in the other place, was very comprehensive. I acknowledge his fantastic work. The inquiry made some very clear findings to which I would like to hear the Minister's response. The Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 was amended by the Government to acknowledge Aboriginal people's unique cultural connection to sea and inland waters and to protect and promote Aboriginal cultural fishing. A special provision, section 21AA, was also introduced, which was intended to protect Aboriginal people from compliance actions for fishing offences if they were undertaking cultural fishing. Thirteen years later and section 21AA has still not commenced. Extraordinarily, the will of Parliament has failed to take effect. Finding 2 of the report entitled *Commencement of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009* states:

That the NSW Government's implementation of a local management approach to make provision for cultural fishing has been too slow and lacks the full support of stakeholders.

The member for Tweed said that there is a pilot starting on the North Coast. He also said that the people on the North Coast are thanking the Government for allowing them to do cultural burning. Since time immemorial Aboriginal people have been practising traditional practices yet the Opposition has to beg the Government to change the legislation to protect them and to allow them to continue those cultural practices. The pain and hurt of people like Kevin Moore not being able to pass down his crucial understanding means that we are losing generations. It is not just this generation that is being incarcerated. The lost knowledge that this Government is facilitating harms generations in the future.

I note the deep concerns of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association and NTSCORP, which all oppose the bill. I also thank the member for The Entrance. I too have great commercial and recreational fishing communities in my electorate. I understand that there are measures in the bill to protect commercial and recreational fishers and the fish stock in the future. I thank the Recreational Fishing Alliance, the NSW Professional Fishers Association, Sydney Fish Market and the mighty Public Service Association of NSW for their work to make the most of our commercial fishing. But the bill is not about commercial fishing; it is about cultural fishing. We have the possibility to make a massive change. On the South Coast 4 per cent of the population is Aboriginal yet 80 per cent of the charges for fisheries offences are brought against Aboriginal people. Not only can they not pass on their knowledge, they get charged for doing so. Aboriginal people are waiting in the court system for up to four years, which is a horrible thing. I would hate to have to wait to go to court for fishing.

I grew up in New Zealand and it was normal for me to collect periwinkles, pipis and parwal with the Māori kids. Customary fishing rights have been guaranteed in New Zealand since 1992. I give the example of a lovely young man from the South Coast, Walbunja diver John Carriage, who is 21. He narrowly escaped criminal conviction when the charges against him were dropped last year. He says that it has really damaged him and made him not want to jump into the water anymore. What happens to his children and his children's children while we wait for this Government to pass legislation?

The Department of Primary Industries has paid \$500,000 in legal fees related to dropping charges against Aboriginal people because the legal system in New South Wales thinks the cases are ridiculous and it is wrong to penalise them. An Aboriginal person who is charged has their life put on hold while they are waiting for their

court cases to be heard. I beg the Minister to think more carefully about the bill and listen to possible amendments in the upper House so that we can do better than what is on the table right now. Cultural fishing has a long and proud history across many of our Indigenous peoples. In its submission to the inquiry entitled *Commencement of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009* the Government said:

There is an innate connection between waterways and cultural identity and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Fishing and access to the many and varied water resources has always been a critical element of the relationship between Aboriginal people and their traditional country. The importance of sea or other waters is reflected in dreaming, languages, art, music, dance and stories.

That reflection is engraved in petroglyphs in my community, the age of which we do not know. Aboriginal people have an incredible connection to the sea and country. There are beautiful petroglyphs of stingrays, whales and turtles engraved across my electorate. This Parliament needs to do better on this. My Aboriginal foster daughter's artwork for her HSC is of the food that she has collected on the land and the food that she has eaten growing up on the river. We must do better and not punish Aboriginal people for carrying on their traditional practices. The inquiry heard a first-person account of an Aboriginal fisher. He said:

... all my Elders ... taught me to fish since I was born pretty much. It's just been in my life all my life. ... I've always been diving ... We always take from the ocean to eat food and stuff like that. Take it home, take it to my Elders and my cousins and my family. If my uncles and aunts call me up one day and say they want some feed, I'll get up straight away and go get it for them, no matter what I'm doing I go out of my way to go get them food.

It is a shame that the Government has left this legislation to the dying minutes of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. According to the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 563 Indigenous fishers have been charged since the legislation was passed in 2009. Some 80 per cent of jail terms imposed on fishers caught under the legislation have been for Aboriginal people. That is jail time for fishing. It is clear—and it was spelt out during the inquiry—that there are massive gaps in the training for our fishing supervisors on the South Coast, in particular. They are caught between the Fisheries Management Act and the cultural fishing guidelines. The Minister must do better and ensure that this does not continue. The legislation was passed 13 years ago. That is 13 years of injustice and racial discrimination that went wilfully unaddressed by this Parliament.

According to NTS Corp and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the failure to introduce the component of legislation related to cultural fishing is a racist act. Our community is better than this and expects better of this place. This country has huge rates of Indigenous incarceration. We must do better. It is a disappointing reflection on the Liberal-Nationals Government that it failed to commence section 21AA when the bill was enacted to ensure that cultural fishing can be conducted in New South Wales. I look forward to amendments being moved in the other place, and I hope that the Minister has something to say in reply.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (12:21):** In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate, particularly the members representing the electorates of Wyong, Tweed, Sydney, The Entrance, Balmain, Auburn, Maitland and Gosford. I make clear that the Fisheries Management Amendment (Enforcement Powers) Bill 2022 clarifies the ability for compliance officers to do their jobs; the bill does not focus on cultural fishing, despite that being highlighted by many members. The upper House inquiry dealing specifically with that issue brought down its findings on Monday, and the Government will respond to them. I will speak shortly about the issues raised by those opposite.

To confirm, the bill is narrow but important. It responds to the issues raised in a recent District Court judgement that, if left unresolved, would compromise the ability of Fisheries officers to protect fisheries resources—which has been brought up a number of times—and aquatic habitats across the State. The bill is specifically about addressing those issues in the legislation to ensure that the officers have the powers to effectively undertake compliance duties and ensure that they are not hamstrung or forced to stand idly by in the event of people doing the wrong thing. That is the concern. The ability to conduct compliance and enforcement operations effectively is key to supporting the sustainable management of fisheries resources. Most people do the right thing, thankfully. The few who do not, rightly, need to be held to account.

New South Wales has an estimated one million recreational fishers, 1,000 commercial fishers, 200 charter fishers and Aboriginal communities across the State, all of whom access our shared fish stocks. About 100 Fisheries officers monitor the activities of all fishing sectors. It is critical that the limited resources are effective and efficient in monitoring our shared community-owned fisheries resources. The bill amends search powers available under the Fisheries Management Act to respond to issues raised in a recent District Court judgement about how those powers can be exercised. It does that by clarifying the intended meaning of the available powers. The previous interpretation of the available powers was based on a historical Supreme Court judgement from 2004. Two courts coming to two different interpretations means that there is ambiguity to be resolved, and that is why these amendments have been moved. The bill has not been rushed through at the last minute of Parliament; it has been brought in to clarify what was accepted as the interpretation until a recent District Court judgement.



These clarifications ensure that Fisheries officers are not precluded from undertaking a search on a beach, riverbank, rock platform or any other place that may not be considered "premises" following the recent judgement. It also ensures that Fisheries officers are able to require a person to hand over something in their possession to be examined if they have reason to believe it is connected with a fisheries offence. Without those powers, a Fisheries officer's ability to do their job in protecting the shared fisheries resources of New South Wales is severely compromised. For example, a Fisheries officer who sees a person on a beach placing fish or cockles clearly in excess of the allowable bag limit into an esky or backpack would not have the power to undertake a search of that esky or bag unless the amendments are incorporated. That is what the bill is about.

I note that many members opposite expressed concerns in the debate about whether the bill will have implications for Aboriginal cultural fishing or impact on Aboriginal people exercising their rights to fish. That has also been raised in public comments about the bill. I do not minimise those concerns, but Aboriginal cultural fishing is an issue that many people in the community feel strongly about. I note that this week the upper House inquiry tabled its final report. I will speak further about that report in a moment. I make it abundantly clear that these amendments are in no way targeted at a particular form of fishing, a particular group of fishers or a specific species of fish. The amendments are designed to respond to issues with available powers that affect compliance activity across the breadth of all species, areas and types of fishing regulated under the Fisheries Management Act 1994. I cannot express that strongly enough. Without these changes, Fisheries officers will not be able to protect fisheries resources for current and future generations. That is in nobody's interests.

In light of the inquiry's recent report, I highlight that the Government and the Department of Primary Industries strongly support Aboriginal cultural fishing. It is an object of the Fisheries Management Act to recognise the spiritual, social and customary significance to Aboriginal persons of fisheries resources, and to protect and promote the continuation of Aboriginal cultural fishing. It is in the Act. The New South Wales Government is committed to achieving that in the context of a sustainable resource management framework, and to working actively with Aboriginal communities and other stakeholders to achieve that outcome. The Government is partnering with communities to improve our processes and to ensure that Aboriginal people are able to practise their culture within the fisheries management framework. That is underpinned by consultation and a shared aim of meeting community aspirations for place-based cultural fishing needs.

As part of that, the Government will continue to incorporate Aboriginal traditional knowledge into fisheries management decision-making and involve Aboriginal communities in those decisions. That occurs at the strategic level, including through representation on key fisheries advisory bodies, as well as at the operational level. For example, since January 2010 the New South Wales Government has issued over 140 section 37 permits to facilitate Aboriginal cultural fishing in the context of key cultural events. I recognise that there is a range of views around the current approach to regulating Aboriginal cultural fishing, and the Government takes those seriously. We are looking closely at the recommendations made by the inquiry and will provide a government response in due course.

The Government has been working to advance Aboriginal cultural fishing interests and to commence section 21AA since 2009, when the Fisheries Management Act was amended to incorporate the specific recognition of Aboriginal cultural fishing. That has included establishing the Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council to advise the Government on matters related to cultural fishing; establishing the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund to support projects to assist and foster cultural fishing across New South Wales; consulting with Aboriginal stakeholders over a five-year period on the development of a cultural fishing regulation to commence specific take and possession limits for cultural fishing; and establishing a specific provision to allow for permits to be issued for Aboriginal cultural fishing.

It has always been the intent of the Government to commence the provisions of the Fisheries Management Act set out in section 21AA with a regulation that specifies take and possession limits. I note that the member for Wyong and the member for Sydney were looking for answers regarding how the Government will ensure that the proposed changes in the bill will not result in over policing Aboriginal fishers. Fisheries officers receive comprehensive cultural awareness training, including awareness of native title legislation and Aboriginal culture. Fisheries officers completed updated cultural awareness and native title training earlier this year. Fisheries officer ranks have been bolstered recently and there are now six dedicated Aboriginal Fisheries officers—whom I have met—under a newly established Aboriginal Fisheries officer career pathways program, which is integral to fostering partnerships between fisheries compliance and Aboriginal communities.

With respect to cultural fishing and native title, our fisheries officers have specific work instructions that guide their interactions with Aboriginal people. They are acutely aware that they are dealing with a complex set of issues, and recognition of native title status and Aboriginality in the field is not always easy or possible. One of the main challenges for our officers is dealing with situations where large quantities—sometimes in the

hundreds or thousands—of high-value species, such as abalone, have been apprehended by officers being sold under the premise that it is cultural activity.

The Commonwealth Native Title Act and the New South Wales Fisheries Management Act both define cultural fishing as being an activity for the purposes of satisfying personal, domestic and communal need—not for a commercial purpose. Those situations have been referred to the courts, and on a number of occasions the courts have determined that the activity has not been cultural fishing and deemed it illegal under Commonwealth and State law. That highlights the complex environment that our fisheries officers are dealing with. All that said, the Government will continue to review and refine our approaches and our Fisheries officers' work instructions in light of the recent parliamentary inquiry report. I will highlight that the proportion of finalised court charges under the Fisheries Management Act brought against Aboriginal people between 2009 to date is around 16 per cent. That is the total number, 16 per cent, compared with 84 per cent brought against non-Aboriginal people and companies. To clarify the number that has been raised by those opposite—

**Mr David Harris:** But that is a percentage of the population.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** Just listen.

**Mr David Harris:** It is proportionate. That is rubbish.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** No, I will clarify. For one moment, listen.

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

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** The 80 per cent is for the South Coast jail sentences only.

**Mr David Harris:** Correct.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** That is for the South Coast. If the member wants to look at things overall, then take note of the overall number. The overall number is 16 per cent, compared with 84 per cent of non-Aboriginal people. That is what it is. You cannot argue with facts, and these are the facts.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** The proportion of penalty notices issued to Aboriginal people under the Fisheries Management Act from 2009 to date—the proportion—is 1.5 per cent, compared with 98.5 per cent brought against non-Aboriginal people and companies. They are the actual figures for the entire State. The figures also show that there is a sliding scale in fisheries offences between inland and coastal areas and from the North Coast to the South Coast. Inland fishing compliance issues with Aboriginal fishers are negligible, with only 12 non-custodial sentences in the past 13 years to date. Offences that resulted in physical imprisonment involved either large-scale abalone trafficking or recidivist offending, which have broader potential impacts for the future health of the industry.

I will use one example from the many examples that were given in the upper House inquiry. On one occasion an illegal syndicate supplied an undercover operative with more than 380 kilograms of abalone, or 4,491 individual abalone, in exchange for over \$20,000 in cash. The legal street value for the abalone at the time was estimated at \$40,000. That was not cultural fishing. That said, I re-emphasise that we fully recognise and support the need to facilitate improved access by Aboriginal communities to our commercial fisheries to support economic development aspirations for commercial fishing. To address this, the New South Wales Government has commenced a new project in collaboration with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and the New South Wales Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council to establish three new fully formed Aboriginal community owned and operated fishing companies.

That is one initiative we have introduced. This new initiative, which started only this year, aims to assist Aboriginal communities to participate more meaningfully in our commercial fisheries. It will also serve to draw a clear line between cultural fishing—for personal, communal and domestic needs—and the commercial aspirations of some in Aboriginal communities. In determining whether to prosecute, all proposed prosecutions undergo a rigorous assessment before they are approved to be commenced, including being reviewed by the department's prosecution review panel. If approved, the prosecution briefs are finally subject to formal prospects advice from a solicitor or barrister.

At this point, I will also clear up some misconceptions about what the bill does in practice, and I will be absolutely unequivocal on this. We have seen some interpretations that do not accord with the intent of the bill, so I want to make sure that there is no doubt about the aims of the bill. The bill does not allow fisheries officers to search a person. That is specifically provided for in proposed section 255A (6). I was absolutely clear on that point in my second reading speech—the power to search does not extend to searching a person. The bill also does not change the powers of arrest available to fisheries officers. That is set out in section 262 of the Act, and the bill

makes no change to that section at all. Nor does the bill create any new powers or change any existing powers that require people to provide information to fisheries officers. The bill makes no changes to powers of arrest or requirements to provide information.

The bill also does not create a new power to enter premises. The power to enter premises has always existed in the Fisheries Management Act, ever since it was introduced. The bill simply clarifies what constitutes a "premises" to ensure that compliance activities can be undertaken in places where the offences occur. It is not a new power in any way, shape or form. The bill simply clarifies the current powers in response to the recent judgement and helps to ensure that officers can carry out their important compliance activities. It is very much a targeted bill, which helps ensure that Fisheries officers' search powers are fit for purpose.

While there is much more I could say, in conclusion, the amendments to enforcement powers in the bill are sensible, proportionate and appropriate, and they are broadly comparable to powers available in every other jurisdiction in the country. They are also broadly comparable to powers available under other similar legislation in New South Wales. This is a clarification of the existing powers, aimed at addressing the issues arising from the recent judgement. It is not indicative of a change to anything around the approach to fisheries compliance. While I appreciate all the concerns raised by members, I can only re-emphasise the clear and pressing need for the bill. Without the bill and its proposed changes, our resources will be left dangerously unprotected and our fisheries officers will be prevented from acting in situations where they are clearly expected to be able to do so. That is not something that we are willing to accept. It is not something that anyone should be willing to accept. 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 DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MOTOR ACCIDENT INJURIES AMENDMENT BILL 2022

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2022.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:37):** I speak on behalf of my hardworking colleague and shadow Minister for Customer Service, and shadow Minister for Digital, Yasmin Catley, in debate on the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2022. The bill will amend the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 to implement recommendations from the three-year statutory review conducted by Clayton Utz and Deloitte. The review received feedback from 31 organisations and individuals, as well as taking on board submissions to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice's 2020 review of the compulsory third party insurance scheme.

After receiving feedback from stakeholders, the reviewers assessed the performance of the scheme over its first three years. They found, firstly, that policy objectives of the Act remain valid; and, secondly, that the applied terms, regulations and guidelines are largely appropriate for securing those objectives. Clayton Utz and Deloitte made 73 recommendations to improve scheme design, scheme implementation and key performance indicators. Ten priority recommendations were identified, covering independent claim file review; internal review case selection; personal injury commission improvements; claimant understanding of scheme and entitlements; the CTP Assist complex claim team; additional monitoring of claims and how they progress; transitional excess profits and losses mechanism; vulnerable persons and lower claims frequency, compared with the original schedule 1E parameters; fraud information; and fraud responsibilities.

I now turn to the contents of the bill. As the Minister noted in his second reading speech, the lexicon regarding injuries has changed since the Act was enacted. To reflect that, schedule 1 amends multiple sections of the Act to replace the term "minor injury" with "threshold injury". The term is less distressing for claimants. New section 1.6 (1) outlines the definition of a threshold injury for the purposes of the Act as:

- (a) a soft tissue injury,
- (b) a psychological or psychiatric injury that is not a recognised psychiatric illness.

We are pleased to see statutory benefits being increased from 26 weeks to 52 weeks, with amendments to several sections throughout in schedule 1 to the bill. In particular, section 3.28 will have a new heading inserted:

**Cessation of statutory benefits after 52 weeks to injured adult persons most at fault or to injured persons with threshold injuries**

Section 7.33 will be omitted from the Act. That section covers time limits for referring claims and making assessments. The removal of that section will make the scheme more accessible. New section 11.1A enables the authority to establish a trauma support service for members of the family of persons who have been injured or who have died as a result of motor accidents. That service will be funded by the Motor Accidents Operational Fund outlined in new section 10.12 (3) (h2) and (h3).

Those who have lost a family member or had a family member's life turned upside down by a motor accident know how traumatic that experience is. We welcome the establishment of a trauma support service in new section 11.1A, which I hope will provide crucial support to families struggling with the loss of a family member. New section 11.13 (2) and (2A) establishes that the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Act 2022 will be reviewed after three years of commencement, with a further review to take place every five years thereafter. The review will be required to be tabled within both Houses of Parliament within 12 months of being conducted. The application of amendments states:

... an amendment made to this Act by the 2022 amending Act extends to—

- (a) a motor accident occurring before the commencement of the amendment, but not before 1 December 2017, and
- (b) a claim for statutory benefits or damages made before the commencement of the amendment, but not before 1 December 2017, and
- (c) proceedings pending before a merit reviewer, a medical assessor, a claims assessor or a court ...

I understand stakeholders are broadly supportive of the bill and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] has remained in contact with stakeholders over any concerns they have about the bill. One section in which SIRA and the Government have ignored stakeholder concerns is new section 1.10A relating to the liability of a nominal defendant. It states:

**Liability of Nominal Defendant**

The provisions of this Act relating to the liability of the Nominal Defendant in connection with a motor accident apply to a claim for statutory benefits in the same way as they apply to a claim for damages, subject to—

- (a) necessary modifications, and
- (b) modifications prescribed by the regulations.

I understand the basis for this amendment relates to the case *AAB v AAI Limited* [2021] NSWPIIC 44, heard before the Personal Injury Commission. The case related to a golf cart accident on a golf course in which the presiding Personal Injury Commission member found the injured person was entitled to damages.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Committees*

**COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

**Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:43):** As Chair: I take note of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption report No. 5/57 entitled *Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*, which I tabled on 20 October 2022. One of the committee's functions is to examine each annual report and other reports of the ICAC and its inspector. The committee's recently tabled report summarises the findings of its review of the 2020-21 annual reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC. This year's review focused on several key issues relating to the ICAC's operations, including an appropriate funding model, the effectiveness of the three-commissioner model and the possibility of staggering commissioner terms to preserve institutional knowledge. Other issues covered were reporting time frames, information handling practices and restrictions on the ICAC's access to encrypted telecommunications.

The committee also reviewed the work of the Inspector of the ICAC, covering the inspector's audit function, the gap in the inspector's powers under the Commonwealth Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979, and the possibility of allowing the inspector to serve consecutive terms to assist with operational continuity. The committee was pleased to see in this review period that progress has been made on a solution for the ICAC's funding model. However, evidence given at the public hearing by the former chief commissioner, and at budget estimates hearings by the Auditor-General, indicates that aspects of the model lack detail. The committee will continue to monitor the development and implementation of the new funding model, and expects that the model will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The committee also heard feedback during the public hearing about the functionality of the three-commissioner model comprising one chief commissioner and two part-time commissioners, which has been in place since 2017. Concerns were expressed about unnecessary duplication of work and the difficulty of accommodating other professional commitments of the part-time commissioners, but different views were offered about the best alternative solution. The committee recommends that the Government review the existing three-commissioner model to determine if it is the most appropriate solution for managing the workload and resourcing of the ICAC. The committee also recommends that consideration be given to staggering the terms of the chief commissioner, the commissioners and the inspector to prevent loss of institutional knowledge at the changeover of terms.

The timely production of reports has also been an issue of concern to the committee. This matter was explored in the committee's recent inquiry into the reputational impact on an individual being adversely named in the ICAC's investigations, which found that it can take a number of years between any final hearing and the delivery of a report by the ICAC. In this year's review, the committee found that current staffing levels may impact the time taken to produce reports. The issue of whether time standards should be introduced for finalising reports will be examined in the committee's current inquiry: Review of aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

The committee also looked at the issue of access to encrypted telecommunications under the Commonwealth Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Assistance and Access) Act 2018. This Commonwealth legislation compels communications service providers to assist police and other law enforcement agencies with access to encrypted communications; however, it does not apply to the ICAC. The ICAC and the inspector have made several representations to the Commonwealth Government on this issue without success. The committee shares the concerns of the former chief commissioner and the former inspector that the gap in the ICAC's powers under the Commonwealth legislation limits the ability of the ICAC to perform its functions effectively in an environment where communications are increasingly encrypted.

Since that is a Commonwealth matter, the committee recommends that the New South Wales Government updates the committee on any representations it has made, or intends to make, to the Commonwealth Government on the issue. In relation to the Office of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the committee heard evidence about the gap in the inspector's powers under the Commonwealth Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979, which prevents the inspector from accessing phone taps for the purpose of carrying out routine audits. There appears to be progress being made on this issue at a Commonwealth level through reforms to electronic surveillance legislation. The committee will continue to monitor developments on that issue.

The committee also heard evidence that the oversight of the ICAC may benefit from an inspector who is able to help facilitate the transition between commissioners and ensure that issues of ongoing concern are addressed, particularly while the current practice of commissioner terms expiring at the same time is in place. Accordingly, the committee recommends that the Government considers allowing the inspector to serve a maximum of two terms, which would bring New South Wales into line with some equivalent roles in other jurisdictions. The role and powers of the inspector will be examined further in the committee's current review of aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

I thank the ICAC's outgoing chief commissioner, the Hon. Peter Hall, KC, outgoing commissioners Stephen Rushton, SC, and Patricia McDonald, SC, and ICAC senior staff for their contributions to the public hearing. I also acknowledge their service to the ICAC and to the people of New South Wales more generally. I thank the outgoing inspector, Mr Bruce McClintock, SC, for his participation in this inquiry and his service as the Inspector of the ICAC over many years. In addition, I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable input during the review process. Finally, I thank the committee staff for their assistance with the hearings and the committee's report. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:49):** This year saw the end of the terms of service of three ICAC commissioners as well as the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I place on record my appreciation of the Hon. Peter Hall, KC, Patricia McDonald, SC, and Steven Rushton, SC, for their services as commissioners of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, as well as Bruce McClintock, KC, who served his five-year term as Inspector of the ICAC. In respect of Mr McClintock, the committee very much welcomed his advice both publicly and privately, and he will certainly be a significant loss. Bearing in mind the committee's task to oversight the functions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the ability to have his assistance was enormous.

The commissioners were the first three commissioners appointed after parliamentary reform of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 2016, which was a direct result of a number of what we refer to as legacy issues and, as the inspector referred to, that period between 2012 and 2016. The commissioners,

operating under a revised Act, were required to apply the principles of natural justice, and they have done so eminently. There has been considerable criticism of the functions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and complaints about decisions made on public hearings. I remind the House that during that five-year term every decision to hold a public hearing received a unanimous vote of 3-0 with those commissioners. That indicates that if there is criticism of that procedure, the criticism should be of the Act rather than those eminent commissioners.

Considerable criticism has also been made of the alleged delay in the commission dealing with matters that have had public hearings. I remind the House that public hearings also include submissions of various parties and submissions in reply. The timetable on the ICAC website for the most publicised investigation, Operation Kettle, which involves the former Premier, shows that the final response submission—even though those submissions are suppressed—was 10 October 2022. Therefore, the criticism that there is some delay of the commission is not correct. If there is a delay then the public needs to look to Parliament and not to the individual members of the commission, who are discharging their statutory function.

Criticism has also been made of the delays to prosecute people from public hearings. Those criticisms, either of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Independent Commission Against Corruption, are not well founded. Criticisms—of which some are valid—should be directed to the Parliament and the Act because the commissioners discharge their responsibility under the Act. New commissioners have been appointed and although I have been critical of the lack of consultation with the oversight committee—as has been the practice in the past—I am impressed with the quality of those appointments, having heard from them recently about their approach to root out serious and systemic corruption. At least as far as the commissioners are concerned, the commission is in good hands.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:53):** I make a brief contribution to debate on report No. 5/57 of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which I have been a member of since 2011. I acknowledge the Chair, the member for Port Macquarie; the Deputy Chair, the member for Heffron; members representing the electorates of East Hills, Monaro, Balmain and Castle Hill; and the Hon. Chris Rath, the Hon. Rod Roberts and the Hon. Adam Searle from the upper House. It is imperative to have a strong ICAC and we are proud of the commission in New South Wales. The commission has done a lot of work over the past 12 years, with numerous deliberations and public hearings, producing many reports to peruse.

I also pay tribute to the staff of the committee. I acknowledge Stephanie Mulvey, Director of Scrutiny and Engagement, committee managers Imogen Wurf and Amy Pond and their respective teams, all past teams that have managed the committee, and past Chairs and members of this House who have been members of this prestigious committee. Among its functions, the committee serves to examine trends and changes in corruption. It provides an opportunity for us in this place to ensure that we have good governance, effective rule of law and that we do everything we can to eradicate corruption.

I too acknowledge the outgoing commissioners Peter Hall, KC; Patricia McDonald, SC; and Stephen Rushton, SC; and the outgoing inspector, Bruce McClintock. I thank them for their tremendous service. I cannot believe it has been five years since we debated and deliberated over legislation in this Chamber to enact a three-commissioner model. I welcome the incoming team comprising the Hon. John Hatzistergos, AM; Helen Murrell, SC; and Paul Lakatos, SC. The take-note debate examines the report of review of the 2021 annual report outlined by the Chair. We held public hearings for that inquiry in May. The second chapter of the report focuses on the role of the Inspector of the ICAC, which is integral to the way the ICAC operates, and its relationship with the ICAC, the inspector's audit function, the inspector's power gap under the Federal telecommunications legislation and the length of the inspector's term.

The report made a total of four findings and five recommendations on those matters. While a response from the New South Wales Government is not due until 23 April 2023, I urge the Government to outline how it will support the recommendations and findings made by the committee as quickly as practicable. If members in this place have the capacity to strengthen the operations of the ICAC to stamp out corruption from public life in New South Wales, then we must do so. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:57):** As Chair: I am pleased to speak on the Public Accounts Committee report No. 11/57 entitled *Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports June –*

*December 2020.* The committee resolved in May 2022 to adopt an inquiry to examine 10 performance audits tabled by the Auditor-General between June and December 2020. Those audits included water conservation in Greater Sydney; Their Futures Matter; health capital works; governance and internal controls over local infrastructure contributions; credit card management in local government; support for regional town water infrastructure; Government advertising 2018-19 and 2019-20; waste levy and grants for waste infrastructure; managing the health, safety and wellbeing of nurses and junior doctors in demanding hospital environments; and procurement management in local government.

The committee made nine recommendations that seek to improve public accountability and transparency. Those recommendations relate to four performance audits, two of which were examined at the public hearing, and two of which were the subject of further written questions from the committee. Two recommendations were made to the Office of Local Government. One was to provide guidance to councils on credit card use and one was to publish comprehensive guidelines to the local government sector on effective procurement practices. Four recommendations were made to the Department of Planning and Environment. Three of those related to the waste levy and its five-yearly review. Another recommended that data should be published on the environmental outcomes from waste levy compliance activities within 12 months of the end of reporting periods.

Three recommendations were made to the Ministry of Health. One recommendation was that NSW Health commence a regular survey of nurses in New South Wales hospitals to collect data about their psychological health and wellbeing. Two recommendations were also made to the Clinical Excellence Commission, including that it finalise and publish the biannual incident report which is overdue and is important for public scrutiny, and that the Clinical Excellence Commission consider publishing the Clinical Risk Advisory Group's COVID-19 Serious Incident Review subcommittee report on lessons for learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee also carried out a conduct of inquiry, which commenced 12 months after the Audit Office audits were concluded. The committee invited submissions from responsible agencies about actions they have taken in response to the audits. Some 28 submissions were received, including subsequent submissions from several agencies where the committee deemed more information was needed. In some cases, the committee invited representatives from agencies and the Audit Office to a public hearing. Representatives from seven local councils, the Office of Local Government, NSW Health and the New South Wales Clinical Excellence Commission attended the public hearing on 6 June 2022. The relieving Deputy Auditor-General and the relieving Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audits, also attended the hearing and gave feedback to the committee.

Overall, the committee was satisfied with the agencies' responses to the relevant recommendations made by the Auditor-General and commends them for the efforts they made in making submissions and attending the public hearing. Committee members believe it is evident that agencies took the audit seriously and made efforts to address recommendations made by the Audit Office. The examination process has proven to be an effective means of reviewing agencies' responses to performance audits and to maintain scrutiny of agencies under review. This will be the last take-note debate that I will contribute to in this Parliament and perhaps in any future Parliament as chairman of a committee, so I thank the Auditor-General and Audit Office staff for their assistance not only with this inquiry but throughout my term as chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

I also thank my committee colleagues over the years, and particularly in relation to this period. Current committee colleagues include: deputy chair and member for upper Hunter, Mr David Layzell; the member for Holsworthy, Ms Melanie Gibbons; the member for Monaro, Ms Nicole Overall; the member for Keira, Mr Ryan Park; and joining us here today, the member for Castle Hill, Mr Ray Williams. I also thank the committee secretariat for its assistance—though "assistance" is an understatement. All of the committee secretariat staff do an amazing job. Members of Parliament could not do the work with which we are charged without their expertise and diligent service. I truly commend and thank them for that. I hope that that can be passed on to them. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (13:03):** As Chair: I speak on the recent report 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*. As part of this annual inquiry, the committee heard from the Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson; the Children's Guardian, Ms Janet Schorer; and other representatives from their offices. We also heard from three representatives from the Youth Advisory Council. Under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, the committee

is responsible for overseeing how the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People is performing its functions.

We were pleased to find that the office of the advocate continues to fulfil its functions and is working to promote the voices of children and young people in New South Wales. One of the key aspects of the advocate's role is to consult with children and young people and give them a voice in decisions that affect them. We were pleased to hear that the advocate undertook extensive consultation with children and young people during the reporting period. For example, the advocate consulted with children and young people who are exiting Youth Justice facilities and have experienced the out-of-home care system. To assist the committee with future annual reviews, we recommended that the Advocate for Children and Young People include data on the number and types of consultations undertaken each year in its next annual reports. The advocate has also done important work to encourage government and non-government organisations to incorporate the voices of children and young people in their decision-making.

The committee also congratulates the advocate on the completion of the *NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-24*. Statewide progress on the strategic plan will be reported annually. The committee notes that those reporting arrangements will assist government and non-government agencies as they strive to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in New South Wales. Our oversight of the advocate also includes its work with the Youth Advisory Council. The committee notes that the advocate appropriately supported the Youth Advisory Council during the reporting period through numerous training opportunities and by involving it in key projects undertaken by the Advocate for Children and Young People. We heard from three representatives of the Youth Advisory Council. I thank them for their contributions to the inquiry and their work to represent the children and young people of New South Wales.

The committee also has oversight of the Office of the Children's Guardian, focusing on its administration of the Working with Children Check, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and the new Child Safe Scheme. We were pleased to find that the Children's Guardian had fulfilled its responsibilities in administering those important schemes. Several legislative changes were introduced during the reporting period. The Working with Children Check scheme was amended by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment Bill 2022 to make several improvements to the scope and function of the check. The Reportable Conduct Scheme was also amended as part of the implementation of the Child Safe Standards, which widened its scope. The committee notes that both amended schemes are functioning well. We were also glad to hear that the Children's Guardian received funding for additional staff to support the increased scope of those two functions. We recommend that the Treasurer and responsible Minister continue to monitor the needs of the Children's Guardian as its work and responsibilities expand under the Child Safe Scheme, and that funding be increased as appropriate.

The committee was pleased to hear that significant progress was made in implementing the Child Safe Standards during the reporting period. The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021, which passed the Parliament in November last year, conferred additional functions on the Children's Guardian. Those functions are aimed at embedding the Child Safe Standards as the primary framework for guiding child safe practice in New South Wales. We consider that ongoing work to implement the Child Safe Standards will strengthen the ability of organisations to provide safe and secure environments for children. The committee notes that the amendment bill also conferred additional oversight functions on the committee, which will allow it to monitor the Children's Guardian's administration of the Child Safe Scheme as it continues to be implemented across organisations in our State.

I thank Ms Robinson and Ms Schorer for their hard work and dedication to the cause of protecting and representing children and young people. I note that Ms Schorer recently concluded her term as Children's Guardian. On behalf of the committee, I thank her for her valuable service. I also thank the representatives of the Youth Advisory Council for their work on the council and their valuable contributions to the inquiry. Further, I thank committee members for their considered input throughout the inquiry and committee staff for their ongoing support. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:09):** As a member of the Committee on Children and Young People, I speak in debate on the reports. I welcome the findings of the review of the annual reports and other matters that the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian continue to fulfil their functions and "promote the voice of young people in New South Wales". It has been my honour to serve on this committee for the past two terms and to play a part in overseeing the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian. The tabling of these reports shows that these bodies are carrying out their functions and adhering to their governing principles and that they continue to be accountable to this Parliament and the people of this State. I thank the Advocate for Children and Young People, Zoë Robinson, and the Acting Director for the Advocate for Children and Young People, Shannon Longhurst, who appeared before the committee in June this year. I also thank the Children's Guardian, Janet



Schorer, PSM, for her contribution. As the member for Camden noted, she is finishing up her term, so I wish her the best in her future endeavours.

In addition, I recognise the contribution made by the representatives from the Youth Advisory Council. After their appearance at the committee in June I came away inspired by the drive and vision of our young people today. The Youth Advisory Council plays a vital part in advising the New South Wales Government on issues, policies and laws affecting young people. I value the insight provided by these young people into the challenges facing people similar to them and the opportunities they see as being the future direction in our State. There is a widely held belief amongst older Australians that young people are disengaged from politics, but the Youth Advisory Council certainly shows that this is not the case. There is also a feeling amongst young people that their voices are not heard in this place.

Issues raised by the council include the rise of vaping, social media, mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of young people as carers for their siblings and parents, and the issue of consent. I look forward to hearing more about these issues from the Youth Advisory Council next year, particularly in regard to the use of e-cigarettes and vapes in school-aged children. I also note the committee's recommendation to request that the Advocate for Children and Young People continue to collect information relating to this matter and report back on its findings. I will also follow with interest the annual reporting on the *NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-24*, an important and valuable tool for tracking the outcomes of government initiatives and whether they provide support and acknowledge the needs and desires of young people in this State.

This year saw the strengthening of the Working With Children Check system through the Office of the Children's Guardian. With more than 1.8 million people in New South Wales holding a cleared Working With Children Check, this system is an integral part of creating safe places for children. The Guardian reported that barriers to engagement in the check process have been addressed, including simplifying written and verbal correspondence mechanisms, which the committee was pleased to note. I note also that the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 has linked New South Wales with the National Police Reference System, which is important to ensure information sharing across jurisdictions. Finally, I thank the committee secretariat for the important work that it has been doing in supporting the Committee on Children and Young People.

**Report noted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the member for East Hills, members of the National Australia Bank Retired Employees Club. I also welcome to the gallery for question time guests of the member for Ryde who are student leaders, parents and teachers from the Denistone East Public School, Kent Road Public School, Marist College Eastwood and St Therese's Catholic Primary School. I also welcome the guest of the member for Blacktown, Max Pondal, who is a year 11 student from Blacktown Boys High School and who is doing work experience with the member. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Lake Macquarie from the Lake Macquarie University of the Third Age. Finally, I welcome as guests of the member for Campbelltown the Hon. Stephen Conroy, a former Senator of the Parliament of Australia, and Gino Marra, Chairman of Macarthur Bulls Football Club. I welcome all our visitors to the Chamber.

*Announcements*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that a staff member from the office of the Deputy Premier has been authorised to take still photographs from the public gallery during question time today and that departmental staff have also been authorised to take still photographs of departing members during their valedictory speeches and any Christmas felicitations over the next two weeks for historical departmental publications and social media purposes.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I inform the House that the Minister for Energy will be absent from question time this week and the Minister for Environment and Heritage will answer questions on his behalf. I also inform the House that the Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality

and Racing will be absent from question time and the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales will answer questions on his behalf.

**The SPEAKER:** We will at least start question time with some decorum. As indicated yesterday, I am prepared to remove members from the Chamber. I do not want to do that, but I will to maintain order in the House.

*Question Time*

**PORT OF NEWCASTLE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:18):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier has had 24 hours since the Opposition asked him repeatedly yesterday to tell the House: What estimate has he been provided of the financial compensation that the taxpayers of this State will have to pay NSW Ports over the next 40 years?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:18):** That was not a question.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Answer any way you want. We'll do it in pictures next time.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I do not think that was a question.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It was a statement.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The voice did not rise at the end where the question mark should be. Was it a statement—

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Yes.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —or a question?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** A statement.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It was a statement. Question time? Anyway, as I said yesterday very clearly in relation to the Port of Newcastle—which I note relates to this matter—we have agreed on a fair and balanced approach. So if the Port of Newcastle decides to increase its capacity, a valuation will be undertaken and that report will be provided to the taxpayers of New South Wales. We also know that the member for Lake Macquarie supports that position and will back it in. The approach that we have taken since 2011 has transformed the State of New South Wales. That is why Labor has opposed every single transaction.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier was specifically asked what estimate has he been provided—

**The SPEAKER:** I am mindful of the question, as the Premier is, and he has been relevant. He is perhaps moving to it. I will give the Premier another minute and if he has not answered the question, I will entertain another point of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It was not a question; it was a statement without a question. I have made it very clear—in fact, I could not be clearer in relation to this matter—that in circumstances where the capacity that is currently in place at the Port of Newcastle is exceeded, then a new valuation will take place to provide compensation to the taxpayers of New South Wales.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I have made that abundantly clear. We know that here in New South Wales asset recycling has increased the net worth of New South Wales. Opposition members talk about privatisation.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Premier has been asked directly what estimate he has been provided with. He must have been provided with some estimate. He either tells the House or he does not tell the House, but he cannot waffle on.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I am not waffling on. I am answering the question.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** You are not answering it.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It was not a question. I am answering the statement.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being relevant, although I remind him that he was asked what the estimate is, if there has been an estimate.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No. It was not asked; it was a statement. Government assets under Labor were \$163 billion. Under the Liberals and Nationals, it is \$271 billion. The net worth of this State, the net worth of every single person in this State, has increased under the Liberals and The Nationals. [*Time expired.*]

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

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:22):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are strengthening our frontline health services?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Give me a break. This is a fantasy.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:22):** I bet you I get an extension.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** That's guaranteed.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We will see if I get an extension. We will see if my answer is supported by the member for Holsworthy, who does a fantastic job in her electorate—and that was a question. Yesterday I spoke about the 170 health facilities being built across New South Wales. On this side of the House we manage money well and we make the difficult and tough decisions that have transformed the State—more schools, more hospitals and more public transport. Yesterday we saw—and Opposition members know it too—that they were there on Sunday using asset recycling proceeds to fund their policies. That is what we saw on Sunday, and Opposition members know it to be true. Labor opposed the road and opposed the transaction.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Now the Opposition wants to build a hospital. The member for Canterbury said, "I want a new hospital."

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Mookhey said they cannot afford it, so she said, "Well, why don't we just use WestInvest?" Those opposites sold out their principles in five minutes. This Government not only has built 170 health facilities including hospitals right across the State, which includes metropolitan, Sydney and regional New South Wales, but also has made significant investment in frontline health staff, with our record \$33 billion Health budget in this State. We have 154 new paramedics. We had the Health Services Union out with us backing in that decision. I know the health Minister is tuning in from home. He knows very well that 2,128 extra staff over the next four years will make a real difference. They spoke about nurses. With our Health army, this year's budget will allow for 10,148 staff to be recruited over the next four years. I will check, but it is on track.

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Over 4,000. I will confirm that for you.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In addition to that, our regional health workforce—\$833 million.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In this year's budget we have a record investment in our palliative care workforce, providing care and support for the most vulnerable people across our State. It is the most significant investment in palliative care, not just in the country but arguably the world. I will say that until I am proven wrong. No-one has informed me otherwise. [*Extension of time*]

We know our health system, like all health systems around the country and the world, has been under significant pressure during COVID. During Delta we got the non-urgent elective surgery waitlist back to zero. We put in an additional \$408 million over the next two years, bringing the total amount to \$1 billion, to provide support to those people and to ensure that the waitlist is reduced as quickly as possible. We have led the country because we have invested significant amounts, not just during the pandemic but ensuring that coming into the pandemic our health system was the strongest in the country. We saw that hands down.

When there were higher hospitalisations in New South Wales with COVID, we still had the greatest capacity of anywhere in the country. The Government of Western Australia closed its borders because it could not trust its health system. New South Wales was able to stay open—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Those opposite do not like the truth—and freer than anywhere else in the country, arguably the world, because during good times we invested record amounts, we built the hospitals, we invested in the frontline health staff, and that paid dividends for health care and support for people right across our State. Since 2011 the population of New South Wales has increased 13 per cent, but the number of nurses and midwives has increased by 27 per cent. The medical workforce has increased by 53 per cent. The total workforce in Health has increased by 29 per cent and the recurrent budget by 98.3 per cent. That demonstrates the clear difference between Labor and the Liberal-Nationals. When money is managed well and the tough decisions are made, we can invest in the things that matter to people's lives: the best health care, the best education and the best public transport system anywhere in the country.

#### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:27):** My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier stand by the comments of his finance Minister yesterday, who said regarding the Government's privatisation agenda that "We have done it successfully, and we will continue to do it successfully"?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:28):** Yes, I do. Has the member got a supplementary coming? Have those opposite run out of questions? How good is Damien Tudehope? What a great finance Minister. He has learnt from the best. As I say, over \$50 billion in asset recycling is able to be unlocked and delivered for the people of our State. That is better health care, better education and better public transport. Look at all the cranes in the sky. Labor has opposed every one of those projects. They opposed WestConnex, didn't they? It is sad. Now, the member for Summer Hill drives on it every day to get to work, and she loves it. Guess what else? Parramatta Road flows faster.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** No, it doesn't. Go down to Silverwater.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Okay, Low Energy Lynda, how quickly would it flow if there were no WestConnex? Oh, that is right, we will take out the road and see how Parramatta flows. You know the truth.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time. I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time. The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Anyway, they know the truth. Let us go to another road those opposite oppose, the M2. If anyone in the gallery today lives in north-west Sydney, could they imagine life without the M2? Labor called the M2 the "road to nowhere". No-one is ever going to live in north-west Sydney. Why would they need the M2? Imagine Epping Road today without the M2. We go to every corner of the State to answer the question. The Metro North West, once again for those in north-west Sydney, promised back when I was in primary school—never delivered. We came into government in 2011 and delivered it. Why? Because we manage money well. Our asset recycling program has ensured more roads, more rail, more schools and more hospitals than ever before in our State's history because of the approach we take. The member for Summer Hill, the answer is yes.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC INVESTMENT

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (14:31):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Minister for Police. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting economic development in regional New South Wales?

