



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 10 November 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 10 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.

### *Announcements*

#### **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST**

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the members who attended this morning's fifteenth and final Thought Leadership Breakfast for the parliamentary term. I thank Liz Broderick for sharing her thoughts and insights on leadership and ethics. Liz was accompanied by Lisa Ryan, with whom she worked on the recent Broderick review. The event was well attended and there was a good discussion from members of both Houses.

#### **DEFAMATION LAW PRESENTATION**

**The SPEAKER:** At 1.00 p.m. Professor David Rolph from the University of Sydney Law School will give a presentation in the parliamentary theatre on the topic of recent changes to defamation law and their implications for members of Parliament. The event will be hosted by the member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin, and is open to members, guests and staff.

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery a delegation from the Victorian Parliament, which is here for a three-day procedure staff exchange program. I was fortunate to visit the Victorian Parliament a couple of weeks ago, where I met with its President. I welcome Steph Blackshaw, Juliana Duan and Chrissy Andonovski, who are here to observe the opening of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly as well as question time, though that may be a little rowdy. I also welcome visitors from Service NSW, which does a fantastic job. Perhaps I should ask, "How can we help you?" I welcome them and hope they enjoy their visit to Parliament.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 13 October 2022.**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (09:48):** I am delighted to complete my contribution to debate on the budget both in my shadow ministerial capacity and as member for Campbelltown. I will express the concerns and challenges that people in west and south-west Sydney continue to confront. Before I do that and with the indulgence of the House, I offer my sincerest condolences, thoughts and prayers to those affected by the tragedy of the passing of a six-week-old baby in Campbelltown last night in a fire. My colleagues and I cannot begin to imagine what that family is going through. We send our thoughts and prayers and hope the family is surrounded by all the support and love they need during this deeply challenging time. On behalf of the people of my electorate of Campbelltown, I offer that family my sincere condolences for their tragic loss.

When I refer to the challenges of local families and businesses across western and south-west Sydney, I speak in terms of health, education, the shortfall in infrastructure and the serious financial challenges that they are confronting, both in their own homes and in their everyday lives. I note the presence in the House of my colleague and shadow Minister for Health, Ryan Park, and other Labor colleagues. They know all too well that this is not limited just to west and south-west Sydney but extends down through the Illawarra and to the north, in the area of the electorate represented by Mr Assistant Speaker, where health services continue to be under strain. The condition of those services and facilities that have been put in place were present before COVID. I take this opportunity to acknowledge our health workers—our nurses, our midwives and our allied health workers as well as each and every other staff member at our hospitals—who got us through the pandemic and who continue to carry us through and provide us with support.

If it is good enough for them to have supported us, I suggest that it is good enough for this Government to support them. Quite frankly, that support has not been there for them and is not there now. The pressures that they



are under are not just because of a lack of funding. We do not see political will from the Perrottet Government to provide them with what they need and deserve. Many of the people of west and south-west Sydney are offended by this Government's treatment of them, and rightly so. I acknowledge in my electorate the upgrades to Campbelltown Hospital. I am very proud to have fought for those facilities and stood with my community to get them. All credit is due to our community. I note that the Government likes to pat itself on the back, but it is taxpayers' money that upgraded that hospital. The hospital is in a growth centre and new families are coming into the growth area of our region. Put simply, it is a matter of providing supply to meet the demand of an increasing urban population.

Ironically, right across the west and the south-west of Sydney we are seeing growth that we have not seen in decades under this Government's urban growth plan. Are new schools being built to keep pace with urban population growth? No, they are not, not to the level that is required to accommodate that growth and to deliver for local families, students, teachers and parents. Let me be very clear, when we talk about those who work in our education system, ultimately, they provide the support that our students need. Any investment in education is an investment in the prosperity and opportunities for our students, our children, to get the best education that they not only need but, in my view, are entitled to. This Government is obligated to provide them with that support. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the House and my colleagues opposite for their support to allow me to continue raising matters that are confronting families across west and south-west Sydney. I note the presence in the House of the member for Holsworthy, who also is passionate about her local community. She knows all too well—because she is right in the heart of it—but cannot speak about the shortfalls of the Government's delivery across south-west Sydney. I used to live in Holsworthy, East Hills barracks and Wattle Grove, but I moved on to the greener pastures of Campbelltown in the mid-nineties and I have never looked back. But the reality is we are not seeing an appropriate delivery of services. There is disparity between urban population growth and adequate funding for resources, services and infrastructure that continues to increase enormously. Funding simply is not keeping pace.