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:31):** Yes, I can. I thank the member for Monaro for her question and acknowledge the great work that she is doing for the people of Monaro. She is getting on with the job and delivering for the people of Monaro. She also sees that the New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of representing and delivering for the people of regional New South Wales. It is thanks to the investment by the Liberal-Nationals in government that the regions are booming. It is our ambitious infrastructure pipeline that continues to see businesses and jobs created across the State. Unlike Federal Labor, we are not hitting the brakes. We are continuing to hit the accelerator so that regional communities get their fair share of investment in the regions.

A few weeks ago I launched the Regional Investment Attraction Strategy. That program is about ensuring that over the next five years around \$1 billion of private sector investment will go into regional New South Wales. It will also create around 15,000 jobs. This will allow investment into businesses and create jobs in our regions

for the future. This is also being supported by a \$145 million investment. That includes \$110 million in grant funding that will support businesses and investors to expand and set up in regional New South Wales. The grant applications are open right now and people can see them on our website. I encourage the Opposition to have a look at it. I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to see what is happening in regional New South Wales.

The regions are buzzing at the moment. That is thanks to the Liberal-Nationals in government. Last month we announced that in the past five years of our Regional Growth Fund around \$3.3 billion has been invested in regional New South Wales. That is over 2,700 projects. But it is more than a number. These projects are making a difference to the lives of people living in those communities. There has been investment in playgrounds, main street upgrades, sporting fields and improvement in facilities for females. This is because we want to ensure that regional New South Wales gets its fair share. This is about breathing new life into regional New South Wales and making sure that where they were neglected for decades, they are certainly seeing that the Liberals and The Nationals in government are providing that investment for them. *[Extension of time]*

**Ms Kate Washington:** Twelve long years.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I am coming to you. Meanwhile, Federal Labor has seen our approach. What has it decided to do? It has decided to do the opposite. We are growing our investment in the regions. What is the Federal Government doing? It is cutting it. It has axed the Building Better Regions Fund. It has axed the Regional Accelerator Program. It has scrapped the ag visa program. This is another example of what Labor does to the people of regional New South Wales. It is another kick in the guts to the hardworking people in regional New South Wales who are trying to make a living and have opportunities. Labor has turned its back on them once again.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** In the House yesterday the member for Port Stephens said, "There is more investment now than ever before." She went on to say that people in rural and regional New South Wales are much better off under an Albanese Government. I do not know if she saw the same budget that I saw, because the budget that I saw and that the people of regional New South Wales saw was a budget that cut programs. It took projects away. It gutted regional New South Wales. The member for Port Stephens can go and tell all of those communities that are not seeing those projects delivered that she thinks they are better off. Tell the people in Bourke, who are losing a childcare facility, and the people in the Central West, who wanted the Great Western Highway, that they are better off. They are certainly not better off. The DNA of the Labor Party is for "NSW", which stands for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Labor turned its back on regional New South Wales. Only the Liberals and The Nationals in government will continue to stand up for the people of this State. We will continue to fight for them and make sure they get their fair share.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I have been too tolerant of her interjections.

#### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:36):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier has privatised tens of billions of dollars' worth of revenue-generating assets, undermining the revenue base of the State's balance sheet at a time when debt is at an all-time high, how much money are taxpayers missing out on in dividends each year because of his asset sale spree?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:37):** That is a ridiculous question. Once again, it just shows how financially illiterate the Opposition is. Asset recycling, as I have said, has grown the asset base of the State. When we did the WestConnex transaction, for example, we established the Generations Fund to protect our debt position into the future. We seeded it—

**Mr Chris Minns:** How is that going?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I will tell you. It is going fantastically. We seeded it with \$10 billion. It has now increased to \$15 billion. That ensures—

**Mr Paul Scully:** How much has debt increased to?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They want to talk about debt. Going into the pandemic, we had a negative net debt position in our State. What did that enable us to do compared to anywhere else in the country?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Run it up even further.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No. It enabled us to actually support people through COVID because we had the capacity to invest in our health system. We had the capacity to provide support for every business across the State, but the Opposition wants to talk about debt.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Maybe the ratings agencies would know something about debt. The other day Fitch gave us a triple-A. Compare that to Victoria, the most like State and economy to New South Wales, which is in a much poorer debt position with much lower ratings. New South Wales is the strongest of any State when it comes to our debt position, based on the reports of the ratings agencies. They know that our approach will make a real difference to people's lives and that our reform process and asset recycling approach has ensured we have been able to invest record amounts in infrastructure—\$112 billion over the next four years. That is twice as much as Victoria, with—guess what?—a better rating. That is because we manage money well. We invest in things that drive economic activity. It has driven about half a percentage to our economic growth leading into the pandemic.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You have increased tax rates, you have increased debt and you have lowered growth.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** At the last election, the Opposition ran on a platform of increasing taxes on every single small business in New South Wales and taxes on farmers in the middle of a drought. That is the difference between the Liberals and The Nationals.

**The SPEAKER:** I note that members from the University of the Third Age in the gallery visiting us from Maitland are leaving. I thank them for their presence during question time.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES FUTURE FOCUS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (14:40):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Training. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government's future focus policies are helping people secure a brighter future?

**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) (14:40):** I thank the member for Albury for his great question. The member for Albury reminds me of that great 1986 one-hit wonder by Timbuk 3: His future is so bright he has to wear shades. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has its eyes firmly focused on the future. The recent Federal Labor budget has shown what Labor really stands for. Federal Labor is unable to do its job. It is unable to deal with increases in the cost of living. Federal Labor is unable to deal with increases in interest rates.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked what the Government is doing, not what Federal Labor may be doing some of the time.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Minister. I ask the Minister to come shortly to the New South Wales situation.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I will. Federal Labor is unable to deal with energy price hikes. It is unable to deal with cybersecurity breaches. Federal Labor has no vision for the future, and NSW Labor is exactly the same. Do not take my word for it; listen to what Labor MPs say. They are not ready to govern.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. The Minister is clearly disorientated.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Canberra is a couple of hours down the road. This is the New South Wales Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** One team, one dream. A good example of the way in which the New South Wales Coalition is embracing the future is our revolutionary investment in the new digital institute of applied technology at Meadowbank. Today, the Meadowbank Institute of Applied Technology opened enrolments in 19 new digital courses, in areas like cybersecurity, cloud computing and artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is Labor's best hope. Students from across New South Wales will be learning at Australia's largest and best cybersecurity teaching facility at Meadowbank. The courses will help deliver jobs that will drive our economy for generations to come and keep our community safe. Not a cent was contributed by the Federal Government. The New South Wales Government decided long ago that it had to invest in institutes of applied technology, and that is exactly what it has done. [*Extension of time*]

The Government decided to invest in our institutes of applied technology [IATs] because we know how important revolutionary new training is to the future of our State. It is certainly not a knee-jerk reaction to current events. We made the decision to invest in IATs and our physical and human infrastructure, and we have been doing that consistently since we came into government in 2011. The Meadowbank Institute of Applied Technology is a future-focused joint venture between Microsoft, TAFE NSW, the University of Technology Sydney and Macquarie University. Courses in cybersecurity have been developed hand in glove with industry, which is the best way to develop the skills people need for the jobs they want and to keep our community safe.

Opposition members—who are screaming across the Chamber, as they do—do not care about skills and training and TAFE. The only time we ever hear them talk about TAFE is when they talk it down, along with the dreams and the futures of our young people, because they do not care about it. That is another reason they are not ready to govern. What about the future-focused stamp duty reform? Opposition members say not to do it. Who could argue against having choice about something like that? They do not want our young people to have a future in which they own their own homes.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister is being directly relevant to the question.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Minister was departing from being directly relevant in the last part of his answer.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has had a good go at attacking. The Minister will be directly relevant to the question for the last 20 seconds of his answer.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** This Government's stamp duty policy is for the future of young people in our State. They should not be dictated to by Joseph Stalin over there, who thinks he knows better than them about their own future and how they should exercise their choices. The Leader of the Opposition is denying our young people a future.

#### CASHLESS GAMING CARD

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:46):** My question is directed to the Premier. Not a single Liberal, National or Labor MP attended the launch at the Parliament today of a plan to reduce the harm caused by gambling and pokies.

**Mr Paul Toole:** Thanks for the invite.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** To be clear, everybody was invited. Will the Premier commit to calls from Wesley Mission, the NSW Council of Social Service and other churches and organisations for a cashless gambling card that is run independently of the gambling industry and has genuine harm-reduction measures like self-exclusion and time and spending limits?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:47):** Well, I did not get an invitation. I thank the member for Newtown for her question. She quoted all those church groups, so she must have had a great conversion. Welcome to the Christian faith. The Government takes the question and the concerning report that came from the Crime Commission very seriously. My comments on this have been very clear: We cannot have a situation where any proceeds of crime are laundered through pokie machines or by any other measure in this State. It must stop and we must look at ways to do that. I have also made it clear that, in relation to problem gambling, we cannot have people throwing their life savings down pokie machines or any other measure that causes harm to families across New South Wales. Change is required.

I have said clearly that I will work with the industry to make the changes. It is clear in the Crime Commission review that we should move to cashless machines. We have seen that in other jurisdictions. I will work closely with the industry to achieve that end, which will create a situation where the proceeds of crime cannot be laundered and—I say this very clearly—problem gambling is addressed so that people are not throwing away their life savings, with all the mental anguish and harm that causes families across the State. The report came out a bit over a week ago. The Government is considering it and we will provide a detailed response. I could not be clearer on the approach that we will take—how we get to a destination in the best way possible that reduces crime and harm across the State.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (14:49):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on the status of health services in western New South Wales?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (14:50):** I thank the member for his question. As members on this side of the Chamber know, the Government knows no bounds when it comes to the delivery of healthcare services, and western New South Wales is no different in that regard. Western New South Wales, for those who have not been there, has incredible towns and incredible people who love where they live. They realise and understand that sometimes delivery is different in regional areas. There is not a template for the city that works in regional areas. This Government does things differently in the regions, including, for example, appointing the first Minister for Regional Health, former nurse the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who is doing an incredible job.

One of the big things that the Government has delivered for western New South Wales is the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, better known as IPTAAS. The recent \$150 million uplift for the scheme in the budget has been received very warmly by people. In fact, since 1 August an extra 1,000 patients a month are taking up the opportunity to use IPTAAS to travel to where they need to go to receive treatment. Hundreds of patients in western New South Wales are doing it. IPTAAS is also a massive factor for Macquarie Home Stay, which is located in Dubbo but serves the region. From Mudgee to Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett, people come to Dubbo from everywhere to get first-class hospital care or cancer treatment at the Western Cancer Centre, which is a service that has been growing exponentially.

Recently there was an opportunity for Federal Labor to support Macquarie Home Stay, but what did it do? Nothing. Some \$2.5 million was applied for to help provide 26 more units at Macquarie Home Stay. What did it get? Doughnuts—absolutely zip-a-dee-doo-dah. That is Labor's response on health. It is not worth anything—not a brass razoo. Macquarie Home Stay is having to turn people away. This Government invested significant funding in Macquarie Home Stay to kick it off, but Labor does not do anything. They do not care about the regions, as the Deputy Premier has mentioned, and they do not care about health. One thing that can be guaranteed is that members on this side of the Chamber will continue looking after health.

Other things that this Government has done include recognising the Western NSW Local Health District for five years of incredible service of virtual assisted chemotherapy. In Coonabarabran patients can now receive treatment in their own homes. Free Japanese encephalitis vaccinations are also now available at 39 different locations across western New South Wales. With the increased mozzies due to the flooding, we are doing everything we can to keep people safe. To start that off, there will be free Japanese encephalitis vaccinations tomorrow at Narromine multipurpose service and on Friday at the Wellington health centre.

#### TEACHER SHORTAGES

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:53):** My question is directed to the Premier. Government data shows that there are 2,458 vacant teaching positions in New South Wales, including four at Epping Public School. Does the Premier stand by his education Minister's comments yesterday when she said, "To claim there is some kind of shortage of thousands and thousands of teachers is just not true"?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:54):** What I do know is that since 2011 we have had an increase in students by around 7.5 per cent and a 15 per cent increase in teachers. We have also increased teachers by around 10,000 since we came to office in 2011.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Premier will be allowed to answer the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We also know that there are shortages in a whole range of professions right around the country. There is a skills shortage. Members opposite might have missed it, but there has been a skills shortage around the country. Every State and Premier in the National Cabinet provided a skills shortage list to the Federal Government, which I led through the Council for the Australian Federation. Guess what? The lists are all very similar. They include construction, hospitality, teaching and nursing. The New South Wales Government has been addressing the shortages through a range of reforms, including our 10,000 temporary teacher support policy, which Labor copied.

**Ms Prue Car:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor should stop plagiarising our policies.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Londonderry rises on a point of order. The Premier will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Prue Car:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The actual question was specific. Is there a shortage or not? Does the Premier stand by the education Minister's ludicrous comments?



**The SPEAKER:** I am aware of the question. There is no point of order. The Premier is being directly relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Members opposite are upset. That is why they keep copying our policies. They copied our policy for the 10,000 temporary teachers and support staff to become permanent.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They know how good that policy was. The Government is also dealing with this challenge by reducing teacher administration with 200 new administration and support staff, which commenced in term 4 this year, and additional curriculum release time for teachers across the State. That will create the equivalent of almost one full day every week for lesson planning. There are shortages and issues across the State in a whole range of areas but, once again, the Government's reforms will ensure more time and support for teachers across the State.

#### LOCAL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering for local regional communities across New South Wales?

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (14:57):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question. He knows all too well the importance of delivering for local regional communities. This Government has committed \$123 million for the delivery of Bowral hospital, \$112 million for major upgrades to Picton High School and \$14.6 million for the Picton to Colo Vale loop line—toot, toot—in his electorate. From health and education to infrastructure, those projects represent a handful of examples of this Government's tireless commitment to securing a brighter future for local regional communities across New South Wales. Members on this side of the House know that infrastructure investment drives economic growth, generates employment, encourages investment, increases productivity, alleviates congestion and supports resilience in supply chains. Let us not beat around the bush to call out those opposite—all of them—who are silent on the lemon that was Federal Labor's first budget. Labor ripped regional Australia's guts out and left it in the lurch. Some \$250 million was promised to local regional communities.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. Senator Conroy was in the gallery recently but this is State Parliament, not Federal Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not want to hear a speech. The Minister will continue but I will listen carefully.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** The member is right; it is State Parliament. But it is the effect that that budget has on regional communities. Let me give an example.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. I ask the Speaker to intervene and stop the Minister from shouting across the table.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I am just so passionate about regional communities, unlike those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will come to order.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Councils across our regions spent time and money on preparing applications for that significant program and then the Federal Labor Government reneged on its promise.

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** That is a glimpse of what the regions can expect if a Labor Government is elected in New South Wales in the upcoming elections. There will be cuts to the regions because Labor does not care or understand them. That is the problem.

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** In my own electorate of Goulburn, Labor has stripped \$3.65 million from the Goulburn Mulwaree Council for the proposed multi-sport upgrade to Carr Confoy Park.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** You don't want to know about this?

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked what the Government is doing in the regions, not what some other government or anybody else might be doing. It was a specific question for the Minister to outline what the Government is doing in the regions. She is not being directly relevant to what she was specifically asked for in the Dorothy Dixer.

**The SPEAKER:** I have reacquainted myself with the question. The Minister is barely directly relevant, but I am satisfied that it is within the purview of the question.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Very fair.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** I seek an extension of time since the Minister has been interrupted so much.

**The SPEAKER:** I will grant an extension of time strictly on the basis that the Minister comes back to what the New South Wales Government is doing.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Let me tell you.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale had been so well behaved. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** The State Government had already announced funding to support the much-needed project at Carr Confoy Park in Goulburn. The Goulburn Mulwaree Council was relying on \$3.65 million to complete that fantastic project. Members opposite have not questioned why that funding was pulled from regional communities. The member for Bega has not voiced any concerns about what is happening in his region. It is so important that regional communities are supported, but they will not be supported by any Labor Government.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Minister has departed from the basis of the extension that was given.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will be directly relevant to what the New South Wales Government is doing.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** The record is there. I am talking about regional funding from this State Government. I am talking about regional funding not being allocated, being withdrawn from the Federal Government to support regional communities. It is time for the Opposition leader to look at who is supporting him in regional areas. I cannot believe that quality candidates supporting regional communities, such as the Hon. Mick Veitch, have been overlooked.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Minister has ignored the Speaker's ruling under Standing Order 129. I ask that we move to the next question.

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

#### TEACHER SHORTAGES

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:03):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Government's submission into the teacher shortage inquiry admitted that there has been a 30 per cent reduction in people taking up teaching degrees, will the Premier admit that his Government's inaction has caused the severe teacher shortages in New South Wales schools?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:04):** Who wrote that question? It is a straight-up "no".

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

The member for Lakemba should not have left the profession; he would be much better there than here. I have been very clear in terms of the shortages that we are facing around the country in a whole range of areas. That is what happens when we have to close borders. That is what happens when we have a once-in-100-year pandemic. It does. To politicise that in some way to make it somehow a unique New South Wales issue, when it is clearly a nationwide issue, is very interesting and very political.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** All politics, no substance.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** All politics, no substance. Ultimately, that is why we have invested record amounts in our education system—\$25 billion in the recurrent budget and 10,000 more teachers since coming in, reforming the education system. To spruik the new rewarding excellence program, it will provide the best financial support for the best teachers. We want to attract the best and brightest from across the State into the teaching profession. On the opposite side of the House, they stand with the Teachers Federation. They stand with the Teachers Federation above parents and above children.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** The Teachers Federation is teachers. Go back to school, Dom.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yes, it is a union.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is a union that opposes higher pay for teachers to reward excellence. Let us be very serious. This is a very serious question.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have seen education standards nationwide reduce, and it needs to be addressed. That is why when it comes to the changes to the curriculum in New South Wales—

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Londonderry that she is on two calls to order. The member will remain silent.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** When it comes to rewarding excellence and making the changes to drive better educational outcomes for our children, those opposite will never do it because they are owned by the Teachers Federation on that side of the House. In addition to that—

**Mr David Harris:** Standards are going down. It is getting worse.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How many schools did Labor close in government? How many schools did Labor close?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blue Mountains will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It closed 90 schools across the State.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Ku-ring-gai that he is on two calls to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That was how Labor addressed teacher shortages—shutting schools down. On this side of the House—

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Government closed two schools in my electorate. It sold one and tried to sell the second one. Do not talk to me about selling schools.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wyong to order for the second time. In fact, the member for Wyong was on one call to order before question time. I call the member for Wyong to order for the third time.

#### **PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:07):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney. Can the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering a world-class light rail network for the people of Parramatta and western Sydney?

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:08):** I certainly can, and I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. Today the New South Wales Government took another step forward in delivering a world-class light rail network for the people of Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula by seeking community consultation on the environmental impact statement [EIS] for Parramatta Light Rail stage two in order to assist in shaping the final design of this once-in-a-generation project.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** The EIS is an opportunity to provide the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula community with information on the project and seek feedback. The Parramatta Light Rail stage two will transform the beating heart of western Sydney by connecting stage one of the light rail from the CBD of Parramatta to the entertainment and sporting precinct around Olympic Park. We could not be doing this without the economic management of the Perrottet Government. I spoke to the Premier earlier today, and we worked ourselves into a lather about the projects that are being built: the Parramatta Light Rail, the metro and new airports. We channelled back to 1985 and that song by Starship, *We Built This City*. I thought to myself, "You know, we couldn't have done this without electricity privatisation." We couldn't have done it without the ambition and the drive of the Premier. I then thought, "Let's go back to what wise words have been said in this House about electricity privatisation."

I quote from *Hansard* the wise words that have been said in this House about electricity privatisation and how we build things. The Government has finite resources, "both recurrent revenue and borrowings", choosing to do some things that it cannot. It was a speech that said, "The ... Government believes in massive investment in infrastructure." The Parliament heard, "The Government's strategy for the next 10 years sets out its plan to invest in infrastructure and capital works." It was the biggest expenditure program in the State's history—as pointed out in question time—that "cannot go ahead or will be significantly delayed" without "electricity reforms". I thought those were very wise words in favour of electricity privatisation that were said in 2008 by the member for Maroubra. Those are all his words. I cannot think of a bigger endorsement of the New South Wales Government's asset recycling than those very words from the member for Maroubra, and I embrace them. I will forgive the fact that he is a racist and that his caucus says he is lazy, but I will not forgive the hypocrisy. He has endorsed this Government's recycling—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maroubra rises on a point of order. It had better be good.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Two thousand and eight? The Minister's investigative work is slower than his light rail.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time.

#### CANTERBURY HOSPITAL

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the last upgrade of Canterbury Hospital occurred 25 years ago and the hospital is literally falling down, does the Premier agree with his regional health Minister, who said, "We've already done this"? It has not been upgraded.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:11):** Is this the hospital that Labor announced on the weekend, funded through WestInvest? I just want to check, because there is Bankstown and there is Canterbury.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** No, we are further away.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I was talking about the Canterbury one.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What did the regional health Minister say? That it has been done. It has not been done.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Is this the one you announced—

**The SPEAKER:** Does the Premier need the question to be repeated?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I just wanted to clarify, Mr Speaker.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

I actually know a lot about Canterbury Hospital. Canterbury Hospital was last upgraded under Labor. It was in an absolutely terrible state under Labor, and it had to close it and move patients—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I know the Premier is inviting interjections, but I remind the member for Wyong, the member for Keira, the member for Canterbury, the member for Maroubra and the member for Port Stephens to be careful as they are all on three calls to order. I will not allow the Premier to bait members.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Do those opposite think it is hypocritical that they are funding their announcements out of asset recycling after spending the entire last—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira rises on a point of order. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The regional health Minister, a member of Cabinet, said that the upgrade is already—

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** It relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister said that the upgrade is already done. The last upgrade was 25 years ago.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will continue.

**Ms Prue Car:** So both Sarah Mitchell and Bronnie Taylor are wrong?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Leave strong women alone! Why are you all so upset?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Why are you all upset?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: I insist under Standing Order 74 that the Premier be required to answer through the Chair. Otherwise, the House becomes disorderly and it is the Opposition members who go on calls to order.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I direct the Premier to answer the question through the Chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** When it comes to building hospitals, the Liberals and Nationals lead the nation. We have built 170 hospitals and health facilities right across the State. We can do that because of our asset recycling approach opposed by those opposite. But on Sunday they found out where money actually comes from, and they came after the money from the transaction they opposed. It was a transaction they called "smoke and mirrors", yet to fund their first announcement for Canterbury Hospital they have come after the money that the Liberal-Nationals Government recycled as part of the WestConnex. It is a vindication of the policies of the Liberal-Nationals Government.

#### SENIORS SERVICES

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors. Will the Minister update the House on how the Liberals and Nationals are delivering for seniors across the State?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Minister for Seniors.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** Stand up, Mark!

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I place the member for Macquarie Fields on two calls to order. I have expressly asked members not to make those sorts of comments.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (15:16):** I thank the member for North Shore for her question. What an outstanding member she is. This Government's priority is to ensure seniors across our great State can access the best possible services to live active and healthy lives. Unlike those opposite, we have the ideas and the policies to do this.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** That's why you cut the aged care commissioner's budget.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I will get to the member in a second, I promise. From the newly established Energy Bill Buster program to the Reducing Social Isolation for Seniors program, we put our words into action to create a brighter future for seniors across New South Wales. While the Federal Government is cutting support for seniors, here in New South Wales we are ensuring that no-one is left behind. Can someone wake up the member for Prospect?

This year the Federal Albanese Government decided to end the program to provide free rapid antigen testing kits through the concessional access program. No consideration was given to those seniors who still needed those tests or the financial impact it would have on them. However, thankfully this Government stepped in. We took on another responsibility of the Federal Government to support vulnerable people, including our seniors, in accessing free rapid antigen testing kits. We expanded our own program to provide Commonwealth concession cardholders in New South Wales access to 10 rapid antigen testing kits over three months until 31 October 2022.

Recently I was pleased to announce that we extended this program up until 31 January 2023. I know this move by our Government was appreciated by all members in this Chamber, including the member for Charlestown, who I am told is the shadow Minister for Seniors. She loved this announcement so much that she promoted it on her Facebook page—not once, not twice but three times. I commend the shadow Minister for Seniors for rising above politics and backing in this great policy. Without any policies of their own, who can blame those opposite for backing ours? This Government is able to support the people of New South Wales and step up where the Federal Government has failed. We are delivering better hospitals, stronger schools and caring for the most vulnerable.

#### **MURRAY COD AND BLACKWATER EVENTS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:19):** My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. Ongoing flooding is causing blackwater events resulting in fish kills. The Minister's department has warned locals that permits are needed to rescue stressed Murray cod or those locals will face a \$20,000 fine. Why can Murray cod not be temporarily relocated to farm dams during a blackwater event without incurring a fine?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:20):** I thank the member for Murray for the question. Blackwater is something that happens during droughts and floods; I am sure the member for Campbelltown would be interested to know that. We have put out warnings around blackwater events affecting vast areas of the State right now. These areas are seeing towns cut off, resources stretched, crops flattened, livestock airlifted and people delivered groceries and pet food each and every day. It is another natural disaster.

We are in our third La Niña. As the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience knows, it has been an extremely challenging time. We are doing everything we can to support communities, including people living in towns but also those stranded out on properties who are finding it difficult to check on their livestock and look after themselves in a dire situation. Everything we can do, we are doing. Briefly I will mention that the support line for livestock producers is something we are—

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order—

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I am coming to the fish. The number for livestock producers is 1800 814 647. It is for those people who need any help, including veterinary assistance, livestock movements or aerial drops of fodder. As far as fish are concerned, there are rules and regulations about being able to deal with all sorts of fish in all sorts of different ways. Fisheries teams across the State are doing their very best to help protect fish in these blackwater events. I am happy to take on board what the member has said about fines. I am not aware that fines have been handed out to anyone. There may have been the suggestion that fines could be handed out if people are doing the wrong thing. I am happy to work on that with the member and see if there are specific instances of people being fined, because I certainly have not heard if there are.

Our fisheries officers are doing an incredible job across the State to ensure that people are doing the right thing to protect the resource, which is being impacted again. We have had a series of droughts where fish were affected by blackwater in a completely different way. Now we are seeing fish and crayfish turn up on highways and in paddocks where they have never been seen before. We are doing everything to support not only the fish but also the landholders to do the right thing. We have great fisheries officers who are trying to do everything they can. Narrandera is literally one of the world-leading authorities on breeding and rescuing fish. We have fish from the Macquarie, in my electorate, that have been re-bred at Narrandera and are repopulating rivers. We are doing everything we can. If there is a specific issue the member needs some help with, I ask her to come and say g'day.

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:23):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how New South Wales Government city-shaping projects are delivering a dividend of affordable housing for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (15:23):** I thank the member for Heathcote for his excellent and poignant question. Key workers, from carers to cleaners, are the backbone of this city. They are entitled to decent, accessible and affordable housing. That is why the Government is raising the bar for affordable housing in our urban renewal precincts. Master planning has now commenced to transform Rozelle Bay, for example, into a world-class precinct on the foreshore of the world's greatest harbour, connected by a new metro to universities, hospitals and Sydney's CBD. Providing public access to our harbour foreshore, realising our vision of the world's best harbour walk, Rozelle Bay will be a dynamic working harbour, with connection to the city secured and a restored Glebe Island Bridge.

Next door we are already at work restoring the Premier's favourite building, the White Bay Power Station. Most importantly, we have insisted that 30 per cent of all residential stock be earmarked for affordable and key worker housing. This means more opportunity for teachers, nurses and police to avoid long commutes to jobs in the inner city. Our harbourside precincts will not be only for the rich. We are restoring Balmain to its battler beginnings because we are the party of the key worker. We are not interested in talking about social justice; we will deliver it in bricks and mortar. When it comes to our urban renewal precincts, 30 per cent affordable and diverse housing is the new standard. Under Labor it was zero. We have already started at Redfern and Central, where key workers and students will access homes on the doorstep of Tech Central and the CBD. Then there are the 300 affordable new homes across Bayside, Blacktown, the inner west and Cumberland, as part of the Transport Asset Holding Entity's affordable housing pilot program.

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** For all of Labor's TikToks and Tweets on affordable housing, it dismissed the use of TAHE land for this purpose as "privatisation".

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

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Rather than use TAHE to generate a social dividend of affordable housing for New South Wales citizens, Labor proposes to dismantle the very engine that can drive just housing outcomes. We have transformed Rozelle railyards into parklands. The airspace above Central will be parks, plazas, workspaces and homes. Abandoned warehouses adjacent to railway corridors will be diverse and accessible housing for those who need it most. Under Labor, these projects would be impossible. A ship might be safest in port, but that is not what a ship is for. Labor's plan for government is to do nothing, to propose nothing, to stand for nothing. They want government, but they do not want to do anything with it. They stand to stop, to block, to oppose. That is not what government is for. Governing involves action. It involves using our assets to drive a vision for a better, fairer and safer society. That is why we are using the people's property to deliver homes for the people.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge in the gallery Mr Sam Giovas, Vice President of the Macquarie University Greek Association, guest of the member for Canterbury.

#### *Committees*

#### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

##### **Government Response**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Pursuant to Standing Order 303A, I table the New South Wales Government's response to report No. 10/57 of the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee entitled *Quadrennial Review of the Audit Office of NSW 2022*. I move:

That the document be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

##### **Connells Point Public School**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Department of Education to undertake upgrades to Connells Point Public School, received from **Mr Chris Minns**.

#### *Business of the House*

#### **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 105, I advise the House that general business orders of the day (general orders) No. 1 [NSW ACT Cup Tennis Legacy Fund] and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 3771 to 3796 will lapse tomorrow.

**REORDERING OF GENERAL BUSINESS****Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:28):** I move:

That the general business order of the day (for bills) No. 5 [Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2022] have precedence on Thursday 10 November 2022.

Right now, every member of this Chamber has the chance to provide by Christmas protection and certainty to the two million renters in the State of New South Wales. For the first time in a very long time, the Liberal-Nationals Government does not have the numbers on its own to pass or block legislation in this Chamber. I seek an urgent reordering of business to bring on The Greens Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2022 so that it can be debated tomorrow. The moment to do it is now. The Independents are on board, and we do not need to wait to kick out the Liberal-Nationals Government in March 2023 to deliver on this reform. If NSW Labor steps up right now and stands by its election commitment that it made just days ago to end no grounds evictions, we can introduce it this year. We must take this opportunity now to deliver immediate housing security and cost-of-living relief for renters in this State.

For NSW Labor to stand in the way of this critical reform just days after making an election announcement, talking itself up all over social media, to end no grounds evictions and then refuse to support this motion would be nothing short of offensive. Renters cannot afford to gamble in the hope that NSW Labor might win the election in March 2023 and then potentially deliver on this reform. We need to act now, and we have the numbers to do it. Ending no grounds evictions is not a controversial move. The only people who see it as controversial are those who seek to profit from the massive housing insecurity in this State.

Peak organisations such as Shelter NSW and the Tenants Union of NSW support the urgency of debating this bill today. The NSW Women's Alliance, which provides specialist services and statewide support to those affected by sexual, domestic and family violence, have written to all members of Parliament urging them to support this bill and urgency motion. Every month we delay, thousands more renters will face rent hikes, because they are too scared to negotiate, or evictions, because they have asked for repairs or have been forced to move out of their home for no reason. At the Healthy Homes for Renters briefing, which we co-hosted with Better Renting, Sweltering Cities and the Tenants' Union of NSW, they all pointed to end no grounds evictions right now. Renters know that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is a party of greedy landlords and big investors, and we know that too. But where does NSW Labor sit? We know what its members have said and what they have championed on social media. But what will they actually do? We can and we must pass this bill by Christmas to give renters the protections they need.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:31):** I support the motion moved by the member for Newtown. We have a significant opportunity to pass important protections for renters. As someone who has passed four bills in this Parliament—that is four more bills than the Labor Opposition—I can say that it requires three elements: good policy, which the member's bill is; good timing, and now is the deadline to be able to pass this reform; and the numbers. If the Opposition committed to the statement it made over the weekend to back renters, it would ensure that this bill is debated and voted on tomorrow and passes this Parliament. We are soon to face an election. The electorates are smart enough to know that parties can make a commitment, but what is more important is that they deliver. The Labor Opposition has the opportunity today to deliver on its commitment, to not wait until the outcome of the election and whatever the situation is in the next Parliament. We could do this today with the support of the Opposition. We call on the Opposition to take a stand and vote with the crossbench to ensure that we are able to protect renters from no fault evictions in New South Wales.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....7  
Noes .....63  
Majority.....56

**AYES**

Dalton, H  
Greenwich, A (teller)  
Leong, J

McGirr, J  
Mihailuk, T

Parker, J (teller)  
Piper, G

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E

Finn, J  
Hancock, S

Provest, G  
Roberts, A



## NOES

Ayres, S	Harris, D	Saffin, J
Bali, S	Harrison, J	Saunders, D
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Scully, P
Car, P	Henskens, A	Sidgreaves, P
Chanthivong, A	Hoenig, R	Singh, G
Clancy, J (teller)	Holland, M	Smith, N (teller)
Conolly, K	Hornery, S	Speakman, M
Cooke, S	James, T	Stokes, R
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Taylor, M
Coure, M	Layzell, D	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Lee, G	Toole, P
Crouch, A	Li, J	Tuckerman, W
Daley, M	McDermott, H	Upton, G
Davies, T	Mehan, D	Voltz, L
Dominello, V	Minns, C	Warren, G
Donato, P	O'Neill, M	Washington, K
Doyle, T	Park, R	Williams, L
Elliott, D	Pavey, M	Williams, R
Evans, L	Petinos, E	Zangari, G

**Motion negatived.**

*Bills*

**MOTOR ACCIDENT INJURIES AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:42):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2022, which arises as a result of the decision of *AAB v AAI Limited 2021* in the Personal Injury Commission. The case related to a golf cart accident on a golf course, for which the presiding Personal Injury Commission member found the injured person was entitled to damages under the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017. It is worth noting the insurer did not cite section 1.10 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017. Representatives of the legal fraternity have made the argument to SIRA and the Government that the decision was made in error and that, had section 1.10 been invoked, the claim would have been dismissed. Proposed changes under new section 1.10A risk causing unintended consequences for workers who are, for example, injured by a forklift in a warehouse.

Currently, under section 1.10 of the scheme, workers receive statutory benefits under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and they can also bring a common law damages claim against their employer. The assessment of damages for such claims are made under the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017, which entitles the worker to both pain and suffering damages and economic loss damages. An injured worker is also entitled to medical and treatment expenses thereafter paid for life under the Motor Accident and Injuries Act. Section 1.10A, if passed, risks extinguishing lifetime payments of medical and treatment expenses for workers injured in a warehouse, yard or other worksite by a vehicle. This is because under section 1.10A a nominal defendant would not be required to meet statutory benefits for claims involving an unregistered vehicle that was not on road or a road-related area. This change was not a recommendation of the statutory review. Given the negative impacts it could have for workers, the Minister has failed to articulate the need for such reform. As such, the Opposition cannot support this aspect of the bill and will move an amendment to omit section 1.10A from the bill.

Another aspect of the bill that a broad range of stakeholders have raised concerns over is clause 3.11, which covers extending benefits from 26 weeks to 52 weeks. While the extension of benefits is welcomed, the clause also reduces the weekly payments by 61 per cent of the entitlement ordinarily paid to those wholly or mostly at fault. This change will increase complexity and will be an impediment to those injured who are focusing on their treatment and recovery. Both insurers and members of the legal fraternity have raised concerns over this change and, I understand, have been in discussions with the Government and SIRA. I foreshadow Labor will move an amendment in the other place to address this issue.

I understand the Insurance Council of Australia has raised concerns with the change in terminology from "minor injury" to "threshold injury". The concerns centre around this change causing confusion in explaining to

an injured person that while they have a threshold injury, that injury does not meet the threshold for benefits beyond 52 weeks. Instead of "threshold injury", the use of terminology such as "schedule 1 injury", which would align with the former "minor injury" terminology, and "schedule 2 injury", which would align with the former "non-minor injury" terminology, has been suggested to the Government. I ask the Minister to also address these concerns.

Finally, concerns have been raised about the extension of the time frame for a liability decision to be made from three months to nine months. This change risks statutory benefits expiring after 52 weeks before a decision. Insurers have raised this with the Government. Insurers have argued that liability decisions should be made within six months, in line with the statutory benefits. I also ask the Minister to address this issue. As the Minister noted in his second reading speech, the member for Swansea was the shadow Minister at the time the original Act was passed and Labor did not oppose that Act. Labor will not oppose this bill either, but we will move those amendments in the other place to improve the bill.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:48):** I am pleased to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill 2022. Compulsory third party [CTP] insurance is some of the most complex policy in this State. Every single person who owns a registered vehicle in this State must obtain a CTP or green slip policy. The reduction in green slip premiums helps every single motor vehicle owner in my electorate of Bankstown and throughout New South Wales. Equally as important is being able to access treatment and care benefits or weekly income benefits or being able to obtain rightful compensation for the most serious injuries from a motor vehicle accident.

As the Minister outlined in his second reading of this bill, the transition from the former compensation-based CTP scheme to the current hybrid statutory-based model in 2017 has indeed achieved almost all its policy objectives. The cost of CTP premiums has reduced for ordinary motor vehicles; injured motorists are receiving benefits quicker than under the old scheme; and more motorists, particularly at-fault motorists or people injured in single vehicle accidents, are accessing more treatment and care benefits than under the broken, old CTP scheme. Fraudulent claims have been mitigated by the redesign of the scheme. The amendments in the bill seek to improve the CTP scheme. Essentially, the amendments seek to implement the recommendations, supported by the New South Wales Government, of the statutory review of the Motor Accident Injuries Act undertaken by law firm Clayton Utz and actuarial firm Deloitte.

In short, I support the amendments made within the bill. They are important. They seek to expand the length of time that treatment and care statutory benefits are available to injured motorists to 52 weeks. This is an important benefit to people injured in a motor vehicle accident. Another welcome amendment is the removal of the 20-month waiting period, which was unfairly forcing people who experienced the most serious category of injury from commencing a common law damages claim. I also welcome the amendments to the profit clawback mechanism, the transitional excess profits and losses [TEPL]—one of the key features of the 2017 Act which provides a safeguard from insurer super profits.

The Minister has noted that SIRA has made the decision to activate TEPL for the 2017 motor accident period, returning more than \$90 million back to motorists. On the face of it, that seems like a win. But I am interested more in why the design of the 2017 CTP scheme has enabled more than \$90 million in excess profit to be obtained by the CTP insurers. Most stakeholders within the CTP scheme seem to be under the impression that the New South Wales Government keeps the true level of insurer profit being realised by insurers under a veil of secrecy. The Australian Lawyers Association has made some interesting public commentary in this regard. In a recent submission to the law and justice committee, the association noted, "Sure, there can only be clawbacks of super profits if super profits are being made. Super profits only occur if some aspect of the scheme does not performance in accordance with premium filings."

I call on the Government to provide a detailed explanation as to which aspect of the scheme design has failed, enabling insurers to profit at least \$90 million from the 2017 accident period. The New South Wales Government and SIRA must, as matter of practice, be receiving up-to-date actuarial advice from the scheme actuary, Ernst & Young, regarding the true level of insurer profit. The Government must know the true extent of insurer profit and the scheme design elements that are enabling super profits which need to be clawed back in the first place. With this bill, the devil seems to be in the detail. Clayton Utz's independent review of the 2017 CTP scheme made a large number of recommendations. Sadly, this bill fails to address many of them, in particular the legal rights of injured motorists in respect of the assessment of minor injury, or the "threshold injury", as this bill proposes to rename it. The determination of the degree of injury is the single greatest source of dispute in the 2017 CTP scheme.

My view is that at present the balance is unfairly skewed in favour of insurers rather than injured claimants, who have been limited under the design of the Act to obtain legal advice. Clayton Utz made several recommendations to ensure that the scheme design could optimally achieve its policy objectives relating to the

rights of injured motorists. There is legitimate concern from legal stakeholders regarding how the definition of a threshold injury impacts adjustment disorder and psychological injury. The Government cannot simply ignore these legitimate concerns. Every aspect of the scheme design is important. If the number of statutory benefits and common law damages claims is tracking lower than originally forecast in 2017, then the CTP insurers will experience more profit, leading to higher premiums paid up-front by New South Wales motorists. Clawing back profits 10 years after the fact simply is not good enough, when consumers have to pay more in annual CTP premiums than they should be.

Another aspect of concern is the lack of progress in respect of the high CTP premiums paid by taxis in New South Wales. According to the Taxi Council of NSW, taxi operators in Sydney and greater urban areas are paying approximately \$5,600. The average estimate in country and regional New South Wales is \$3,200. I find it concerning that the New South Wales Government treats rideshare operators and taxi operators on an uneven playing field under the CTP scheme. Rideshare vehicles are treated as class 1 vehicles and taxis are class 7. In Queensland, I understand there is no such distinction and, as a result, taxis are paying approximately \$712 in annual CTP premiums. Taxi operators are paying more than rideshare operators due to administrative decisions made by the New South Wales Government and SIRA.

Unsurprising to me, NSW Labor has proposed no amendment in this regard, despite for months purporting to be the champions of taxidriver. Certainly, no amendment has been put forward by NSW Labor in this regard. Labor has missed an opportunity to fight for cheaper premiums for taxidriver. Both Labor and the Government should listen to the reasonable proposals offered by the Taxi Council. While I welcome the amendments in the bill, I trust that the New South Wales Government will consider in the upper House further matters to improve the design and operation of the scheme.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Fair Trading) (15:55):** In reply: I am pleased to deliver a reply on the Motor Accident Injuries Amendment Bill. I thank members who contributed to the debate, particularly the member for Canterbury and the member for Bankstown. The Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017 brought about meaningful reforms for the compulsory third party [CTP] insurance scheme in New South Wales. The New South Wales CTP scheme focuses on recovery from injury and supporting injured people by providing fast access to payments for medical treatment and loss of income to assist in their recovery and return to work or other pre-injury activities. These reforms enabled a significant reduction in premiums for New South Wales CTP policyholders from an average of \$635 to \$482, representing an average saving of \$153. That \$635 was a figure set in time that did not include the forecast which, but for the reforms, by now would have been of the order of \$800, from memory. The real savings are closer to \$250.

A key component of the 2017 reforms was the introduction of new regulatory powers for the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] to control the level of insurer profit under the transitional excess profits and losses [TEPL] mechanism. In 2021 SIRA recouped almost \$91 million, further contributing to savings of \$19 per person on average for New South Wales motorists. The bill makes improvements to the operation of the scheme to the benefit of CTP policyholders and injured persons. To our knowledge, the TEPL mechanism is the first of its kind in the world. Nowhere else is there a clawback mechanism in relation to insurance. Previously what we had were insurer super profits. They were making up to 32 per cent super profit from the scheme but are now limited to that figure of approximately 12 per cent plus one or two points for innovation, if they could establish it, with clawback. It is a design that is world-leading and far better than what existed before, which was runaway super profits.

The proposed amendments will improve access to statutory benefits for injured people by improving access to weekly payments for the period before the claim is made, even if made more than 28 days after the date of injury; removing the three-year time limit for commencing a damages claim in the commission; assisting those with minor injuries and those wholly or mostly at fault to access statutory benefits for up to 52 weeks, which currently is 26 weeks; removing the time restriction for an injured person to make a claim for damages, which is currently 20 months before lodgement; and removing the need for an internal review by the insurer of a permanent impairment assessment. The proposed amendments will also enhance the regulation, supervision and operation of the scheme to amend the Act so that SIRA has greater oversight of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority's determination of the Motor Accident Injuries Treatment and Care Benefits Fund, and amend the Act to require the Minister to review the Act three years after commencement of the Act and every five years thereafter.

Additionally, these reforms increase the access and availability of rehabilitation and trauma support services by changing the terminology "minor injury" to "threshold injury" to minimise potential distress caused by the term; allowing SIRA to institute, administer or coordinate the provision of services including trauma support to family members of persons who are catastrophically injured or who have died as a result of a motor accident; enabling SIRA to approve rehabilitation providers to deliver services in the CTP scheme; and expanding

SIRA's guideline-making powers to provide for circumstances in which the treatment and care is taken to be reasonable and necessary.

Finally, the bill addresses other miscellaneous reforms that seek to improve and clarify the operation of the scheme by allowing SIRA to impose a civil penalty without referral to a special committee, and clarifying that a medical assessor and review panel can determine a dispute about whether treatment and care to be provided is reasonable and necessary. The bill before the House is one part of the Government's continuing improvements to the New South Wales CTP scheme. The bill addresses 15 of the 33 recommendations contained in the Clayton Utz report that either recommend or require an amendment to the legislation or regulation. The remaining recommendations that require legislative change will require further consultation; or would significantly alter the underlying structure of the scheme; or are substantively addressed by other changes; or the report asks SIRA to further consider potential changes. SIRA has begun addressing many operational statutory review recommendations, including one to strengthen its scheme performance framework, and measures relating to effectiveness, efficiency, affordability, customer experience, viability and equity. Pending passage of the bill, further consultation will be undertaken in 2023 to inform development of supporting statutory instruments where guideline-making power has been expanded.

I would like to comment on the following issues raised during the debate. In relation to Nominal Defendant amendments, I note the comments that have been made by my colleagues on the amendments to clarify the operation of the scheme as it relates to accidents that involve unregistered or unidentified vehicles. Under the CTP scheme, claims for damages are made on the Nominal Defendant when the vehicle alleged to be at fault, or mostly at fault, is uninsured or unidentified and the accident occurred on a road or road area. Section 1.10 (2) (d) of the 2017 Act effectively restricts the application of the Act to circumstances where there is a right of action against the Nominal Defendant. Section 1.10 of the Act is in all material respects the same as section 3B of the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999. The explanatory note for section 3B clarifies that it "effectively limits the application of the Act to on-road motor accidents [and] off-road motor accidents where the vehicle is registered (and so has third-party insurance)". This position was intended to remain unchanged in the 2017 scheme.

The amendment proposed is to clarify the operation of the Act and the application of the Nominal Defendant provisions in the statutory benefits scheme. To enable this to be more clearly drafted, the existing section 2.28 application of division 2.4 uninsured and unidentified vehicles to statutory benefits has been omitted and a new provision included at section 1.10A to provide that the provision of the Act relating to the liability of the Nominal Defendant in connection with a motor accident applies statutory benefits in the same way as they apply to a claim for damages, subject to necessary modifications prescribed by regulations. If the Act is made, SIRA will engage stakeholders in consultation on the drafting of any required regulations.

I now turn to the comments made on the operation of contributory negligence in the scheme. The 2017 reforms established a hybrid scheme of fault and no fault. As a third-party scheme, when an injury occurs because of a motor vehicle incident, the claim is made on the at-fault party. The bill does not change the existing provision in section 3.38, which reduces weekly payments of statutory benefits after 26 weeks following the date of accident for claimants who are contributively negligent in relation to the accident. The bill includes provisions that extend the statutory benefits payable after 26 weeks to drivers wholly or mostly at fault in the accident. Under the legislation, in relation to statutory benefits, a motor accident was caused mostly by the fault of a person if the contributory negligence of the person in relation to the motor accident was greater than 61 per cent.

Why is the bill not removing adjustment disorders from the "minor injury" definition? The bill before Parliament does not include changes that would alter the definition of "minor injury" in the current legislative package. The removal of adjustment disorder from the definition of "minor injury" would have a significant impact on the scheme and is not recommended. The medical definition of an adjustment disorder is that it lasts no longer than six months. For those who may experience injury in the form of chronic adjustment disorder, access to appropriate treatment and care will be available for up to 12 months, as per proposed changes in the bill. Actuarial advice provided to SIRA indicates that removing adjustment disorder from the definition of "minor psychological injury" could result in significant increases to premiums for policyholders of approximately \$2.50 to \$12.80.

The combined effects of changes in response to recommendations 37 and 40 will ensure enhanced benefits for those people who have had an accident. For drivers who were wholly or mostly at fault, provision was made to apply an appropriate reduction, being 61 per cent, on the statutory benefits payable to the drivers wholly or mostly at fault in respect of the period from 26 weeks to 52 weeks after the accident. These amendments will not impact treatment and care entitlements. The scheme continues to have a strong focus on early recovery and rehabilitation for injured persons. I thank our key stakeholders for providing invaluable feedback on this legislation. These reforms will continue to strengthen the New South Wales CTP scheme, delivering enhanced benefits for injured persons whilst maintaining policy affordability for all New South Wales motorists.

A schedule on the comparison of profits by accident for the year ending 30 June shows that in 2000 the super profits were 31 per cent; in 2001, 28 per cent; in 2002, 27 per cent; in 2003, 30 per cent; in 2004, 21 per cent; in 2005, 26 per cent; in 2006, 20 per cent; and in 2007, 23 per cent. It then goes into the teens until the reform came into place. The average over the period was circa 20 per cent. These are extraordinary super profits in relation to a scheme that is compulsory. These are guaranteed profits. There was no risk. I believe the reforms introduced by the Government are internationally recognised because of the clawback provisions. Those provisions enable us to hold insurers to account but, more importantly, they enable us to apply those profits to those who are injured on the roads and to the ultimate stakeholders, the people who pay the premiums. I thank all who have contributed to this historic reform and the subsequent amendments in the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (16:10):**  
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On 21 March 2022 an inquiry into the preparation for, causes of, responses to and recovery from the flooding events of 2022 was commissioned and led by former Chief Scientist Professor Mary O'Kane, AC, and former NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller, APM. The *2022 Flood Inquiry* report was presented to the Government in July. Recommendation 15 of the report was to create the NSW Reconstruction Authority, to be closely modelled on the Queensland Reconstruction Authority [QRA]. As committed to by the New South Wales Government, an authority dedicated to disaster preparedness, recovery and reconstruction from natural disasters will be established in New South Wales under this legislation.

The bill presents the opportunity to set up New South Wales' response to future disasters on the strongest possible foundations. Here in New South Wales, we have been faced with multiple disasters year after year, and our emergency services personnel and volunteers and our communities have faced and responded to these disasters head on. Following years of drought were the Black Summer bushfires of 2019 and 2020. Then we faced the devastating floods at the start of 2020 and two years of pandemic. Severe floods confronted our communities in March and September 2021 and again this year in February, March, July, September and October. As I speak, we are unfortunately facing another wet summer, with already waterlogged soils and rivers full to the brim. In spite of all these challenges, communities across New South Wales are working together tirelessly to recover from the devastating impacts of these disasters. The bill is the next step in the Government's commitment to support our people in the face of any future disasters. The Government knows there is work to be done to ensure our future responses are an improvement on what has been done in the past.

Established 11 years ago and tested by time, the QRA has proven itself to be highly successful and experienced and the leading model for recovery. Our colleagues in Queensland have shared their knowledge and experience from their reconstruction authority, and we have pooled this with our collective experience to develop the structure for this new authority. The bill and the establishment of the NSW Reconstruction Authority is the Government's commitment to learning from past challenges for the future betterment of our great State. Importantly, the bill enables the establishment of an authority that will work hand in hand with our emergency combat agencies and councils to plan and prepare for future disasters and will lead a coordinated response to preparation and reconstruction across the State.

The primary object of the bill, and therefore the primary object of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, is to promote community resilience to the impacts of disasters in New South Wales through disaster prevention, preparedness and adaptation, and recovery and reconstruction following disasters. The design of the

NSW Reconstruction Authority is informed by the structure and experience of the QRA, which was established in similar circumstances following consecutive disasters that devastated parts of that State. Ninety-eight disasters have struck Queensland in the 11 years since the QRA was first established. It has played a significant role in rebuilding from and mitigating the impact of disasters throughout that time. Members of the QRA have worked with us over recent months to share their invaluable knowledge and experience in establishing a new authority with such a critical remit. I acknowledge their generosity and send our thanks for their willingness to help us stand up our own reconstruction authority.

While we rarely admit when Queensland sets the pace over New South Wales, and I will never speak these words about the State of Origin, in this space it has been a great pioneer and this work would not have been easy. Not only did the QRA help by opening its doors to me, my staff and my agency, it has been at the forefront of helping us get this legislation in today. I particularly acknowledge the member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin, who is a huge advocate for how Queensland responds to disasters. In fact, the member for Lismore presented me with Queensland's bill in demonstrating how our northern neighbour's model had been successful in supporting its communities. I acknowledge the leadership the member for Lismore has shown, and continues to show, in her electorate. I acknowledge her support when it comes to building the new authority. I also acknowledge the mayor and general manager of the Lismore City Council, who are in Parliament today. They have been at the heart of the recovery in Lismore and are great advocates for their community.

The structure, functions and powers proposed for the NSW Reconstruction Authority draw on our recent experience responding to the impacts of fires and floods, and provide a single point of reference for reconstructing infrastructure, strengthening government's recovery response and building our communities to be stronger and more resilient. We are still feeling the pain of the recent floods, and we have not forgotten the fires of 2019-20. We know we need to act more swiftly and make sure every effort is taken to protect our communities and help them rebuild stronger. We all know the impact of these disasters, whether it is the cost to life, livelihoods or the economy, and we will continue to improve our responses to these disasters. That is the next step in being better. I thank our amazing emergency service staff and volunteers, who have tirelessly and repeatedly risen to the challenges of multiple disasters in the past few years. The devastation has taken a toll not only on our communities but also on the people on the ground responding to the emergencies.

The authority will be required to work closely with the emergency service agencies and will establish formal agreements or memorandums of understanding with the combat agencies across all hazards to ensure effective collaboration across disaster prevention, preparation, response and recovery. The Reconstruction Authority will be a new government agency headed by a chief executive officer who will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the authority while still being subject to the control and direction of the Minister for Planning. The authority will also have an advisory board made up of State and Commonwealth experts, who will provide advice on the strategic priorities of the authority, make recommendations on both priority infrastructure and projects needed for mitigation and reconstruction, and provide other advice in relation to the authority's functions to the Minister and the CEO on request. The members of the advisory board will be experts in their fields, and that expertise will be invaluable when advising the Minister and the CEO.

I turn to the Reconstruction Authority Fund. The authority will also have responsibility for a newly created NSW Reconstruction Authority Fund, which will hold moneys from both the State and Commonwealth treasuries for its work. The fund will be used to pay for protection, recovery and reconstruction measures, for grants to affected community members, and for mitigation works that provide protection from future disasters. The fund is key to making sure the authority can do what needs to be done to support the people and places of this State. Critically, the fund will be able to accept philanthropic donations, which will be used to support the authority's work. That in particular ensures that those with the means to donate will know the money can be spent helping their neighbours and communities who are hit by disasters without the restrictions and barriers we saw for the RFS following the Black Summer bushfires.

While much of the bill has been guided by the experiences of our Queensland counterparts, it has been tailored to account for the unique planning laws in New South Wales and to ensure that it operates cohesively in the New South Wales context. Importantly, the bill ensures that the objectives, powers and functions of the authority are effective and appropriate for New South Wales. With respect to the powers and responsibilities, the authority will have the responsibility and power to facilitate the protection, recovery and reconstruction of affected communities following a disaster; to implement mitigation measures against the impact of potential disasters; and to improve the resilience and adaptation of communities against future disasters. The authority has all the powers of an individual, including, for example, the power to enter into contracts; to acquire, hold, deal with and dispose of property; and to appoint agents and attorneys and engage consultants. Those powers will ensure that the authority is well equipped to exercise its functions under the bill.

Part 5 of the bill is significant and provides for the declaration of declared projects and reconstruction areas by the Minister, and disaster prevention areas by the Minister, with concurrence from the Premier, by notice published in the Gazette. The Minister's declaration of areas and projects will enable the authority to exercise functions to expedite decision-making processes and to step in to manage projects and development where necessary to avoid delays in delivering critical development or to pause development that is inappropriate in the face of a disaster. Additionally, the authority will be able to acquire land, both by agreement and by compulsory acquisition, where that land is within a declared disaster prevention area or reconstruction area. The power to acquire land will allow the authority to ensure that the development needed to mitigate against the risk of future disasters is delivered when required.

The bill also gives the authority power to plan, procure and deliver effective planning outcomes for at-risk and vulnerable communities. Specifically, the authority will be able to plan for and advise on the development of infrastructure and new housing, and the relocation of affected communities. One of the authority's biggest successes will be ensuring that development for the purposes of reconstruction and mitigation happen faster. The authority will do that by permitting development, supporting development approvals and, in some circumstances, undertaking development where it is appropriate to do so. Importantly, they are not powers that will be brandished haphazardly or without proper consideration. The powers are tempered by the oversight of both the Minister and, in some circumstances, the Premier. To assist the authority to achieve those outcomes, the CEO will enter into agreements with other New South Wales agencies to establish the circumstances and protocols in which the powers may be used.

The bill imposes strict caveats and limits on the use of such powers to ensure that they are used only when required. The declaration of declared projects, reconstruction areas and disaster prevention areas can only be made by the Minister and the Premier on the recommendation of the authority, and when the Minister is satisfied that the declaration (1) applies to a part of the State that has been directly or indirectly affected by a disaster; (2) is necessary to facilitate the protection, rebuilding and recovery of at-risk communities; (3) is necessary to mitigate against the impacts of disasters; and (4) will improve resilience for the at-risk communities for potential disasters through, for example, the betterment of the community.

The authority also has powers in part 2 of the bill that are subject to strict constraints and are intended to only be used when absolutely necessary. They are powers to carry out development on certain land in particular circumstances and to direct a government agency, a State-owned corporation, a local council or a person prescribed by the regulations to take particular action in certain circumstances. The authority will only exercise those powers when immediate action is appropriate and required in the face of a disaster or an impending disaster. I make it clear that a decision to exercise such powers will not be made lightly. The authority will only resort to using such powers when lives are at stake and when immediate action is required to combat an impending or unfolding disaster, and only to the extent necessary to alleviate the threat. It is likely that the authority will rarely need to rely on those powers. However, they are an essential element in the ability of the authority to respond to a disaster or an impending disaster quickly and efficiently, which was an important point out of the inquiry report.

These powers are not designed to strongarm or encourage unnecessary or unwanted development in New South Wales. We can look to the lived example of our Queensland counterparts to see that the equivalent provisions within the Queensland Reconstruction Act have been rarely used. In fact, Queensland has used step-in powers three times in 11 years and the direction power only once, and that was by request. The powers exist to ensure that the red tape can be removed when action is required to protect people and property. They will ensure that the authority can work with local councils to keep things moving so that communities can recover from disasters as soon as possible.

The authority will also take a lead role in the preparation, mitigation and adaptation for disasters. The requirement to prepare a State disaster mitigation plan and disaster adaptation plans in part 4 of the bill will ensure that disaster mitigation and prevention strategies are embedded into strategic land use plans at the local, regional and State levels. The alignment between planning for disasters and planning for places will be an integral part of how we design our cities and towns into the future. I now turn to the transition period. I am aware that concerns will be raised by the community that the establishment of the authority will disrupt existing emergency measures during the coming bushfire and storm seasons. I assure the House that the authority will not disrupt our trusted emergency combat agencies or existing measures designed to minimise the impact of the coming bushfire and storm seasons.

The existing emergency response arrangements that are in place will remain in place when the authority is established. Our emergency service personnel will still be there, trained and prepared, and ready and willing to help local communities that may be affected by the upcoming seasons. Others, particularly those in the Northern Rivers, may be concerned that the new authority will derail the recovery and reconstruction efforts already underway, particularly those being led by the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation [NRRC].

I reassure the House that no changes will be made that undo the good work currently being undertaken by the NRRC. To be clear, there will be no change to how the NRRC operates, including in relation to buybacks and the building back better strategies adopted to help those in the region.

At this time the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation is a development corporation that can carry out activities such as construction, subdivision and land acquisition, but it still needs to obtain planning approval from the Department of Planning and Environment for this type of work. The authority will have a direct relationship with the planning Minister and some powers to amend environmental planning instruments when needed in order to streamline the planning approval process. The authority will work with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to ensure its work continues and can respond effectively to community need, but with quick and ready access to planning functions and relationships as a result of the role of the authority. This joined-up approach will couple the on-the-ground experience of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation with the powers and functions of the new authority. To provide the Northern Rivers community with the stability and confidence it needs, the NRRC will remain as a standalone body until a transition plan is in place, which will be jointly agreed to by the Deputy Premier.

Once the authority is fully established, there will also be a change to the position of the State Emergency Recovery Controller [SERCON] to support a close relationship between recovery and reconstruction after a disaster. The SERCON is responsible for liaising closely with the State Emergency Operations Controller, or SEOCON, during the response phase of a disaster or emergency, coordinating and reporting on the extent of damage and the need for recovery operations, and overseeing the preparation and maintenance of the State's recovery policies. That alignment of roles and responsibilities will reinforce the close relationship between the authority and our emergency services agencies and eliminate any gaps between how the Government manages disaster responses, immediate recovery efforts, building back better and disaster adaptation.

For absolute clarity, both the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act and the NSW Reconstruction Authority Bill 2022, once enacted, will state that directions given by the SERCON under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act prevail over any given by the authority or the CEO under the bill. Removing the chance for doubt in this situation will avoid conflicting directions being given or inaction by either or both entities in the aftermath of an emergency. Over the coming months the New South Wales Government will consider in more detail existing emergency management structures and policies to ensure that they deliver what is needed to keep our people safe in the future and during the most difficult of times.

The Government acknowledges that there is more work to be done to help communities rebuild stronger, safer and better than before. Local solutions will be needed to get this right. The authority will look to Indigenous knowledge and local experience in developing appropriate strategies, actions and solutions for each place. We have seen the importance of local voices and knowledge in getting people to safety and protecting lives and property this year. The disaster prevention and disaster adaptation work of the authority will be able to harness that wisdom when we plan for future disasters. I thank all members for their efforts and actions to support their communities across the State.

I thank the members of our State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force and NSW Ambulance for their continued efforts. I also thank, acknowledge and pay tribute to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery for her tireless efforts in managing the many disasters that have occurred across the State. Collectively, our people have faced catastrophic conditions over the past five years and have turned to their representatives—such as the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed, who are in the Chamber—as well as volunteers and emergency services for guidance, support and help. I thank them all for going above and beyond to support their local communities in their time of greatest need.

Finally, I know I speak for everyone in this place when I offer my most heartfelt thanks to local communities across the State. Like every disaster before now—and surely every one that is yet to come—the people of New South Wales stood against significant odds to defend and support their communities. We remain indebted to our communities for what they do for each other in the face of extraordinarily challenging times time and time again. We see neighbours helping neighbours, friends helping friends, friends helping strangers, strangers helping strangers and families supporting families. Together our communities have worked to save lives, property and livestock. Our communities offered shoulders to lean on and have never given up. The incredible work of our local communities across New South Wales stands as a prime example to all of us of how great this State is and how strong our people are in the face of extraordinary odds. I thank them for their strength, resilience, courage and bravery.

To the people of New South Wales I say that the Government is committed to improve disaster prevention, preparedness and adaptation. The establishment of the NSW Reconstruction Authority is the first step we have taken to ensure that our State is better prepared to manage the risks and impacts presented by disasters. Our hope



is that the authority will live up to the example that the community has set. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will provide the foundations of a stronger, better State, one that is prepared to tackle disaster mitigation and recovery head on. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will be the driving force behind the resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures that are aimed at improving the State's ability to protect its people now and into the future. The bill represents the culmination of the New South Wales Government's commitment to guarantee the people of New South Wales that all efforts will be directed towards disaster prevention, preparedness and adaptation, as well as recovery and reconstruction.

I thank and acknowledge the hardworking staff from my ministerial office and my agency, some of whom are in the public gallery, for their tireless work over the past number of months. At times it has been frustrating, but we held it together and we have landed this. I again thank the member for Lismore for her leadership and preparedness to cooperate. This is a bipartisan issue. We cannot afford not to pass the bill. I thank Minister Cooke and her team for their tireless efforts in making the bill a reality. I also acknowledge Mary O'Kane and again thank the agency staff in the public gallery, whose presence shows how proud we can be of this legislation.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT (TAXIS AND HIRE VEHICLES) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Elliott, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:34):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Amendment Bill 2022. The purpose of the bill is to take the next step towards the New South Wales Government's vision for a more responsive, innovative, resilient and dynamic point to point transport industry that provides a more tailored transport solution for the diverse customer base right across the State. We are laying the platform to allow industry to come back stronger than before after suffering through droughts, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill is part of a package of reforms in response to the Point to Point Transport Independent Review 2020. It is the logical next step to the wideranging reforms that began in late 2015, deregulating booked services and introducing a new safety framework for the industry.

The changes proposed in the bill will deliver more choice for customers by freeing up the supply of taxi licences and supporting cheaper, more competitive taxi fares. They will help level the playing field for all parts of the point to point transport industry and also help deliver the New South Wales Government's Future Transport Strategy by enabling point to point transport services that are customer focused, safe and accessible. To help support taxi licence owners impacted by the reforms, the Government is making \$760 million in transitional industry assistance payments available. Those funds are in addition to the more than \$145 million already paid to industry and will support taxi licence owners impacted by the reforms in a fair and equitable way. That constitutes the most generous financial assistance package to support the transition of the taxi industry of any State in the country.

The New South Wales Government deeply values the contribution made by taxi owners, operators and drivers across our State over the past century or more and believes that is demonstrated through the generosity of this financial assistance package. Taxis are privately owned businesses that provide point to point transport services to fare-paying customers, including those who do not have access to a private vehicle or cannot access suitable public transport. Taxis and other private vehicle services have been regulated by government for many years for a variety of purposes, in particular to ensure the safety of drivers, customers and the general public, and to provide consumer protection. A distinguishing feature of taxis is their ability to offer anonymous rank and hail services. That presents a risk to both passenger and driver, particularly in urban environments and busy locations where neither passenger nor driver are likely to know one another. Booked services, by contrast, take records of the driver and passenger before the journey starts.

The key mechanism for regulating taxis is the requirement to hold a taxi licence, which responds to the problem of anonymity by ensuring that taxi service providers are known to the independent government regulator, the Point to Point Transport Commissioner. Each year, Transport for NSW determines the number of taxi licences to be released. That measure can be regarded as ensuring supply of services, but it can also shield industry incumbents from competition. Lacking competition, an industry can grow stale and fail to innovate and meet changing customer needs and expectations. That is what happened within the point to point industry prior to 2015,

when would-be new entrants offering innovative and alternative services were discouraged from joining the market. Five years ago the Government responded by deregulating booked point to point transport services, resulting in improved customer satisfaction across all point to point transport, including taxis, rideshares and hire vehicles.

In the May 2022 customer survey conducted by Transport for NSW, satisfaction with taxis was 87 per cent compared with 82 per cent in 2013, before ridesharing appeared. Rideshare rated only a little higher, at 90 per cent. Additionally, the data demonstrates that the overall market for point to point transport has grown, notwithstanding the recent impact of the pandemic. That data demonstrates that the taxi industry has responded well to additional competition since the deregulation of booked services. However, the higher costs inherent in tradeable and leasable licences, coupled with the cap on supply, mean that taxis struggle to compete with a largely deregulated and uncapped booked sector. Releasing those cost and supply pressures by making licences available on application will enable taxi service providers to respond more nimbly to changes in demand, putting on new services when required and efficiently scaling down operations when demand drops.

It will allow the taxi industry to reinvest those savings into improving its service to customers. New entrants with new ideas on how to service customers will be able to join the rank and hail market, adding to the diversity of the service offerings in response to customer needs. In future, taxi licences will be available on application to the Point to Point Transport Commissioner for an administrative fee and will be renewable every 12 months. That will ensure that the commissioner—the independent regulator of the point to point transport sector—has up-to-date information about taxi licences and is able to monitor the safety of services. There will be no limit on the number of taxi licences able to be issued, there will be no more determinations or public auctions of licences, and licences will be able to be used anywhere across the State. A taxi licence will still be required for anyone wishing to offer a rank and hail service.

The regulation of the safety of the point to point transport industry is not changing. Every current taxi service provider that wants to continue to offer taxi services will be able to do so. There will be a transitional period during which the commissioner will issue new licences to those providers, matched to current taxi licences and numberplates. After the transition period, anyone wishing to start a taxi business or add taxi vehicles to an existing business will be able to apply to the commissioner for a new licence. As they do now, taxis will be required to have all the necessary signage and identification markings, as well as the additional security measures that help to ensure that anonymous rank and hail services are safe for both passenger and driver.

As an inevitable consequence of making taxi licences available on application, there will no longer be any value in the buying, selling and leasing of taxi licences. As a result, there will no longer be any ordinary tradeable licences. The bill includes a provision to cancel those licences after a transitional period, during which current licence holders can move to the new system. The licences that are issued under the new system will not be able to be leased or traded. A taxi licence will simply authorise a particular person or entity to provide a taxi service. If a licence holder no longer wishes to offer a taxi service, they can hand their licence back. Whoever wishes to provide that taxi service can simply apply for their own taxi licence.

The New South Wales Government understands the impact that will have on current licence owners. Many have worked all their lives in the industry and invested heavily in their taxi licence. As we did when we introduced the last round of reforms to the industry, subject to support for the bill, the Government is offering financial assistance to taxi licence owners who are affected by this current round of reform. As part of the 2015 point to point transport reforms, the Government has paid out more than \$145 million to help taxi and hire car licence holders adjust to the reforms. A further financial assistance scheme totalling \$760 million will provide \$150,000 for each eligible Sydney metro taxi licence up to a maximum of six licences per licence owner. That amount is above the current market value for Sydney taxi licences of \$30,000. That is significantly more generous than financial assistance schemes for taxi licence owners in Western Australia or Victoria.

The total value of assistance provided by the New South Wales Government to the taxi industry since reform began in 2015 will be \$905 million. For our regions, the scheme will provide a range of payments between \$40,000 to \$195,000 for each taxi licence outside of Sydney, with no maximum number of licences per licence owner. The amount of the payment will depend on the operating areas of the licence. By structuring payments in that way, the scheme recognises the differences in the value of regional taxi licences, some of which have sold for higher prices than in Sydney, while others in small regional towns have traded for significantly less. Even where two licences are located nearby, the value of sales of the licences may differ significantly.

As I mentioned earlier, we have consulted with industry on the design of the scheme. We have heard the continued call for the value of the financial assistance to be based on the original licence price or its market value prior to 2015. We have heard industry's concerns about the complexity of previous assistance schemes. This is a carefully considered scheme that will help support those most impacted by the latest reforms and free the taxi industry to build on its vital role in providing point to point transport services across our great State. It will be a

simple financial assistance scheme, providing flat payments that will minimise the risk of affecting anyone's social security payments or benefits.

The tax treatment of the payments will be of critical importance to taxi licence owners. That issue has been raised by members opposite and also by the NSW Taxi Council. While payments made to taxi licence owners under previous assistance schemes were treated as income for tax purposes, payments under this financial assistance scheme are more likely to be treated as a capital event. That is because it is proposed to make payments in connection with the cancellation of a tradeable licence. Ultimately, the tax treatment will be determined by the Australian Taxation Office [ATO] in consideration of the individual financial circumstances of each taxi licence owner. I am advised that Transport for NSW is already engaging with the ATO to get further clarity and guidance for licence owners on the tax impact of those payments. The scheme will be funded by the passenger service levy, which is already in place for the point to point transport industry.

The levy will increase from \$1 to \$1.20 per trip, or \$1.32 including GST if passed on to the passenger as part of the fare. The levy will change on 1 July 2023 and, as provided in the bill, will stay in place until December 2030—by which time it is expected that we will have raised the funds necessary to pay for the financial assistance scheme. The Minister will still be able to terminate the levy sooner if the full amount is raised before the end of 2030.

The bill before the House today also includes a provision to ensure that monies previously appropriated for earlier financial assistance schemes are available to fund the new financial assistance scheme. The New South Wales Government will in the future also provide additional flexibility to taxi service providers by allowing them to set their own fares for rank and hail journeys. Rank and hail taxi services present a consumer risk, with passengers getting into a cab on the street or at a rank potentially not knowing what they will be charged for the journey. Maximum taxi fares have been regulated for that reason. This contrasts with booked services, where fees are not regulated because the passenger can reject a booking if they are not happy with the quoted price. The risk of price gouging is greatest where competition is constrained. But if customers have more choice, service providers have less incentive to raise fares beyond what is economic.

The customer can choose to use a no-frills cheap brand or pay a premium for a quality service. The first lever to improve customer choice is to remove the restraint on competition by making taxi licences more available. After some time to bed that down, the Government will ask the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to assess the level of competition in the industry and to examine the impact of removing the cost associated with licences. IPART can provide guidance about the level of fares, which can be used as benchmark for both the industry and customers to set and choose fares that best suit the service being offered. IPART's reviews always include extensive public consultation, so the industry and its customers will be able to have their views heard. The Government will only deregulate fares for rank and hail services after it has fully considered the results of that assessment of competition. The provisions of the bill reflect those changes.

The bill provides for a staged commencement process so that we can prioritise getting financial assistance payments to current owners of ordinary taxi licences. Transport for NSW and the Point to Point Transport Commissioner will put in place the administrative arrangements to support the payments scheme and also the new licence application process. Once those preparations are complete, a proclamation will be made to commence the substantive provisions of the bill. The financial assistance scheme and the transitional licensing period will both open on that day. The transitional licensing period will provide current taxi licence holders—that is, people who currently provide taxi services under an existing taxi licence—with the opportunity to obtain a new licence. After the transitional process is complete, the new licence system will open to new entrants. All existing licences will be cancelled, and all operating area restrictions will be removed.

The substantive provisions, which are set out in schedule 1 to the bill, are relatively straightforward. Item [16] amends the taxi licensing provisions to remove the requirement for annual determinations of the number of licences to be issued, thus removing any limit on the supply of licences. Items [6], [7], [8], [11], [19] and [21] delete the requirement to include a sealed tender with a licence application and make associated amendments to other sections. Item [10] makes taxi licences renewable annually, with no limit, for an administrative fee—currently \$200. The ability of the commissioner to impose restrictions on the operating area of taxis is repealed by item [9], and item [14] is consequential to that. Item [12] repeals the provisions permitting dealings in taxi licences, including transfers and leases and other arrangements, and items [3] and [5] make consequential amendments.

Item [13] recognises that under the new system taxi licence holders will also be providers of taxi services, by adding the failure to be authorised as a taxi service provider or to be affiliated to an authorised service provider as grounds for the cancellation or suspension of a taxi licence. Item [15] ensures that the commissioner is able to take both kinds of actions against someone who breaks the rules—that is, cancel or suspend their licence, as well as take proceedings against them for failure to be authorised as a service provider or affiliated with an authorised

service provider. The transition from the old system to the new is dealt with in items [23] and [24]. Item [23] provides for current taxi service providers—known as "licence holders"—to be able to obtain the new licence ahead of the commencement of the new system. The commissioner's decision to issue a licence to a person will be final and not subject to review.

When a new licence is issued, the old licence will be cancelled and the current licence owner will be notified. However, any restrictions on the operating area of the old licence will continue to apply to the new licence until the day on which the new system commences, providing some continuity and breathing space to current service providers before the system is opened up to new entrants. Importantly, I note the cancellation of the licence during the transitional period will not affect the current licence owner's eligibility for payment under the financial assistance scheme. Item [24] provides that on commencement of the new system, all existing taxi licences—both ordinary licences that are able to be bought and sold, and all licences issued by the Government—are cancelled. Most will have been cancelled during the process of issuing new licences to current service providers, but this ensures that any licences not dealt with during the transition are also cancelled. On the same day, all operating area restrictions will come to an end.

In the new system, taxi licences will be able to operate anywhere across the State. On that day, the new licence application process will also open to new entrants. That will occur on a day to be proclaimed or, in any case, no later than 12 months after the bill receives assent. This provides sufficient flexibility and opportunity for payments to be made under the financial assistance scheme and for holders of existing licences to transition to the new scheme, while also providing certainty that the new system will commence in full no later than 12 months after assent. Items [17] and [18] amend IPART's power regarding fares so that it is not limited to recommending maximum fares. The power of Transport for NSW to set maximum fares by order is retained; it will be used to set maximum fares for journeys from international airports and terminals. It will also be available, if required, to set maximum fares for subsidised transport in point to point transport vehicles.

Item [2] enhances the toolkit of the Point to Point Transport Commissioner's authorised officers to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements about service provision—for example, turning on a fare calculation device for a rank and hail job, or not demanding in excess of the quoted fare for a booked journey. Item [25] establishes the new financial assistance scheme. It empowers the making of regulations to establish the criteria for eligibility and other features to support the administration of the scheme by Transport for NSW, including the approval process. The regulations will set out the level of payment for each type of licence, as I described earlier. Item [25] also ensures that all the funds appropriated in 2016 for the previous rounds of assistance will not be spent through those processes because of a shortfall in eligible applicants, and they are available to be spent as part of the new financial assistance scheme. Item [26] increases the passenger service levy to \$1.20, with effect from 1 July 2023, and item [27] sets an end date so the levy will no longer apply from 1 January 2031 or an earlier date specified by the Minister. This will provide the further funds required for the financial assistance package.

Point to point transport services play a key role in connecting residents to regional centres for social activities, employment opportunities and essential services, while also providing transport around local towns for those who need it. Fewer restrictions on services, including putting an end to the operating area restrictions, will enable more efficient operations as well as encouraging new and innovative service models that are more adaptable and better equipped to meet the needs of our regional communities. We know there will be challenges while the industry adjusts, which is why there will be a strong focus on maintaining service provision for customers, especially those who rely on point to point transport to access essential services.

The bill is a crucial step in continuing with our plan to deliver meaningful change to the sector to improve customer outcomes, while continuing to support industry through a significant transition. We have been listening to customers and industry feedback every step of the way, including through the independent review and through further consultation conducted by Transport for NSW, which has assisted us in the drafting of the bill now before the Parliament and the design of the financial assistance scheme. The changes proposed in the bill will enable the industry assistance scheme to be established and for changes to be made to taxi licensing and maximum rank and hail fares. The changes will increase flexibility for existing taxi service providers but also make it cheaper and easier for new businesses to enter the industry. Customer choice will continue to expand.

I conclude by thanking members of the Government who worked with me to ensure that the bill was drafted in accordance with the wishes of the industry. I pay tribute to the Taxi Council, although it was obviously a very brutal debate that occurred over the course of the past couple of months. I pay particular tribute to the member for Rockdale, who, on behalf of the Opposition, also worked to ensure that there were high levels of communication and consultation throughout the industry. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**ANIMAL RESEARCH AMENDMENT (RIGHT TO RELEASE) BILL 2022****Messages**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Legislative Assembly's amendments.

*Community Recognition Statements***SRI OM CARE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:55):** I acknowledge the Sri Om Foundation for the work it does for seniors right across western Sydney. Sri Om Care is a charity organisation that provides aged-care services for people of South Asian backgrounds. Sri Om Care was launched in 2007 and has since become a well-known organisation that does terrific work with the elderly. Sri Om Care has a large number of staff and volunteers who have a range of qualifications and are able to communicate effectively in many Indian languages. Recently I had the opportunity to spend time with the Sri Om community at their Diwali celebrations in Glenwood. It was fantastic to see such a large group of community volunteers, staff and seniors come together for a fantastic celebration of culture. I thank Jay Raman for all the work he does with the Sri Om Foundation in making a difference to the lives of seniors within our local community. I wish all the people involved with Sri Om Care the very best, and I look forward to catching up with them again soon.

**ST BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:56):** People in Port Stephens care about the environment in which we live because we love it. In our children, the care runs deep. I see it when I visit our local schools and preschools. I was delighted to learn of one local school recently recognised, a school that has been growing warriors for the environment for years. St Brigid's Primary School in Raymond Terrace has been awarded the 2022 Young Climate Champion in the NSW Sustainability Awards. The school has introduced a waste sorting system, which seeks to tackle plastics and recycle virtually everything it can. Next on its agenda is to build a bee and butterfly corridor across the town in partnership with other schools. I am delighted to report that the school has also been named as a finalist in the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Awards and in the Creative Koalas program. I congratulate the students and thank the principal, teachers and staff of St Brigid's Raymond Terrace, especially teacher Kristen Jones, for building environmentally responsible leaders of the future.

**BRIAN WHITE AWARD FOR RADIO JOURNALISM WINNER CLINTON MAYNARD**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:57):** Today I acknowledge constituent Mr Clinton Maynard, who was recognised at the Australian Commercial Radio Awards with the prestigious Brian White Award for Radio Journalism. Clinton has more than 20 years' experience in the industry and is currently a reporter and presenter on 2GB and Nine Radio. He regularly fills in as a presenter on a wide variety of shows and programs. In Clinton's career he has covered major assignments, including Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, the London Olympic Games, the Boxing Day tsunami, the Beaconsfield mine disaster, the Bali Nine arrests and the Schapelle Corby case. I congratulate Clinton on his achievements. He is extremely deserving of the accolade.

*Public Interest Debate***ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:58):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Premier described privatisation as the "golden key".
- (2) Notes that the Minister for Finance said regarding the Government's privatisation agenda that "we have done it successfully, and we will continue to do it successfully".
- (3) Notes that the Government has sold or privatised \$93 billion worth of taxpayer assets.
- (4) Notes that the Government's privatisation agenda has resulted in higher costs, reduced services and undermined the State's balance sheet.
- (5) Calls on the Government to rule out the further privatisation of revenue-generating publicly owned assets.

Privatisation is one of the great economic lies of our times, and its greatest exponent is this current Government. It is a guaranteed way to privatise profits and socialise losses. Under this Government's privatisation model—like with all of them—it is the ordinary person who gets clobbered and keeps losing out. All of the burden is placed on ordinary, downtrodden working people and their families. This Government has privatised like none before it. It is the great exponent of this lie and its members are the most successful thieves in the history of this State.

Privatisation proceeds on many lies; for the benefit of members, I will go through some of them. This week members have listened to the Premier during question time trying to defend the indefensible. Privatisation presupposes an endless supply of publicly owned, revenue-generating assets to keep selling. Those opposite have sold a hell of a lot—some \$93 billion worth—but I will get to that in a minute. They will run out eventually. The second lie that privatisation proceeds upon is that if you recycle—and what a grand euphemism that is; let us just say "sell" or "flog off"—there is only an upside. The "golden key" unlocks wealth and riches trickle down. When those opposite talk about unlocking assets it suggests that those assets are trapped and unproductive in the first place. That is not true.

Privatisation merely brings forward into net present value all the revenue from the future. It is theft from our children. Trickle-down economics is the greatest lie. In the best of times, the privatisation model of this Government merely moves the economic benefit. In bad times, it deprives ordinary citizens and their children of what is rightfully theirs. In the worst of times, it delivers waste on a grand scale. Make no mistake about it: For 12 long years we have been in—and remain in—the worst of times. This Government has sold \$93,551,000,000 worth of productive assets. Those sales have been attended by waste, blow-outs and mismanagement now approaching nearly \$25 billion. That is thievery on a grand scale.

Let us look at some of those sales. The Government sold Liddell Power Station, only for AGL to announce that very day it had effectively, in its valuer's eyes, acquired that asset for nothing—for zero dollars. It was gifted to AGL by the New South Wales taxpayer. Then a few years ago we had the Federal and State Liberal parties talking about using taxpayers' money to pay AGL and its successors to keep the power station open for longer. Vales Point sold for \$1 million; its private owners sold it for over \$200 million. The Government sold Eraring for \$50 million and then tried to buy it back for \$239 million. It sold off electricity transmission assets only to watch prices skyrocket immediately. It tried to inflate the price of our ports through anti-competitive and illegal secret deals, and our taxpayers will have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to unwind it—perhaps, because that is not the end of the story.

I do not want to pick on ports, but they are emblematic. In its final year of trading as a government enterprise, Port Botany's revenue was \$220 million. The Government sold it for \$4.3 billion. Multiply \$220 million net revenue a year by 99 years—and what did they get for it? Some \$4.3 billion. When the golden key was put into that transaction, what did this beautiful, big, revenue-raising, publicly owned asset of Port Botany translate into? Three-quarters of the \$4.3 billion went into a \$3 billion light rail. That is absolutely comical. Those opposite have converted a port that was making money into a loss-making, revenue-losing asset: A giant caterpillar that snakes its way into the city. There is no trickle-down, just a loss-making disaster that moves at the pace of a trickle.

The people of the electorates of Maroubra, Coogee, Heffron and those in the Hunter know all about privatisation. We remember the Premier completely ruling out any further privatisation prior to the last election. Within weeks of the election, the buses were going to be sold. We predicted then what would happen when the buses were sold: The services would get worse, the routes would be changed, there would be fewer drivers and their conditions would be denuded. All of that came true. The people of the eastern suburbs, the Hunter and the inner west are living that horror story every day. We used to love our buses before they were privatised, but not now. The only people who are happy about it are the Premier and the Treasurer because they have saved money.

Governments are not here to save money; they are here to deliver services. No-one would have thought that in 2022 the eastern suburbs would have worse bus services than it had a century ago—because the Government sold the services. The people of Australia just got rid of a Prime Minister who people such as Mike Carlton on Twitter used to refer to as Smirko. The current Premier is Smirko version two, the smiling sorcerer, the smirking sorcerer. He talks about privatisation now because, with an election looming, there is more on the way—hospitals, trains and water. What will be next? [*Time expired.*]

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (17:05):** The hypocrisy coming from the member for Maroubra is breathtaking. But I congratulate him on his transition. He has changed sides. He is now batting for a different side, and I congratulate him because he did that under the cover of darkness. I remember in 2008 when Premier Morris Iemma put the member for Maroubra and me on a committee to advocate for the privatisation of electricity. The sole responsibility of that committee was to advise a Labor Government on how to best message the electricity privatisation sale. In 2008 the former member for Murrumbidgee said, "The member for Maroubra must have staked his political future on privatisation," not in opposition to it but as a fierce advocate for selling off State assets. That was you, Michael. So much so that back in August 2008 the member for Maroubra, the very same man who has moved this motion today, was compelled to stand up in this House and congratulate then Labor Premier Morris Iemma on his "willingness to do what is right for the people of NSW". Labor might sit there in Opposition and advocate for public assets and public ownership, but when it is in government it does exactly the

opposite. We remember that debate in 2008. Michael Daley, the member for Maroubra, stood up in Parliament and said—

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Point of order—

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

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** My point of order is that the Minister should refer to members by their correct title and not by their name.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. That is in accordance with the standing orders, as I am sure the Minister knows.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** The member for Maroubra used to advocate, "What is right? Privatisation is right." We have heard hypocrisy from the member for Maroubra today. The member for Maroubra and the Labor Party were fierce advocates for selling State assets. Do not take my word for it. This is what the member for Maroubra said on the topic of asset privatisation: It is "what is right for the people of New South Wales". He also said that it is "necessary to secure the State's future" and "projects are at risk because the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of the Liberal Party and The Nationals will not support the electricity privatisation legislation". Today he criticises us for supporting electricity privatisation in order to recycle assets. But back then, before his conversion on the road to Damascus, before his transition, he criticised us for not supporting privatisation. He also said—and this is my favourite—"the world will fall apart if the electricity system is not privatised tomorrow". A Liberal Government did it, and we are still here. He is obviously aware that the world did not fall apart because not only did we privatise it, we recycled assets.

What did Labor say about the sale of State assets? It said, "Bring it on." It encouraged us to do it. The member for Maroubra said, "It will secure our economy." He knows deep down in places where he does not want to go that this policy is right for the taxpayers of New South Wales. When the Liberals opposed Labor's bill to sell off the assets, he said it was a dark and disappointing day. He said that the whole world was going to end because we would not privatise these assets. I cannot believe that in 2022, of all the people in the Labor Party, they put up the member for Maroubra in this Chamber, the very man who sat on a committee with me to privatise electricity assets in this State under a Labor Government.

The member for Maroubra complained about private buses in his electorate. This State has had private buses for 100 years and no Labor Government in 100 years has tried to change that. His party has not said to a private bus company, "We will buy you out. We are going to nationalise the buses." I am horrified that the people of New South Wales would even consider the advocacy of those opposite when quite clearly, right now, here today, we have heard nothing more than criticism. And I have not even touched on the Qantas debate and his great mentor Paul Keating. What a great liberal Treasurer he was. Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank—you name it, Federal Labor sold it. They sold it, knowing full well it was right for the people of Australia. It was good value for taxpayers. Now Labor stands condemned for its hypocrisy.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:11):** I support the motion moved by the member for Maroubra. Paragraph (5) states:

(5) Calls on the Government to rule out further privatisation ...

Even if the Government had the guts to support this motion, it cannot be trusted. Just before the last State election, then Premier Gladys Berejiklian said there would be no further privatisation. Butter would not melt in her mouth. But after the election, assets were sold as far as the eye could see and our buses were next. Since the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected, \$96 billion of assets have been sold, with the sale of those revenue-making assets that fed the coffers of New South Wales now ensuring that New South Wales is in debt. As the member for Maroubra said, everyday people are paying the price. We know that every time public assets are privatised, profits come before people, shareholders come before communities, and it is the everyday people who lose out.

Privatisation is bad economics. It is even worse policy, and it undermines our communities and our public services. Privatisation of public assets has reduced our social amenity right across New South Wales. Electricity privatisation has been a nightmare. Turning on lights costs people an arm and a leg. In the western suburbs electricity is so expensive that people ignite fires in their home and almost burn their house down because it costs so much to turn on a heater. It is appalling. In 2012 the Government sold off the desalination plant, privatising water. Water is an asset and a utility that people need every single day in order to live their lives. When we turn on our taps, an overseas teachers' plan gets the money, rather than New South Wales coffers being filled.