When we consider the amount of stamp duty that has been taken out of west and south-west Sydney since this Government came to power, 12 long years later that amount is enormous. It is into the billions of dollars. I will have more to say about that, as have Chris Minns and Daniel Mookhey. The shadow Minister for Education, Pru Car, is right that we simply are not getting our fair share of revenue. She, too, is a member of an electorate in our beloved western Sydney, so she knows this all too well—not because of her role as shadow education Minister but from her role as a good and passionate local member and an advocate for her community. When we consider disparity, it is very clear that west and south-west Sydney, including Campbelltown, are not getting their fair share.

But let me now discuss what we have got. We have new tolls on old roads. That is an enormous burden on local families and local businesses. Some local businesses in south-west Sydney are paying thousands of dollars a week to sit on a congested toll road. As I have stated previously, many families, if not all families in west and south-west Sydney, including Campbelltown, have a decision to make when they are going to work, as 80 per cent of them leave the area to work somewhere else. That is another error that must be rectified. The daily reality is that local families and workers have two choices: to sit on a congested toll road or to drive to a railway station to catch a train that is either overcrowded or late—and that is if they can find a car parking space at a commuter car park. This Government has promised time and again to deliver a car park, but it has not delivered that car park.

When Gladys Berejiklian was the transport Minister, she promised a commuter car park at Campbelltown, and we are still waiting for it. The ignorance of the former member for Bega, Andrew Constance, still resonates right across west and south-west Sydney. The legacy of that member is nothing more than abhorrent, and it is a reality that local families experience every day. What we have seen from this Government is Government members putting their politics before the needs, dreams and aspirations of the people of west and south-west Sydney. The people of that area know it, and, in reality, I think this Government knows it as well. A good symbolic representation is when I look to the great city of Penrith. The Government again has announced a stadium for Penrith. Good luck to Penrith; I take nothing away from Penrith. But women cannot play at the Campbelltown Sports Stadium because there is no women's change room.

I have written frequently to this Government about the Campbelltown Sports Stadium. It might sound menial to Government members, but they should put themselves in the position of a strong sporting community where participation in sport for our whole community is encouraged and supported, particularly women, in rugby league, football or Aussie rules. Imagine how a bloke would feel going to a stadium to play footy and being told, "Sorry, but there's only a female change room." That would be an absolute bloody outrage. In the scheme of things, it may not sound important. Government members can joke about it; I do not know why because it is not funny at all.

It is a clear, symbolic representation of this Government's wrong priorities. It is a good example of a government putting its politics and desperate political survival before what is actually needed in local communities and giving people what they need. Whilst I am on the topic of ablutions, toilets, bathrooms and showers, there is not even a dunny at the Service NSW centre at Gregory Hills. As if it was not bad enough that this Government shut down the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] offices at Narellan, Campbelltown and in the electorate of my good friend the member for Macquarie Fields, it put the service centre at Gregory Hills, which is not accessible by public transport and there is no toilet.

It may sound menial to those opposite, but I get a copious amount of correspondence and representations, particularly from seniors and those with mobility issues, who have to travel a long way on public transport and have no toilet to go to. It is unbelievable. My colleague the shadow Minister for Customer Service, Yasmin Catley, is in the Chamber. She understands what that is like, because the RTA office in her electorate was also shut down. If NSW Labor is privileged enough to be elected to government, we will put the needs, dreams and aspirations of the people of New South Wales first, no matter what electorate they live in. We will do little things like putting in a bathroom so that women who play sport can get changed with dignity. We will prioritise, based on need, where future Service NSW offices are located, for example, places like Campbelltown. I will continue to lobby and fight for a Service NSW office. We will make an assessment to ensure that, if we are privileged to be in government, when we deliver it will be based on what the people of New South Wales need in each electorate.

As the Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Pru Car, have said, they have a meritorious approach. We would govern for all. This Government has not done that. After 12 long years all we have is privatisation, more fines and higher tolls. Yet the Government gloats about the prosperity of the people of New South Wales. In reality, it is gloating about its own politics. That once great party called the Liberal Party, which is now nothing more than a decaying carcass on the fringe of New South Wales politics, has a stench about it and a laziness that the people of New South Wales will no longer tolerate, and nor should they.

If Labor was in office, I would be equally critical. In reality this Government is lazy. After 12 long years the people of New South Wales deserve better. They deserve a government that will put people and not party politics first. The people of New South Wales need and deserve a government that will prioritise their needs more than the needs of The Nationals or the Liberal Party. In my electorate and electorates all around New South Wales I do not think people really care about the Labor Party or the Liberal Party, or any of the rubbish that those opposite carry on with. What they care about is making sure that their children get access to good education, and when they go to a hospital the staff are funded and supported so they can make people better.

Another good example of not putting people first is that this Government used taxpayers' money to build a car park at Campbelltown Hospital for the private sector to profit from. Pensioners are paying up to \$14 a day to park at a hospital when they visit their sick loved ones, which is abhorrent. They have paid taxes their whole lives—their taxes built the car park—and they have to pay to park in it. It speaks volumes that those opposite do not understand what is so deeply wrong about that.