More than 60,000 people in the eastern suburb signed petitions against this Government's privatisation of buses. In response, 31 bus routes were removed and over 50 bus stops were ripped out. People are unable to access

health care, unable to get to school and unable to access friends and family. Elderly and disabled people are isolated. Not a day goes by when my electorate office is not contacted by people who cannot catch a bus. Buses are cancelled every single day. Bus drivers are leaving their jobs because the employment standards are worse under the private provider than they were when they were working for the State. People have been forced onto the light rail. Their commutes have doubled—and that is if it works. On average, the light rail breaks down at least twice a week. Commutes have lengthened.

Privatisation never works and is never better for our communities because profits come before people, and that is embedded in the Corporations Act. The job of private companies is to put profits before people and our communities lose out. The privatisation of our valuable public assets has reduced our social amenity. Social housing is being sold off and privatised in the eastern suburbs. There is a 15-year waitlist to get into social housing in my electorate, including for those on priority lists such as women escaping domestic violence, living in their cars, unable to access a home. Rather than investing in social housing, the Government is selling it off and privatising it. But even if it supported social housing, the Government cannot be trusted. Government members would sell their mothers' silver if they could. If the Government is re-elected next year, more privatisation will come. Will the trains be privatised, or the ferries? Will there be more social housing? We know it is coming.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:16):** The member for Maroubra asked about the benefit of—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Don't say the word.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** —leasing Port Botany for 100 years. I did not interject on you. Every year in New South Wales at least 50 people are alive because they were not killed on the Pacific Highway. That is what putting money from privatised assets into infrastructure can achieve. Former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner did the deal with Premier O'Farrell at a time when we were at risk of stopping work on the Pacific Highway. Privatising one-third of that asset ensured that we could continue working on the Pacific Highway. Back then we had a 50-50 arrangement with the Commonwealth Government and Anthony Albanese as infrastructure Minister, and then in 2013 Warren Truss became Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Prime Minister. Those events have saved at least 50 lives every year on that road. That is what recycling assets does.

The member for Baulkham Hills completely blew the member for Maroubra out of the water. To think this is the best Labor can offer the people of New South Wales in our second-last sitting week—rhetoric and lies about what it has or has not done on asset recycling to ensure the future of this State. Today we went through the 2011 budget papers to find out what Labor's infrastructure spending was in its last year in office. Guess what? It was so bad the number was not even in the budget papers. To this year the Government has spent \$112 billion on infrastructure. All we had from Labor in government, and it cannot just blame the GFC—

**Mr Michael Daley:** It was fairly significant.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It was an impact, but compare nil investment versus \$112 billion. There was a \$30 billion backlog. How many projects did Labor cancel and not proceed with? We have leased assets responsibly; they are still owned by the people of New South Wales. But it is better to utilise that income to create more jobs and opportunities. Leasing Port Botany kept the duplication of the Pacific Highway moving at pace. Those works now save 50 lives a year because the highway was duplicated the entire way. We have to build the Coffs Harbour bypass and there is money in the budget to make that happen. We must also build the Hexham bypass and planning is underway. Now we have turned our attention to the Princes Highway, which has a similar fatality rate. We are also improving the Great Western Highway. That is what recycling assets does. It is nothing to be ashamed of, and the member for Maroubra should be honest about that. He supported Premier Morris Iemma in his wish to deliver a better outcome for the people of New South Wales by recycling electricity assets, which the Coalition did later, and that has also benefited the people of New South Wales.

Selling Snowy Hydro to the Commonwealth has provided an incredible boost to regional and southern New South Wales. Some of those proceeds went into the Future Fund. They will continue to help people across the whole of this State, particularly in the regions. The Nationals are strong in the regions because over the past 12 years we have spent a record amount of money to catch up on Labor's 16 years of neglect. I go back long enough to know of our plan in 1995 to make significant investment after the Olympics if we had won government. We had a post-Olympic investment plan for regional New South Wales. What happened? We did not win the election and nothing happened in regional New South Wales. That is a fact. That is what happened and that is why the people of regional New South Wales are grateful. They expect this type of infrastructure. We recognised that there was a lot to catch up on, and constituents in Labor electorates have benefited from that infrastructure. The member for Port Stephens knows it but she never talks about it. There has been significant investment across New South Wales because the Government has recycled assets and treated New South Wales professionally.



**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:21):** The sale of monopoly government assets does not work. It never has worked; it never will work. It is extraordinarily unpopular and the people of New South Wales have worked the Government out. Call it asset recycling or call it the golden key; it does not make any difference. It does not work because, firstly, people do not want their assets sold; secondly, they understand the Government is selling monopoly, revenue-generating assets; thirdly, they know the Government is foregoing revenue; and fourthly, the Government is handing over super profits to the private sector, which effectively earns far more than the Government. The tragedy is that in 2011 the former leader of the Liberal Party, His Excellency the High Commissioner of India, used a clever political election strategy to sell off as many assets as he could to put money into infrastructure so that he could get two terms in government in a State that he considered to be a Labor State and say, "After 16 long years of Labor, we are getting on and building things in New South Wales."

The problem is that none of the infrastructure projects in which the Government has invested that money work. None of the Government's privatisation proposals work. They were all lemons that resulted in the State being ripped off. They demonstrate what happens when one allows the private sector to run a monopoly. It has been an embarrassment. Who remembers when the Government sold off the desalination plant in 2013 for \$2.3 billion? As a result, the New South Wales Government must pay \$500,000 a day to keep it on standby. The Government is locked into paying \$10 billion over the next 50 years to the owners of the desalination plant just so that it can be made available. Even the minor attempt at privatising Stadium Australia resulted in the Government paying \$220 million to buy it back.

Embarrassingly, the Government sold Vales Point for \$1 million and the private owners who purchased it onsold it for \$200 million. It sold Eraring for \$50 million and then tried to buy it back for \$239 million. In the sale of the electricity assets that it had a mandate to sell—because Mike Baird did take it to an election—those who acquired those assets were not kept under any control by the State and have made super profits at the expense of the citizens who have to rely upon the supply of those services. WestConnex was sold off—a road initially announced at \$10 billion to service Port Botany has now cost the Government \$23 billion and does not go anywhere near the port. The Government has not got back what it paid for it. And because people cannot cop anymore tolls, the Government has recently had to commit \$520 million over the next two years to provide toll relief. Effectively, it is providing relief to citizens who are paying the private sector.

The inflated sale price of Port Botany and the Port of Newcastle was probably the worst example of privatisation in the history of Australia. The deeds of arrangement were kept secret so that not even the Cabinet got to see them. The member for Lake Macquarie is trying to unwind that arrangement with the Port of Newcastle, but the Government has no idea how many billions of dollars the State is going to be liable for in respect of it. The political decision to go through this cash splash is going to bite the Government of New South Wales for decades to come. It is a pretty poor history. If it had been done properly, then at least it could have implemented its philosophy. But the Government has not done that at all.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for North Shore, I welcome to the gallery a former mayor of Randwick, Chris Bastic. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly for this public interest debate.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:26):** Every day across this State people in our community have to figure out how to make tough decisions about funding their needs, paying for the costs of living, supporting their family, supporting their kids and trying to get a roof over their head. They have to make tough decisions about where to find the money to put in to their needs. Those are the kinds of things that governments have to do. It is quite disappointing in this House today that we have people on the other side who think that they are ready to take over the chequebook of New South Wales. I do not know to what extent they are capable of managing their own money, but what they demonstrated today is a fundamental lack of understanding about the notion of infrastructure, meeting the needs of communities and how you deliver it.

I think it is quite telling that three neighbouring MPs from the eastern suburbs of Sydney have come here and criticised the notion of a privatisation agenda. In his reply I would like the member for Maroubra to tell us what those eastern suburbs Labor MPs would like to do. Would they like to can the almost one billion dollars of investment into the Prince of Wales and Sydney Children's hospitals? Those hospital upgrades, delivered through asset recycling undertaken by this Government, save lives every single day. Would they like to scrap the light rail? They talk about extending it, loving it sometimes and hating it at other times. Do they want to reduce public transport services for their community or—I know this will not be popular with the new member for Coogee—do they want to scrap Allianz Stadium? That major events and sporting precinct is revitalising Moore Park; we know the member for Coogee likes to enjoy the hospitality there. Maybe her neighbouring members would like to see it scrapped.

Governments have to deliver outcomes for community. We have to deliver economic returns for community. We have to deliver public transport, roads, hospitals, lifesaving and life building infrastructure. Those opposite have never been able to deliver that, which is why they come to this place with hypocrisy and attack the

model of financial turnover that we utilise to ensure we are delivering what this community needs. When they can tell us what they want to take away from their own community, then they can reconsider the way in which we manage funds. The big problem here is they do not just want to take away from the eastern suburbs and their own voters; they want to take away from the rest of us.

They went to take away the lifesaving infrastructure the member for Oxley spoke about—the number of lives saved on the Pacific Highway, the investments in the Princes Highway, the investments up and down the New South Wales coast—things that do not just change people's lives but save them. They want to take away everything that has been delivered. They want to take away the 200-plus schools that have been upgraded, the billions and billions of dollars in our hospital system, and the record number of new and upgraded hospitals from every single voter across New South Wales. That is what happens when you do not manage your money. That is what happens when you elect people like those opposite, who do not understand that money has to come from somewhere. Although the member for Coogee wants to talk about selling off her mother's silverware—it is nice that she has enough of a silver spoon that she has silverware to sell off—most of us do not have that capability. We have to find equity to invest.

Those opposite showed us through their 16 years in government that they could not find any equity. They promised over and over again—

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

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** They promised over and over again that they would deliver infrastructure. They promised 12 rail lines and delivered half of one. They lost billions of dollars of the State's money in failed contracts and failed projects—money that could have been put into the type of infrastructure we produce that creates additional revenue and money for us to put equity into new infrastructure projects. Those opposite have clearly run out of ideas. They are coming towards the end of the sitting year and they have repeated the topic from their last public interest debate. They are attacking the notion of privatisation without understanding that it is where we get the capital to drive investment for New South Wales.

It is the kind of cheap sloganeering that we get from the Leader of the Opposition all the time, but this is not Twitter. The Parliament of New South Wales is not Twitter. We need to be sensible adults and make tough decisions that deliver outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Our record is proven on this. We have a clear record of a pipeline of more than \$100 billion of vital infrastructure—schools, hospitals, roads across the State for the benefit of all people of New South Wales. It is only through the asset recycling program that the Government has been able to undertake the sophisticated economic management that takes the capital that is tied up in these assets and delivers it for future community benefit. We know what they are promising opposite. They are promising more years of failing to deliver for our community.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (17:31):** In reply: The teals will not have much work to do in North Shore if that speech is any indication. I begin by thanking the member for Oxley, who I enjoyed debating again for maybe one last time.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** You were not at the Kempsey Cup.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I will be there on the twenty-sixth. The member for Oxley is a nice person. She is respected and will be missed. She has a legacy to leave—I wish the member for Oxley well in her retirement—unlike her colleague the member for Baulkham Hills, who lacks all of those features and spent his whole time looking in the rear-vision mirror. Falling apart was the theme of his speech. The only thing that is falling apart is his political career. In four and a bit sitting days' time when we look in the rear-vision mirror, we will see him and it will be a small sight. We will not have to drive very quickly because he does not leave any legacy except comical acts, spite, vitriol and not much else.

Did he offer defence of privatisation? No. Did he deny there had been \$25 billion worth of losses due to waste and mismanagement? No. Any evidence that the conversion of Port Botany into a light rail was a good transaction? No. Any evidence that the bus system in our area having been privatised is better? No. Did he offer any evidence that the privatisation of energy supply kept prices down? No. Any evidence that private energy companies making super profits have not benefitted at the expense of families? No. Any denial that Sydney Water is safe? No. Did he offer any guarantee to the people of the Hunter that they would not try and privatise Hunter Water if they get their hands on it if they are re-elected in March of next year? No. Did he offer as a Minister of the Crown any guarantee, any safeguard, any security to the people of the Central Coast that their publicly owned Central Coast water assets would not be thieved, pilfered, pinched and flogged off like other assets that they have flogged off in the last 12 years if they are re-elected in March? No. Was there any guarantee that our currently publicly owned hospitals will be kept wholly and solely publicly owned—remembering as I do, having been a member of this House for quite some time, that this Government tried that one before?

It was some brave whistleblower who leaked the fact before the last election that the Government was planning to privatise five publicly owned hospitals. No, there was no mention of that by the member for Baulkham Hills—or, indeed, by anyone else. The member for Coogee spoke about social housing. The Government says it privatised \$93 billion worth of assets and turned them into other assets, but there was not a cent of new money for social housing. Shame on this Government! If the Government gets re-elected, it will be just more of the same.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....41  
Majority.....6

#### AYES

Aitchison, J	Finn, J	Minns, C
Atalla, E	Harris, D	O'Neill, M
Bali, S	Harrison, J	Park, R
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Parker, J
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Saffin, J
Chanthivong, A	Holland, M	Scully, P
Cotsis, S	Hornery, S	Tesch, L (teller)
Crakanthorp, T	Kamper, S	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Leong, J	Warren, G
Dalton, H	Li, J	Washington, K
Donato, P	McDermott, H	Zangari, G
Doyle, T	Mehan, D (teller)	

#### NOES

Ayres, S	Henskens, A	Saunders, D
Clancy, J	Layzell, D	Sidgreaves, P
Conolly, K	Lee, G	Singh, G (teller)
Cooke, S	Lindsay, W	Smith, N (teller)
Coure, M	Marshall, A	Speakman, M
Crouch, A	McGirr, J	Stokes, R
Davies, T	O'Dea, J	Taylor, M
Dominello, V	Overall, N	Toole, P
Elliott, D	Pavey, M	Tuckerman, W
Evans, L	Perrottet, D	Upton, G
Gibbons, M	Petinos, E	Williams, L
Greenwich, A	Preston, R	Williams, R
Gulaptis, C	Provest, G	Wilson, F
Hancock, S	Roberts, A	

#### PAIRS

Barr, C	Bromhead, S
Catley, Y	Anderson, K
Dib, J	Hazzard, B
Lalich, N	Griffin, J
Lynch, P	Kean, M
Watson, A	James, T

**Motion negatived.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **SHOALHAVEN RIVER FESTIVAL**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:42):** The 2022 Shoalhaven River Festival was a huge success for the Shoalhaven community, after two years of setbacks due to COVID. This year the river festival went ahead—and it was incredible. The one-day event held on 29 October saw the most amazing weather, with

the sunshine making the day perfect for families and friends to head down to the beautiful Shoalhaven River to support a brilliant local community event. There were some awe-inspiring water events, raft racing, dragon boats, jet ski shows, a tinnie float parade and one flying Aquaman.

We also cannot forget to thank the incredibly talented singers and performers as well as those who played and danced throughout the day. Smoking ceremonies and traditional dance demonstrations were also held during the day by our talented Indigenous community members on the floating pontoon stage. I was delighted to witness the evening events and noted the crowds who were present until well into the evening. I acknowledge and congratulate the organising committee chair, David Fleeting; his committee, of course; and everyone else who took part in putting this fantastic day together. I also thank the 10,000-plus people who attended the 2022 Shoalhaven River Festival.

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICE LEGEND KEN RYAN**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:43):** I take this opportunity to thank our local community legend, Ken Ryan, whose compassion, selflessness, dedication and care have helped so many local kids to build their confidence in the water—and have fun in the process. Ken has spent over 40 years organising weekly races at Clovelly pool for local kids aged between four and 12 who are either not confident swimmers or require remedial races. Ken successfully created and fostered a safe, nurturing space where everyone's needs and abilities are considered, respected and celebrated. This initiative has helped hundreds of local kids to develop water confidence and safety skills over the years it has been running and has also helped to build their personal confidence through a sense of achievement and community involvement, and by giving them an opportunity they would not have had otherwise to participate and try their best. Thank you to Ken for his dedicated community service.

#### **SCONE RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:44):** I congratulate the Scone Rugby League Football Club on being awarded the 2022 NSW Rugby League Clayton Cup. The prestigious honour is presented to the first grade team that has the best overall record for the season in the Country Rugby League. The Thoroughbreds were undefeated during the regular season, posting 15 wins with a "points for and against" differential of 602. Another notable statistic is that 16 of the 17 team members have risen through the ranks having played juniors with the club. Hunter Valley Group 21 grand final day saw Scone finish the season on a high, with the club crowned premiers in all four grades, including the women's league tag competition. This is the second Clayton Cup for the club, having previously been awarded the title in 1979. I congratulate captain-coach Adam Clydesdale and his team as well as Thoroughbreds president Scott Pennell and the committee on a 2022 to remember.

#### **OXI DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:45):** On Wednesday 28 October I joined my colleagues Sophie Cotsis, Steve Kamper and Courtney Houssos at the eighty-second anniversary of the Oxi Day commemoration at the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW centre in Lakemba. The Greek Orthodox Community of NSW is one of Australia's oldest organisations representing Greek migrants. Oxi Day is an important day in the Greek community's calendar. It commemorates the day when Greece said no to occupation by the fascist powers in World War II. This annual event shares the vibrancy of Greek culture within our community, and I am glad that this year I was able to celebrate the occasion with the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW. Unfortunately, Sophie, Courtney and Steve stopped me from showing off my Zorba dancing skills during the celebrations. It is important that the Australian Greek community commemorates a day that celebrates democracy and rejects fascism. Oxi Day is relevant for us today with racism still existing in Australia and with far-right groups being more vocal, seeking to divide us. That is why it is crucial that we reflect on the principles of Oxi Day and educate people on the dangers of racism to our democracy.

#### **SUTHERLAND DISTRICT HOCKEY CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:46):** I congratulate the Sutherland District Hockey Club on another triumphant season. Established in 1965, the Sutherland District Hockey Club is one of the largest hockey clubs in Sydney. The entirely volunteer-managed club prides itself on promoting, growing and developing hockey and successfully fields male, female and junior teams at all levels of competition. On 14 October I had the pleasure of attending the Sutherland District Hockey Club presentation evening to celebrate the successful 2022 season. This year, the club's masters team won the State over-65s championship, and two women's teams qualified for the Sydney Women's Hockey League grand finals. As a volunteer-managed club, none of this success would be possible without the hardworking Sutherland Hockey Club committee, which includes David Krepp, John Mulcair, Sarah Dredge, John Cowan, Sean Ryan, Jo Momsen, Ruth Sannes, David Richardson, Andrew Hoy,

Frank Rowling, Steve Harvey, Garry Thomas, Neil Wray, Kevin Margetson and Kristen Agius. I commend Sutherland District Hockey Club for fostering a love of hockey within our community.

#### **CONSERVATIONIST PETER PIGOTT**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:47):** I acknowledge the wonderful work of Blue Mountains champion Peter Pigott in establishing the Yengo Reserve in Mount Wilson, a haven for a species of a small kangaroo-like mammal known as the parma wallaby. The breed was facing extinction until Peter decided to act. The parma wallaby was considered a pest in its native area of New Zealand, so Peter personally funded the transportation of 38 of these animals to his home in Mount Wilson, essentially saving the species. Over the years Peter has generously shared his time and efforts, and has personally funded the security of the reserve and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. He is an informed and caring individual, having spent his life savings on this project. Peter is now applying to the Biodiversity Conservation Trust for an agreement that will continue his legacy and keep these precious animals safe. This man's creation will leave an incredible mark on the world. I hope others will be encouraged to follow in his footsteps to keep safe not only the parma wallaby but also other vulnerable species that are facing extinction. I have been privileged to attend and assist Peter with feeding these gorgeous creatures. I thank Peter, who is a true legend.

#### **RACE WALKER HEATHER LEE, OAM**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:48):** I congratulate Mrs Heather Lee, OAM, on her truly inspiring race walking record. Heather turns 96 on 17 November. This year she has achieved several world record times. I am proud to say she is a Richmond resident. I am sure she is an inspiration to all. Heather has received many prestigious awards for her walking efforts. She has ranked first in the world in race walking for her age group and was named the 2019 NSW Senior Australian of the Year. Heather also has an Order of Australia Medal. In 2022 Heather achieved world record times for the 400-metre, 800-metre and 1,500-metre walks. Videos of Heather's achievements have generated great interest online and attracted thousands of views. Heather started walking after the passing of her husband, Len, and it has led her down an amazing path. I commend her for her dedication and passion for the sport and wish her a very happy birthday.

#### **CENTURY 21 CO-DIRECTORS DOMENIC BONFIGLIO AND HENRY FERNANDEZ**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:49):** I acknowledge the efforts of Mr Domenic Bonfiglio and Mr Henry Fernandez, co-directors of Century 21 The Paramount Group for their contribution to the real estate arena. The young men began operating in Camden in 2014 and opened a second office in Gregory Hills in 2019. I was honoured to cut the ribbon. Domenic and Henry have gained the trust of the community, and it shows. They were awarded number one property management office in New South Wales for 2021 and 2022. In 2022 Henry Fernandez was awarded the status of top 1 per cent of sales agents in the world. Caring for their community is paramount to these gentlemen. Domenic has developed a unique program to assist single parents who have suffered from domestic violence to find accommodation. He has worked tirelessly with property owners and has a working relationship with the Department of Communities and Justice to assist with housing this particularly vulnerable group in our wider community. I commend Domenic and Henry for their efforts and wish them the best of luck with their business and future endeavours.

#### **JOURNALIST RUBY PASCOE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:51):** I recognise Ruby Pascoe, a senior journalist with *Port Macquarie News* and one of 13 journalists across Australian Community Media's national network who collaborated on the Young and Regional series *Our Climate Future*. The collection of stories focuses on how climate change is affecting young people across Australia, what the future looks like and what it is like to report on these issues in regional communities. I congratulate Ruby on creating stories that come from a place of belonging, as both a regional reporter and a member of our community. She has lived through and respectfully reported on the Black Summer bushfires and record-breaking flooding that caused such devastation across the Port Macquarie-Hastings area. Ruby's focus in *Our Climate Future* explored the impact of coastal erosion and the local government response to climate change. The series has received positive feedback from the public and people involved in speaking out about climate change. It has also been praised for raising these issues. In Ruby's words, "These stories matter to us."

#### **CENTRAL COAST GROUP TRAINING AWARDS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:52):** I congratulate and thank everyone involved in the Central Coast Group Training Excellence in Training Halloween awards night. It was fabulous to be back together to celebrate the successes of apprentices and supervisors from across the Central Coast after three years away. It was also great to share a room with so many fabulous employees and hosts, both large and small, who play such an important role supporting young people in the early stages, and even the later stages, of their careers. There was a large

cross-section of awards and awardees, with tough competition in every category. I offer special thanks to the sponsors, including VERTO, Commonwealth Bank, Star 104.5, Central Coast Council, Bishop Collins Accountants, the Australian College of Commerce & Management, CCTS and myHomecare, who play an important role in supporting the event. The Halloween costumes were spectacular and the feeling in the room was palpable. I congratulate every apprentice, past and present. They make a massive difference to their lives, their families' lives, their businesses and our Central Coast community.

### RIDING FOR THE DISABLED MUDGEES

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (17:53):** I congratulate Riding for the Disabled Mudgee on its win at the RDA NSW Musical Ride Competition. Gulgong Public School students Hunter Cowley, riding Toby, and Jackson Maynard, riding Theo, took out the musical ride with a theme or story-led category with their piece *Two Little Mates*, about a couple of Aussie diggers. But these two little mates could not have done it alone. I say well done to fellow Gulgong students Abby Sims-Cheesewright and Ashlee Milton, principal and deputy David Lewis and Kylie Duffy, and all the other extras and riders from Gulgong Public School. I congratulate coaches Di Burnicle and Tracy Lucas. Tracy is the chairperson of RDA NSW and president of Mudgee group. Groups like RDA cannot run without lots of community support. I thank Bruce Walker; Bob Colley; Joy Clinton; Ashlee Purvis; Jennifer Roberts; Sandra Ashton; Fiona Townsend; the 205 army cadets from Mudgee and Mendooran; Hugh Bateman, OAM; Ken Sutcliffe, OAM; Jess Holland; Melanie Burnicle; Nick Pearce; and 2MG. I congratulate RDA Mudgee on this fantastic achievement. I cannot wait to see what it does next.

### BELMORE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:54):** I congratulate Belmore Boys High School, which recently celebrated its ninety-fifth anniversary. Belmore Boys is a place of critical thinking and skill development where young men can gather the skills to become leaders in all they do. I am very proud to see the development and growth of students at Belmore Boys, and I am excited to meet some of the amazing students in Parliament next week. I acknowledge the phenomenal, relentless, amazing principal, Ms Ramadan, who has been a fierce advocate for the local community and for the education of young men in my electorate. I congratulate Principal Ramadan on all she does for her students and the wider school community. She set up working groups and workshops with parents, particularly with the mums. I also acknowledge the staff, teachers, support staff and school P&C for playing an important role in creating a safe and productive space for students to grow and flourish.

### SENIORS' STORIES

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:55):** I congratulate Paul Barrett from Padstow and Alison Miller from Panania whose stories have been published in the eighth volume of *Seniors' Stories*. *Seniors' Stories* was launched in 2013 as a way of recognising and valuing the experiences of seniors and building connections between the young and old. This year's theme was "Celebrating Diversity" and has unique stories from all over New South Wales. Paul's story was entitled *Ireland was born in me*. He wrote that "it is important to be proud of both where you were born as well as your heritage". Alison's story was entitled *Families of the Suburbs*. She reflected on living in Revesby and her school life. I congratulate Paul and Alison on having their stories published. This book is a great way for these stories to be preserved and passed on for generations to come.

### FOOTBALL STAR ZOE KARIPIDIS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:56):** Zoe Karipidis is a rising football star. Zoe played her junior football at Kanwal Rovers Football Club until she was 12 years old. Zoe then moved to one season at the Mariners academy, and she is currently at the Newcastle Jets academy. Zoe was selected in the national school girls' team, representing Mackillop Catholic College Warnervale, to play next year in the USA. Already this year, Zoe was part of the under-18 CommBank Matildas, which were the ASEAN Football Federation Champions in August. Zoe is now part of the under-20 CommBank Young Matildas and plays in a tournament in Canberra, beginning with a match tonight at 5.00 p.m. Zoe has had a big year, and she also just started year 12. Her classmates at Mackillop Catholic College are very proud of her efforts. I wish Zoe well with her football career and acknowledge her already significant achievements. Next year the FIFA Women's World Cup is being played in Australia and New Zealand, and it would be fantastic if young Zoe's name was added to the squad.

### MAYOR'S LOCAL HERO AWARD WINNER DITTE KOZAK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:57):** I congratulate Ditte Kozak who was awarded with a Mayor's Local Hero Award at the 2022 Local Celebration Awards. For over 27 years, Ditte has been serving her community, leading Nepean Food Services, a community service that provides meals and social support to those living with a disability and vulnerable seniors. My electorate is home to some of the greatest, most selfless volunteers, who wake up daily with the intention of only serving others. Ditte is a remarkable human being who

I have got to know over my time as the local member for Mulgoa. She never shies away from challenges that emerge in her role and in the volunteer sector. Ditte is an exceptional person and more than deserving of this incredible accolade. I thank Ditte for all the hard work that she does and for her service to the community.

**Business interrupted.**

*Members*

#### VALEDICTORY SPEECHES

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Balmain, I acknowledge all his guests who are in the gallery for this very significant moment. Ladies and gentlemen, but also boys and girls and children, it is wonderful to have you all here.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:58):** I start by acknowledging that we meet today on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and that the electorate of Balmain where I live and work is on the land of both the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora nation. I pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. This land was, is and always will be Aboriginal land. When I joined The Greens I never expected to be elected to anything, especially the New South Wales Parliament. The Greens may be a small party, but we have a big appetite for change.

The Greens offer an alternative vision for how our society can progress based on the four key principles of environmental sustainability, peace, non-violence and grassroots democracy, as well as economic and social justice. Those four principles have guided my work. Those principles acknowledge that we live in an interconnected world in which social inequality, abuse of human rights and environmental degradation are not separate problems but the same problem manifested in different ways. They are the principles that were needed in the New South Wales Parliament, and principles that my community brought to the Legislative Assembly in 2011 when they made history by electing me as the first ever Greens member in this place.

Some—admittedly not very kind people—called it a fluke. But since then, not only have I been re-elected twice, but The Greens, along with our four principles, are now represented in this place, the House of Government, by the member for Newtown and the member for Ballina. While I did not join The Greens to win a seat in Parliament, we did. We have continued to grow, allowing me to serve my community, which has been the privilege of my life.

I did not come from a political dynasty or a family of great means. Our family was built around dockyards and harbours, as Balmain was, but politics was all around us. My father was a tradesman, a fitter who worked in the confined space of a ship's engine room when he sailed into Sydney Harbour as a merchant sailor. My mother was the daughter of a proud dock worker from Liverpool in England. I remember vividly the stress experienced by my family when my father was on strike. Each day rolled by with the uncertainty of no income but the determination to achieve a fair go for himself, his family and his workmates. From those times, I gained a real insight into power and the sacrifices that people made to win positive change. It helped me understand how power works and how people who are well organised can act as a counterweight to those injustices, both social and environmental.

The ideas which formed during my upbringing were confirmed and reinforced intellectually during my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, which, not coincidentally, were in the field of economics. It was the ideas gained from my experience and my studies that led me to stand as a candidate for The Greens for election to Leichhardt council. In 1999 no Green had ever been elected to that council, and only a few Greens were on councils across Australia. But I stood to get important community issues on the political agenda and was surprised to win the election to represent the Balmain ward.

I served as the lone Greens councillor for four years, and then in 2004 four Greens were elected to that council. Six were elected in 2008, and I became the first Greens mayor. I am so proud of those 12 years and what we achieved. I learnt a lot from the legacy of former councillors Nick Origlass and Izzy Wyner, as well as then Independent councillor Hall Greenland. Three years later we had an enormous breakthrough, which was something we never thought possible. The people of the electorate of Balmain elected me to be the first Green in the history of this Parliament to represent an electorate in the lower House. It was a win, I confess, that I approached with some trepidation.

When I first walked through the doors of the Parliament, there was no blueprint. To make my introduction to Parliament even more challenging, not only was I on my own in the bearpit but I missed the induction for new members. Why? Because the counting of votes for the seat of Balmain was so tight I could not claim the win and attend the meeting until a full week after the election. In the end, we squeaked over the line by a measly 205 votes. I made that number the pass code on the entrance to our office for many years so we could remember every day

the mountain we had to climb before the next election. When you are in a marginal seat, it is a sprint every single day. Of course, what I did have was several Greens colleagues in the Legislative Council, whom I relied on for assistance and advice. Having only been a party of the upper House, we did not know then that there were many critical differences between the two Houses of Parliament, a key one being question time.

In the other place it is more of a voluntary exercise. Thinking attendance was optional, on my first day in Parliament I was outside having a quick lunch only to get a phone call from my alarmed staff saying, "All the members are in the Parliament. I think you need to be there too for question time." I had to sneak rather obviously into question time through a side door—my first day on the job. There was also some question amongst the Clerks as to my standing in the House. Until that point the Legislative Assembly had been made up exclusively of members of the Government and the Opposition, with a smattering of Independents. When it came to asking a question in the House, the standing orders indicated those who could be given the call: members of the Government, members of the Opposition and Independent members. I was not any one of them. In fact, no minor party had held a seat in the New South Wales lower House since 1973.

The Speaker had to make a procedural statement to account for my presence in this place. That amendment to take account of The Greens being in the lower House was the start of more changes in this place. I hope my election helped to dispel the myth that a vote for a party that a lot of people would like to vote for was a wasted vote because they could never win. That is clearly not the case. In the decades since, the power of the major parties has been steadily whittled away as the people of New South Wales have chosen to be represented by more and more diverse political colours. Assistant Speaker, I believe that is overwhelmingly a good thing for politics in New South Wales—as I am sure you will agree, as an Independent member. It has been a good thing for the environment, for integrity and for our communities.

When I was elected, I think it is fair to say that I was not greeted with open arms by the Labor Party or even by the Government. But, over time, I think the culture has changed to recognise that other parties have a place here and that our views are all valid. I acknowledge the former Speaker during those early years, the member for South Coast, who gave me a fair go. She defended me from the worst elements of the Parliament when I was new and I was speaking or asking questions. So I thank the member for South Coast.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** You were the teacher's pet!

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** That's it! We imagine that laws are developed through a contest of ideas. We hope as much, and we hope it is about weighing up evidence. But, sadly, they often are not—at least not always here. Ministers, no matter their colour, often are not led by the evidence, experts or the community. They can be led by lobbyists and vested interests. While lobbyists may not be able to donate as much cash, they are here in the building and they work full-time to build relationships with departmental staff and Ministers, which means they can wield disproportionate influence. That influence-peddling can be seen in action as Ministers leave Parliament and then take up lucrative roles in industry. That is why it is critical that the recent ICAC recommendations on lobbying are implemented in full. I have seen community organisations forced to jump through endless hoops to secure precarious funding for proven, effective and cost-efficient programs, and then seen Ministers snap their fingers and produce millions for marginal seats for stadiums or a pet project. The people of New South Wales deserve better.

I note the new political device known as the business case—the most secretive and often very expensive modelling that allows the approval of just about anything. It is a new device that leads to a demand for it to be supported. It reminds me of the so-called business case that supported the amalgamation of councils against the wishes of their communities. The projected benefits were wildly inaccurate but the consultants still marched on, charging millions for their must-have justification document that Government members can wave at the media and public saying, "Our policy is right." When I was elected to Parliament, my top priority was to deliver for my local community. Together, I have shown without doubt that members in this place can deliver results despite not being in government. I was so proud to have negotiated changes to the laws proposed by the Government concerning Callan Park. My amendments passed by the Parliament—and I acknowledge Minister Stokes—protected Callan Park from privatisation and exploitation.

The new laws come on top of the \$14 million secured to restore the magnificent public space of Callan Park, ensuring a bright future for this jewel of the inner west. The Greens also changed the State's constitution. Our bill, now law, allows Parliament to meet virtually during a crisis, such as the pandemic. During a crisis it means an end to the Executive running the State and members of Parliament being empowered to allow our democracy to continue to operate. That critical check and balance is now enshrined in law. It is the only non-government bill that passed through Parliament in my almost 12 years as a member. It was opposed by the Government but was actually supported by most members. That is a clear sign of what negotiations in good faith can achieve and what The Greens can deliver in Parliament.



In my local community The Greens have seen the revitalisation, not the demolition, of the White Bay Power Station, with \$14 million invested in its upgrade. I hope it will soon become an iconic cultural and community space for all of Sydney to enjoy. We have driven a successful campaign that secured \$60 million for shore-to-ship power at White Bay after the former Government made the terrible decision to locate a cruise ship terminal metres from people's homes. We have also helped make the largest fleet of electric buses anywhere in the country live in the electorate of Balmain at the Leichhardt Bus Depot. Nearby, I helped to lead a successful campaign for the Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill light rail line during my time on Leichhardt council. I was also pleased to gain the support of the Parliament to secure an amendment that delivered \$50 million for green hydrogen projects, the first investment of its kind in New South Wales. With the support of the community, The Greens won a Glebe ferry and a new school for Ultimo. Many of my biggest achievements have been stopping bad ideas from seeing the light of day. The details of those machinations, however, will have to be left for another time.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** No! Tell us.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Tell us.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** I know—that's all the good stuff. But they are still in this place. It will be in the book later on. This proves that you do not have to be in government to deliver good results and represent your community. You can be an effective advocate for your area from the crossbench. Apart from those bigger-ticket items, I have been so proud to deliver grant funding worth many millions to small community groups through the Community Building Partnership and other programs for my community. Most importantly and most proudly, I have been able to speak up for people who often do not have a voice, especially for our social housing community, helping residents with everything from filling out forms to getting a new roof or their kitchen repaired. I have also been so proud to act as a voice for many communities in New South Wales who need support and solidarity, like our friends in the public gallery from the Kurdish community, the people of Myanmar and the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara. I have tried to help those people have a place in Parliament so their calls for justice can be heard.

Beyond those issues, members will know that I have been keenly focused on matters of integrity in government. The investigative work of the ICAC has claimed two Premiers, dismantled the upper ranks of the former Labor ministry and dismissed pretty much a cricket team of Liberal MPs. I have defended the ICAC from political attacks from pretty much all sides, and pushed for independent funding for better protections for anti-corruption whistleblowers and stronger anti-corruption laws to ensure that crooked politicians are actually convicted. The good news is that, working together, we have had success in just about every one of these areas, and I acknowledge the role of all members in that.

I was delighted to be appointed to the Parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It took me eight years to get on that committee, my work on which over many years has been some of my most fulfilling. It has been a fascinating insight and a real honour to be part of the committee that oversees the ICAC and ensures that we have a strong corruption fighter in our State. I take this opportunity to commend the ICAC and all of those who have taken a stand for integrity, which we all know can often come at a great personal cost.

I thank all the members of Parliament who have worked collaboratively with me to make my achievements possible for the people of Balmain and the State. I particularly thank the members who are in the Chamber to hear my valedictory speech. I know it is not compulsory. To have anyone apart from my colleague the member for Newtown come to listen to me is a win, so I acknowledge that.

**Ms Melanie Gibbons:** Four more years!

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** Four more years. I note that a lot of Ministers' parliamentary staff are here. I will not mention any names because it might do them more harm than good. But I will mention those Ministers—they know who they are—those MPs and their hardworking staff who have done so much for my community and supported me and the issues that I have raised. I also acknowledge the various leaders of the House whom I have come to know over the years. With a few rare moments and exceptions, they have always been even handed and treated me with respect. I thank the Labor MPs, their leaders and staff. Again, I will not mention them because, as I said, it may cause more harm than good. I acknowledge those who have worked collaboratively with me very closely behind the scenes to get good outcomes.

I thank my friends the Independent colleagues on the crossbench: the member for Sydney, the member for Wagga Wagga, and the Assistant Speaker and member for Lake Macquarie. They have been great supporters and advocates, and they are outstanding members. I acknowledge the members on the crossbench from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the passionate and effective Independent member for Murray. I acknowledge the

latest addition to the crossbench, Ms Tania Mihailuk, the member for Bankstown, who is a person of great integrity.

The work we do in this place is only ever as good as the work that happens behind the scenes with our staff. I could not have done this job without them and I have been so fortunate to rely on the skills, wisdom, energy and fortitude of a small cohort of committed full-time staffers over the years, including Fiona Byrne, Alison Martin, Gemma Pitcher, Madeleine Lush, Adam Taylor, Lesa de Leau, Elisia Yeo, Louise Stewart, Parissa Zand and Sharon Butt. Many of those former staff are in the Chamber today. I thank them so much for their commitment over the years. While I cannot mention them all, I thank the staff who acted as short-term relief and have been so effective in contributing to the work.

I acknowledge my current team, who are here this evening, including David Lewis, Anastasia Radievska, Ned Cutcher and Eleanor Nurse. Eleanor added to my speech "the best staffer I've ever had". I thank her for that subtle addition. I am waiting for any other traps in my speech now. What else am I going to say? I feel an immense sense of genuine gratitude to have worked with them all. I know that feeling is echoed by my constituents, who are full of praise for the team and the huge contribution that they have made to their lives. I have been blessed by a cohort of people who have chosen the Balmain office to volunteer or intern. I knew I had been in this place for too long when a journalist—I will not say who—approached me to say that they had done their work experience in my office.

I have been lucky to count on the advice of several great political minds and a band of truly dedicated supporters who have worked so tirelessly. I am proud that our support has grown over the years. It is a testament to the volunteers that our margin is now 10 per cent. I was proud that we won the vote in the last election in every polling station in the electorate, from booths dominated by public housing voters to the wealthiest areas and everything in between. I thank the Greens councillors who have assisted me during my time in Parliament, on the City of Sydney, Leichhardt and inner west councils. I give a special thanks to the former mayor of both Leichhardt and the inner west, Councillor Rochelle Porteous.

Most importantly, I thank all Greens members and volunteers, who have made everything possible. I give a special mention to the current and former conveners of the local groups, and all office bearers. There are so many community organisations I could thank, but the list would be far too long. I intend on holding a community event next year, when I can focus on those groups and individuals. I extend my thanks to parliamentary staff who keep this place going, including the folks in Hansard, the people at Cafe Quorum, the cleaning staff and everyone who helps make our democracy work.

Every member in their valedictory speech acknowledges their families, because they pay the price for our work. One of the few things that all members agree on is that our families carry the burden—the missed birthdays, the late nights, the short weekends, the lack of time, and sharing me with every local resident who wants to "just mention their issue very quickly for five minutes" in the cafe, the park, the restaurant and walking down the street. I thank my family, most importantly, including my father, Richard; my mother, Pamela; my brother, Jonathon; and my sisters, Rebecca and Jaqueline, and their husbands, Mosi and Eihab. I thank my wonderful partner, Shelley, and my delightful daughter, Beatrix, who just turned four on Monday. I think she is having a little lay-down in the gallery. I am so pleased that they are in the Chamber tonight and I hope they are proud of the work that I have done with all that time that was spent away from them.

I thank my Greens colleagues in the Legislative Council, Ms Abigail Boyd, Ms Cate Faehrmann, Ms Sue Higginson and all those who came before me for the incredible work they do. There is nothing like the solidarity, friendship and unconditional support I have received from the member for Ballina and the member for Newtown, my lower House colleagues. Having them in this place is all the more powerful, knowing what it was like to do it by myself for four years. It is great to have someone to second my calls. I thank the member for Ballina, who could not be in the Chamber because she has fallen ill with COVID. She is watching from home. She is a remarkable, compassionate and caring person, who warms the room when she enters it. She is thoughtful and generous and exudes wisdom and insight. I thank the member for Newtown, who is the most sensible member, which is a bit of an in-joke. No-one wants to squeeze more out of this place than Jenny. She is brave, tenacious, passionate and thoughtful. The standard she walks past is the standard she accepts. I can tell you, she does not walk past very much. I am honoured to have had both of those members with me for almost eight years. I could not have imagined sitting in this place next to anyone else.

Rarely in history has Parliament led progressive social change; most often the Parliament has followed the will of the people reluctantly. While Parliament has great powers, I recognise that genuine leadership happens most often in our local communities. Nowhere is that culture of community activism and leadership stronger than in the seat of Balmain. My constituents put me in this place, but they keep me here by being active and engaged and encouraging me to do more and be better. As my friend Hall Greenland says, "There's nothing like the hot breath of the masses on your neck to keep you focused."

Other members in their valedictory speeches mention a strange feeling when they choose to move on. It is like a wake, where everyone gives you praise but with the added benefit of being alive to hear it. With that, to everyone who is here tonight and to everyone who elected me to represent them, I hope I have lived up to their expectations because I have tried my hardest. After standing as a candidate in 11 elections—and I recently counted—it is time to move on. I have tried to be fair, to listen, to collaborate and to be humble. I have tried to be a good ally and to make space for the voices of others. I have always tried to put public interest first. Now, it is time to take my leave and to say thank you and goodnight.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Balmain has more than achieved his goal of satisfying everybody's ambitions for him. His family and friends are very proud of him, as are his colleagues in the Chamber. We admire him greatly and he will be missed in the next Parliament.

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

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Riverstone, I warmly welcome his family and friends who are in the gallery this evening. Welcome to Parliament House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:27):** When I first arrived in this place in 2011, I was in awe of the fact that I would be standing in this spot and addressing this House in the same way that giants of New South Wales political history had done over a century and a half before me. It is where Edmund Barton, Henry Parkes and James Martin stood and spoke, and where the great debates over major legislation took place to make New South Wales what it is today. It is still an amazing thought. I promised myself then that I would not take for granted the immense privilege that it is to be chosen to represent so many people in such an important role, and in such a special place, so I begin by thanking the people of the Riverstone electorate for entrusting me to represent them over these 12 years. It is an honour that is difficult to understand, let alone repay. It is an enormous privilege.

I also thank in a special way my wife, Cathie. She has never liked politics—surprisingly!—but has supported me every step of the way over what will be 24 years in the business, in both Hawkesbury council and in this House as member for Riverstone. Cath has been the greatest support and strength I could have ever asked for. I know that what I have been through has caused her stress and anxiety at many times. Cath, your love has powered me. Your clear sense of right has guided me all along. I could not have managed without you.

Given that I have been involved in politics for so long, my children have never known a time without politics in their lives. They became such experts in the subject that if a teacher at Chisholm Catholic Primary School in Bligh Park who was teaching a unit on government was ever in doubt about some tricky detail, they would check with the Conolly child in the class. It was not a complete surprise to those teachers that our son, Patrick, ended up as Mayor of Hawkesbury Council in recent times. I thank each of my children—Jess, Joe, Pat, Megan, Ben and Olivia—some of whom have been able to be in the gallery today and others who may be watching online. Thank you so much for your support over all those years.

While my parents, Joan and Clarrie, are not here tonight, I acknowledge them for what they have given me. Joan died in September this year, and Clarrie, who is living with dementia, is unable to be here. I owe them so much for instilling in me the values I brought to this place, the confidence and sense of self-worth that allowed me to dare to seek a place in politics, and their example of lifelong faithful commitment to each other and their children. My parents had seven children of their own and then adopted three, giving a second chance in life to those three littlies.

I thank the enormous number of people who have done so much to help me achieve what I have been able to over the years as member for Riverstone. I apologise in advance for those whom I do not mention; there are just so many who have played a part in that journey since the end of the last century. Unfortunately, not all of them are still with us, but I particularly mention the following: Paul Fakes; Lou Baker; Eric and Joan Jordan; Bob and Judy Newland; Sean and Lyn Fannin; Ian Gilbertson; Warwick Mackay; Rod and Maureen Rose; Ian and Judy Jordan; Mal McEwan; Michael Barnes; Norm and Betty Johnson; Milan Maglic; Bryan and Joan Mullins; Bill Watkins; Jim and Betty Wrigley; Linda, Rudy and Paul Mech; Chris Winslow; Richard McQueeney and his daughter, Sarah Green; Shirley McLeod; John and Cheryl Shanahan; Mohit and Jenny Kumar; Margaret and Jim Simmonds; Stan and Kay Stringfellow; Dee Zegerac; Michael Stublely; Damien Milne; Les Daniel; Mark Holmes; Sue and Bruce McKenzie; David and Cara Middleton; Shail Wadwha; Randeep Grewal—and many, many more. The generosity of these people still overwhelms me. I will be forever grateful to all of them.

I acknowledge the people who have given superb, dedicated support to me in my electorate office over those years: Janine Daher; Nathan Zamprogno; Elizabeth Banks; Stephanie Jennings; Lyn Fannin; Elizabeth Veasey; Reuben Shearer; Robyn Preston, MP; Rick Cortese; Marija Martinovic; Sue McKenzie;

Cara Middleton; Sam Jacobs; and Michael Davis. There were so many people, and we have crammed in so much over the time. Twelve years have flown by, full of activity and effort on behalf of the people of Riverstone.

Back in 2011 this Coalition Government took several tough decisions early in its life in order to turn around the budget and make possible so much of the infrastructure investment that has followed. At the local level, many things have happened. They were made possible because of the Government's tough decisions and its discipline to carry them through. Those local achievements include the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital redevelopment and expansion, at over \$700 million, and the increase in staffing there of over 35 per cent; the upgrade of Richmond Road to a major arterial road; and the construction of Schofields Road and South Street arterial road and the underpass built beneath the railway line.

The electorate has seen the delivery of the massive Sydney Metro Northwest as well as five new schools in the area, with several schools upgraded and two more new schools in the pipeline—and so much work happening. A new police station was built at Riverstone and there was an increase in authorised police strength there. New precincts were rezoned and the conundrum of the paper subdivisions at Riverstone and Vineyard was solved with a new regulation. We delivered new bus routes and extra services, as well as the On Demand bus service; the Schofields station car park for 700 cars; upgrades of local roads such as Hambledon Road, Grange Avenue, McCulloch Street, Boundary Road, Loftus Street and Railway Terrace; and the air conditioning of 11 local schools. We also provided school crossing supervisors to many additional schools. I take some pride in being instrumental in the changed criteria for school crossing supervisors so that more schools across the State were able to secure this protection, and for lobbying successive Premiers and Treasurers about providing air conditioning in schools, which played a part in the introduction of the Cooler Classrooms Program across the State.

There are things still to come. We need still to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam. It has become a hot-button issue again as a result of floods in 2021 and 2022, and, while it has taken years longer than I would have wanted, I am pleased that this Government has decided to put the protection of people first and to commit to this important project. On a related theme, I believe it is important to devise a strategy for removing dwellings from very low land in harm's way. While buybacks of all such properties may be beyond the capacity of government to fund, that is why I think we should develop a market-based solution to achieve the same outcome. The Rouse Hill Hospital is on its way. Having secured the site for this new public hospital and, knowing that an announcement of the clinical services plan is imminent, I will be keenly monitoring progress on this project over the remaining months in the job. Delivery of this new hospital will be a huge boost for the region. The duplication of the Richmond railway line is a project that has not yet been locked into future planning, but I have always argued that it should be. My successor will need to take up this challenge.

Winston Churchill noted in 1947 that it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried from time to time. It would not be hard to believe the person who said that originally had spent some time in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I believe all of us here would agree that there is much to be desired about the way in which this House operates and conducts itself. I know that successive Speakers have done their best to address some of these challenges. My concerns, though, are greatest about the responsibility we have as legislators when in fact many in this Chamber have very little input at all into the legislation that we vote either for or against. Improvement to our system can only come from those who sit in this Chamber. All the rules in the world cannot produce a better culture. Only members who value a commitment to democracy and to the welfare of the community can do that.

And yet, for all its shortcomings, democracy is both precious and fragile. Our Parliament is a special part of what makes Australia a lucky country. The views, needs and concerns of ordinary people are given expression in this place every sitting day. I thank all members of the House who strive to make life better for those they represent. I know I have disagreed with many of you about all manner of things, but I recognise that most people come here to do what they believe will be good for the people they represent. After nearly 12 years in the role, it can be a surprise to look back and recall how many issues we have grappled with and to reflect on some of those that were highlights and lowlights for me. Rarely, but occasionally, members of this House will find themselves conscience-bound to cross the floor to vote against their own party's position. I am not certain, but I might be the only person who found himself in this position before I had even had the opportunity to sit in this Chamber.

When the O'Farrell Government was first elected, it promptly moved to address the challenging budget position it inherited. A decision was made by Cabinet in the period before Parliament sat to immediately close the former Government's Solar Bonus Scheme, to retrospectively cancel contracts that people held under the scheme and to legislate to indemnify the State from liability for compensation for those cancelled contracts. I told the Minister and the Whip's office that I could not and would not support stripping people of their rights in this way. To my surprise, my position was leaked to the media and reported around the State and country even before I had entered the Chamber as a member. Predictably, Premier Barry O'Farrell was less than impressed. As it turned out,

though, I did not need to cross the floor as it became apparent that the Legislative Council would not support retrospectivity either. It was an early lesson in being careful about what you say and who you say it to.

Like my colleague Chris Gulaptis, who delivered his valedictory speech yesterday, I too had a big problem with the Baird Government's position on greyhound racing. I listened to members of the Riverstone community who would be impacted by the decision. To me, it was a question of fairness. You do not punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty, and you do not restrict people's freedom unless there is really no other way of solving a serious problem. I spoke against the bill and abstained from the vote. In the end, given the way it turned out, I reckon my instincts were probably right. One of the lowest points of this Parliament over the past 12 years was the ramming through of legislation entrenching an extreme abortion regime, bringing New South Wales, in my view, into alignment with paragons of civilisation like 1970s East Germany. My views about that legislation are obviously on the public record.

From the point of view of democratic process, this House was seen at its worst in that episode as the bill, which was not foreshadowed in the election campaign just six months earlier, was pushed through at record speed in a transparent attempt to minimise public involvement and input or even knowledge of what was being done. History will not judge us kindly in relation to that sneakiness. Two years later, a fundamental change to one of the bedrocks of our legal system, legalising the killing of one person by another, was pushed through at a time when, due to the pandemic, no member of the public was allowed in the gallery. At the time the predominant concern from the leadership on both sides of the House seemed to be that we get it done before Christmas, rather than that we should get it right.

The Legislative Assembly rarely refers bills to committees, which is understandable in a House where the Government usually has a majority and most legislation is initiated by the Government. But for conscience votes I believe there is a need for a committee stage, preferably before the second reading debate rather than after. This would allow more genuine consideration of specific aspects of a bill than our existing process allows. It would allow individual members time and space to consider the issues before going on the record with their stance. I believe there should be an open-minded review of how this House deals with conscience vote bills. On the positive side of the ledger, I was pleased and proud to be a member of this House when legislation was introduced to reduce barriers to adoption. While only a small step, this change will mean that at least some children who were facing the prospect of spending their entire childhood being bounced from pillar to post in out-of-home care will instead be able to experience a "forever home" and family. That will change lives for the better.

I give credit to former Minister Pru Goward for her gutsiness in bringing this change about. While I am well aware of the difficult legacy of adoption in the State, and of the complexities and challenges in concluding that a child cannot safely be returned to his or her parents, the children living this extended limbo right now deserve better and need this Parliament to do more to give them a better life. One of the big issues we did not deal with in my time here is protection for freedom of religion. It remains a source of disappointment to me that this Coalition Government, despite reassurances given at various times, has not taken action to protect this basic human right of people of faith who face an increasingly hostile environment. I would hope that both sides will find the will to do that in the next Parliament.

Back in 2011, during my inaugural speech I stood here and said that, while there certainly is plenty of rivalry in politics, I believe my real enemies are not other members of Parliament but those things that would undermine the welfare of, and reduce the opportunities available to, the people of New South Wales. These enemies include poverty, disease, homelessness, corruption and the breakdown of family relationships. It will be my goal to confront those enemies on behalf of the people I represent and to do whatever I can to maximise the opportunities for a good life for all. In particular, I want to contribute to policies that will support marriage and family life, and which assist people to build communities that are nurturing and supportive of their members.

At the end of 12 years, as I finish here, I hope that what I have done in this place and in the Riverstone electorate bears at least some resemblance to those lofty goals. I know that I have given it my best shot. I also know that I could not have done very much at all without the steadfast love and support of the best wife ever. I look forward to spending a lot more time with her and doing things we have been planning to do for years. As the Mortein ad said many years ago, when you're onto a good thing, stick to it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank family and friends of the member for Riverstone in the gallery for joining us. I thank the member for Riverstone for his valedictory speech. From a personal perspective, I wish him all the very best for the future and commend him for his many local achievements for the electorate of Riverstone.

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

*Community Recognition Statements***FASHION BUSINESS OF THE YEAR CATEGORY AWARD WINNER WOLFGANG MUSE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:46):** I congratulate Kara Fuz from Wolfgang Muse on winning the Fashion Business of the Year category at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Wolfgang Muse is a boutique women's clothing store in Kareela and a must-stop shop for local fashionistas. In establishing Wolfgang Muse, Kara drew on over 20 years of fashion experience to create the signature laid-back, luxe streetwear with an urban raw edge. All Wolfgang Muse labelled pieces are personally designed by Kara, 100 per cent Australian made and in limited supply, which has seen the brand develop quite the reputation of uniqueness in the Sutherland shire. NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like Wolfgang Muse that are an important part of our community as key providers of goods, services and jobs. I again congratulate Kara Fuz from Wolfgang Muse on her success at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

**SIR RONALD WILSON HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:47):** The Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw/National Unity Government of Myanmar Support Group Australia [CRPH/NUG Support Group] received the 2022 Sir Ronald Wilson Human Rights Award on 2 November 2022. The group consists of 73 organisations and includes 20 based in New South Wales, including the Australian Karen Organisation. The group is part of the global movement to advocate for democracy in Myanmar after the February 2021 military coup that toppled the country's democratically elected government. Presenting the award, President of the Australian Council for International Development, Susan Pascoe, said, "The work that the CRPH/NUG Support Group is doing in Australia is maintaining the heart and soul of the Myanmar community. Through suffering, trauma and displacement, this Support Group is an embodiment of the strength of the Myanmar diaspora and their commitment to their homeland." I congratulate the group and their member organisations for their incredible work.

**EAST HILLS CHARITY CAR SHOW**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:48):** I congratulate the organisers of the East Hills Charity Car Show who provided a family day for a great cause, with stalls, live music, category winner awards and over 200 fantastic cars on show. The show supports a different charity each year. Funds are raised through vehicle entry fees, raffles, sponsorships, stallholder fees and donations from the public. There are around 85,000 Australians who are living with inflammatory bowel disease—the collective term used for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis—and presently there is no cure. This year the East Hills Charity Car Show raised \$19,000 for Crohn's & Colitis Australia. I greatly admire the tenacity of the organising committee, who have scheduled and rescheduled this event many times due to COVID-19 and a succession of adverse weather events. It was a top day and I look forward to next year's event.

**OURIMBAH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:49):** I acknowledge the Ourimbah United Football Club's fortieth anniversary. Its inception in 1981 was driven by the motivation of Ross and Yvonne Whitelaw to provide both males and females of all ages their own football team situated north of Narara Valley and up to Kangy Angy. The community rallied behind their vision, an interim committee was established and the club was registered in the 1982 soccer season even without having a home ground to play on. With enthusiastic locals, working bees, heavy machinery donated to level paddocks and fundraising efforts, a home ground came to fruition in April 1983. A lot has changed since those days. Initially the uniforms were chocolate brown in colour and incorporated a boomerang emblem to honour the Indigenous history of the area. Uniform colours were updated to dark blue and light blue in 2008, and the emblem changed to feature a swooping falcon, which led the club to be known as the Ourimbah Falcons, or the "Mighty Falcons", as locals refer to them. The club is one of 25 on the coast. It has a lot of players. I wish them all the very best.

**MOUNTAIN BIKER RYAN GILCHRIST**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:50):** The Coffs Coast has many sporting superstars who are shining on the world stage, and we are proud of them all. One of them is Bonville mountain biking sensation Ryan Gilchrist who has secured a top five international ranking after spending four months this year competing at the Enduro World Series. Ryan is only 20 and has earned this top five ranking in the under-21s category of the International Mountain Bike Series. He celebrated podium finishes with a third place in Scotland and a second in the United States. Ryan hopes to build on his experience in the under-21s as he takes the step up into the elite senior level. The Enduro World Series consists of eight races across seven countries, including Scotland, Slovenia, Italy, Canada, the United States, Switzerland and France. Most recently Ryan again rode his heart out at the AusCycling Gravity Enduro National Championships in Melbourne, where he won the under-21 men's

competition. I wish Ryan every success as he aims to be the best in this physically demanding, gruelling and fun sport.

#### **TOMAREE HEADLAND HERITAGE GROUP**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:51):** I acknowledge and thank the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group in my electorate of Port Stephens. This hardworking local volunteer organisation played an important role in the campaign to keep Tomaree Headland publicly owned and for community use. Members would be well aware that, following the closure of the Hunter large residential centres, there was a very real possibility of Tomaree Lodge being sold off to private developers. Alongside our community and the Friends of Tomaree Headland, we ensured this precious parcel of land at Shoal Bay was protected and returned to the community. Our community and the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group secured bipartisan support and stopped the sale of the land. I especially thank Peter Clough, Geoff Washington, Dennis Corr, Frank Future, Chris Bastic, Doug Cross, Tim Meharg, Tom Lupton, Iain Watt, Nigel Dique and Samantha Macabulos, who have so successfully led this organisation. I encourage everyone in Port Stephens to have their say about the future use of this significant, special site. The online community consultation closes on 6 January 2023.

#### **BETH AND IVAN HODGE SIXTY-THIRD WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:52):** There was certainly love in the air at Balmoral Beach on the weekend as locals Beth and Ivan Hodge celebrated their sixty-third wedding anniversary. Beth and Ivan have celebrated their wedding anniversary at Balmoral for many years. It has become an annual fixture for the whole community to attend. More than 1,000 locals joined in at Balmoral on Sunday along with the Fire & Rescue NSW Band, which kept everyone well entertained. There were other politicians spotted walking along The Esplanade. I was very happy to see Ivan and congratulate him. Beth and Ivan are well known for their spectacular honeymoon trip when they travelled in a VW Beetle from London to Calcutta in 1960. In 1996 they again embarked on the same journey in exactly the same Beetle, affectionately known as Love Bug, this time ending up in Mumbai. They are currently in talks for a feature film to be made about their lives. I look forward to a special screening of it down at Balmoral. I congratulate Beth and Ivan on their sixty-third wedding anniversary. I wish them many happy years ahead with their 12 grandchildren. I thank them again for making it a special day for our entire community.

#### **NOT-SO-SCARY HALLOWEEN**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:53):** Owner Karla Jacob from Storybook Party Co held a free event called Not-So-Scary Halloween for the community at Charmhaven, raising money for the Kids with Cancer Foundation, on 30 October 2022. At the event were popular children's characters to meet and greet with photo opportunities, a mini trick-or-treat walkthrough, a colouring competition and handing out many treats donated from Woolworths Lake Haven. The raffle held on the day included prizes worth more than \$3,000, with incredible sponsors that jumped onboard to donate wonderful items for a very important cause. A few that contributed were Bellebird Photography, Seaweed and Sand, Kel K Styling, Party Mama and Doyalson RSL Club, raising more than \$2,000 with online ticket sales for the Kids with Cancer Foundation. On the day amazing volunteers dedicated their time and efforts to make this a great community event. The atmosphere was wonderful, with many people saying thank you for doing this for the community and for the kids. Karla has been very community orientated since primary school age, and it delights children and parents to continue her journey.

#### **COOTAMUNDRA MOBILE DONOR CENTRE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (18:54):** I say a massive thankyou to all of the volunteers within the Cootamundra electorate who dedicate their time to help at the Cootamundra Mobile Donor Centre. The mobile donor centre visits my local government areas of Temora, Junee, Cootamundra, Coolamon, West Wyalong, Young, Harden, Narrandera, Gundagai, Grenfell and Cowra, where members of each community volunteer their time to help save lives. The volunteers helping in the donor centres are an essential part of making the donation process run smoothly. Their mighty and quiet acts of service help to ensure that donors are well looked after. Whether the volunteer is a pro milkshake maker, an expert on the subject of blood donation or an all-round amazing person, by delivering exceptional experiences for donors, they help provide a safe and sufficient blood supply for many Australians in need. Lifeblood volunteers know that they are a part of a team contributing to life-giving purpose. I thank every volunteer who helps save the lives of other Australians.

#### **MAITLAND ELECTORATE ART EXHIBITIONS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:55):** Last weekend I had the enormous privilege and honour of opening two art exhibitions in my electorate of Maitland. One was Annie Huthnance's beautiful exhibition called *The Still Point*. Annie is a healer and she expresses her healing thoughts and ideas through her work. It was

a really personal, introspective piece at the beautiful location of Maddies of Bolwarra. After a very rushed week through southern New South Wales, it was great to reach *The Still Point* and feel it. The other exhibition was by Helen Fenner, an amazing woman in our community who has suffered deeply from depression and suicidal thoughts. She donated all funds from her exhibition to the Maitland Region Suicide Prevention Network, which is part of her therapeutic approach to reducing her risk. Those two really different exhibitions in Maitland show the importance of art in our lives to help with mental health.

#### **WARATAH HIGHLANDS RETIREMENT VILLAGE SPRING FAIR**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:56):** I had the pleasure of attending the Waratah Highlands Retirement Village Spring Fair on 15 October in Bargo. It was an incredibly joyful day, and the sun was out. There was something for everyone to enjoy, including arts and crafts, sausage sizzles, a display of classic cars and raffle prizes. It was also great to see the residents of the retirement village enjoying themselves and mingling with other members of the community, particularly after the immense periods of isolation suffered during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when the retirement villages were not allowed visitors. I thank the Waratah Highlands Retirement Village for hosting this magnificent event that brought the community together.

#### **DAY OF THE DEAD**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:57):** On 29 October I attended Day of the Dead at The Entrance township organised by local businesses and supported by Central Coast Council. The event drew a large turnout and was a great success for the local businesses that collaborated and worked together for the benefit of the community. Children and adults were treated to free face painting, the opportunity to take photos with a giant skeleton puppet and a stilt-walking La Catrina. These events continue to put The Entrance on the map, attract people from across the Central Coast and ensure that visitors to our town know that The Entrance is the place to be. I thank Kane, the manager from Lime Mexican, a new restaurant in The Entrance township, which has already made its mark in the hospitality sector. Kane was the driving force behind the event and should be commended for his creativity. I also thank all the local businesses that remained open to service the community and play their part in activating the town centre, as well as Central Coast Council, which provided much-needed support.

#### **SHOOTING ENTHUSIAST PETER HOLZIGAL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (18:58):** I recognise Peter Holzgal from Inverell for his efforts in winning the Vision Impaired Supported 10m Air Rifle event at the NSW Small Bore and Air Rifle Association State Championships at the Sydney International Shooting Centre. Mr Holzgal was a shooting enthusiast until his eyesight began to deteriorate 20 years ago and is now almost totally blind. However, with recent technology, vision-impaired shooters use a high-speed camera device on top of the rifle that sends noise back through headphones. With this astounding advance, Peter has resumed practice and competition, with hopes to compete at the Commonwealth Games in 2026 and the Paralympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028. I congratulate Mr Holzgal on his recent win at the NSW Small Bore and Air Rifle Association State Championships.

#### **NSW LOCAL HERO AMAR SINGH**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:59):** I congratulate Mr Amar Singh, who was recognised at this year's NSW Australian of the Year awards. Amar was chosen as the NSW Local Hero from an extraordinary group of 16 finalists. These awards give exceptional people the opportunity to share their stories and inspire Australians to make their own special contributions. Amar Singh is very deserving of this award. I have had the pleasure of working alongside him and supporting him in his organisation for many years. I was pleased to hand over a set of keys to a bus funded by the New South Wales Government that I know will assist his work. In 2015 he founded Turbans 4 Australia, a Sikh-led charity specialising in providing emergency goods to people experiencing financial hardship, food insecurity, homelessness and unemployment. Many of our electorates have benefited from its volunteer work. Every week Turbans 4 Australia packages and distributes up to 450 grocery hampers and goods to vulnerable people across our State and in western Sydney in particular. I thank the organisation for the work it does.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **DAVIDSON ELECTORATE POLICE AREA COMMANDS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:00):** My electorate of Davidson has the good fortune to be served by the wonderful men and women of three police area commands [PACs]: Northern Beaches, North Shore and Ku-ring-gai. Each PAC brings a wealth of experience and expertise to a range of beautiful suburbs in my electorate where varied skills are sometimes needed to ensure the safety of those living in them. The past three years have been a challenging time for many constituents, including those in Sydney's north. The ominous threat



of fires in late 2019 and early 2020 were followed by devastating storms and flooding that stretched the resources of all emergency services personnel, including police. There was virtually no breathing space after those natural disasters were addressed before COVID-19 hit.

The pervasive pandemic created a new set of rules for everyone to follow. Those charged with administering them had to ensure that they were reasonably enforced. Despite police resources being constrained by the evolving COVID restrictions, as they were in the wider community, our local men and women in blue provided a calming and sensible approach to the lockdowns and other restrictions that affected so many individuals and small businesses in my electorate. Fines for breaches of COVID protocols were few and complaints of overreaching officialdom fewer. One of the attractions of living in the Davidson electorate is that it is a very safe place. While the suburbs of the Davidson electorate are certainly not crime free, they are anything but a safe haven for the criminally minded.

The past two years have seen an overall reduction in theft of 21 per cent on the Northern Beaches and 19 per cent in Ku-ring-gai, while sexual offences have decreased by a remarkable 43 per cent in Ku-ring-gai in the same period. In the same time frame, only one homicide occurred across the three police area commands and, despite predictions that COVID-19 enforced lockdowns would cause a spike in domestic violence, the two-year period from July 2020 to June 2022 saw domestic violence incidents in all three PACs in my electorate remain as they had been pre-COVID. In fact, throughout New South Wales, only three police area commands saw a marked increase in domestic-related violence during this period. All police can be justifiably proud of their achievement of these statistics, as can the communities in which they work.

The North Shore Police Area Command is benefiting from the recent appointment of Detective Superintendent Paul Devaney. Based in Chatswood, Detective Superintendent Devaney's command encompasses much of the lower North Shore, including the suburbs of Roseville, Lindfield and Roseville Chase in my electorate. A veteran of many years in the NSW Police Force and now in his seventh command, Detective Superintendent Devaney brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him. His immediate past command was the Cumberland PAC, which he took over on the same day the entire region went into severe lockdown in mid-2021. With a significant multicultural population, there were many challenges in successfully getting the Government's message across.

Over 100 officers and Australian Defence Force personnel doorknocked households across the region to convey and enforce the stay-at-home orders that were in place at the time. As a result, many individuals sick with COVID were identified and received lifesaving medical treatment. Detective Superintendent Devaney has received numerous police awards during his time with the NSW Police Force, particularly for acts of bravery in the line of duty. Officers of the NSW Police Force place their lives at risk each day to keep our communities safe. I commend Detective Superintendent Devaney for the expertise he brings to the North Shore PAC, as I commend all the men and women of the Northern Beaches, North Shore and Ku-ring-gai police area commands for the inspirational work they perform in making the Davidson electorate a safe place to live, work and play.

#### **MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:05):** On 11 October Mount Druitt Hospital celebrated its fortieth anniversary. It unfortunately coincided with a parliamentary sitting day, and I was therefore unable to attend. I understand that it was an excellent celebration, well attended by hospital staff and community members. Aboriginal Elders Aunty Julie Jones and Uncle Wes Marne, OAM, were both present, and local artist Danny Eastwood unveiled his new 26-metre-long mural between the main entrance and the emergency department. The event was also attended by Mayor Tony Bleasdale, OAM, who spoke on behalf of Blacktown City.

Forty years ago Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, visited the Mount Druitt community to officially open the hospital. The Queen addressed those present, as did the New South Wales Premier, Neville Wran. Prior to the establishment of the hospital in 1975, the area was served by what was then known as the polyclinic. Community needs rapidly surpassed the polyclinic's capacities, making abundantly clear the real need for a hospital to bolster the health services available to communities in Mount Druitt and neighbouring Rooty Hill and St Marys.

The hospital was officially opened on 11 October 1982, and my predecessor, the Hon. Richard Amery, served on the Mount Druitt Hospital board. The hospital has established a remarkable record of achievement after achievement over the past 40 years. In 1983 the hospital grounds won the Landscape Construction Award. That same year the hospital held its first annual fete, a major fundraiser, and the ladies committee opened the gift shop. The volunteer transport service started in 1984. In 1989 the hospital received a certificate of accreditation. The early 1990s saw the completion of the mental health hostel, the dental and diabetic education centre and the Tallowood dementia day care centre. In 1994 the volunteer hosts service was launched. In 1996-97 work

commenced on the \$90 million redevelopment of both Mount Druitt and Blacktown hospitals. In 1998 the palliative care unit was opened. I have spoken in this Chamber about the palliative care unit at Mount Druitt Hospital and again commend the palliative care staff for the work that they do.

In 2010 Mount Druitt scored the highest marks in New South Wales for patient satisfaction in an independent survey. In 2014 the expanded dental unit opened and the rehabilitation expansion was completed. In 2016 work commenced on the Mount Druitt stage two expansion. In 2017 a new pre-admission clinic opened, as did the new centre for addiction medicine, the MRI unit and the expanded recovery area. The digital theatre was also completed that year. Most recently, in 2018, the community dialysis centre was opened.

As that record demonstrates, my community is home to an excellent healthcare facility. Mount Druitt Hospital is the workplace of caring and compassionate staff who do their utmost to deliver the best patient care. The volunteers at the hospital are an integral part of the hospital service and have been there since its establishment in 1982. Beyond the mere bricks and mortar, the hospital strengthens the bonds among my community. In saying that, I applaud Mount Druitt Hospital on the celebration of its fortieth anniversary. I call upon the Government to ensure the hospital's continued success, and I look forward to an expansion of services to fulfil the community's needs. I hope that future anniversaries are an equal or greater cause for celebration.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery) (19:10):** I represent an electorate of small communities that is punching well above its weight when it comes to infrastructure investment, which is setting us up for a brighter future. I am proud to have championed greater investment in our region for five years as part of the NSW Nationals in government, for we are the only party that represents the interests of smaller communities like mine. This Government has put in the hard work on road, rail and water security projects for the benefit of tourism, small business and the community well into the future. Those opposite have no plan for the future of regional New South Wales. State Labor left a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog in New South Wales when it left office, and the current Federal Labor Government has ripped billions from regional communities in the Federal budget.

Meanwhile, the NSW Nationals are getting it done. We know how important a safer and more efficient road network is for us to drive to work and medical appointments, to move freight and to succeed in business. Overtaking lanes have been delivered right along the Newell Highway. Upgrades have been made to the Tara-Bectric Road and Maxwells Lane in Temora shire, the River Road in the Junee shire, and the Colinroobie Leeton Road in the Narrandera shire. Substantive safety works have been undertaken on the Bendick Murrell bends on the Olympic Highway north of Young and on the Hume Highway. The Fixing Country Roads program alone has delivered 31 projects totalling over \$23 million of investment. The Government is also adept at responding to challenges as they arise, as shown by the recent \$50 million boost to combat potholes in our local road networks.

Safety and productivity are also priorities in rail, with the reopening of the Blayney to Demondrille rail line being fundamental to getting trucks off our local road network, to improving connections and efficiencies within the existing rail network and to reducing costs for industry. That project continues to have my full support. Reopening the Blayney to Demondrille line just makes sense. It is our missing link in rail freight and particularly of late, when key lines have invariably been impacted by landslips, flooding or bushfires. The Blayney to Demondrille line was closed in the first place thanks to the previous Labor Government. Labor members showed no interest in the line then, and they still do not. Transport for NSW continues to do the legwork required for the reinstatement of that crucial line, with further industry engagement happening as we speak.

We have also seen upgrades to the Temora to Calleen line to a 25-tonne axle load; works on the Temora West and Barellan rail sidings; and the \$11.66 million Coolamon crossing loop extension, which means longer trains can be taken off the main line when loading to allow other rail traffic to pass unimpeded. The Government's record in rail is also about the movement of people, with recent highlights including the completion of accessibility upgrades at the Cootamundra and Junee rail stations. Those works have been delivered to support a safe and comfortable journey for commuters from the moment they arrive at the station.

When it comes to water security for our smaller communities, Government members know there is no better time than now to ensure we have the infrastructure in place to be better prepared for the next drought. The Wyangala Dam wall raising project is the biggest we have, raising the wall by 10 metres to boost capacity by an additional 650 gegalitres. The project is crucial to delivering water security and improving resilience to drought, as well as flood mitigation benefits for communities right along the Lachlan. It is one of the biggest and most complex water infrastructure projects in the State. There is a huge body of work associated with the project, including environmental surveys, geotechnical studies, site investigations and hydrology modelling.

The new Wyangala water treatment plant is part of the early works and is progressing well. It is expected to be handed over to Cowra Shire Council early in the new year. This \$5 million project will deliver up to 800,000 litres of potable water every day to the residents of Wyangala village and the popular Reflections holiday park. More recently, the West Wyalong water security project has got underway, thanks to the Resources for Regions fund. The projects might not be super glamorous, but we know they are vital to support these smaller communities into the future. I am proud to be part of the Liberal-Nationals Government that is working hard to lock in a strong future for small regional communities through such investment.

### CASHLESS GAMING CARD

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (19:15):** Registered clubs are a unique part of Australian life—Pittwater included. No other country has the local club as an integral part of every town and every suburb. The United States has country clubs, the United Kingdom has pubs, other nations have alehouses or cellars, but New South Wales provides a special status for registered clubs on the basis of a long-established social contract. Clubs are afforded a range of special treatments in tax, regulation and even in the planning system on the basis that they provide unique benefits. Local connections are upheld through clear membership arrangements. Social benefits are secured through charitable donation, and not-for-profit status ensures that value is returned to local causes, not private profit.

These community benefits are why, in 1956, the Cahill Labor Government awarded clubs a monopoly on the operation of gaming machines. Ever since, the implied social contract—that the community benefits of registered clubs outweighed the social harms of gambling—has underpinned the legitimacy of clubs as major providers of machine gambling. Machine gaming proved to be a cash cow, with extraordinary revenues fuelling the malignant expansion of some clubs with ballooning assets, memberships and facilities. The original objective of community benefits has, in many cases, been superseded by an emphasis on expansion, market share and profit. Machine gambling has become a dominant fiscal lever, distorting clubs so that the social agenda is subordinated to commercial interests.

Recent Victorian research has found that, similar to other jurisdictions, purported community benefits from gambling revenue are significantly overvalued, with just 1.5 per cent of club net gambling revenue being contributed to charitable and philanthropic purposes. The once friendly, familiar local club—a traditional locus for thriving community—has been distorted and disfigured. Throughout the State, many clubs now feature sizeable spaces dedicated to poker machines in so-called VIP lounges. Where else in the world can you so easily lose thousands of dollars gambling, in the space of a few minutes, in every town and city? And none of these gambling operations would remain sustainable without countless souls blowing their life savings playing addictive video games that are impossible to beat.

Our registered clubs do good work in the community, whether it is supporting veterans, sports clubs or community groups. However, we cannot hide from the uncomfortable truth that human misery is the financial lifeblood for many New South Wales clubs. There are 86,840 poker machines in New South Wales—30 per cent more than in Victoria and Queensland combined. Areas with some of the lowest-paid workers have some of the highest losses to poker machines, further entrenching inequality, further entrenching disadvantage, creating more broken homes, more lost opportunities and more unrealised potential. This week Liquor & Gaming NSW revealed that profits from poker machines—in other words, losses for punters—hit a record \$3.8 billion in the first half of this year. The Premier has shown true leadership and is absolutely right when he says we have to do better. Contrast this with the Leader of the Opposition, who squibbed his chance to join a bipartisan push for action. We can break our addiction to gambling. We must reduce the stakes.

In New South Wales, gaming machines allow vast amounts to be fed into a poker machine at once—hundreds of times more than recommended by the Australian Productivity Commission in 2010. Empower people to resist gambling addiction. Precommitment systems enable gamblers to set binding limits on their losses. Ban gambling advertising that programs young people to a lifetime of addiction. Change the culture. The comforting stereotype of a suburban bowlo nestled in a quiet street under the gum trees is far from the reality of many contemporary clubs, which are bloated concrete bunkers separated from their community by vast, treeless car parks. Outwardly they are brutal, unwelcoming junk spaces that all look the same; inwardly they are a fairytale of lights and delights, all directed to deprive the vulnerable of their savings.

It can all be done. The United Kingdom recently reduced the maximum stake per bet on slot machines by 50 times. Nordic countries have well-established precommitment systems and universal loss limits. Germany does not allow gambling ads on the TV or internet, and strict advertising bans were just announced in Belgium. Sure, change involves administrative cost and personal inconvenience, but that is nothing compared with the savings that will not be lost, the homes that will not be broken and the people we will not lose to suicide. If a cashless gaming card can help liberate a few people from their enslavement to poker machines, then it is the least we can do for the people of New South Wales. Gambling generates demonstrable social harm but ephemeral community

benefit. The social contract justifying the capacity of clubs to offer harmful services is broken. The community has had a gutful. We need to renegotiate the social contract with clubs to ensure the equation adds up to hope, not harm.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (19:20):** On Thursday 27 October I attended a mental health conference in Bankstown organised by Mission of Hope, with keynote speaker Dr Rania Awaad. She is a Clinical Associate Professor at Stanford University, where she is the director of the Stanford Muslim Mental Health & Islamic Psychology Lab. The focus was on the mental health experiences and needs of Muslims and culturally diverse people living in Australia. Mission of Hope was founded to establish a culturally, religiously and trauma-informed service to the Muslim and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Sydney. The two-day conference was co-organised by Mission of Hope and ISRA, and I thank them for their leadership in this space.

Events like these and R U OK? Day platform mental illness and emotional insecurity. They are the start of an important conversation that destigmatises vulnerability and reaching out for help. At its worst, this discourse is confined to a day or a panel discussion and is not complemented by meaningful actions. As an educator and as a politician, I feel this responsibility acutely, particularly when I see the challenges that our community faces—particularly our young people. A once-in-a-century pandemic has taken away loved ones, separated families along State or local government area lines, and dramatically shaped the formative learning years of students. The Northern Rivers has been battered by floods—livelihoods washed away and faith in the institutions tasked with providing assistance tested. The scar tissue of the Black Summer lingers on in communities I connect with, like Bilpin, and an acute cost-of-living crisis intensifies the challenge faced by too many people to provide for themselves and their families.

With increasing levels of demand, the number of people seeking mental health services has jumped 25 per cent compared with pre-pandemic levels. Approximately 31 per cent, or 147,368, of all attempted contacts to the Kids Helpline came from children and young people based in New South Wales—approximately 404 contacts per day, or one contact every four minutes. In 2021 counsellors provided 27,984 counselling sessions to young people based in New South Wales, which was a 12 per cent increase on the number of sessions in 2020. In 2021 we also saw a 111 per cent increase in the number of emergency referrals made to ambulance, police or child safety services in New South Wales. These statistics marry up with the sense we all have that the times we live in are much more difficult. Each hardship varies, each story is different, because each person is different. Any one of us who has been in an electorate office knows that the people who present through the doors are often climbing their own Everest in their own time and in their own way.

We all have a collective responsibility to do more to ease that burden, not only by paving an easier path to access support but also by making sure that the support is available for those who need it. We will never truly know the full social cost of mental illness, but we know, to some extent, the economic cost of poor mental health. The Impact Economics and Policy report commissioned by the NSW Council of Social Service looked at the compounding impacts of repeated natural disasters and the pandemic on the mental health of the population. The report found that lost productivity due to poor mental health will cost the New South Wales economy \$7.5 billion by 2025 without more support for workers and businesses. The report found that rates of depression and anxiety had increased in recent years, with young people some of the worst affected. This includes an almost 50 per cent jump in the number of teen girls presenting for self-harm or suicidal thoughts from 2018 to 2021.

As a father of three adolescent children, I feel a sense of urgency when addressing this crisis. I am very proud of my colleagues the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Keira, the shadow Minister for Mental Health, for committing \$17 million to Kids Helpline over four years to increase its capacity to respond to a rising number of calls. This is what I mean when I talk about mental health days and events being at their best—a platforming of issues with a commitment to do more. Am I okay? Not always, no. But I have a safety net of family, friends and colleagues who support me. I have learnt and continue to learn when I am overstretched or overwhelmed. We would all do well to ask ourselves and each other these questions. For those privileged to serve in positions of leadership, I invite us all to ask what more we can do to address this very important issue, especially for those without the proper support networks that many of us have.

### BUNGENDORE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (19:24):** I highlight all this Government has done to improve amenity for those living in regional New South Wales, by singling out one rural community in Monaro that is becoming a leading lifestyle hub. Tucked in a picturesque valley at the top of Monaro, the historic village of Bungendore is a charming rural escape. It is a mix of lovingly preserved colonial buildings, a thriving arts and crafts scene, innovative local businesses, and developing residential areas in sympathy with surrounding farmland. Most know my love of regional history and so will not be too surprised if I share a little of Bungendore's.

Established in 1837, it was seen as an ideal location connecting the larger centres of Goulburn, Braidwood, Queanbeyan and Cooma. The industrial development of the century, rail, came in 1885 and created a population boom.

Almost 200 years later, Bungendore retains much of its heritage and appeal and so, over recent years, the town has become a much sought-after area to live, work and raise a family. It has been a major goal of our New South Wales Government, and for me as the local member, to make sure this delightful town, with its historic past, is able to look to an even brighter future. Among the incredible benefits secured for Bungendore, for the first time in the town's long history local families will enjoy the best education facilities for their children from preschool through to year 12 in their own community. The incredible \$71 million Bungendore High School will have contemporary facilities comprising 24 flexible learning spaces—including three support learning spaces—a library, a multipurpose hall and canteen, playing courts, an agricultural plot, and kiss-and-drop zones. Along with learning spaces for the likes of science, technologies, English and maths, so will the school cater to personal development, creative arts, languages, vocational education and training, and agriculture.

Such a visual delight will this new high school be, a locally based architect emailed my office to say, "I think the proposed project is a wonderful architectural solution which will enhance the precinct of the proposed high school." Going hand in hand with the construction, there will be improvements for the families, children and staff of Bungendore Public School too. The upgrades include improvements to the existing playing field, a new amenities block and new field lighting. Additional teaching spaces are also to be created. Added to that, the school community called for more play space options for their children, and this Government listened. I have been successful in securing a resurfacing of the basketball court and the reconfiguration of a previously unused area of the school.

The local Scout hall will have the advantage of updated storage facilities. Similarly, following a call for more car parking, I have secured a commitment for that to occur. So will a more than \$1.6 million funding boost to Bungendore Preschool provide an additional 60 places per day, much needed by local families. And there is still so much more going on in Bungendore. Along with consistently welcoming new residents and seeing new businesses open, we recently opened Bungendore's new adventure playground. This incredible play space is the culmination of two years' work by the State Government, the Bungendore Playground Committee and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council. It was a true community effort, and the result is exceptional. I would suggest it is one of the best, if not the best, playgrounds of its kind in the State.

Other infrastructure commitments have included a \$1.1 million boost towards stage three of the Bungendore Sports Hub, a state-of-the-art facility boasting six grass fields, six hard courts, sporting club facilities and an aquatic centre. Stage two is now complete, with two turf playing fields, four netball courts, floodlights and irrigation—yet another project to benefit the entire community. So have there been major commitments to improving our local roads, including significant upgrades to the Kings Highway; and connectivity, too, with the installation of new mobile phone towers in Bungendore, as well as nearby Carwoola and Hoskinstown, through the Government's \$50 million Connecting Country Communities Fund.

Bungendore boasts a new ambulance station, which opened just three years ago, also funded by this Government. Other community projects range from the Bungendore Showground receiving more than \$88,000 to the Bungendore racecourse being the recipient of almost \$50,000 for critical upgrades. All of this, and more, has resulted in an investment in this community of close to \$100 million. Bungendore is realising the benefit of this incredible investment and attention thanks to the commitment of this Government to regional New South Wales. It is happening by government working alongside and with our local community and council to ensure this fantastic Monaro town is well equipped for the best and brightest future possible. Thank you to all who have demonstrated such commitment in achieving this in the best interests of this great community.

### HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE PROJECTS

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:29):** It has been an exciting couple of weeks in Heathcote, with visits from Premier Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Women the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC, as well as a site visit to the Heathcote Road Bridge project. On Thursday 3 November the community attended Engadine Bowling Club for afternoon tea with the Premier. The room was packed to the brim, with the community keen to meet and hear from the Premier. He spoke of current issues and the future of New South Wales. He also discussed matters at the heart of Heathcote. I thank residents for taking the time to attend and share the matters most important to them with the Premier and me. I look forward to taking their concerns forward and continuing to deliver for Heathcote.

Whilst the Premier was in the electorate, we called in at the Coledale RSL Club and I introduced him to a number of community members from Sandon Point Surf Club, Era Surf Life Saving Club, the Northern Illawarra Residents Action Group and the Royal National Park Coastal Cabins Protection League. All who attended were able to discuss freely the local concerns that mattered to them, with the Premier pledging to discuss them further

with his Ministers. Lastly, we met with presidents of Helensburgh cricket, netball, soccer, rugby league, junior rugby league, little athletics and off-road cycle clubs at Rex Jackson Oval. Since I was elected they have trusted me to deliver for each of them with various grants. However, I believe the community deserves a sporting facility that matches the level of community spirit and participation. Since June I have been in discussions with them to collaboratively broach the idea of a Helensburgh sporting precinct. Having the Premier visit was an opportunity to put the case to him that serious funding is required. I thank all presidents and their representatives for taking time out of their busy days to address their needs directly to the Premier.

On Tuesday 25 October, I hosted the Heathcote Women's Forum with guest speaker Minister Taylor. Local women attended and openly discussed issues important to them. The Minister highlighted the New South Wales Government's Women's Strategy, which will help to improve the economic, social and physical wellbeing of women and girls. I thank the women for taking the time to attend the forum and for sharing issues of importance to them. I enjoyed meeting with them all and hope they found the forum enlightening.

Delivering the new Heathcote Road Bridge was one of my proudest achievements, so on a recent visit to the site it was great to see the progress the project team have made. All foundation work for the bridge had been completed, including rock cutting, four piles, piers and headstocks; and the crane had been set up for installation of the Super-T girders. Another major milestone has been reached, with the Super-T girders officially installed. It is an exciting time with the new structure taking shape. I look forward to completion of the project, which will improve safety and journey reliability for commuters. I commend the project team for their hard work and management of the project. Despite all the obstacles they have faced during construction, with severe weather events and flooding, the project is on schedule. It is a job well done.

### FEDERAL BUDGET AND THE ENTRANCE ELECTORATE

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:33):** A lot of discussion and debate has occurred in this House, in my electorate of The Entrance and in the wider Central Coast about the first Federal Labor budget for many years and what it will mean for our community. A lot of the chat has been about what we will or will not get in terms of things built and money spent.

One of the budget items that has not received an awful lot of attention has been welcomed by my local commercial fishing community. I work very closely with them to protect their lifestyle and advance their interests, as they are an important part of the Central Coast community. The Central Coast needs a diverse range of job opportunities to ensure that all of our community can find useful work in the world. The professional commercial fishing community and I worked very closely and became very close during the Government's Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program in 2016-17. I recall hosting meetings of commercial fishermen in this House to hear their concerns. They told me what they were going through under the program and its huge disruption to their professional lives.