**Ms Melanie Gibbons:** They don't have to pay that.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I note the interjection of the member for Holsworthy. She supports the Government's position to build car parks at hospitals for staff, patients and their carers. I thank the House for its indulgence. As we head to the election, I urge the Government to reconsider its priorities and to put the west and south-west first, where they belong.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:04):** The member for Campbelltown should have remained in the Chamber for the next 30 minutes to hear what the Government is doing and all the positive things that are happening in New South Wales, in particular, the south-west region that we both love and share. I speak on the 2022-23 New South Wales State budget and its positive impact on the residents of the Holsworthy electorate and across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government's 2022-23 budget has a strong focus on our region, with a record amount of funding secured. The budget focuses on a pathway forward, after the State has endured some of its most difficult times. We are securing a brighter future for people, families, and communities across New South Wales.

It was important for our State's recovery from floods, fire and COVID that the New South Wales Government delivered a budget that focused on jobs, compassion and support. The budget does exactly that. The budget is important not only for the people of the Holsworthy electorate, but also for every resident across the State. With record levels of funding in our education system, the healthcare sector and infrastructure, as we have emerged from an unprecedented health and economic crisis, the budget attempts to meet the needs of New South Wales citizens. The budget also has a significant focus on supporting families and the wider community. We all left the Chamber after its delivery with a sense of optimism and focusing on the future. I am proud of the Government's achievements in this budget and in every budget delivered in my 12 years in this place. I am proud

to be a member of a team that has turned this great State around and that is rebuilding New South Wales after such a challenging few years.

The New South Wales Treasurer, Matt Kean, spent a great deal of time and energy to ensure that the budget provides for the people of New South Wales. I thank him as we look towards building our future whilst responding to the economic and health challenges we have faced. We have been able to deliver some great things locally. Today I will reflect on some of the benefits to the residents of the Holsworthy electorate. Cost-of-living pressures affect everyone across New South Wales, from families to seniors to our young people who are trying to get a start in life. They have been made worse by rising inflation costs. I am proud that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is addressing this through our cost-of-living measures and programs that we have introduced. We are securing a brighter future for the people of New South Wales by providing comprehensive cost-of-living relief.

To highlight the importance the Government places on tackling cost-of-living pressures, we have included more than \$7.2 billion in the measures in the budget to help boost household budgets. One of those programs is the Premier's Back to School program. Some \$193 million will be allocated to provide families with a \$150 subsidy for each child who attends a primary or secondary school in 2023. The subsidy can be used towards school supplies, such as school uniforms, shoes, bags or textbooks, as well as other things to help children get the best start to the school year, while also taking the pressure off the family budget and leaving more money in their pockets at the end of the week.

Some \$128 million has been included to help up to an initial 30,000 eligible households install solar or replace appliances with more energy efficient ones. The program enables households to make decisions that will deliver long-term savings on their energy bills, while making clean energy improvements to their homes. Those renting or living in apartments who cannot have solar installed may be eligible to swap their current annual rebate for a suite of energy efficient upgrades, helping to reduce demand on the grid and lower power prices for everyone. Appliances available in the package include energy efficient fridges, dryers, air conditioners and hot water systems, as well as upgrades such as window shading and draught sealing valued at up to \$4,000. This program will help take pressure off families and put more money back into household budgets, helping them save around \$600 a year.

The NSW Toll Relief program has also been introduced to help New South Wales motorists save up to \$750 a year on tolls. Under this new program drivers will receive a 40 per cent rebate for tolls incurred once they spend \$375 annually, with the maximum benefit for each customer being \$750. Toll relief will not only ease cost-of-living pressures for families and eligible small businesses who apply but also extend for the first time to pensioners. I am happy that the Government has provided a \$536 million funding boost for Service NSW within the budget. While Service NSW is typically thought of as the place to get your driver licence or Working with Children Check, it also provides an important additional service to our community by offering cost-of-living appointments to ensure households are receiving all of the support they are entitled to. More than three million people have accessed Service NSW's online Savings Finder tool, while the savings specialists have carried out more than 100,000 appointments in their service centres, with an average saving of \$770.

In February a brand new Service NSW centre in Ed.Square at Edmondson Park had its soft opening. That is in the electorate of the member for Macquarie Fields; he did get something brilliant out of the budget. It is another election promise that has now become a reality. The Edmondson Park Service NSW centre is the State's 111th centre. I know the huge difference the centre will make to our community, because it will reduce pressure on other local centres such as Liverpool, which I believe is either the first or second busiest in the State. The Premier officially opened the centre. He opened the Liverpool centre several years ago when he was finance Minister, so he knows the benefits and the difference the centres make to our electorates. It was a great opportunity to show him around the new centre and to have local small business owners also present to ensure they are aware of what Service NSW can offer them. I thank the Premier. I also thank the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Victor Dominello, for his energy around Service NSW. His passion has driven the transformation of the Roads and Traffic Authority into a brilliant new service for everyone.