Local fisherman Allan Reed said his family had fished on Tuggerah Lake for generations and he outlined the impact of the business adjustment program on his livelihood. At that time the Legislative Council held an inquiry into the business adjustment program. One of the key recommendations from that inquiry was that the Government introduce a country-of-origin labelling scheme. That was one of the concerns of the commercial fishing industry in this country. Our industry is small by international standards and 70 per cent or thereabouts of the fish consumed in this country is imported. However, there is no way for people to know that when they order barramundi at a club, restaurant or pub. They might think they are getting Australian barramundi because it sounds like an Australian fish, but more often than not it is imported from overseas. That was a big issue for my community.

In a media release dated 30 May 2016 and entitled *Seafood labelling on the menu in New South Wales*, then Deputy Premier Troy Grant said the Liberal-Nationals Government would do something about the issue. It is 2022 and nothing has been done of any worth in that area. One can attend a restaurant, club or hotel and not know whether one is consuming local or imported seafood. The people who want to support Australian-grown and Australian-caught food as well as my commercial fishing community and I were absolutely delighted to learn that the Federal Labor Government has committed \$1.6 million towards the mandatory labelling of seafood products. That is a really great outcome. A lot was said about the impact of the budget on rural communities, especially from members of the National Party, but over its years in government at both a national and State level it has never seriously addressed that issue.

I am really pleased that the Albanese Labor Government has committed that money to introduce mandatory country-of-origin labelling for our seafood. When we order food at a restaurant, club, pub or hotel, we can tell whether we are supporting local fishermen who have caught fish that have grown under our stringent local conditions and we can support Australian working men and women in the commercial fishing industry. That also applies to understanding whether or not we are buying imported products. I really look forward to the progress of

that initiative. The seafood labelling bill that I introduced to Parliament was rejected by those opposite. I want to see progress on the matter and I look forward to a successful outcome for my commercial fishing industry.

#### **WARNERVALE BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PRECINCT**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:38):** I raise an issue that first started in 2011 when I was unfortunately caught in the tidal wave of that election. When I lost the election, the people of Wyong had a very short taste of Liberal representation in Parliament. I am pleased to say that my margins now are almost 13 per cent, which is far higher than it was when I first won the seat in 2007. An issue that has continued since then is the provision of secondary education for students in the Warnervale precinct. For those who do not know, Warnervale is a greenfield site on which literally thousands of new houses are being built. Currently it is served predominantly by the Wadalba Community School, but its population is becoming excessive. Over the years the department has tried to placate the community by providing token consultation, but that has led to nothing.

At the 2015 election Labor committed to building a new high school for secondary students in that precinct, and it did so again at the 2019 election. Over the past couple of years I agreed to not push the issue because the department was talking about the possibility of building a senior campus at Wadalba. I was not against that; it is a good idea. It was to be built separate from the current school but on the same grounds in order to alleviate some of the population problems at Wadalba. But a couple of days ago members of the Wadalba community advised me that the department had inexplicably gone cold on the idea. There is another election coming up, and while the Government has allowed thousands of houses to be built over the past 12 years, it has also allowed our public high schools to become overcrowded.

At the moment Wadalba has 1,600 students, but the school was never built for that number, so playground space and a whole lot of issues are causing stress. The Government committed to looking at changing boundaries so that some students could go to Gorokan High School or Wyong High School, but it has never done that. That would have been the simplest short-term solution for the community but, again, nothing has happened and the idea of a senior campus seems to have gone off the agenda. The community, rightly, is now asking for a standalone high school. I have watched that area grow. As a former school principal, I understand the pressures of overcrowded schools. It leads to a range of other problems that impact on learning. At the same time there have been extensions in the private system at Mary MacKillop Catholic College and Lakes Grammar, and St Philip's is about to build a new Christian school up the road at Charmhaven.

The private sector understands the need for more secondary places for the growing population, but the Government is deaf to the issues. I am quite reasonable. People know that I would rather work with the Government than against it to get things for my community. That is why I have got so much infrastructure in my community, including hospital upgrades, ambulance stations, a primary school and a range of other things. But now I will once again ramp up the campaign and put the Government on notice that it must do something. It must start on consultation and planning, because one cannot just build a high school or a senior campus. It takes one, two or three years of planning, and the community cannot wait another four years. The consultation must start now so that we can fully understand the problem and come up with solutions that can be put forward for funding. But at the moment we have zero, zilch, nothing, and it is not good enough.

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:43):** On the hill at New Lambton Heights, straddling the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie boundaries, sits the John Hunter Hospital. It has many highly skilled surgeons and doctors, wonderful nurses and dedicated support staff. They do an amazing job and they are rightly greatly respected by the community. The hospital opened in 1991 and since that time it has had billions of dollars spent on expanding its services and size. While there is much to laud John Hunter Hospital for, the seemingly all-consuming focus of local health administrators and planners to centralise services there is detrimental to communities. People are forced to make their way to that site for even relatively simple requirements because Health will not invest in where they live.

We know hindsight is a wonderful thing. But if ever there was a place to build a public hospital of this size and importance, New Lambton Heights would not be it. Notwithstanding the fact that the hospital is in a bushfire zone and has its own bushfire escape plan, it is incredibly hard to access. For many residents of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the broader Hunter region, a trip to John Hunter Hospital requires some planning. Preparing a packed lunch and carrying a few extra bottles of drinking water for the trip is not a bad idea. If one survives the traffic snarls around the hospital precinct in peak times, they then discover the joys of finding somewhere to park and having to manage the pain of the parking fee.

In the letters pages of the *Newcastle Herald*, many locals still ponder an extension of the city's light rail system to John Hunter Hospital in a desperate bid to find better ways of getting there. The reality is that there is

no light rail system capable of getting up the hill to where the hospital actually sits. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but considering the sites that were chosen in the 1980s for the John Hunter Hospital begs the question: What qualities were considered to be most important for its location? Let us talk about foresight. When I stood in this very spot 15½ years ago to deliver my inaugural speech to Parliament, I spoke about the glaring void in health services between Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital and the Central Coast's Wyong Hospital, particularly casualty and outpatient services. At the time of my election to Parliament, I was part of a significant push from the communities in south-western Lake Macquarie for better public health services in the area and a hospital at Morisset.

A committee chaired by John Quinlan from the Sunshine Progress Association examined what would be needed in the future in our area. On the committee was the former Federal member for Charlton, Greg Combet, and a range of community leaders including many with contemporary or recent experience in the health system. Despite what I and many others believed was a compelling case to at least plan for future healthcare delivery in the Southlake area, the argument was dismissed. Hunter New England Health had no plan then; there is no plan now. Strategic planning for this area has been woeful. The billions of dollars in funding for capital works coming to the area's health service has always been welcomed, but sadly little of it seems to be directed beyond the conglomeration on the hill 60 kilometres away at John Hunter Hospital.

The level of my frustration and that of the local community is beyond palpable. It is made even worse when we see the Government spending millions and millions of dollars on roads around John Hunter Hospital just to ease the traffic trying to get in and out of it. It is mind boggling because it never had to be that way. When will we start providing public health services and building facilities in places where people can easily access them? For example, Morisset is on the main northern rail line. It is just a minute off the national M1 motorway. It is in the middle of a rapid expansion area where the local population will grow by another 6,000 people in the next few years alone. What does it take to get someone at the Hunter New England Local Health District to understand that? Sadly, we are now rapidly losing sites in the local area where a hospital or public health facility could be located. Those sites should have been on Hunter Health's radar but are now missed opportunities.

The curtain may be coming down on another government, but I am hopeful I will be part of the new Parliament next year. Whatever form that new government may take, I can assure it right now that the large and growing population of the greater Morisset area has the right to be provided with accessible public health care. Things must change. Planning for a new hospital must begin. Investment must be made and the equitable provision of public healthcare services must be extended to the people of south-western Lake Macquarie.

### COALMINING INDUSTRY

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:48):** Tonight I inform the House that the Upper Hunter electorate has again celebrated an industry that is a driving force of the Hunter Valley's economy. It might be hard to believe, but the Hunter Coal Festival is a relatively young event, despite representing a rich industrial heritage in the region which spans approximately 225 years. When European settlers started the first export industry in New South Wales, few could have imagined the impact that the black sedimentary rock that was found near the mouth of Coal River—later named the Hunter River—would have on the local area and ultimately other nations in the years to come. The *NSW Mining Industry Expenditure Impact Survey 2020/21* released earlier this year by Lawrence Consulting provides a snapshot of the industry's current day economic impact.

The annual mining expenditure survey found that in the last financial year participating mining companies supported over 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs and directly injected \$14.6 billion into the State economy. The Hunter region recorded the highest direct expenditure in 2020-21, with \$6.1 billion or 41.6 per cent of the total direct spend across New South Wales. In terms of total economic benefit, the 28 companies surveyed had the highest overall impact in the Hunter region. My electorate of Upper Hunter, which includes Singleton and Muswellbrook, has 4,300 of the 7,269 full-time equivalent jobs in the local mining industry, generating over \$641 million in associated salaries and total industry spending of almost \$2 billion. For the record, in 2019-20 this Government raised \$1.7 billion from royalties, with coal providing \$1.5 billion of revenue.

Discussions began a decade ago on how we could celebrate our modern coalmining industry, which is so central to the Hunter Valley community. In 2015, the first Coal Festival was held as a two-week event with events staged from Newcastle to the Upper Hunter. A second festival followed in 2016 before the event was scheduled to be held every two years. In 2018 the festival was judged a success and planning was underway for 2020, but COVID-19 stopped the festival's preparations and the globe plunged into a health emergency. Thankfully, COVID-safe conditions have allowed our Upper Hunter communities to resume community events over the past 12 months. That meant the Hunter Coal Festival could also return and it was held from 21 to 29 October. It is fitting that Muswellbrook was the launching pad for the 2022 festival, providing an opportunity to celebrate the pioneering Muswellbrook Coal Company's 115-year contribution to the Hunter coalfields.



A careers and innovation expo at Muswellbrook RSL Club was the festival's opening event. It gave Upper Hunter residents, including over 150 students, the opportunity to learn from mining companies and suppliers about the career opportunities available across the industry. Mining, like many other public and private industries in the Upper Hunter, has its own COVID-induced workforce shortages. Whilst pick and shovel has made way for draglines, excavators, dump trucks and water carts, the modern Hunter Valley coal industry is also searching for tertiary degree educated workers, especially those educated in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. For those who were keen to see mining at close quarters, the Bengalla Community Open Day was held on Saturday 22 October at the Muswellbrook Showground. Bus tours to the mine sites were scheduled throughout the day, allowing the community to see close up what happens at an open-cut mine site.

On Friday 28 October, a tradition that has spanned decades in Singleton wrote a new chapter when the Hunter Coal Festival's Mining Leaders Lunch was held at the Civic Centre. Singleton Council began the community's dialogue with the coal industry when it staged coal discussion days at the Civic Centre from the 1980s to learn more about mining. Federal Resources Minister Madeleine King was the festival's keynote speaker at the lunch this year. Also in attendance was Stephen Galilee from the NSW Minerals Council and Steve Fordham from Blackrock Industries. On Saturday 29 October a community day held at the Singleton Showground was the focal point for the festival's closing event. Numerous displays by mining companies were held. The coal industry also took the opportunity for the community to see what it is like on a mine site. I congratulate everyone involved on staging the festival this year, particularly festival organiser, Singleton Business.

#### **WESTMEAD HOSPITAL AND AMBULANCE STAFF**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Corrections) (19:54):** It is important to recognise the work done by our outstanding hospital system and the care given by the staff. I wish to bring to the attention of the House the great work of the Westmead Hospital staff and ambulance officers. It was with great pleasure that I was able to give very positive feedback to Graeme Loy, Chief Executive of the Western Sydney Local Health District, about my experience at Westmead Hospital, where the Government recently spent over \$1 billion on new facilities.

It all started about eight weeks ago when I fainted at home at 9.00 a.m. on a Saturday. I believe the appropriate term is a syncopal episode. My partner phoned the ambulance service and they came incredibly quickly, in less than 10 minutes. I cannot commend the ambulance officers more highly. They were kind and helpful, not just to me as a patient but to my family, especially my daughter who, surprisingly, was in shock about seeing her father lying on the ground in a pool of blood. The ambulance officers realised that I had a very low pulse rate and, unsure about what was wrong, they called a second ambulance. I commend the team leader, Peter Handler of NSW Ambulance, who transported me to Westmead Hospital. Certainly the ambulance officers went above and beyond the call of duty, helping out and looking after my family when I left home to go to the hospital.

The Westmead Hospital's emergency department is very busy and takes care of close to 200,000 people a year. The hospital has outstanding new facilities. We often hear about emergency centres having difficulties, and western Sydney, particularly Westmead, is no different. Various people present in distress for a whole range of reasons, including people who are aged, people with mental health problems, people who are battling drug addiction or other drug issues, people who may be better served attending their local GP, as well as people who need emergency medical help. In the time that I was at the hospital, I can say that the staff did their very best to look after everyone. Even so, I am sure that even they would say that they could always do better.

That night Dr Andrew Watkins, who is a maxillofacial surgeon, came to the hospital after hours. He was on call that night and was having dinner but he left his home, his two young children and partner, to come to the hospital. He is a specialist in the area of reconstructive surgery. He was certainly warm and engaging. I commend him on not only his excellent bedside manner but also his ability to pull back the ragged edges of the cuts to my skin and stitch my skin back into place. I commend him on his abilities. I must also say that the cardiology ward has outstanding new facilities. I understand that there is no better place for people with medical issues to be treated. The doctors and nurses administer state-of-the-art care and are really great.

I commend cardiologist Dr Saurabh Kumar, who is extremely professional. He took the time to explain to me thoroughly and gave me reasons why he was going to operate. He even drew a diagram. I appreciate his work as a specialist. His registrar, Dr Sumedh Jayanti, is an incredible success story and an example of our public education. He attended James Ruse High School and medical school and is now a resident. I feel confident in saying that he is a very passionate doctor and that one day he will be a very wonderful and successful cardiologist.

Finally, I mention Matthew Han, a nurse educator, who took the time to look after me. At that time, industrial action was being taken. Matthew rolled up his sleeves to put patients first. He usually does not work on the wards but because of the industrial action he put the care of patients first. He is a wonderful example to the

student nurses he teaches. There could be no better example to impart to the next generation of our nurses. I congratulate Westmead Hospital on all the specialist services it provided to me: an ECG and MRI imaging of the heart; the gastroenterology service; a barium swallow test, which was tough; an exercise cardiac stress test and electrophysiology to check the heart's electrical signals; and the installation of a cardiac loop monitor, which will monitor my heart for the next six months. I want to thank all the staff at NSW Ambulance and the staff at Westmead Hospital.

### CANTERBURY CITY COMMUNITY CENTRE

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:59):** I congratulate the Canterbury City Community Centre on celebrating 50 years of service to the community. The Canterbury City Community Centre, also known as the 4Cs, is based in Lakemba and runs many important programs and activities across our wider community. This non-government organisation is firmly committed to its motto "Community Building Community". The 4Cs was founded in 1972 and now employs a team of staff and volunteers who deliver essential services for residents in the local community, particularly the elderly and our multicultural community. The 4Cs offers fantastic programs to provide valuable support for the local community. One program, which is called Mum 2 Mum, brings together women and their children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It is so important because it brings mums and their children together to practise their English language skills and settle in our local community.

The 4Cs also provides services such as transport, domestic assistance, allied health services, respite and personal care, social support and home maintenance for the elderly. The 4Cs supports elderly residents to remain comfortable and independent in their own home and to stay involved with their community. The 4Cs operates as a community hub where residents can become involved in a range of services and can meet others within their community to socialise through long-term and short-term programs. I acknowledge Esta Paschalidis-Chilas, who has served the community as CEO of the 4Cs for the last two years. Esta took up the role at a very challenging time. The past two years have been very challenging for our community. Esta has helped to steer the 4Cs through its development and has continued to maintain its core vision, mission and values.

Esta also has been a tireless advocate for the community, particularly during COVID and associated lockdowns in our local community. The 4Cs provided support to those who were struggling and remained accessible to the local community. Throughout this very difficult time, Esta, the board, the staff and the volunteers provided leadership and initiative in ensuring that people were supported and cared for. I know, as a result of the many meetings on Zoom we had with the Government, that the 4Cs was at the forefront of advocating very strongly to the Government about the centre's need for resources. I very much acknowledge the 4Cs' leadership on that front.

I also acknowledge the previous CEO, Liz Messih, who was the CEO for 22 years. At Liz's farewell, she said that it had been a great privilege to be part of the organisation and she is very proud of her association, her work and the commitment of bringing everybody together. Particularly over the last 22 years when she was the CEO, she initiated a number of very important programs. Our current CEO, Esta, recently stated in the 4Cs' fiftieth anniversary newsletter:

One of the things that attracted me to the role was knowing we are confident in our contribution to the collective impact of the community and sector. We know that our work builds on the work of others and does not happen in isolation. Partnership and collaboration has been in our DNA from the very foundation, 50 years ago.

I also wish to announce a number of the many programs offered by the 4Cs, which include STARS—the Skills Training and Resource Service—the Garden Care Program, the Lakemba Community Garden, the original Canterbury Men's Shed, the Lakemba Ladies Lounge and many short courses, social inclusion groups, events, activities and campaigns such as I Love Lakemba as well as what we saw from the centre over the last couple of years. I acknowledge the 4Cs' board of directors, Rhiannon Cook, Rachael Gavarotto, Stephen Hoy, Jubaida Hossein, Annette Bird, Max Dixon and Michael Stoddart. I thank them for their tireless advocacy and service to the local community. Congratulations and I look forward to celebrating next week.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Before I call the member for Coffs Harbour, I welcome in the gallery Motorcycling NSW CEO Daniel Rushworth. Welcome to tonight's events.

### COFFS HARBOUR REGIONAL BOAT RAMP PRECINCT

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:04):** A few years ago the Coffs Harbour Regional Boat Ramp Precinct Enhancement Committee was created. As the name suggests, the committee wanted to improve the precinct with 10 enhancements. It sought community endorsement of the plan with more than 12,000 signatures on a petition. In the lead-up to the last election I joined the then Deputy Premier and the then member for Coffs Harbour to announce funding for an upgrade to the Coffs Harbour boat ramp precinct. I say up-front that the most controversial aspect is now the extension of the rock wall, or groyne, by 75 metres. The wall has exposed a problem with siltation that was not there before its construction. Weather conditions are being

blamed, and I acknowledge that is being met with scepticism and cynicism in the community. Before I talk about that in more detail, we need to understand how we got here.

The harbour accumulates between 20,000 and 50,000 cubic metres of sand per year, depending on the conditions. That sand should be travelling north to Park Beach and beyond. As a result, without dredging, the harbour is slowly filling up with sand. In 2018 the committee released a report that detailed 10 enhancements to the boat ramp precinct: a 75-metre extension to the groyne; a widened bay and ramp area provision for 12 boats; a six-boat environmental wash down area; more parking for cars, boats and trailers; toilet and shower facilities; increased boat rigging and derigging capacity; security cameras, lighting and signage; enhanced fish cleaning facilities; recreational and barbecue areas; and a redesigned walking path.

I will focus on the first point, the groyne, because that is now the most talked about area. The report detailed in some length possible locations for the precinct and various other options. It recognised that the harbour is the subject of significant siltation and that this will continue unless the harbour is dredged or the south wall is extended beyond Mutton Bird Island. The purpose of the groyne was to make the mouth of the boat ramp safer. The report states:

The addition of a breakwater extension in a north, north-westerly direction from the existing boat ramp basin breakwater was demonstrated to reduce ocean swell wave energy at the mouth of the basin. The 75-metre breakwater extension option was considered to be the most effective option in reducing wave swell conditions.

But we all know now there is another problem—the sand. Investigations from coastal engineers found the wall to be one of the issues, which has intensified the sand build-up. Sand is being trapped on the shore side of the wall, which is creating issues for navigation. Over the last few months dredging has been periodic, but yesterday a floating dredge arrived that will maintain a navigable entrance to the boat ramp. This is a short-term fix, but it needs to be done until the long-term solution is implemented. Long term, the solution looks like it will be a bypass style system and options are currently being peer reviewed with a likely installation date early in the new year.

Four years ago I signed up to a vision of an amazing boat ramp precinct. The plan had universal support from the community, council and even the Labor Opposition. I am having regular meetings with the Minister for Transport, the Deputy Premier and the Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office about the issues and implementing the solutions. I am in regular contact with boaters and enthusiasts and I will be at the boat ramp for this weekend's gathering. The siltation at the ramp has been a problem since it was built decades ago. The wall has magnified it. I share the disappointment, frustration and anger of the boating community.

I agree that it has become a debacle. I have also discovered there are many different opinions on how the issues should be fixed. Regardless of any of that, I applaud the boat ramp committee for having a vision for the precinct and getting the community and government on board. We absolutely have hit a hurdle, but I have not been hiding away hoping this problem will go away. I am working hard to make sure that that vision is realised, to make sure that Coffs Harbour has a boat ramp precinct that delivers on the 10 enhancements and that we have a precinct of which we can all be proud.

### MARTINS CREEK QUARRY

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:09):** I speak about a project at Martins Creek Quarry which is of grave concern to many of my constituents. On Monday and Tuesday this week two public meetings were held with the commissioners of the New South Wales Independent Planning Commission [IPC]. The member for Upper Hunter spoke about this issue in his private member's statement last week. We have not had a chance to have a chat, as he promised, but maybe this will be sufficient for now. I have written to his office about that. This is an issue of grave concern to my community.

Prior to my election in 2015, when I was doorknocking in Bolwarra with Councillor Loretta Baker along the route of the trucks servicing the quarry, we were very quickly appraised of the community's views on the issue. We met with a number of local residents at a community meeting about the issue, as well as attending another community meeting in the Paterson area in the electorate of Upper Hunter. There is an ongoing significant concern because a lot of truck movements have been coming out of that quarry for a long time. There have been significant increases at times well out of consent. This has come to the Independent Planning Commission because Dungog council, the consent authority, has knocked it back. It has gone through different court cases and now here we are at the IPC.

After my representations to the New South Wales Government in 2014 and 2015, Maitland City Council was successful in getting a very small grant of \$1.2 million from the State Government to undertake road widening and repairs on Bolwarra Road to reduce the impact of the road noise—which was terrible because of the bumpiness of the road—and to increase safety for pedestrians, particularly around school time. There were no footbridges. At that time the company significantly reduced its operations, which resulted in reducing truck movements. But

the concern is that, because there have been so many breaches of consent over time, there is a lack of faith from the community that they will stick to it and there will be an increase in scale.

The frustration from many in the community is there is a railhead at Martins Creek Quarry. Last week I spoke to the Australian Rail Track Corporation about this issue and asked if there was a possibility of that being used. I have spoken to the proponents for the quarry, Daracon, and asked them to consider that. They say there are some constraints. I will be very clear, this is what I have said to them as well. We all know that we need to get rock out of the quarry for our roads. We need to have better roads in New South Wales. We are really struggling, particularly in regional areas. I have a community that has put forward bids for up to \$100 million for road projects to relieve congestion on freight roads that are being used by trucks going to quarries—not just at Martins Creek but also at Brandy Hill—and its roads are being chewed up by these trucks, but we got \$1.2 million from the \$543 million Fixing Country Roads budget. It is disgusting.

Earlier I listened to the member for Cootamundra boast about 31 projects in her electorate that were supported by that program—\$23 million. We would like just a couple more of those millions to come through to Maitland. If this is truly a State-significant project, then there should be an investment by the State Government to ensure that the aggregate and quarry rock coming out is being used on the roads it is damaging. I thank the people from the Martins Creek Quarry Action Group, who have briefed me very professionally, clearly and articulately. They have visited quarries in southern New South Wales and they talked about projects worth \$34 million. Recently I was at the awards for the Concrete and Aggregate Association. The association talked about the \$20 million amelioration work it is doing for communities that are providing the rocks and other materials for our road reconstructions so that they are not being completely overwhelmed by truck movements through their towns, which is destroying them, their livability and amenity. I am fair dinkum about the issue. It is great that the member for Upper Hunter wants to talk to me about issues in the House. It is lovely that he is in the Speaker's chair tonight, but he should pick up the phone and write emails. Let us be bipartisan about this issue.

#### **MEMBER FOR BARWON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:14):** As the year draws to a close and the election draws near, it is interesting to reflect on my time as the member for Barwon. When I was elected at the March 2019 election, things were not looking great. The electorate had been suffering for years under the neglect of the Liberal-Nationals Government. The State was in the grip of the worst drought in Australian European history, and very little had been done by the Government to alleviate the financial, physical or mental distress of those suffering from the drought. The Government was standing idle while water supplies in regional communities were drying up. Volunteers were driving private vehicles with box trailers full of water to Barwon communities. Even before the beginning of my term, I began to apply political pressure for broad drought relief, which eventually came, but very late in the day.

In early 2020 the rain came and washed away the dust, but soon there was a new problem that the Government was inclined to ignore: the mouse plague. I went in to bat for farmers and communities who were having produce ruined, machinery destroyed, homes and businesses invaded, and extra mental stress added on top of the stress they had endured during the drought. The Government told me that it could not fix the problem by throwing money at it, but eventually bowed to political pressure. I worked with NSW Farmers and the Country Women's Association on that issue, and I thank them. The Government provided a \$150 million compensation package to farmers, households and businesses to deal with the mice problem.

At about the same time, the pandemic came along. The Government again demonstrated a misunderstanding of people in regional areas by imposing health orders that were patently unsuited to country areas. Fortunately, my access to and relationship with the health Minister allowed me to have those orders changed at least 10 times to better fit the needs of regional New South Wales and accommodate the border communities along our South Australian, Victorian and Queensland borders. It has been a similar story with many other issues over my time in this role. I have used my access to Ministers and the good relationships that I have cultivated with them to achieve a lot for my constituents.

Some of the victories were small, while others were more significant. The following is just a sample. I was able to secure a vital, reliable water supply for Emmdale Roadhouse, which is something The Nationals never did. Wanaaring Health Centre received an extension to its consulting rooms, with no hoops or business case. That was secured through a relationship. I successfully asked for and received a review of the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme, leading to increases in reimbursements. I called for and supported the regional health inquiry, and I will keep pressure on the Government to follow through with that.

I was able to get an audit into the design and construction of Pooncarie Road. I fought successfully for the unincorporated area to be considered for disaster funding like a local government area. I successfully advocated for Imperial Lake to remain in the Broken Hill community as an asset; it is now about to be turned into a major

tourist attraction for the area. I suggest the Temporary Speaker go there. My team organised for increased services at the Tilpa medical centre. I successfully lobbied the State Government to request a royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin. I was successful in getting the decommissioned prisons Yetta Dhinnikal at Brewarrina and Warakirri at Ivanhoe repurposed for use respectively as a rehab centre and refuge and as accommodation for mineworkers. I successfully negotiated a review into the NSW Firearms Registry with the Premier's office. I achieved so much more.

Those are some of the examples in a five-minute statement. All of those examples are small fry and not that important. The record funding to the electorate stands as a testament to how things have turned around since 2019. In the financial year 2016-17, before I was elected, the electorate-specific funding spend in Barwon was \$132 million. In the most recent 2022-23 budget, the spend had gone over \$907 million. As we head towards the election, I look back on what a term it has been for Barwon. Most Parliaments will deal with one, maybe two major events during their term, but I have seen the worst drought in European history, a horrific mouse plague, a one-in-100-year pandemic and currently near-record flooding across the electorate.

There are still plenty of things I want to do. I want a Doppler radar at Fowlers Gap to cover the black spot in the far north-west of the State. That would give the whole State richer data and inform Far West residents about impending storms, and it would have saved millions of dollars in hail damage and flooding. Pastoralists would have been better prepared for livestock management and dam clean-outs in preparation for rain events. There is also still a major problem with telecommunications and internet access across regional New South Wales. That is largely a Federal issue but needs to be addressed. The health system in country areas is still suffering from years of government neglect. We still need to solve the problem of housing in the rapidly growing areas in the Barwon electorate. A major issue as we head towards the election will be roads. That issue needs a bipartisan solution with collaboration between all levels of government. It will be a massive task that will not be solved before the election, and I will pursue it in my next term if the electorate wants me to continue this work for a further four years. If it does, I stand ready to do that work.

### **BILPIN FRUIT BOWL**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:19):** I acknowledge the many years of effort and hard work invested by the owners of the Bilpin Fruit Bowl as they continue to provide a fun experience for locals and visitors to Hawkesbury. That follows managing multiple devastating events, including bushfires and a worldwide pandemic. It was an exciting day at Bilpin Fruit Bowl recently for Margaret and Simon Tadrosse. The Tadrosse family has owned and operated the Bilpin Fruit Bowl since 1985, and now they are adding another dimension to it. I was honoured to cut the ribbon on the new strawberry hothouse where 70,000 strawberry plants are now available to the public for picking, as part of the new pick-your-own-strawberry experience.

Since the tragedy of the Black Summer bushfires of December 2019 and January 2020, Margaret and Simon's business has undergone a transformation. With the assistance of the New South Wales Government's Bushfire Industry Recovery Package, a grant of \$1.2 million was made available so that the strawberry farm could evolve. The grant turned a disaster into an opportunity. I like to call it a "disastertunity". As they turned their sights to the recovery, Margaret and Simon were able to think outside of the square and find a new way to bring tourists to the area. Their initiative is a great example for their children and other locals looking to boost their businesses.

With government funding, they were able to repair fire-damaged infrastructure and also add the two strawberry hothouses, which have become the Bilpin Fruit Bowl's latest attraction, offering visitors a pick-your-own-strawberry experience. The addition means the Bilpin Fruit Bowl can now employ four more full-time staff and bring on extra casual staff for weekends. That translates into an escalation of Margaret and Simon's business and also boosts local jobs. The new hothouses also mean strawberries can be grown all year round.

The Black Summer bushfires wreaked devastation on so many businesses and families across New South Wales. They were then followed by several years of on-and-off closures due to COVID-19, which forced the doors of many businesses to shut to visitors and tourists. The closures, though, allowed Margaret and Simon to focus on the construction of the hothouses. After all the challenges, it was heartwarming to be at the grand opening as Margaret and Simon helped cut the ribbon on the strawberry hothouses. It was an inspiration to see how they took the opportunity to pick up the pieces from the ashes and use the recovery funding to actually grow their business. That is what is done in Hawkesbury: Locals pick themselves up and get on with the job ahead.

I encourage everyone to take the beautiful drive out to Bilpin on Bells Line of Road and spend some time picking strawberries on the farm. It is a great way to spend a day outdoors with the family and leave with fresh strawberries to enjoy, or even eat them on site. The Bilpin Fruit Bowl also offers much more than just strawberries. An assortment of fruits and vegetables can be picked, depending on what is in season. I recommend the homemade

apple pies, meat pies and all the other sweet treats, and a few apple ciders on the side. I congratulate Margaret and Simon on their entrepreneurial approach to this bushfire recovery, and I am pleased that the New South Wales Government funding assistance provided an incentive to achieve that amazing outcome.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SECTOR

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:23):** I recently had the privilege of sitting down with a group of hardworking early childhood educators from the electorate of Blue Mountains to thank them for the important work they do in our community and listen to their concerns about the future of their profession. I was welcomed to the beautiful Katoomba Leura Preschool where educators from across the mountains had gathered. I offered my solidarity on a day they were pausing to take industrial action, which is a rare occurrence in the early childhood education sector. But as was communicated to me so strongly that day, the sector is in crisis and immediate reform and action is needed.

After spending time with passionate and committed educators, it was clear to me they feel undervalued, despite being skilled professionals who conduct meaningful, important and exhausting work each day. I heard that too many early childhood educators are leaving the sector due to burnout from excessive workloads and low pay, and that services are having to limit enrolments and close rooms due to understaffing. They were not being overdramatic. Just weeks after the meeting I received the awful news that an early childhood service in my electorate had been forced to close due to staffing issues. BOOSH, a much-loved out-of-hours service in Blackheath, has been unable to attract new staff because of the sector's poor wages and conditions. That is a huge loss for the Blackheath community, and I hope the service can be supported and will reopen as soon possible.

I listened carefully to the stories that were shared that morning, as well as to those from other educators who sent theirs to my office afterwards. I promised them that I would share their stories in Parliament, which I am honoured to do tonight. Talia, who is new to the profession and is still completing her certificate III, said:

I absolutely love my job. It's not just playing with children, nor is it just watching them. It's so much more. I am well aware I can earn more doing an unskilled job such as working in Woolworths. However, I have chosen a job that is rewarding and gives back to the community. A 17-year-old babysitter with no qualifications or life experience is paid more than me on a trainee's wage. I earn \$20 an hour while most babysitters are charging \$30 an hour.

Catherine, another educator, told me that she loves her job but is feeling frustrated. She said:

I'm passionate about working with young children, but passion doesn't pay the bills. We want recognition for our profession and to stop being referred to as "childcare workers". We are teachers and educators.

Justine, a veteran who has worked in the profession for 30 years, told me that she has followed her passion for working with young children despite the disapproval of her father. Her experience is heartbreaking and encapsulates so much of the current crisis. She wrote:

My father told me that if I chose early childhood education, he was not going to support my further studies or my career path. He asked, "Why do I need to go to university to learn how to change nappies?" This comment was said back in 1991 and I have carried it with me since. My father to this day has not been able to appreciate or acknowledge the fact that I have studied and have my degree. He never attended my graduation or assisted me with my university fees, despite doing so for my sisters. Sadly, I feel that my father's opinion of the early childhood sector is still prevalent today. We are seen as professional babysitters. Society hears the language used to describe our sector as "care", "minding" and "play" et cetera.

The experiences of Talia, Catherine and Justine illustrate powerfully why change is needed. Early Childhood Australia surveyed over 700 educators from across Australia. In response to the question about how they currently feel about working in the early childhood sector, over 70 per cent of respondents said that they were "exhausted" and "stressed" on a daily basis. Our early education sector must be properly valued and recognised for the professional work that educators do. I acknowledge the advocacy of the United Workers Union. The dialogue and language need to change. Those working in the sector should be referred to as "educators" and the pay should reflect their work as trained professionals.

To value our precious early childhood educators, I urge the Government to work with the Federal Government to ensure that they have a reason to stay and are awarded fair pay. The Government should value early learning as part of the education system as much as it does schools. It must put children's outcomes first in the early education system. I honour and thank all early childhood educators in the Blue Mountains electorate and across New South Wales, especially those who shared their experiences with me. I value their skilful, significant and crucial work.

### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (20:28):** October was Mental Health Month in New South Wales, which served as an important reminder to all of us to take the time to check in with our family, friends, loved ones, work colleagues and even ourselves. The event encourages everyone to prioritise their mental health and exercise self-care. There is no doubt that the issue of mental health ranks highly in the Wollondilly electorate

where our sense of community is vital. To say that the Wollondilly community has had it rough is, to say the least, an understatement. In the past few years we have not only shared the same struggles as the rest of the country and the world, such as the impacts of the pandemic, but also dealt with other extreme disastrous events.

The far-reaching impact of recently losing five teenagers in a horrific road trauma incident in Buxton has devastated the community. Unfortunately, the loss of young lives in vehicle accidents in my electorate is not uncommon. The Quest for Life Foundation, located in the adjoining electorate of Goulburn, partnered with the Road Trauma Support Group to provide immediate support for road trauma through its Moving Beyond Trauma program. If services were permanently in place before a tragedy, it would relieve the pressure of locating services and providing care when time is of the essence. To support the mental health of my constituents, about 400 tradies and other members of my community came together on R U OK? Day to have a chat and connect over coffee and breakfast. The Hon. Damien Tudehope and the Hon. Victor Dominello were there on what was a wonderful day. We held a minute's silence for the victims of the crash in Buxton, which happened the day before. The day brought the community together, with many local organisations, including Service NSW and the Commonwealth Bank, in attendance. The minute's silence was beautiful. The community is still reeling from that tragic loss in September.

Tradies form part of the backbone of the community. A significant number of registered businesses are involved in the construction industry, and we owe so much to them. In New South Wales around 17 per cent of the workforce works in construction. In the Wollondilly electorate it is 32 per cent. As a former tradie, I was proud to be with those young men and women who came out that day for the community to ask, "Are you okay?" A lot of those tradespeople also volunteer for the SES, RFS and other volunteer organisations. They are an integral part of the community and have skin in the game. They do a lot of work outside of their jobs, but no-one ever asks them, "Are you okay?" They work hard from 6.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. They have a tough time, working long hours running their own businesses and doing invoices, just like I did in my 20s. The day had a very positive impact on my community.

Recently I had the pleasure of working with Guy Sebastian and the Sebastian Foundation. As members would have recently seen in the media, it was absolutely beautiful of Guy Sebastian, along with his wife Jules and his team, to come out to Picton High School and surprise over 1,000 students at their assembly by singing three of his hit songs. It was a really magical moment and you could see the tears of joy in the kids' eyes. Days after I noticed on social media that parents wrote that it was the first time in two months that they had seen their son or daughter come home with a smile on their face. For someone like Guy Sebastian to give up his time to come out to Picton after doing a world tour to help pick up the pieces for the students, teachers, families and friends who were affected by that awful incident was amazing.

Community Links has done some excellent work in the mental health space in my electorate following the tragedy of the crash in Buxton. The organisation offers short-term housing, treatment and support for people with mental illness and mental disorders who are experiencing a crisis. It aims to improve the quality of life for people with a mental illness by avoiding unnecessary presentations to emergency departments or avoidable admissions to acute mental health units by establishing a 24/7 community-based alternative initiative. I am glad to be part of a government that is committed to mental health services and strengthening the rural and regional health system in New South Wales. A record \$2.9 billion in funding from the 2022-23 budget will focus on investing in the spectrum of mental health and acute wellbeing support to ensure that the right services are available for individuals, families and communities.

#### **MULGOA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:33):** I highlight a handful of incredible improvements that the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered for my community in the Mulgoa electorate. I am honoured to represent the hardworking and diverse people of my electorate, which is made up of young families, seniors, young people and individuals who want to build a brighter future. It is this Government's responsibility to ensure that those families and individuals are provided with the opportunities to make the best choices for themselves and their families. To do that, the Government is providing support for women, investing in critical infrastructure and delivering hip-pocket savings for families and individuals who need it most.

Women in my electorate and across the State should rest assured that they remain essential to the Government's priorities. The Government is demonstrating that through the Brighter Beginnings initiative, which will deliver more affordable childcare and Universal Pre-Kindergarten. Through the Brighter Beginnings initiative, this Government is delivering Universal Pre-Kindergarten to ensure the best start for our children and to unlock women's ability to bolster the New South Wales economy. Through the budget delivered for 2022-23, this Government is also investing in women's safety and delivering record support, with 20 days paid leave for domestic and family violence for public sector employees.

Some \$100 million is also being invested into the women's safety initiative, protecting women through a range of measures, such as \$43.6 million to expand the Safer Pathway program to support victim-survivors of domestic and family violence by providing a comprehensive wraparound response to increase women's safety. We are also supporting women by increasing support for menopause awareness and support services, which is an area that affects all women. Sadly, it is rarely spoken about within our communities and within friendships and family groups. Many women suffer in silence. I commend the Government and the Minister for Health for highlighting that need and backing it up with the funding that was announced just a few weeks ago.

In addition to supporting and investing in women, my community is being supported by significant infrastructure, which is already making a tremendous difference to the lives of families, communities and businesses. Because of the Liberal-Nationals Government, together with the Federal Government's support, investment in my community will see the delivery of a new toll-free M12 motorway, which will help drive forward the future of western Sydney and the nation. It will connect my community with the State's next big aerotropolis. Western Sydney will have access to the international community right in our backyard. It will boost jobs, grow businesses, grow communities and drive infrastructure and innovation. The sod has been turned on the M12, on the Western Sydney Airport and on Bradfield, which is the new community being built south of the Western Sydney Airport.

If members have not taken a drive along Elizabeth Drive, I highly encourage them to visit the visitor information centre and take a look at what is happening. It is a transformational project. It is incredible to see what is being built in Badgerys Creek. It is a milestone and a significant shift in western Sydney. It will create a whole new chapter for the communities of western Sydney for us to benefit from now and for generations to come. Finally, I highlight the support and direct savings providing hip-pocket relief for our hardworking families. The Government is delivering over \$7.2 billion in savings for a brighter future for western Sydney families, to ensure that they can keep the electricity on and put food on the table.

I highlight three key measures that will directly benefit my community. Firstly, the Family Energy Rebate is a \$180 rebate for households with dependent children to save on their energy bills. Secondly, the Back to School NSW Vouchers is a highly successful program that provides a \$150 voucher for every child at school to help provide cost savings for school supplies. It commences at the beginning of 2023. The Government is supporting the community and delivering to ensure that no child is left behind at school. Thirdly, the Toll Relief Rebate Scheme is for families who spend over \$375 per year on tolls to save 40 per cent or up to \$750 per year on their toll bill. Families are becoming more aware of that scheme. Commuting on our highways is essential to getting to work on time and getting home to families sooner and safer. I congratulate the Government on ensuring that a brighter future is provided for families right across our State, especially in western Sydney.

### **MEDOWIE HIGH SCHOOL PROPOSAL**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:38):** I have lost count of the number of times I have spoken about the desperate need for a public high school in Medowie in this place. I campaigned for it well before I was elected. It was the reason I first put up my hand to run for Parliament way back in 2011. I raised it in my inaugural speech in this place in 2015, and I have spoken about it many times since. When I first became involved in the campaign, I was nursing my youngest in meetings. She is now in her final year of schooling. On this, the fifth last sitting day of this Parliament and this Government's term, I return to the issue that started it all for me. I want to see secondary students in Medowie, Karuah and the Tilligerry Peninsula attending a public high school closer to home, accessing the public education they deserve in their community. But this Liberal Government has failed to deliver on the promise it made back in 2011. Since then, year after year, Medowie has grown and grown. Year after year, this Liberal Government has failed to deliver on its promise.

The need for a public high school in Medowie has not gone away since 2011; it has only increased. There are now two independent high schools in Medowie, but no public high school. The two high schools in Raymond Terrace—Irrawang High School and Hunter River High School, which are our feeder schools—are already at or over capacity. Some 1,000 new dwellings have been approved in Medowie and are under construction. Port Stephens Council projects that Medowie's population will increase by 7,200 to a population of 17,500 by 2036. Soon there will be a six-bay ambulance station and there is even a 24-hour McDonalds, but no public high school.

Our kids, in their thousands, still squeeze onto school buses every day. That is if they are lucky enough for the bus to turn up. The school bus driver shortage has hit our community hard, with school buses regularly failing to turn up. What is the Government's plan? Instead of delivering public education where it is needed and instead of delivering on its 2011 promise, the Government plans to significantly expand the high schools in Raymond Terrace to squeeze in more students.



It makes me really mad that the Government's short-sighted policy is not driven by the best interests of our kids. It is not in the best interests of students at Irrawang High School or Hunter River High School to expand their schools to squeeze in more kids. It is not in the best interests of kids in Medowie, Karuah, the Tilligerry Peninsula and Williamstown to keep squeezing them onto overcrowded school buses. Our kids' educational outcomes and wellbeing should be at the heart of the decisions made by this Government, but they are not. While Sydney gets new stadiums and grant funds are rorted across the State, the Government has chosen the cheapest, nastiest solution for Medowie. It is a lose-lose for everyone involved. Our kids and my community deserve so much better, and so do our teachers. Teachers are at breaking point across the State due to the worsening teacher shortage, which was in the pipeline well before COVID hit our shores.

Here is the thing: A public high school in Medowie is so much more than a building. It will keep our teenagers connected to the community and their families. This Government does not understand that when we bus thousands of teenagers out early in the morning, returning late in the afternoon, and when the year 6 cohorts get split across several schools and friendships are lost for a lifetime, there is a cost of disconnection and disengagement. It is little wonder that mental health issues are on the rise and educational outcomes are plummeting. Our kids and our community are paying the price of this Government's neglect of public education.

A public high school would transform Medowie. It would lift local kids' education and wellbeing, create local jobs, and stop the exodus to private education that many parents can ill afford. Everyone in Port Stephens knows that Medowie desperately needs a public high school. I thank the thousands of people who signed the petition that I tabled today, demanding that the Government build a public high school in Medowie. After 12 long years of this New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government neglecting public education, my community and an entire generation of students, I have one message for it: Time is up.

#### **OATLEY ELECTORATE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors) (20:43):** On a positive note, residents living in the Oatley electorate have access to some of the best health facilities that the State has to offer. With multimillion dollar upgrades being delivered, St George Hospital has truly become the crowning jewel of the local area. It is a world-class health facility. Further upgrades mean that the hospital will remain a practical option in the future, with the capacity to meet the community's ever-changing needs. While the previous Labor Government neglected St George Hospital for 16 years, the Coalition Government has endeavoured to restore the hospital back to its former glory.

The latest round of upgrades will see the construction of a brand new state-of-the-art ambulatory care building, with over \$410 million invested as a part of the 2022-23 State budget. Included in the design scope are essential health services such as blood transfusions and biopsies, a physical rehabilitation unit, specialised palliative care and brand new surgical services with refurbished operating theatres. Accessibility is the key to these upgrades, with a number of important services under the one roof. Over 300 meetings were held with key members of the community, hospital staff, clinicians and other key stakeholders to ensure that this was truly the right fit for the community. Those meetings have informed the new precinct's design, as well as the core services that it will accommodate.

A further \$26 million was also announced as a part of the latest State budget to construct additional parking facilities at St George Hospital, which locals have been campaigning for over many years. This will allow staff and patients to gain easy access to the hospital, enabling them to get in and out much quicker. This funding is part of the New South Wales Government's record \$33 billion investment in health as a part of the 2022-23 budget. This investment is making a real difference to the Oatley electorate, and we will continue to back these essential services that residents rely on.

An initiative such as the Survivorship Clinic, operating as a part of the St George Hospital Cancer Care Centre, is one of the services making a real difference in the lives of locals recovering from cancer. Medical professionals work alongside patients who have undergone treatment for cancer, assisting them in overcoming the physical, emotional and mental toll of cancer treatment. The testimonies of some survivors are truly heartbreaking. I am so thankful that this service is available so close to home. With cancer impacting so many Australians, the support of skilled professionals in the recovery stage is critical.

I also recognise the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, which has funded research at both St George and Sutherland hospitals. Operating for over 15 years, it has funded over 70 projects, with over \$8.76 million in funding provided. This fantastic organisation supports emerging researchers, who often go on to secure larger grants through external funders to continue their research. This research not only impacts and changes the lives of those living within the St George community but often those in the wider community across Australia and the world. What better place to conduct research than St George Hospital, a world-class institution with some of the best and brightest doctors and nurses in the world?

With over \$740 million invested into St George Hospital by this Government since 2011, this facility is truly one of a kind, providing world-class healthcare services to thousands of locals each and every year. Securing these investments for our local hospital is perhaps my proudest achievement. Working in consultation with the broader community and the New South Wales State Government, I will continue to deliver vital health services to the St George area and, in particular, the Oatley electorate. I am so proud of the work that has been done so far. I thank all the vital healthcare workers who work day in, day out to support our community. Whilst I know that there is always more to do, I can promise that we will continue to get the job done for our local community.

*Community Recognition Notices*

**POLISH CLUB 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I had the great pleasure of attending the Polish Club's 50th Anniversary celebration on Saturday 29 October at their Club in Bankstown. The Polish Club in Bankstown was established by Priest Edmund Gagajek, who formed a committee called Tadeusz Kosciuszko Cooperative in 1959. Following the Second World War, a large number of Polish immigrants settled in Chullora and Bankstown. The committee purchased the land on which the Polish Club sits today in 1959. I would like to thank the President Andrzej Lubieniecki, Vice-President Barbara Kubiak, Treasurer Urszula Orczykowski and Secretary Zurawska for their invitation to the anniversary. I am very proud that this Club continues to champion Polish culture, food and values in Bankstown for the Polish-Australian community, their families and children, and newly arrived Polish migrants. The Polish Club deserves commendation in this Parliament for helping to enrich our broader community over the past 50 years.

**PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to attend the recent Centenary Celebration of Punchbowl Public School. Punchbowl Public will always hold a special place in my heart because I am very proudly a former Punchbowl student! The education that I received at Punchbowl Public helped shaped me to become the person that I am today – strong in my convictions, proud of where I am from, and never afraid to stand up for what I believe in. The Centenary Celebrations included over 300 current and former staff and students. In fact, I had the pleasure of running into a couple of my old classmates. There were traditional dances including African, Indonesian, Pakistani, Arabic and Pacific Islander dances. I extend a special thank you and pay tribute to the Principal of Punchbowl Public School Donna McGeary, the Deputy Principal Eleni Mavridis-Kontakos and the many hard working teachers and staff, both past and present, for their contribution in helping to educate and improve the lives of the local children in Punchbowl. Punchbowl Public has already produced one Member for Bankstown and I have no doubt that I won't be the last given the bright future ahead for the current students.

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ANNUAL CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I had the honour of attending the Opening Ceremony of the Annual Canterbury-Bankstown Children's Festival on Sunday 30 October held at Abel Reserve, Revesby. The Canterbury-Bankstown Children's Festival has been a staple in our community calendar since 1999 and has helped provide a platform for our many diverse community, cultural organisations and language groups keen to showcase their traditions costumes and performances. I wish to acknowledge President Mr Thuat Van Nguyen OAM, Troung Ho and the organising committee, who help to manage this event every year. I further recognise the tireless efforts of the Canterbury-Bankstown Children Festival's volunteers who assist in co-ordinating an impressive programme. The festival was attended by 17 different cultural groups and included performances from Zahrava Ukrainian Youth Association Dance Ensemble, Inspire Performing Arts, Bandana Cultural School, Creative Arts Group Kalinka, Movement Nation Dance Studio, Angel Charms with 4 Little Miss Beauty Queens, Sydney Sakura Kids Cheerleaders, Vietnamese Cultural Schools Association Lakemba, Spreagadh Na Rince Irish Dancing School, Queeness, Inner West Vietnamese Language School, Kud Vardar Bankstown, From Within Performing Arts, JP Dance, Sikh Association of Sydney-Revesby Punjabi School and Sabdamala Nepalese Language School.

**PAULA TOWNSEND**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the wonderful efforts of Orange resident Paula Townsend. For the last 15 years Ms Townsend has worked tirelessly for the Bowen community to improve outcomes for marginalised residents who do not have access to computer technology. In 2007 Ms Townsend with the support of Orange City Council, was given a small room and two donated computers. Children of Bowen residents, including Indigenous children began calling in to the centre after school, where Ms Townsend would help them with their homework and guide them through the computer technology. Teaching the children to share in a supported communal learning environment has made a difference in the lives of scores of children. Over the years Ms Townsend has worked year-round securing second-hand and new computers from businesses and donors

so the Bowen Technology Centre could expand to provide services for the whole community. I congratulate Ms Townsend.

#### **BILL AND MARGARET SANDERS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the outstanding work of the Can Assist volunteers Bill and Margaret Sanders of Peak Hill. Bill and Margaret have taken it upon themselves to be a drop off point for locals to leave cans and bottles to be cashed in at their local Return and Earn Scheme. Since 2018 the couple has sorted more than 420,000 empty bottles and cans with all funds raised going directly to support cancer patients in their area which also includes Tomingly, Trewilga and Mungery. Support for country cancer patients by Can Assist can make a huge difference in the experience of those diagnosed with cancer. Funds are distributed to assist with fuel costs, accommodation and other out of pocket expenses as patients often have to travel long distances to access appropriate cancer treatment. Assisted by their fellow volunteers of their Can Assist Branch Bill and Margaret are to be congratulated.

#### **PARKES COLLEGE FOR SENIORS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of Parkes College for Seniors. Since 2015, when Ronald McDonald House Charities Central West located in Orange first opened, members of the Parkes College for Seniors have handcrafted beautiful items such as rugs, baby clothes, and toys for the children in Orange Hospital from rural areas who are undergoing specialist treatment. Every so often the ladies arrive at RMHC Central West with a boot full of these beautiful items which are gifted to every child whose family is staying at the house. But the generosity of the Parkes College for Seniors does not end there. Through their fundraising efforts from a small group, they provide regular donations to house with the latest a cheque for \$5,000 presented recently. This money goes towards the provision of emergency meals and groceries for families at the house while their child is in hospital.

#### **KIAMA LOCALS JACK ALEXANDER AND TAYLOR HUDSON FROM HUNGRY MONKEY AND THEIR NEW 'LAZY DAZE' BUSINESS VENTURE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I would like to congratulate Kiama locals Jack Alexander and Taylor Hudson from Hungry Monkey who have recently added a new manufacturing arm to their business ventures. 'Lazy Daze' is a new cold-pressed juice company situated behind the Berry Hungry Monkey store. They will produce handcrafted juices free from pathogens, additives and preservatives, while keeping the nutritional value of the ingredients. Lazy Daze currently has three juices with more to come and is already stocked around the Illawarra at Gerringong's Clay Coffee, Shellharbour and Calderwood Bean Roasted and Uncle Earl's in Wollongong. Expect to see a laid-back, fun, vibrant and youthful option that is nutritious. Since opening their business in 2015, the pair have opened three more stores – in Berry, Bowral and Thirroul – and started a food truck business.

#### **KIAMA HEIGHTS RESIDENT MR ALAN WOODWARD RECEIVES AUSTRALIAN MENTAL HEALTH PRIZE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I congratulate Kiama Heights resident Alan Woodward who has been recognised by his peers with the 'Australian Mental Health Prize' to recognise and celebrate his outstanding leadership as a mental health professional at a national level. He has a long and distinguished career in suicide prevention and mental health with a specific interest in evaluation and quality improvement, particularly in crisis services. Alan has contributed to service development, innovation, and policy advocacy for many years, most recently speaking at the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. He currently serves part-time as a National Mental Health Commissioner. Much of the last 20 years has been working with Lifeline Australia where he led a wide range of organisational reforms including building a very strong evaluation function to achieve better outcomes for individuals and communities. He has only recently submitted his PhD on the experiences of people who use the Lifeline crisis line. While the Illawarra has always been Alan's home, he moved to Kiama with his family in 1999. Locally, he is known to many through his participation in the Kiama Precinct and the Kiama Heights Residents Association.

#### **JOANNE MURRELL**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Joanne Murrell on being awarded a community leader award at the Asian Pacific Ministerial Conference on Risk Reduction, which was held in Brisbane during September. She was recognised for her work following the devastating Dunns Road bushfire, which impacted Batlow in 2020. Joanne, who works for Anglicare as the bushfire relief coordinator, has been tireless in her efforts to help Batlow get back on its feet after the devastation of the bushfires. In accepting the award, Joanne told the gathering "my message is to listen to local knowledge, seek out those in the community who are wanting to contribute, not just those who have the loudest voices. This is especially important when working with First Nations people and people from minority backgrounds". She added: "Showing cultural sensitivity is essential. Be

less reactive, slow down and don't rush in, gain trust, don't overwhelm the community with too many services straight after a disaster. Learn about their history and prepare accordingly, collaborate and work alongside other agencies and be consistent with who is visible in that space." On behalf of the community I congratulate and thank Jo for her dedication and hard work.

#### **WAGGA WAGGA'S FROCKTOBER EVENT**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It was great to be at the Wagga Wagga RSL Club last month for the Frocktober event, a fun event held to raise awareness of an incredibly serious issue: ovarian cancer. The five year survival rate for ovarian cancer is only around 50 per cent, so early diagnosis and prevention are very important. Currently there is no screening for the disease. We need more research, more knowledge, and above all we need to talk more about it. That is why it is so good to have hard-working volunteers in our local communities to support events like Frocktober and make sure the awareness message is spread far and wide. Frocktober is Australia's "most fashionable" month-long fundraiser, created by the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, to raise awareness and funds for vital ovarian cancer research. A big thank you to Wagga Wagga's Tracey Page and her children Samantha Plachotny, Megan Page and Brett Page and her father Ralph Lord and to Judy-Ann Emberson for organising this event in Wagga Wagga. Judy-Anne's late sister Jill Emberson was a Newcastle-based ABC journalist who became a passionate advocate for ovarian cancer awareness and funding following her own diagnosis.

#### **CROMEHURST SCHOOL FUNDRAISER**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—The Cromehurst School in Lindfield, in my electorate of Davidson, is an important educational facility for children with a disability. The school is close to my electorate office in Tryon Road and I sometimes see students and parents on school days. Cromehurst has 60 students, all of them living with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Most of the pupils also have secondary disabilities including autism, physical and sensory disabilities, chronic health care needs and challenging behaviours. Dusanka Matic, a parent and President of Cromehurst Special School P&C Association recently organised the first major school fundraiser in 3 years with a Bunnings BBQ in Chatswood running all day. I went along to support the families and friends running the sausage sizzle, which was a great success. I understand the team sold every single sausage and cake on the day, raising valuable funds. Well done to all involved.

#### **NORTHERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—I recently attended the Northern Suburbs Football Association [NSFA] Presidents Dinner. The NSFA is the governing body for thirty clubs throughout Sydney's northern suburbs, from North Sydney to Brooklyn, including several clubs within my electorate of Davidson. Formed in 1957, NSFA organises football competitions for men's, women's, mixed, boys and girls teams across the region. Along with community football matches, it has representative programs which identify and support talented players to progress their football skills and careers into state and national competitions. Football – the game formerly known as soccer – is played across the world and is now the most popular football code in Australia. It has grown by 20 per cent each year, with over 1.8 million players in 2021. School football participation has grown by over 150,000 and women's and girl's football – outdoor, social and futsal, grew to 174,000 players. Congratulations to Kevin Anderson, the new CEO of NSFA. I wish him well at the helm as I do outgoing CEO Edward Ferguson in his new role at Football NSW. Ian Plant continues as the association's President. I commend the NSFA on its active role in promoting sporting participation throughout the Davidson electorate.

#### **CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Football NSW recently concluded its month-long competition, the Champion of Champions Tournament. This competition, open to age groups ranging from Under 12 Girls and Boys to All Age Women's and Men's teams, has been held annually since 1968, missing only the past two years due to Covid-19. The tournament commenced in late September with 300 teams competing in Round One and concluded with 38 teams remaining in the Finals in mid-October. Teams from across NSW came together at the headquarters of Football NSW, Valentine Sports Park in Glenwood to play in this very popular event in the annual football calendar. Lindfield FC Under 14 Girls, a team of enthusiastic and skilled players from my electorate of Davidson, played at their very best to become the 2022 Champions in their category. Local champion Angelina Ly, already a veteran of the game at age 13, scored both Lindfield's two goals to defeat Harrington United 2-1 in a thriller. Congratulations to Lindfield FC Under 14 Girls and to all teams who competed and made this annual event the spectacular success it is.

#### **TINY FOREST INITIATIVE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I was honoured to recently attend a tree planting day in Dapto as part of Wollongong City Council's Tiny Forest Initiative. I joined students from Dapto High School and Council

employees for the planting of 250 native trees and shrubs. This revitalisation of what is known to the students as 'the dirt patch' will be a great benefit to both students and the environment. The 'Green Group' of students at Dapto High School are to be commended for their initiative and effort, using their green thumb to turn something once barren, and sowing it with the seeds of native flora. The students took inspiration from the Japanese Botanist, Akria Miyawaki and it was from Mr Miyawaki's knowledge that the students have been able to create a miniature forest that will mature in the next 10 years. They worked hard to create ideal soil conditions, prepping the ground to have the right nutrients, bacteria and fungi for ideal growing conditions. Congratulations again to Wollongong City Council and the students of Dapto High School on this fantastic initiative.

### **SHELLHARBOUR FOOTBALL CLUB CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate the Shellharbour Junior Football Club for creating history. On this monumental occasion, all 3 sides won their grand finals in Football NSW's Champions of Champions tournament that took place on the 23rd of October. The Champions of Champions tournament is a knockout style tournament featuring the very best sides from every region in the state of New South Wales. It has been decades since any club who entered the competition have been able to field multiple sides and win multiple age brackets. The Shellharbour Junior Football Club had 3 teams win the final: the under 14 boys, under 15 boys and an under 16 girls' team. Both boys' teams went through some adversity to secure their titles. The under 14s team came from an early deficit to beat Pitt Town 2-1. The under 15s fought long and hard all the way to a golden goal win in extra time against the Bankstown Strikers. In stark contrast, the girls team won in dominate fashion, winning 4-1 over Terrigal. Congratulations to all three Shellharbour Junior Football Club teams, achieving something rarely done in Champions of Champions tournament history.

### **JEWISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I was honoured to attend the Opening of the Jewish International Film Festival last month at my amazing local cinema, the Randwick Ritz. The 2022 Jewish International Film Festival runs until the 28th of November and boasts over 50 films from 21 countries. As many might know this is the second Jewish International Film Festival to run this year so for it to return with another phenomenal selection of diverse and captivating film is no small feat. This festival, like so many cultural and film festivals, mean so much to my community as they get to see themselves, their families, their friends, their languages and their traditions reflected on the screen. I highly recommend that everybody has a look at the program and attends the festival as there is definitely something for everyone. Thank you so much to everyone who made this film festival possible, it truly is a cultural highlight of the year.

### **OUR BIG KITCHEN**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Our Big Kitchen is a community kitchen that inspires individuals to come together to help others. Our Big Kitchen prepares and distributes more than 250,000 meals each year, supports over 30 charities, and helps thousands of individuals. I was so honoured to be able to participate and lend a hand in the kitchen alongside Labor Leader Chris Minns and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism Steve Kamper. It was so inspiring to see the scale of the kitchen operation and the commitment and dedication of all the volunteers without whom this amazing support network for people facing food insecurity would not be possible. Thank you to the hard work, generosity, and selflessness of all the local businesses and individuals involved in Our Big Kitchen, especially founders Rabbi Doctor Dovid Slavin and Laya Slavin who got the idea for the industrial kitchen space when they were preparing food for a local family in need in 2005. While many things have changed since 2005 their sense of giving and community responsibility has not.

### **COROWA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SELECTED IN THE RIVERINA AUSTRALIAN RULES TEAM**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following eight students from Corowa High School: Josh Williams, Benji Hanrahan, Isaac Dickinson, Jaxson Bolger, Caile Duryea, Jay Lavis, Text Longmire and Jayden Forge; who were all selected as part of the 2022 Riverina Australian Rules team. Isaac Dickinson was named team captain of the Riverina AFL representative team. These eight students are very skilful players, and have really committed to their football working very hard improving all aspects of their game. As a team they demonstrate positive skills and encourage each other whilst on the field. I will also make special recognition of Isaac Dickinson and Jay Lavis who were also selected to play and represent NSW at the 15 Years and Under Australian Football Championships. Well done to all the players and students of Corowa High school. Congratulations on a terrific effort.

### **DANCERS BEAT OUT PEERS TO CLAIM CITY HONOUR**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Albury students Macy Cartwright 11, of Le Beat Dance Academy in Lavington and Harry Semmler 14, of Evolve Dance Company Albury who have both

received scholarships with performing and arts training centre Brent Street to attend a summer holiday program in Sydney. Both Macy and Harry were selected from 150 students who participated in a series of dance workshops held in regional areas including Albury. The summer school program runs for a week giving the students a chance to learn and practise different dance styles. Well done Macy and Harry. I hope that you gain much from this opportunity to learn more about the artistic pursuit you enjoy and will help you on the path to discovering whether you see a career as a professional working in dance.

#### **DIWALI CELEBRATIONS IN ALBURY 30 OCTOBER 2022**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha community in Albury who on 30 October held their celebrations for Diwali & Annakut -- an annual festival of light. I was delighted to be part of the day and share in the activities and joyful atmosphere. Albury's Diwali is a spiritual and cultural experience with a program led by the children, youth and Hindu devotees. I was welcomed with 'Annakut' -- a mountain of food -- with offerings of a variety of vegetarian dishes which mark gratitude and the 'victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance'. I thank the Hindu community of Albury Wodonga and Yash Patel for sharing this significant day of celebrations with our wider local community.

#### **CHANTELLE GAUCI**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—Having entered the competition "Just for fun" Nowra Local girl Chantelle Gauci has certainly out did herself ending her 2022 Powerlifting campaign with a new Australian deadlift record in her weight class of 67.5kg in the Open Women's category in Melbourne. The competition Chantelle entered was hosted by World Raw Powerlifting and was called Power of the Women 2 and had 40 female competitors as a female only competition, all money raised going to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Chantelle is an incredibly strong woman and after coming back following an injury she made quite the comeback, having pulled a massive 176.5kg deadlift with a 6kg personal best. What an incredible achievement and something to be extremely proud of to help Chantelle keep pushing herself and smash more personal best. I would like to congratulate Chantelle and wish her all the best with her future with Powerlifting.

#### **ST GREGORYS COLLEGE CAMPBELLTOWN BASKETBALL**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—On top of the hill on Badgally Road sits a school with an incredible reputation both in the classroom and on the sports field. In fact, St Gregory's College Campbelltown is known as one of the best and brightest rugby league nurseries in the state of NSW. James Tedesco, Ryan Hoffman, Trent Barrett, Tim Sheens, Jason Taylor and Jack Gibson are just some of the names on the honour roll. But given the results at the recent NSW Combined Catholic Colleges State Championships, it's looks like the college will be a force to be reckoned with for a long time when it comes to sport of basketball as well. After winning the Parramatta Diocese Secondary School Sports Council gala day, the junior basketball squad -- made up of year 7 and year 8 students -- set their sights NSW Combined Catholic Colleges state championships. After a gruelling tournament at Bankstown Basketball Stadium, the boys eventually walked away champions. Congratulations to coach Benedict Limbrey and players: Nile Bushby, Dylan Chew, Zoran Croft, Lochlan Farrow, Ethan Matthews, Azor Ruiz, Brad Smith, Jack Smith, Kingston Tutani, Kyan Wilton, Jackson Woolford.

#### **SETA BERBARI**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—We are so fortunate in Campbelltown to have a plethora of options available when dining out. One of those places is Seta's Café. If ever there was a business owner who embodies what Campbelltown is all about, it is Seta's Café owner, Seta Berbari. I confess that it is one of my favourite local haunts. But it's not just the food and coffee that makes Seta's Café so appealing. If you spend five minutes in there you will notice how Seta and her staff know the names of every regular customer that comes through. It is personal greetings like that help put a smile on someone's face -- particularly on a Monday morning as the working week begins. Recently Seta was awarded the 2022 Outstanding Café in the Campbelltown Local Business Awards. It is easy to see why such a prestigious honour was bestowed on Seta and her team. Many businesses did it tough during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Seta's Café was no different. But it's great to see small business -- like Seta's Café -- once again thriving in Campbelltown. Congratulations again Seta on a wonderful and well deserved accolade.

#### **NSW TOUCH ASSOCIATION GOLDEN JUBILEE TEAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate three Port Macquarie locals who have attained selection in the NSW Touch Association Golden Jubilee Team. Anna Gleeson, Louise McCourt and Peter Vincent were recently awarded positions announced at a Gala Dinner held at Accor Stadium in Sydney. Each athlete was recognised for their supreme skills and dominant performances on the football field and no doubt this influenced their selection in the Men and Women's Seniors Golden Jubilee Team. This year marks the 50th

Anniversary of the New South Wales Touch Football Association since the organisation was formed by Ray Vawdon and Bob Dyke in 1972. Anna, Louise and Peter will be one of the top 14 players in their division to compete in the NSW Touch Football side. Remarking on the selection, Anna Gleeson noted that it was "one of the proudest moments in her touch career", Peter acknowledged the honour was "unbelievable" while Louise McCourt described that she was "still in shock" to receive the privilege of representing her State. Louise is a veteran of Touch Football with so much skill and experience since taking up the sport in 1983. Congratulations and best wishes for the championships!

#### **TORI MCCOMBE – WORLDSKILLS COMPETITION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise 21-year-old Tori McCombe from Bennetts Steel in Port Macquarie for recently placing first in the Construction Steel Work category at the Worldskills Australia competition. Tori McCombe is a third year Apprentice Metal Fabricator and Junior CNC Program Operator at Bennetts Steel. Currently studying her Certificate 3 in Engineering Metal Fabrication at TAFE NSW, Tori was approached by her teacher this year to enter in the Regional Competition of Workskills. True to Tori's form, the dynamic and talented, young apprentice secured first place in the Regional Competition held over six hours and comprising of demonstrated proficiencies in TIG, Stick and MIG welding processes, oxy flame cutting and interpreting plans and job specifications. Contestants were judged on raw skill with no grinding permitted in the manufacturing of an assessed, miniature sized earthworks roller. Tori will now progress to a three-day competition in Melbourne in 2023. Meanwhile her success at the Regional Competition will now open the door to new opportunities of study in organised workshops. At home, Tori's role at Bennetts Steels involves fabrication of steel, aluminium and stainless steel to develop structural steel components and garden decorations. Congratulate Tori on your impressive achievements.

#### **COLTON CRAIG**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to 14-year-old Colton Craig from St Columba Anglican School for being accepted into the Australian Ballet School in Melbourne. A chance of a lifetime has become reality for Port Macquarie Performing Arts student Colton who was recently offered this exceptional opportunity, training among hundreds of aspiring, young dancers of the highest calibre. Colton was four years old when he found a love and passion for dancing, approached by his Aunt's dance instructor who saw a natural talent in the this young man. Today, Colton performs most styles of dance including tap, jazz, contemporary and ballet. He was accepted into the Australian and Queensland Ballet Interstate Programmes in 2019 and 2022. The past two years Colton has trained with the Port Macquarie Performing Arts Talent Development Programme and has performed in a number of shows - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' with the Melbourne City Ballet, the 'Nutcracker' with the Imperial Russian Ballet and the 'Power of Love' inspired by Celine Dion. Locally, Colton has trained and appeared in eisteddfods and competitions with Port Macquarie Performing Arts. Colton credits his success to his Mum, Dad, sister and teachers who have trained, motivated and guided him to success. Congratulations!

#### **CUPITT'S ESTATE**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge Cupitt's Estate and congratulate them for claiming not one but two medals at the Australian Independent Beer Awards. Cupitt's Estates head brewer Liam Jackson is understandably thrilled with the outcome and is honoured to see Shiraz co-ferment win the Gold Medal and the Nebbiolo Co-ferment claim bronze. The Independent Brewers Association which runs the Indie Beer Awards held an online live event for the third time recently and the Indie's broke last years record as the largest in this event's history. With 55 judges and 1,458 beers from 207 breweries Cupitt's was awarded two medals which is very impressive and I am delighted to again congratulate them for their outstanding efforts.

#### **TEMORA LITTLE ATHLETICS COMMITTEE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to congratulate the Temora Little Athletics Committee who were recently recognised at the LANSW Annual Awards 2022. President of Temora Little Athletics, Emma Bowley, was recognised for her tireless efforts in the club and work as an official, talking out the Little Athletics NSW Official of the Year title at the awards. Club Coach Greg Wiencke was also nominated as a finalist in the Coach of the Year Category and Easter Riverina Zone Co-Ordinator, Judith Peel was recognised with a Merit award. The team at Temora Little Athletics work extremely hard in helping talented young athletes grow and develop into sportsters of the future. Beginners to Elites, beating personal bests and earning national titles, the young athletes in development are nurtured and supported every step of the way by committee and parents. Thousands of kilometres are driven as chauffeurs. Sausage sizzles are held. Money raised and time spent co-ordinating events. There is a lot

of work and effort that goes in behind the scenes by the dedicated team. Congratulations again to Emma, Greg and Judith, and everyone who gives their time to Temora Little Athletics.

#### **COOLAMON AND ARDLETHAN SES**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I had the privilege of recently visiting the Coolamon SES shed where I personally thanked the members from both the Coolamon and Ardlethan SES Units for their Service in ensuring their community is kept safe in the face of adversity. There are currently 20 enrolled members of the Coolamon SES Unit comprising of Andrew Luyt, Andrew Storrar, Barbara Birse, Cassandra Patterson, Charles Luyt, Courtney Cameron, David Jenkins, Gale Lafferty, Gordon Collis, Jodie Andrews, Larissa Purnell, Mark McKinnon, Paul Billingham, Peter Lafferty, Rebecca Forster, Sandra Graham, Scott Paterson, Sharon Hutchinson, Thomas Hazeltine and Thomas Melbourne and 9 enrolled members of the Ardlethan SES Unit being; Andrew Hawthorne, Callie Smith, David Gee, Edith Hill, Garnet Hawkins, Paul Hackney, Paul Horan, Reckell Jones and Steven Fisher. The tireless effort of the members of the Coolamon and Ardlethan SES Units is greatly appreciated and certainly does not go unrecognised. Their determination, quick thinking, and selfless acts of kindness during unprecedented weather events ensures this people of this great State are kept safe and dry. I am very proud of all your dedication and thank you once again for continuing to turn up, day after day, night after night.

#### **COWRA CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I take this opportunity to highlight the amazing event that is the Cowra Christmas Festival, which is happening again on Friday 2 December. A twilight market with entertainment for the whole family, the Festival is a truly fantastic event for the whole community to come together. A particularly special drawcard in recent times is the Christmas Wonderland feature, an initiative of the Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre, with the support of DCJ. The Christmas Wonderland is all about inclusion, with CINC creating an event open to all, engaging with community as part of the fun and excitement of Christmas. The Wonderland includes Christmas photos, sending letters to Santa, goody bags and arts and craft activities. It is a whole lot of fun for families and incredibly popular, showing just how important it is to connect with community through fun. Last year at Sid Kallas Oval I found myself helping-out on the face painting stall alongside the team at CINC. The excitement of the children was contagious! Best wishes to CINC, Cowra Tourism and all involved in this special event which I am sure will be just as big, and just as fun, as 2021.

#### **VALE JOHN MOORE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the recent passing of local resident Lt. Col. John Moore, OAM RFD ED. John sadly died in September due to a debilitating illness. I had the pleasure of meeting John in 2018 when he received a local Seniors Award. Seniors Awards recognise individuals for their contribution to the community, and I want to acknowledge John's legacy. John has served as National Executive Officer and NSW deputy Chairman of the Reserve Forces Day Council, NSW Chairman of Rail Trails for NSW, and CEO of Saluting Monash Council. John was a member of Australia's Defence Reserves and was community-minded, focused, committed, passionate, and determined to make a difference in the lives of others. I want to thank Lynette Scott, who has volunteered alongside John for many years, for reaching out to me to advise of John's passing, and who originally nominated John for his Seniors Award. I extend my deepest sympathies to John's family and friends, including Lynette in the broader community. I thank John for his service to our country and our state. Vale John.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMPLETE THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE OLYMPIAD EXAMS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise the North Sydney Girls High School students who completed the Australian Science Olympiad Exams. The Science Olympiads are considered the ultimate challenge for science students. Several students from Years 10 and 11 participated in the Qualifying Exams, and the NSGH girls smashed it. Many students received High Distinctions across the different categories, which included Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. I want to acknowledge all students who received High Distinctions: Jasmine Hui for Biology, Jessica Heng for Biology, Hedia Ng for Biology, Vicky Guan for Biology and Chemistry, Alyssa Cheng for Chemistry, Sherry Jian for Chemistry and Physics, and Sophie Chen for Physics. Congratulations to each of you on this success. It is great to see local students performing so well. Your diligence and commitment to your science studies have helped secure this achievement. I extend my congratulations to all students who gave the Qualifying Exams a go to challenge themselves. I wish you all the very best for the future, and hopefully, we will see some future careers in STEM.



### 108TH ANNIVERSARY OF HMAS SYDNEY I – SMS EMDEN

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—On the 9th of November 1914, the German cruiser SMS Emden was in the process of attacking the British cable and wireless station on Direction Island when HMAS Sydney I, under the command of John Glossop, attacked the Emden. After a fierce battle lasting nearly two hours, the Emden was ordered to run aground after one hundred and thirty-four men were killed. HMAS Sydney's defeat of the Emden in the Battle of the Cocos was the young Royal Australian Navy's first victory and the end to Emden's dominance in the region. I recently joined with HMAS Sydney I Association members for their 108th anniversary commemorative memorial service at Bradleys Head, where the HMAS Sydney I Memorial Mast stands looking over Sydney Harbour. I acknowledge members of the association, Brian Yeo and Barry Brooks, for organising this service. I also recognise the members of the Royal Australian Navy, Commodore Bradley Smith CSC, Commodore Paul Kable AM retd., and Chaplain Jon-Paul Barry. A special thanks to the family members of HMAS Sydney I and our current serving men and women. Lest we forget.

### NEPEAN BELLE & THE RIVERBOAT BAR

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith)**—I note that the Nepean Belle Paddle-wheeler is celebrating 40 years in service this year. Taking over ownership in 2013, locals Chris and Carol Bennett operate this iconic paddle-wheeler ensuring sightseers and diners have a memorable time cruising the beautiful Nepean River. I also had the pleasure to attend the recent launch of their new floating on river venue, The Riverboat Bar. Only accessible by their Riverboat Taxi, this venue is set to be a hit as we come into the summer, providing locals and visitors with a fantastic place to relax and enjoy some great music. Congratulations Chris and Carol on your vision and for bringing this new venue to life.

### TERRIGAL TROJANS WIN PREMIERSHIP

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would love to celebrate the success of my electorate's rugby team, the Terrigal Trojans, who have recently claimed their third straight premiership. Held at the iconic Central Coast Stadium, the Grand Final of Premier One was held between the Terrigal Trojans and Ourimbah Razorbacks. Despite wet conditions, the match was a nail-biter with both teams fighting hard for glory. The Trojans held on for a 13-8 victory against their long-time rivals. I would also like to make a special mention of Adam Danckert, 5/8 for the Trojans, who has since been named Player of the Year for 2022 at the Central Coast Rugby Awards. As well as picking up the Syd Noble Medal as Player of the Year, he was also named Highest Point Scorer, Rep Player of the Year, and Referees Player of the Year. This is an incredible list of accolades, and I can highly commend Adam for his commitment, talent and hard work. I would like to again congratulate the whole team as well as the supporting coaches, trainers, physiotherapists and sponsors, on an incredible community effort; this reflects your determination and skill. Congratulations Trojans!

### BOUDDI ART AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to celebrate highly talented young artists who have recently been recognised at the Annual Bouddi Foundation for the Arts Awards Presentation. The artistic pursuits of recipients range from dance, music, and song writing, to prop-making, filmmaking, painting, and musical theatre. Around 40 applicants are reviewed by independent panels of distinguished professionals from the relevant discipline to receive grants from \$500 to \$5000. A near-record of \$57,600 has been shared between an astonishing depth of grassroots talent. Such funding is key to support young artists in furthering their artistic pursuits, enabling further study. It can be used to fund international travel, materials, equipment, instruments, studio time, and beyond. I would like to congratulate all recipients and make special mention of award winners from across my electorate, including—musician Kelly Griffith, ceramicist and painter Imogen Hall, and singer/songwriter Ella Powell from Terrigal. Avoca Beach's singer/songwriter Stella Hannagan, musical theatre all-rounder Lily Kennedy-Head, and music producer/vocalist/songwriter Oliver Manning. From MacMasters Beach, producer/musician Thomas Mahler and Gab Pananaan, an animatronics maker, puppeteer and sculptor. As well as Springfield's Tracey Neaves, a painter and drawing master, and singer/songwriter Fletcher Pilon from Wamberal. Congratulations.

### BIDHAL ELDERS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to recognise a fantastic Central Coast initiative which works to support our region's seniors. Bidhal Elders, run by the Gudjagang Ngara li-dhi Aboriginal Corporation is an incredible example of how cultural therapy can be used to heal in a safe space. Primarily, the group work to combat the loneliness and social isolation felt in Aboriginal people over the age of 50. Here, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition and culture is used as a tool to strengthen wellbeing and foster healing, ultimately building community. The Bidhal Elders meet in a monthly yarning circle. Between each meaning, Elders can participate in a variety of projects to stay involved with the community. The projects aim to

keep Elders healthy and active, as well as strengthening our local Darkinjung community by educating on Aboriginal cultural knowledge and identity. This strengthens the community and opens intergenerational conversations, bringing together the established youth group and women's group. Beautifully, "Bidhal" means "celebrate" in Darkinjung language. I would like to thank those involved with organising and coordinating this community space.

#### **LIONEL STEIN JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate and thank Mr Lionel Stein 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 Stein 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 Lionel Stein for his great achievement of serving the community for five decades.

#### **KENNETH GRAY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate and thank Mr Kenneth Gray 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 Gray 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 Kenneth Gray for his great achievement of serving the community for five decades.

#### **BIG YELLOW UMBRELLA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I sincerely pass my thanks and utmost adulation to Big Yellow Umbrella, in Narellan. Big Yellow Umbrella is a not-for-profit organisation who strives to care for all who seek their help. The profound and long-lasting impact effected by Big Yellow Umbrella is too great to summarise in a few words. It should be known however that their work seemingly transcends boundaries and speaks volumes, given the level of effort they expend. I thank all those who work and volunteer at Big Yellow Umbrella, the individuals responsible for the success of the organisation. Thank you to William McCormack, Chairperson and the entire BYU Board. A special thank you to Kim Landouw, Chief Operations Manager, and the BYU team. On behalf of the community, I extend to you our heartfelt thanks and wish you continued prosperity.

#### **GIORGIO "GEORGE" CALLEGHER**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—George Callegher was born near Venice in Northern Italy in 1947. When he was fourteen, he left school to work in a Crash Repair business to support his parents and his siblings. At nineteen, he left Italy for Australia, working in Broken Hill at North Crash Repairs. After a few years, a new business opportunity rustproofing cars in Adelaide, claimed George. It is here that he met Esther and started a family of his own. They returned to Broken Hill and George to the crash repair industry. On weekends George renewed his passion for the "world game" in football, better known as soccer in Australia. George has been involved in the Broken Hill St Joseph's Soccer Club as a player, a junior and seniors grade coach at city, country and state level. He has had significant success with 25 premierships and this year celebrated his 500th game as a senior coach. George Callegher your contribution to the game you love is legendary, and I thank you for your dedication to the Broken Hill sporting community.

#### **CARINGBAH HIGH SCHOOL 2022 AND 2023 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate the newly elected school leaders for 2023 at Caringbah High School. Jacinta Banks and Max Wyer were recently elected school captains, and Cate Chapman and Dylan Adams were elected vice captains. The following students were elected as school prefects: Sophie Anthony, Bassel Beydoun, Sherif Kamenjasevic, Ishaan Nagle, Rafael Rojas, and Tessa Sadhani. Student leadership provides a unique opportunity to grow and develop skills in public speaking, communication, and leadership styles. The new leadership team will now also learn the art of relationship building and completing tasks in leadership groups. These skills are not only important in school but are also crucial in the modern workplace too. I recognise the efforts shown by the 2022 school leaders. Darcy Blades and Matthew Pontey were the outgoing school captains, and Chloe Eaton and Jack Barnes were the outgoing vice captains. The outgoing school prefects were Bianca Dibden, Maya Gribble, Georgia Nolan, Bryn Schwarzl, Bowen Sweeney, Michael Yang, and Bianca Julian. I wish them luck for their future endeavours.

**DE LA SALLE CATHOLIC COLLEGE CARINGBAH STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I commend the 2022 student leadership team at De La Salle Catholic College Caringbah for their contribution to their school community. Noah Eyres was the 2022 school captain, and Mitchell Slater was the vice-captain. Peter Petrou was the Social Justice leader, Jessie Stone was the Sport leader, Simeon Stambolziowski was the Academic leader, Daniel Carr was the Wellbeing leader, and Lachlan Whitehill was the Cultural leader. I recognise the following house captains: Nixon Powell (Benildus House), Nate Ferlazzo (Dermot House), Jack Cooper (Kilian House), Coby Wales (Miguel House), and Matthew Hallett (Solomon House). Student leadership is a unique opportunity to develop essential skills in public speaking, communication, and leadership. As leaders, the students will have learnt the art of relationship building and teamwork. These skills are important for Year 11 and 12 as well as the modern workplace. I wish the students luck as they enter senior high school and for their future endeavours.

**DE LA SALLE CATHOLIC COLLEGE CRONULLA STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate the elected school leaders for 2023 at De La Salle Catholic College Cronulla. Georgia Kent and Langa Mnyandu were elected as school captains, and Zach O'Hara and Jade Tattam were elected vice captains. Student leadership is a unique opportunity to develop essential skills in public speaking, communication, and leadership. As captains, Georgia and Langa will learn the art of relationship building and teamwork. These skills are important for both school and the modern workplace. I recognise the efforts shown by the 2022 school leaders. Charlotte Fullerton and Zach Pontey were the outgoing school captains, and Jess Eadie and Kane Fowler were the outgoing vice-captains. I wish them luck in their HSC results and their future endeavours.

**DONNA RENFREY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Donna Renfrey of Balranald. Donna became a general committee member of the Balranald Racing Club in 2007 and in 2009 was elected treasurer and has continued in this role for over 13 consecutive years and devoted many hours of her time and effort each race meeting. Described as a crucial member of the committee, Donna was presented with a Life Membership at the recent Balranald Derby Day race meeting, the first female recipient of the Balranald Racing Club in recognition of her valued dedication. Donna's first year of involvement with the race meet – there were no horses in attendance due to the equine virus. Unperturbed, knowing how important this social gathering was to the community, horses were replaced with Camels. A memorable 'Camel Race' meet was held showing flexibility and adaptability at its best. My congratulations to Donna and her active and valued involvement with the Balranald Racing Club and her community spirit.

**3BRIDGES COMMUNITY YOUTH ZONE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I commend 3Bridges Community for their Youth Zone program, providing a safe space for young people in the St George area. Being a teen or preteen comes with its own unique set of challenges and 3Bridges Community understands this. Located next to Penshurst Park, 3Bridges Community have established a space which is completely devoted to supporting teens in a welcoming and friendly environment. There are a range of activities available, including pool, video games, a music area, and a chill-out room. There are always case managers and staff available that can provide support and guidance. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the facility and getting to chat to some of the youth that attend, as well as all the wonderful staff. I would like to thank Layton and Vanessa who were incredibly, as well as the CEO Raj Nair. I truly commend you on all the fantastic work you do for our community. I look forward to supporting 3Bridges Community and the Youth Zone in the near future.

**EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK SDN RIVERWOOD**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I would like to congratulate SDN at Riverwood for hosting a successful 'Early Learning Matters Week' showcase. The celebrations this year were tied together by the theme 'come play with us,' which highlighted the importance of learning through play. It was an absolute pleasure to attend the celebrations and see how the development and wellbeing of children are being supported throughout the electorate. SDN at Riverwood has made a huge difference to the lives of educators, families, and the community over the years and it was an honour to be able to support this. In its fifth year now, Early Learning Matters Week gives the wider community a chance to come together and see firsthand what good early childhood education looks like, whilst celebrating the efforts of educators who make this happen. I would like to thank the Centre Director, Christie Sherfan for inviting me out, as well as her spectacular team that worked incredibly hard to ensure that this event was a success. I look forward to next year's celebrations!

**PAUL NASH**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Seniors)**—I would like to congratulate Paul Nash from Oatley West Public School, who recently received a New South Wales Government Community Service Award. I was fortunate enough to be able to present this award to Paul as a part of the 2022 St George Community Awards, which I host every year. Paul is the Principal of Oatley West Public School and has been serving his local community for years. He has been a strong advocate for both students and staff, consistently going above and beyond to ensure the school is well-equipped and meets the demands required of such a space. Oatley West Public School is in incredibly competent hands and Paul has been able to source numerous upgrades to classrooms and play spaces over the years. He has advocated for improving standards of education not only at Oatley West, but throughout the electorate. Paul is incredibly deserving of this award, and I would like to congratulate him sincerely. His insight and dedication are second to none, and I look forward to working closely alongside him into the future.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GILLIESTON PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Congratulations to everyone from Gillieston Heights and broader community who came out in force to support the Parents and Citizens association with their fundraising at a recent Trivia Night at Club Maitland City. I want to pay a special thanks to President Katie Ferguson, Secretary Vanessa Williams and Treasurer Tracee Coombes who all worked tirelessly to make the night an amazing success. Thanks also to sponsors – PRD Hunter Valley, Inspirations Paint, Pulse Climbing, Fratelli Roma, Ijada Beauty, Jessica Hamilton Beauty, Carpet Court Raymond Terrace, Lavenders Riverside Café, Harvarni & Me, Main Coffee Co, IGA East Maitland, Dominos Gillieston Heights, Organic Feast, Millers Produce, Terry White Maitland, Belmore Hotel, Dullboys, Tomkat Books Maitland, Steggles Beresfield, Maitland Mutual, McDonalds Gillieston Heights, Repco Rutherford, RDO Equipment Rutherford, Lyn Perkins Nutrimerics, Betta East Maitland, Reading Cinemas, Burtons Maitland Toyota, Lovey's Grocers IGA Gillieston Heights, Club Maitland City, Alicia Ryan's Aryan Candles, Katie Peacock – Boho Blue, Bridi Lee Ihle from WhichCraft by Bridi. The event raised \$2,700 in much needed funds for the P&C and also provided a great opportunity to build some community spirit. Thanks again to Katie Ferguson for all her hard work & generous donations.

**2022 YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, HAYLEY JOHNS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—I acknowledge the achievements of a driven, compassionate, and community minded young woman from my electorate of Maitland, Hayley Johns. For the second year running, Hayley has been awarded the Hunter Young Volunteer of the Year award as part of the 2022 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. I have had the pleasure of engaging and supporting Hayley on numerous occasions as a representative and young leader in the Maitland Community. During this time Hayley has held a number of impressive roles and has been recognised for her ongoing leadership in the Maitland community. It therefore came as no surprise to learn that Hayley was nominated for this award for her volunteer support with the Hunter River Agricultural & Horticultural Association, the organisers of the Maitland Show. Hayley also supports the local community via numerous other volunteer roles with the National Rural Health Student Network, St John Ambulance at Maitland, the local SES and Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health. Hayley is an impressive young woman, and it's great she is being recognised. Congratulations and thank you Hayley for your continued leadership in our community.

**LIGHT THE NIGHT FOR LEUKAEMIA**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Congratulations to Lyn and Graham Dark OAM for all their hard work and initiative to Light the Night for Leukaemia at a special high tea recently. Graham has suffered from Cancer for over three decades and has been a relentless fundraiser for the incredible work that is being done by medical researchers to beat this disease! The pair organised a high tea event and with the support of West Maitland Centennial Lions Club, Vile and Vile Solicitors, Grumpy's Day Care, Darren O'Brien Plumbing, Jan Oksam and Jenny Crossland, and were able to raise \$525.90 on the day bringing their total fundraising efforts to \$2,621.65. Graham received an OAM as part of the Australia Day Celebrations, but true to form continues to raise funds for various charities. Even his upcoming 70th birthday includes donations to the Light the Night cause! Such a dedicated and inspirational advocate for all of us!

**FARMER TIM HOUSTON AWARDED NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIP**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Mungindi Farmer Tim Houston who was awarded the 2023 Nuffield Scholarship at the Nuffield Australia annual Awards Night in Tamworth on 12 September. Nuffield Australia awards scholarships each year to farmers in Australia with 19 emerging leaders being awarded the 2023 scholarship. The objective is to increase practical farming knowledge, management skills and techniques which will give the scholars an opportunity to study farming practices in New Zealand, Europe,

Asia and the Americas with those countries best suited to the individual. Each scholar is awarded \$30,000 to invest in travel and research. Tim, who is supported by Cotton Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, will research how to sustainably transition land from grazing to cropping, including cotton. Upon returning to Australia it is expected that the scholars are able to actively spread the knowledge and understanding they have gained among their fellow farmers and others. I commend Tim on receiving such a prestigious scholarship and wishes him all the best making the most use of an opportunity that is only given to a few.

#### **DANTE LLOYD – 2022 RURAL YOUTH AMBASSADOR**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Guyra Central School Year 11 student Dante Lloyd for his active and positive contribution to the 2022 Rural Youth Ambassador Program. This program provides opportunities for young rural people to develop their leadership skills and enhance their lives. Dante has undertaken a range of leadership development activities, discussed rural and remote life and learning, participated in presentations to senior education sector people, met with high profile professionals, as well as participated in workshops, forums and conferences. Dante has attended three of the forums and hopes to achieve real productive change through his team's idea to create a promotional video for each member's hometown to attract University students to undertake practicums in rural communities. Part of the Program is about personal development and communication skills which have improved Dante's self-esteem, adding to his determination to make a difference in the world. I congratulate Dante on being chosen to take part in the 2022 Rural Youth Ambassadors Program and commend him for embracing the program and accepting every opportunity that was afforded him.

#### **JOHN GILL – 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BINGARA FIRE AND RESCUE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise former Captain of Bingara Fire and Rescue NSW [FRNSW] John Gill, who dedicated 50 years and one month of service to FRNSW and the Bingara community. John joined FRNSW on 1 May 1972 and proceeded through the Service until his appointment as Deputy Captain of the Bingara Brigade on 1 May 1992. John held this position for just over 10 years prior to being promoted to Captain on 1 June 2002, holding this appointment until his recent retirement. John was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, the highest honour an Australian firefighter can receive, in the 2019 Australia Day Honours. John also has the distinguished honour of being the longest serving member of the Bingara Brigade. On 31 May this year John decided that his career as a professional fire fighter was to come to an end, hanging his helmet up for the very last time. I commend John on his commitment, loyalty and devotion to the Bingara Fire and Rescue NSW and the Bingara community and wish him well in a well-deserved retirement.

#### **GEORGE GOOLEY MENSWEAR – A TIMELESS TREASURE IN LISMORE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—George Gooley Menswear in Molesworth St Lismore is a Lismore institution and beacon of mens fashion in not just our region but Australia. Peter Gooley has been in business for over 50 years and has stood the test of time. Gooley's has done this because they have retained the timeless charm, care for detail and service of an old fashioned tailor whilst modernising with the times. For example my octogenarian husband Jim and 24 years young Electorate Officer Harry were one of the first Gooley customers after the floods. They both left satisfied customers with a spiffy shirt for Harry and comfy tracky dacks for Jim. There is truly something for everyone at George Gooley. George Gooleys was one of the very first shops back open after the floods and whilst February 28 was like nothing like we've ever seen their tried and tested flood plan they have put in place for over 50 years has served them well. George Gooleys is an institution that deserves to be acknowledged in parliament and is celebrated in our community. I look forward to the next 50 years.

#### **ART ON BUNDJALUNG KYOGLE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—On Saturday 22 October Kyogle came alive with the Art on Bundjalung Market. The market is a celebration of the creative cultural heritage of the Bundjalung region. I acknowledge the wonderful artists who contributed. They are Jugan Dandii - Tania Marlowe, Kylie Caldwell, Nan and Nay - Vickki King & Shanaya Turner-King, Noelle King and Jenny Sheward-Spence. The market welcomes original paintings and prints from Jai Walker, Sarah Jane Art, Val Smith, Tracey Paints - Tracey Piccoli, Bungaree - Mark Cora, Dreaming of Country - Tim & Jasmin Stanford and Firefly Arts and Designs - Oral Roberts, Belle Budden and Mel Simmon. There was also a variety of handmade crafts from Arminel Nagas, Rosie Vesper and Thomas Vesper, Choo-Choo Designs - Kira Turner, Dreamtime Artistry and Our Happy Women. A collection of beautiful Indigenous designed jewellery and clothing was available from designers Jill Rokovada, Sam Phillips and Tracey Estreich. Yarning Tea Tribe, Bakarindi Bushfoods and Panangka presented native plants - Jenny Fraser presented a collection of traditional native bush teas, preserves and bush tucker and Mark Trehwella offered a range of Aboriginal artefacts. Casino Wake Up Time group ran a session of Bundjalung weaving practices.

**AZIAH PHOENIX-COX - NSW PREMIERS SPELLING BEE FINALIST**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate The Pocket Public School year six student Aziah Phoenix-Cox for being a finalist in this years NSW Premiers Spelling Bee. His family was affected by this years devastating flooding events and was without internet for 3 months. Despite this adversity Aziah persisted and made it to the state finals. Only 60 students made it out of a starting pool of 165,000 which says a lot about Aziah's skill, aptitude and commitment to learning. Aziah says that he looks at the spelling sheet the turns it over and tries to spell the words he thought were tricky. He keeps going until he gets it right which is the right approach and attitude to learning. Well done Aziah and also to The Pocket Public School which is a small school in a rural community situated between Kyogle and Woodenbong. I know Principal Will Glasson and all the staff will feel pleased and proud to have one of their students achieve this.

**SPORTING SUCCESS FOR SS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Last month saw sporting success for Ss Peter and Paul Catholic School students. The school's Senior Girls Relay team came second at the NSWPSA Primary Athletics Championships, missing out by one tenth of a second in the finals after coming first in heats and semi-finals. Staff and students cheered the girls on as they earned the title as the second fastest relay team across all public, independent and Catholic schools in NSW. The girls displayed remarkable talent, dedication and teamwork. Two of the girls competed in individual events. Ginger Siasat came 15th overall in the 100-metre sprint, and Imogen Moore was 19th overall in the 200 metre and 10th overall in long jump. Another Ss Peter and Paul's Year 6 student, Austin Craig was off competing in the Australian Championships Football Tournament. Austin was one of two boys selected in the Wollongong Diocese to represent NSW in the games held in Western Australia. He scored two goals and made three assists as the team tied third overall in the country. I also acknowledge and thank the Acting Assistant Principal of Ss Peter and Paul, Ms Emma Groves.

**EDNA HAYES**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I acknowledge and celebrate another milestone year of Ms Edna Hayes residing in my electorate of The Entrance. Ms Hayes celebrated her 107th birthday on 1 November, 2022 and I had the pleasure of visiting her again to reminisce and hear some of her life story, which I drew upon in this House on 9 November, 2021. A special lunch was held in celebration of her which also fell on Melbourne Cup Day. In classic Edna style, she made sure that she wasn't dressed in the same blouse she had the previous year, like a true fashionista. I wish Edna another wonderful year of happiness and hope to visit her again next year!

**PHOTOS2ARCHIVE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance)**—I acknowledge and congratulate Photos2Archive on becoming a Central Coast Regional Finalists in the 2022 Excellence in Small Business Award. Entries were assessed and recognised on their abilities to implement specific strategies necessary to achieve success and/or resilience, as well as effectively driving growth within their field. This is an outstanding result and demonstrates their incredible attention to detail when handling and transforming loose photos, VHS tapes and other materials into a digital memory. Photos2Archive connects families and friends, as it preserves memories for future generations and has become a great asset to the Central Coast. On behalf of the Entrance community, I would like to congratulate Photos2Archive for achieving such an impressive result and I thank you for your continued service to the Central Coast region.

**BAPTISTCARE HOPESTREET WINDALE NETWORKING LUNCH**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—There are so many people and organisations doing important work to assist those doing it tough in the Charlestown Electorate, that it's often difficult to keep track of who is doing what and how best to refer people in need to those who can help. That is why events like the BaptistCare HopeStreet Windale Networking Lunch, hosted at the community centre café in South Street, Windale, on 27 October are so important. It was a day of networking and communication, connecting service providers. This fits in wonderfully with the mission of the organisation: to provide hope for people experiencing great trials, through care and services that address the immediate issues while also looking to strengthen and support the local community as a whole. It was my pleasure to go along and to catch up with just some of the many people who are doing everything they can to strengthen and support our community. I would like to thank the fantastic staff at BaptistCare HopeStreet and everyone who came along to the event. Thank you for all the work you do, making such a difference to the lives of so many in our community.

**KOORI NETBALL TOURNAMENT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—For more than 20 years, the Charlestown Netball Complex in Bula Street, Charlestown, has played host to the Koori Netball Tournament—the biggest celebration of Koori

netball in NSW. The event attracts Aboriginal communities from around the state, with more than 1500 Aboriginal netballers getting involved. It's an opportunity for these women to share their love of the sport, and celebrate their talent in a fun, competitive and inclusive environment. The 2022 tournament was played over the weekend of Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October. I went along, and was thrilled to meet GIANTS Netball Academy Coach and proud Kamilaroi woman Ali Tucker-Munro. I had a great chat with Ali about the need to encourage women and First Nations participation in sport. It was also good to catch up with Netball NSW board member Vince deLuca. Congratulations to all the participants, and my thanks to Charlestown Netball for once again hosting this important event.

#### **UNDER CONSTRUCTION CHOIR**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—The candlelight vigil at Christ Church Cathedral in Newcastle is always a highlight of Mental Health Month. It was beautiful to hear the voices of the Under Construction Choir, made up of people who have experienced mental health challenges, their loved ones and the wider community. They performed the hymn 'Dona Nobis Pacem', gospel music like 'Peace in the Valley', and folk songs including 'The Water is Wide'. As choir conductor Kay Lane told NBN News, there is a lot of research that indicates singing together creates connection between people and helps elevate their mood. The Under Construction Choir is a great resource for our local community. I am pleased that, after the long separation caused by COVID, the Under Construction Choir can sing together again. The service has been held at the Cathedral for more than twenty years to honour people with a mental illness both living and deceased, as well as their families and friends. The candles are lit to celebrate mental wellness, to remember those who have been lost to illness and the people who support them. It was a very special service, and an honour to attend.

#### **JEWISH MUSEUM 30 YEARS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I congratulate the Sydney Jewish Museum on 30 successful years commemorating the six million Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust, keeping survivor memory alive and educating people from all walks of life about the dangers of hate. Since 1992, the museum has grown and evolved but it retains the commitment of those Holocaust survivors who did the work to establish this important reminder of Jewish history and the scourge of anti-Semitism. Exhibitions have been seen by up to 30,000 people annually and include the Children's Memorial, the Sanctum of Remembrance, Holocaust and Human Rights, Dressing Sydney, the contribution of Jewish people in the military, the Theresienstadt Ghetto and Jews from Islamic Lands. The Reverberations exhibition to open in December will be an immersive gallery where visitors will experience the lives of 43 Holocaust survivors. I commend everyone involved with the museum for maintaining this important mainstay of Jewish memory, culture and heritage in Sydney.

#### **DON'T BLOCK THE ROCKS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the Millers Point Resident Action Group and local residents for their successful community campaign 'Don't Block The Rocks' to prevent harmful overdevelopment at Central Barangaroo. The community's challenge to careless planning proposals, overdevelopment and opaque decision making has helped protect historic public land on Sydney's harbour foreshore, including important views between the harbour and both Observatory Hill and Millers Point. The Don't Block the Rocks campaign effectively informed key representatives about the impacts on heritage, local residents, parkland and community. They were able to demonstrate the poor outcomes of the latest modifications to the planning scheme to government, media and community. The failure of this proposal is a testament to the campaign's success. This public land and urban heritage can now be enjoyed by current and future Sydneysiders. I make particular mention of contributions by Anne and Martin Crabb, Cormac Champion and Bernard Kelly.

#### **AUNTIE SELINA BLAKENEY**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I acknowledge the passing of respected Woolloomooloo resident Auntie Selena. Auntie Selena was a long time resident, local community leader and Aboriginal Elder. She was a forthright advocate for the community and a fighter for justice and a fair go. She was especially concerned to make sure that young people in Woolloomooloo have safe access to facilities, services and support including for sport and recreation activities. I worked with Auntie Selena on support for local housing tenants and found her a staunch campaigner to retain and fix up social housing in the precinct. She made sure that decision makers knew about problems and needed to fix them. The Woolloomooloo community will be poorer for the loss of Auntie Selena's passionate activism and community support.

#### **PAUL MASON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I acknowledge Northlakes High School teacher Paul Mason on being recognised for his dedication and commitment to teaching, at the Central Coast World Teachers' Day Dinner

last month. World Teachers' Day is a time to celebrate and appreciate our hard-working teachers. This year's theme 'Hats off to Teachers' acknowledged that teachers have shown great resilience during challenging times, so that they can give students the best possible future. Paul well and truly deserved to be recognised at the event for his dedication to his students. He is an outstanding Science teacher, who has consistently supported them to achieve excellent HSC results. Due to his efforts, Paul is highly respected for his commitment to teaching by staff and students at Northlakes High School and the local area. I congratulate Paul on being recognised at the event and thank him for his continuous efforts.

### THE LAKES SLSC

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Today I acknowledge the Lakes SLSC volunteers who went above and beyond to assist rescue efforts during the recent flood emergency in western NSW. Even though the volunteers had their own work and life commitments, and live nowhere near the impacted communities, they did not hesitate to assist NSW SES with searches, rescuing trapped residents, humanitarian relief and other important tasks. Their efforts reflect their selfless nature and that they take great pride in putting on their red and yellow uniforms. I know that the Lakes SLSC and the broader Swansea community is very proud of them for making such a significant contribution to the flood recovery. I am sure that those impacted also greatly appreciated their support. Not only do I thank the Lakes SLSC volunteers for assisting those in need in flood impacted communities, but also for keeping local beachgoers safe.

### RHIANNAN IFFLAND

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Once again, I acknowledge Swansea local Rhiannan Iffland on her cliff diving success. This time I congratulate her on winning the inaugural Sydney leg of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series, which was held last month. The 6-time world champion once again pulled off a jaw dropping performance, taking out first place with a total of 387.75 points. Rhiannan beat Canadian young gun Molly Carlson into second place, with the USA's Eleanor Smart finishing third. Given that this was the first time that a cliff diving event had been held in Sydney, Rhiannan told the media that she 'wanted to put on a really good show in front of our home crowd'. She did just that. Rhiannan is an outstanding athlete who I know many aspiring sport stars from the Swansea electorate look up to. I look forward to watching Rhiannan compete at future events and congratulate her on this outstanding achievement.

### GUMNUT PRESC HOOL BOWRAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Gumnut Preschool in Bowral recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. I had the pleasure to attend the celebration held at the school on the 22nd of October, which commemorated the school's long history with fun activities for everyone to enjoy. The first cohort of pre-schoolers attended the school in 1970. The preschool was established as a memorial pre-school in the aftermath of World War II. It only began development in the late 1960's, at a time where there were no services for young children in Bowral, due to the support of community members and council. The anniversary celebration involved the reveal of an artwork collaboration with Indigenous artists to commemorate the significant milestone. The artwork features footprints that were used to symbolise all the children who have attended Gumnut over the decades to learn and develop new friendships as they progress through life. The artwork also included landscapes that are culturally significant to the Gundungurra peoples, such as the Wingecaribbee river. The event was well timed, as the 28th of October was World Teacher's Day. This day offered a great opportunity for the community to celebrate and recognise our hard-working teachers.

### WINGECARRIBEE WOMEN'S WRITERS

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The Wingecaribbee Women's Writers ['WWW'] are a group of local women volunteers who are passionate to empower women's voices and stories across history. Tasked with shining a spotlight on lost stories and the often invisible female writers throughout history, the WWW have also created a space for local women writers to connect and support one another. The group was formed out of the 'True Life Stories' writing retreat that was held by Kate Forsyth and Belinda Murrell late last year. Attendees were inspired to uncover the lost women writers in history after hearing about the first Australian children's author, Charlotte Atkinson, whose legacy has been forgotten. The author wrote the first published children's book in Australia, titled 'A Mother's Offering to Her Children by a Lady Long Resident in NSW'. The Charlotte Project was subsequently launched, focused on raising funds to erect a statue of Atkinson at Berrima Park, to properly celebrate the author.

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WATER POLO 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Finally, after three postponements due to COVID-19, the Southern Highlands Water Polo celebrated its 40th anniversary at the Mittagong RSL last October. Southern Highlands Water Polo has greatly contributed to the sport of polo in NSW. In 1980, the first Bowral Water Polo



competition was held. Ever since, Southern Highlands Water Polo has hosted many NSW Water Polo Country Club Championships. Not to mention, the sporting club is also responsible for producing two national representatives, Erin and Kelly Douglass, in addition to nine NSW state players. The anniversary celebrations were a great success, with many former players coming together to celebrate. The special guest of the event was the former captain of the Sydney 2000 Water Polo Olympic team, Daniel Marsden, who answered questions from the crowd in a Q&A. The celebrations also involved fundraising for the club, with an auction of sport memorabilia, wine and even a pair of signed underwear by Australian rock band Noiseworks.

#### **WILLOUGHBY FAITH LEADERS FORUM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Friday 21 October, I was delighted to welcome religious leaders to a local community forum in Artarmon. This was an occasion for me to meet with local clergy and to learn of their day-day experiences, challenges and opportunities in pastoring their parishes and communities. It was also an opportunity for me to thank all faith leaders for the precious contribution they make to the spiritual, moral and social wellbeing of our community. Featuring churches of numerous denominations, as well as two synagogues, a mosque and a temple, Willoughby is fortunate to be home to such a rich community of faiths. With the calling to serve something greater than oneself, religious faith drives people to do good and serve others despite their human weaknesses. Inspiring ordinary men and women to be their better selves, faith adds enormous social capital to our community through schools, hospitals, charities and more. I thank all the faith leaders who attended and shared their invaluable insights of faith and community.

#### **AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS NSW**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Founded in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, for more than 75 years Australian War Widows NSW have advocated for the interests of war widows within NSW. The array of services offered by War Widows NSW safeguard the health and wellbeing of widows and ensure they are well supported after their loved one has made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation. I am proud that the organisation is based at Chatswood within my electorate. I was honoured to recently join many war widows to mark the Inaugural War Widows Day on Wednesday 19 October in appreciation of the great sacrifices of our war widows. As our Premier noted: "The star ceremony at the Anzac Memorial and the reception for the first NSW War Widows Day is a small token in honouring the personal sacrifices and contributions that thousands of war widows and widowers across NSW have made." The decision to mark War Widows Day is a fitting tribute and due recognition of the sacrifices made by the families of our veterans. I was delighted to meet with a local war widow from Willoughby on the day and we are in touch still.

#### **ST THOMAS' ART & CRAFT SHOW**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Saturday 29 October, I had the real joy of attending the St Thomas' Art & Craft Show. Hosted by St Thomas Catholic Primary School in Willoughby, the Art & Craft Show is one of the most popular school community fairs on the Lower North Shore. It is an annual event where the school, parish and local communities join together to enjoy a packed weekend of art, craft and jewellery, market stalls, entertainment, carnival fun, foodie delights, and rides. The Art & Craft Show proved a roaring success with over 1,000 cupcakes, thousands of wraps, endless big spin tickets and bucketloads of amusements. The show is a celebration of our wonderful St Thomas' community and is presented by the Parents and Friends Association (P&F), with proceeds donated to the School. The success of the 2022 St Thomas' Art & Craft Show was testimony to the amazing community spirit of the School, and I would like to thank everybody involved for their incredible efforts.

#### **PETER RAMM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Mr Peter Ramm from Robertson in the Southern Highlands. Inspired by his role as a father and the environment, Mr Ramm submitted his collection of three poems titled "Landfall" to the Manchester Writing Competition. Mr Ramm travelled to Manchester in the United Kingdom in May this year to receive the Manchester Poetry Prize Award. The Manchester Writing Competition is the United Kingdom's prime competition for unpublished writers. Mr Ramm has also been acknowledged and received awards for his poetry writing at the South Coast Writers Centre Poetry Award and the Harri Jones Memorial Award. Shortlisted for several other awards and placing third in The Rialto's Nature and Place Competition and has been awarded residencies at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens and WestWords Daffodil Cottage in the Blue Mountains. I congratulate and acknowledge the pride, the eloquence and the artistry that Mr Ramm has demonstrated through his poetry that has been celebrated by the nominations and awards received.

### GOULBURN HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government)**—Today I recognise Goulburn High School. I am proud to recognise the caring spirit of students, teachers and families at Goulburn High School who have raised more than \$2,000.00 to support families in the Lismore region affected by the floods. Goulburn's High School Principal, Mr Yogesh Mani is proud to acknowledge the school community wanting to support those affected by the floods and their contribution to the 'Vouch for Lismore' campaign through Term 2. This campaign generated a range of activities such as BBQ's and mufti days to raise monies. The GHS event proudly and enthusiastically saw a number of student performances, incorporating dance, music and drama. Students also proudly displayed their artworks. I very sincerely congratulate and admire the thoughtfulness and enthusiasm of the Goulburn High School community to support those affected by the Lismore floods. Thank you, Goulburn High School!

### ASSYRIAN SPORTS AND CULTURAL CLUB 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I congratulate the Assyrian Sports and Cultural Club on celebrating their 50th anniversary. The club was established in 1966 under its original name of the Assyrian Australian Club and became a registered club on the 13th November 1972. Since then the club has serviced the local community in various ways and is renowned for being a major Assyrian national organisation in Australia. In commemoration of the momentous occasion of the 50 year anniversary celebration, the Assyrian Sports and Cultural Club will launch the 50th Year Anniversary Book, outlining the history of the club in Australia. I congratulate the Board of Directors and the Assyrian community on this auspicious occasion and commend their efforts in servicing the community of Fairfield.

### MAZU PARADE AND LUNA DOUBLE NINTH FESTIVAL

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—The NSW Indo-China Chinese Association Inc. and the NSW Indo Chinese Tien Hau Temple hosted the second annual, Mazu Parade and Luna Double Ninth Festival after an absence due to the pandemic and lockdowns. The parade commenced at the Tien Hau Temple Canley Vale and made its way to the Pilau Gates, Cabramatta. The parade team was dressed in traditional Indo China Chinese costumes, which also included the Third Prince, Clairvoyance, Clairaudience and the sacred Mazu Carriage. Accompanying the procession of the Blessed Mazu was the Lion Dance team, and the OZ Dance Group. The Mazu is the Chinese Goddess of the Sea to her believers. The Blessed Mazu is the protector of seafarers, fisherman and sailors. Her worship is spread through the coastal communities of China and throughout overseas Chinese communities in South East Asia. I would like to congratulate the parade organisers for the preparation of the parade and cultural festival. I also congratulate the NSW Indo China Chinese Association President Mr Henry Wu and Mr To Ha Huynh for their service to the community.

### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Saturday 5 November, 2022 the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sydney [ICCIAUS] celebrated its 100th Anniversary at the White Bay Cruise Terminal with 600 guests in attendance. The evening was an opportunity to celebrate all things Italian but to also foster a greater bilateral trade relationship between Italy and Australia. Every year the Chamber Awards a prominent Italo-Australian with the prestigious Hall of Fame Award. The Hall of Fame 2022 recipient was Ms Luisa Perugini, a renowned journalist and reporter. Luisa's work with the community spanning fifty years is to be admired. She has inspired Italian migrants, particularly women, to reach their full potential and use their talents to assist others in the community. I congratulate ICCIAUS Chamber President Ms Rachele Grassi, Chairman of the Board Mr Fabio Grassia and the organising committee for hosting the memorable event.

### RALLY FOR RECOVERY

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—This month the team at Rally for Recovery deserves to be recognised for its enormous donation of \$100,000 to the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation. From the humble beginnings of Ian Boardman's and Alan Edmonds' 2001 garage sale that raised \$270, Rally for Recovery sales are now a local feature with an extraordinary tale of success. Rally for Recovery have been operating out of the refurbished Tomakin Fire Shed selling second-hand goods for over 20 years and have donated almost \$3 million to the foundation since their conception to raise funds for research into childhood cancers and blood disorders. Selling everything but clothing, the organisation is completely run by volunteers and when they aren't selling on a Wednesday or Saturday mornings, they are delivering purchased goods to buyers from as far as Narooma and Ulladulla. Club president Ray Dickinson recently said that presenting the donation to the "gobsmacked" hospital representatives made all the volunteer's hard work worthwhile. I'd like to recognise the years of hard work and

dedication behind this community organisation and provide my sincere thanks to everyone who contributes, be that financially or with their valuable time.

#### **MS CHAKINTA JONES**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—Congratulations Ms Chakinta Jones from the South Coast Community College for being recognised as a finalist in the inaugural Community Education Trainer of the Year Award, run by Community Colleges Australia. This special award celebrates the work and underlines the importance of Australian adult and community education (ACE) trainers and teachers. Ms Jones has been with the South Coast College since 2011 and through the years has been integral in developing key stakeholder relationships and has become well-recognised in the community as the 'go to person' within the community services sector. Ms Jones holds many qualifications such as her Cert IV in Training and Assessment, Registered Nursing, First Aid, and a post graduate Diploma in Social Sciences. She is also currently working towards completing her studies in Cert III/IV in both Disability and Ageing. Thanks to those like Chakinta, many thousands of Australian ACE trainers and teachers motivate, inspire, mentor, and guide our students to learn new skills and grow professionally and personally. I'd to recognise Chakinta for her great work in the Bega electorate and thank all our trainers and teachers helping our community reach their economic, social and community life objectives.

#### **MR EWAN MCASH & OCEANFARMR**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate Mr Ewan McAsh who is helping change the industry for aquafarmers across the country. Farming can be a hard profession for those on land, however for many aquafarmers it's not just the location, waves, wind, tide and weather that provide a unique challenge. Gaining access to capital to expand businesses and manage their operations effectively is also a struggle with access to finance often reported as the largest barrier to farm growth. While agricultural farms often have the option of land as an asset to secure financing, aquaculture farmers have traditionally found it more difficult to access this capital as water-based farmland is not privately owned. Mr McAsh has taken on the enormous task of helping others in the aquafarm industry by developing an innovative solution for digital farm operations and providing a new Farm to Buy initiative. Oceanfarmr will provide farming resources, under the agreement that when the crop is sold the proceeds will be used to pay out the finance and the farmer will own the new farming system outright. Thank you, Ewan, for your work in supporting and developing this important local industry.

#### **BRINGING COUNTRY VALUES TO THE CITY**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—The NSW Country Women's Association marks its centenary this year and its newest branch, Georges River is proudly celebrating the association's past while presenting its new face for the future. Formed only in 2015, the Georges River branch CWA is adopting its traditional role as a country women's support network to suit the needs of those living in metropolitan Sydney. The NSW CWA was formed for country women fighting isolation and lack of health facilities. One hundred years on the fight is still the same. The CWA is excellent in providing a welcoming and nurturing environment as well as friendship and a sense of community. The CWA aims to improve conditions of women in welfare, education, health and to provide a voice for women to all levels of government. It raises funds for CWA Education Grants to go to NSW students and also supports local charities and organisations such as Share the Dignity. An exhibition celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the NSW CWA is being held at the Hurstville Museum and Gallery until Sunday, 20 November. Congratulations and well done on 100 years to the CWA – what an amazing achievement.

#### **WEST BEXLEY METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC ON 19 OCTOBER 1957, A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY SAVED A CHILD'S LIFE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—"I was swimming in the Woronora River about 100m downstream when I spotted a group of people on the riverbank. I swam to them to find two Sunday School teachers trying desperately to revive an eight-year-old. I asked if I could take over as I could see that they weren't doing it correctly. Whilst I was doing CPR, he coughed up a cream bun and then started to make some awful gurgling noises which was water coming up from his stomach. I knew I had revived him. The paramedics arrived and assessed the situation. They told me to keep going as I had the correct rhythm. They then put David and I on a stretcher whilst I continued the resuscitation. They carried us some eighty metres across the footbridge and another 100m across the park. I continued to resuscitate him in the ambulance all the way to St George Hospital from Prince Edward Park, a distance of approximately 16km." A remarkable story and one of great courage and exemplary behaviour by 15-year-old Bexley boy, Barry England. Thank you, Barry.

#### **VIVIAN NGO, DANCER FROM ACTIV ELITE PERFORMERS NOMINATED FOR HSC CALLBACK**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—Like many young girls, Vivian took dance classes as a little girl. Determined to shine on stage, she thrived under the spotlight. Having trained since she was three years of age,

dance has been a growing passion. The 17-year-old from Brighton Le Sands, who attends St Ursula's College Kingsgrove, secured a scholarship in 2019 at her Carlton dance school, ACTiv Elite Performers. Vivian has nearly completed her HSC dance course and as a talented performer has been nominated for Callback, the annual showcase that acknowledges outstanding HSC dance performances across NSW. As part of The Arts Unit, exemplary dancers from the state are given notable recognition for their talent. ACTiv Elite Performers principal has stated that Vivian is a standout student excelling at all styles of dance from acro, contemporary, jazz, ballet and even her lesser trained styles such as commercial jazz and hip hop, and is a humble and kind person off stage. Vivian plans on doing a full-time performing arts course next year. Congratulations Vivian on an outstanding achievement. We wish you well in all your endeavours and on achieving your dreams as a professional dancer.

#### **ASIAN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ASSOCIATION 5TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—It is wonderful to celebrate Asian Australian Women Association's recent 5th Anniversary. The Asian Australian Women Association provides support to migrant women from Asian backgrounds and provides help to many local Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese women. The Association provides crucial bridging support, helping with issues such as domestic violence, language-barriers when accessing services, and referrals to counselling services to aid those experiencing depression and isolation. Additionally, the Association provides crucial educational support providing advice on how to find employment in Australia. The 5th anniversary occasion was marked by a beautiful choir performance by Good Friends Ladies Choir and a panel discussion between association president Elizabeth Wang, Canada Bay Councillor Julia Little, and myself on the topic of Migrant Women: pathways to professional employment. It was heartening to see such commitment to community welfare on full display. Congratulations to President Elizabeth Wang and all those involved in Asian Australian Women Association on their 5th anniversary. I wish them all the best as they continue their vital community support work.

#### **VOLUNTEERS IN POLICING**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Monaro Police District's David Loft JP AFSM was recently a finalist in the 2022 NSW Police Force Officer of the Year Awards in the Volunteer of the Year category. The Volunteer of the Year recognises the extraordinary efforts of the NSW Volunteers in Policing who, in their own time, help ensure the community is best served by their police. While he didn't take out top honours, David is still a winner in our eyes. Volunteers in policing are crucial to the smooth running of police stations across NSW and provide those seeking to give back an outlet to do so. From assisting members of the community with certification of documents, assisting police with crime prevention initiatives, or even supporting witnesses in court. Volunteers taking on such roles allow general duties police officers to focus on their core roles. David is also local fixture in Queanbeyan and wears many hats. In addition to his fantastic contributions as a police volunteer, David is a Group Captain with the NSW Rural Fire Service and was instrumental during the 2019/20 bushfires in the Braidwood area. I thank David for all he has done and continues to do for the Queanbeyan community.

#### **BUNGENDORE PRE-SCHOOL**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Research shows that children who participate in quality pre-school programs are more likely to arrive at school equipped with the social, cognitive and the emotional skills they need to help them to continue learning. These benefits extend well beyond primary school. Higher levels of educational success, employment and social skills have all been linked to moderate levels of participation in quality early childhood education. Bungendore Pre-School exemplifies this through its dedicated and professional staff, led by Kim Brodrick, and supported by her fantastic team: Sam, Kristy, Ella, Mel, Darian, Kayley, Danny, Emilie, Anna and Sharon. For decades the Bungendore Pre-School has been educating the children of the village and enabling them to get the head start in life all children deserve. I thank the entire team of Bungendore Pre-School and acknowledge the significant contribution they have made in the lives of Bungendore children.

#### **A GOOD DROP**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—My electorate was heavily impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires, with everything put on hold, homes lost, and lives decimated. Now, two years on and the region is on an upward trajectory again, the Corang Estate is no exception. Their Cabernet Sauvignon has recently taken out top honours at the 2022 NSW Wine Awards and the 2022 Australian Highlands Wine Show. Beating out wines from right across the country to take out the top spot. Corang Estate is punching well above its weight as a small producer against larger operations, and this is a testament to the hard work of owners, Michael and Jill Bynon. Michael, a former barman turned sommelier and Jill a linguist and marketing specialist are a force to be reckoned with, as they cement their place as one of the best producers in NSW and the country. I congratulate Michael and Jill for their efforts.

### WAKEHURST GOLF CLUB LIFE MEMBERS

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—Today I recognise Wakehurst Golf Club which recently held its annual general meeting. A fantastic result that came out of this meeting was appointment of new life members. I would like to extend my congratulations to Jill Hyslop and Peral Burrows who were made life members. This fantastic honour a true testament to their commitment to the club and the community.

### WAKEHURST GOLF CLUB 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—On 15 October Wakehurst Golf Club celebrated its 50th Anniversary. 200 members packed into the clubhouse for a night of storytelling, food, drinks, and dancing. Opening in 1972 Wakehurst Golf Club has been a community institution providing great food and drinks and of course fantastic golf. I again congratulate the club and its members for what has been a fantastic first 50 years and join them in hoping the next 50 will be even better.

### CHILTON'S ANTIQUES AND JEWELLERY

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I commend the incredible team at Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery on winning the Business of the Year and Jewellery Business of the Year categories at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Established in 1986, the team at Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery is experienced and enthusiastic about the quality of their products. The Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery brand is distinguished from competitors through the team's attention to detail and specialised qualifications, with owner Liz Stevens undertaking studies to become a leading gemmology expert. I acknowledge the team at Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery for the passion they have in sourcing jewellery from around the world and making bespoke pieces for special moments. I recognise Liz Stevens, Thana Akkari, Di Trevallion, Nicole Russell, Michelle Beyer, Elise Cameron-Smith, and Ann Selle. This NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery that are an important part of our community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Chilton's Antiques and Jewellery on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### ST MICHAEL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate St Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Kirrawee on 10 years of being the spiritual and cultural foundation of our local Antiochian Orthodox community. The journey of creating this local parish officially commenced on 14 March 2010 when the foundation stone of the church was laid. On 9 September 2022, the first service in the church was held and since this day, the church has provided a welcoming environment for the congregation to come together in worship, Bible study, social activities, youth group and Arabic language classes. I was pleased to join with the congregation on 6 November 2022 to celebrate the patron saint's feast day of Saint Michael with a Divine Liturgy service and luncheon on parish grounds. None of this is possible without the spiritual guidance and support of Parish Priest Father Fadi. I also acknowledge the ongoing dedication of the Church's committee members including John Issa, John Khouri, Michael Fadel, Nich Hawi, Salime Khouri, Lillian Saad, Paul Murr, Faraj Abo Ghazala, Michael Murr, Michael Abo Haidar, and Louis Mikhail. I congratulate St Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church on reaching this important milestone and extend my best wishes for the future.

### STAPLETON'S QUALITY MEATS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I commend the incredible team at Stapleton's Quality Meats on winning the Poultry/Fish/Meat of the Year category at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Stapleton's Quality Meats is a family owned and operated business with a history spanning over 100 years in the Sutherland Shire. As a well-established brand in the Shire and winner of this esteemed award for the third time in four years, Stapleton's Quality Meats has a reputation for offering customers only the highest quality produce. Importantly, the business is truly part of our local community, supporting dozens of local schools, clubs and charity events. I take this opportunity to recognise small business owner Mark Rogers, as well as George Kizi, Nishant Prudel and the wider team at Stapleton's Quality Meats on this achievement. This NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like Stapleton's Quality Meats that are an important part of our community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Stapleton's Quality Meats on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### CHLOE TAULAHl

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—In our State there are over 800,000 carers looking after a loved one with a disability or condition that requires full time care. This can often take a heavy emotional, physical and financial toll. Recently, I came to be aware of a St Clair local and mother, Chloe Taulahi who looks after her

young son Tomasi who has a rare disorder called Angel-man syndrome. It effects movement, balance, cause seizures and sleep issues. Despite this, Chloe gets up every morning and devotes her full love and care towards Tomasi so that he may have the brightest future possible. Chloe is a shining example of what many mothers and carers right across our State are, caring, loving and strong. Today I acknowledge Chloe's story and celebrate the many carers who give all of their time and effort to the improvement of life for others.

#### KATIE ASTLEY

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to Katie Astley, the latest recipient of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Junior Sports Star Award. At the very young age of 16, Katie is already the best female junior lawn bowler in Australia. This is an incredible achievement and something to be extremely proud of. Crisscrossing the country, Katie has travelled far and wide to compete in the sport she loves most. She now harbours ambitions to see herself into the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Victoria. Congratulations again Katie on your tremendous achievement and I look to seeing more of your successful sporting career unfold.

#### KAREN FRUGTNIET

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I would like to recognise Glenmore Park local, Karen Frugtniet who despite the challenges she faces, has found a way to persevere and build her confidence. At age 36, Karen was diagnosed with a hereditary disease that left her legally blind and unable to do some tasks that most people take for granted. She has since found assistance in Guide Dogs Australia where she says it has changed her life and given back her independence. Her first seeing eye dog Josie and now Queenie have both been instrumental in helping her with important tasks like getting to work. Karen is a walking demonstration of never giving up despite her challenges and also highlights the need for accessibility and inclusion to always be apart of the discussion when we all work to build a brighter future.

#### TERREY HILLS RFS

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I congratulate the Terrey Hills Brigade of the NSW Rural Fire Service, who in recent weeks have celebrated their 80th Anniversary. For eight decades Terrey Hills Brigade has been a vigilant protector of our local communities and bushland. Local RFS volunteers have deployed to some of our State's worst bushfires where they have put their lives at risk to protect lives and homes far from their own. Under the leadership of Brigade Captain Peter Duff and President David Lloyd, Terrey Hills Brigade diligently trains in firefighting and rescue techniques to ensure they are always ready. I was delighted to attend the Brigade's 80th Anniversary event and am always inspired by the professionalism, passion and spirit of Terrey Hills Brigade volunteers. Congratulations to Terrey Hills Brigade on 80 incredible years, and on behalf of our community thank you to all our local RFS volunteers for what you do.

#### JENNIFER HARRIS

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I acknowledge the indomitable Jennifer Harris for her contribution to the Pittwater community. Originally from Melbourne, Jennifer has had a successful career practising law, including as general counsel to major corporations including the ABC. Settling in Avalon Beach and opening a local law firm, for many years Jennifer has been an active, highly-valued and supportive member of the wonderful Avalon Beach community. Jennifer is the long-serving President of the Avalon Beach Branch of the Liberal Party and her volunteer work includes her significant contribution as a member of the Presbyterian Kirk. Highly-regarded, Jennifer is incredibly wise and experienced, and is a great sounding board for many in the community. I have always appreciated Jennifer's wise counsel and support, and I would like to thank her for her many years of service to our community.

#### ALEX MCTAGGART

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I recognise Alex McTaggart for his lifetime of service to Pittwater. A stalwart of the Avalon Beach community, Alex has held many roles that have helped shape our local community – including as Mayor of Pittwater Council, State Member for Pittwater, and as a Pittwater Ward Councillor on the Northern Beaches Council. To many, Alex is the epitome of Pittwater. Indeed – some may say he remains the Mayor of Avalon. He is a passionate advocate in the support of local clubs and not-for-profits, always providing a reasoned and sensible approach to community policy. Since retiring as a Northern Beaches Councillor, Alex continues to be an important voice in Pittwater, including as a Director of the Northern Beaches Indoor Sports Centre. Thank you, Alex, for your ongoing contribution to our local community.

**INDY NEGFELDT CATHEAD DESIGNS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—At the age of 12, local Cobar girl Indy Negfeldt started her own fashion label Cathead Country, selling hats jewellery and clothing. The range was designed to be comfortable, durable and for all age groups. Now 14 years old, Indy has managed to increase followers on her online platform and triple her sales and product range. Recently, Indy came across an advertisement on social media for nominations for the Women's Small Business Champion Awards. She noted her business 'Cathead Country' ticked all the boxes to qualify, including the business having a woman as a sole owner who is the main decision maker. The Women's Small Business Champion Awards is a prestigious and comprehensive program that supports and recognises small businesses owned by women across Australia, comprising of several different categories. Earlier this month, Indy was named as a finalist in her category, the New Service Business – Young Entrepreneur and fashion. I would like to commend Indy on her efforts and wish her the best of luck for the awards and for the future of her brand 'Cathead Country', well done.

**ROBERT SKOMBA NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2022 FINALIST**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Robert Skomba, Blacktown Police Area Command (PAC), on being selected as a Finalist in the NSW Police Officer of the Year Awards 2022. Rotary Clubs of NSW, Volunteers in Policing Award. This Award recognises the extraordinary efforts of the NSW Volunteers in Policing who, in their own time, help ensure the community is best served by their police. Robert commenced his role as a NSW Police Force Volunteer on the 30th November 2006. During Robert's 16 years of extensive service, he has played an integral role in supporting the organisation and offering his assistance to Blacktown PAC. He has passionately supported multiple community engagement events across Blacktown PAC, some of which included facilitating letterbox drops for crime prevention, school education programs and supporting command training day BBQs. Robert's dedication, commitment, and continual willingness to go above and beyond ensures that he is constantly serving our community, as well as being a continual role model and mentor to other Volunteers in Policing. Thank you for your service, Robert. I look forward to seeing what more you will achieve to keep our community safe.

**ROBERT FITZGERALD ROTARY POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2022**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Chief Inspector Robert Fitzgerald, Blacktown Police Area (PAC) on being awarded the Rotary Community Award, at the Rotary Clubs of NSW, Police Officer of the Year Awards on November 4th 2022. This Award recognises the exceptional efforts of NSW Police Force employees who have worked for the benefit of the community, putting service above self whether on or off duty. Chief Inspector Fitzgerald is a strong advocate for our community, making many great contributions which include participating in National Tree Day at Morreau Reserve, Rooty Hill where he helped others to plant over 1200 shrubs and trees. Participating in the Blacktown City Council CEO Sleepout helping to raise \$47,655 in funds for Blacktown Women and Girls Health Centre. Volunteering with the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency, supporting Refugee Week. Volunteering with Convey for Kids, helping to raise over \$1 million in donations to the Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service. Distributing meals to Covid positive families isolating at their homes in within the Blacktown PAC. Thank you for your service to our community Chief Inspector Fitzgerald. You are a very deserving recipient of this Award.

**AMAR SINGH NSW LOCAL HERO AWARD 2022**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Amar Singh, Founder of T4A - Turbans 4 Australia, on being awarded the NSW Local Hero of the Year Award on 3rd November 2022. Amar Singh is a very deserving recipient of the NSW Local Hero of the Year Award. In 2015 Amar founded Turbans 4 Australia. From its very foundation, Turbans 4 Australia has practised the Sikh belief of equality, respect and benevolence by extending a helping hand to support vulnerable people in our community. During the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires, Turbans 4 Australia volunteers travelled to the New South Wales South Coast to assist those affected by bushfires. More recently, Turbans 4 Australia has supported our western Sydney community by providing essential food packs to people affected by COVID-19 restrictions, as well as to communities affected by the floods this year. Thank you to Amar Singh and the entire team at Turbans 4 Australia for promoting peace and assisting our society's most vulnerable. You have done so much to improve the lives of many families in our Western Sydney community and in communities across NSW. You should be very proud of your achievements.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:50 until  
Thursday 10 November 2022 at 9:30.**