The Government is continuing to invest in essential education infrastructure. The State's education system has never had more funding. It is also important that we focus on providing high-quality resources to ensure we are getting better education outcomes for our students. With projected growth in the local area, it was essential that our education system was prioritised. The school building boom continues with the Government's record investment of \$1.6 billion to build and upgrade New South Wales public schools. Since 2017 the Government has delivered \$9.1 billion in school building projects, ensuring that students and teachers across the State have access to first-class, modern learning facilities. I am pleased that the Holsworthy electorate has benefited from that record funding already.

Construction of the new primary school in Edmondson Park is underway, which will take the pressure off my local school, Prestons Public School. I had the pleasure of turning the sod in February with the Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, and the school's future principal Heather Ale. The new school is set to open for the start of school next year, and will deliver 44 teaching and learning spaces, four support classrooms and two preschool rooms, accommodating up to 1,000 students and 40 preschool places. The new primary school is one of the many schools that have been built or upgraded since 2019. Prestons Public School was also one of the schools that had a fantastic upgrade, which we opened in 2020.

I am also pleased to note that a brand new high school in Edmondson Park is in the planning stage. It will have fit-for-purpose learning spaces and core facilities to meet the enrolment needs of the rapidly growing area. I am looking forward to seeing the upgraded plans and progress moving forward on the high school. The new Liverpool West Public School upgrade is also progressing. Those schools will support the many new young families that have moved into the area and cater for the projected rapid growth. As part of the budget, the Government committed \$1.3 billion to provide fee relief for families with children across the community and the mobile preschool and long day care sectors.

I now turn to our local roads. Safety on our local roads is of great importance to me. In particular, creating a safer Heathcote Road will always remain a priority. In the budget, \$79 million in capital expenditure was committed to continue planning the duplication of Heathcote Road between The Avenue at Voyager Point and the Princes Highway at Heathcote. That will improve safety for the 36,000 motorists who use the road daily. I have requested that centre dividers be prioritised as part of the upgrade. They have been needed for many years and could have prevented several head-on collisions. As I said, I have been looking into that for many years now, but I am told that we do not have the land at the moment to put the centre dividers in. We would need much more space to do that, but it will come. We have been in discussions and negotiations as part of our planning and investigation with Defence, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council to add to the road verges and install the much-needed dividers.

I have also campaigned for our native wildlife, especially our koalas, to be considered as part of a future upgrade. We need fences, underpasses and overpasses to give them safe access. While driving along Heathcote Road late one evening, I hit a kangaroo or a wallaby. I am not sure what it was; unfortunately, it was too dark and it jumped away too quickly. I realised how dark and isolating that road is. It does not have great mobile phone reception. We need full mobile phone coverage all the way along the road so that if something happens, people can call for help and they are not on their own. While it is a very busy road during the day, at night it can be very isolating. We need full mobile phone coverage for motorists to call for assistance for not only themselves but also wildlife that may have been in an unfortunate accident. As I said, overpasses and underpasses are needed, as well as access into the fenced-off Defence land, particularly for our important koala colony. As has been stated in the House many times, the only disease-free koala population in New South Wales lives between our two rivers.

The funding also continues the 2.2 kilometre duplication between Infantry Parade and The Avenue. As everyone who drives that road can attest, it is coming along well. The upgrade is finally starting to come together. Noise barriers and temporary traffic lights have been installed for the past few months, which is something the community and I called for for a long time. We asked for temporary traffic lights to be installed at the start of the project because we knew that safety measure was needed while the construction took place. They have made a huge difference to people getting home safely. On the topic of getting home safely, I will still be working on access to Pleasure Point for the residents who live there. Not many residents live in Pleasure Point, but they need safe access in and out of their homes for them and their visitors. That is still definitely on my to-do list. The current upgrade will see the duplication of existing bridges across Harris Creek and Williams Creek, as well as a third bridge across the T8 Airport railway line. It is a big project with three bridges.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Bills*

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (CUSTODY OF KNIVES) BILL 2022**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (10:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Crimes Amendment (Custody of Knives) Bill 2022. When I gave notice of the bill in September I announced that the Opposition would be pursuing an increase in penalties for knife possession in

public places and, importantly, in schools. It is unfortunate that we have to enact provisions like these, but we do. We must make sure that in all of our deliberations in Parliament, particularly in respect to criminal law, community safety is paramount. Although the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and Local Court statistics regarding knife crime are relatively stable under the current relevant provisions in the Crimes Act, they are still stubbornly high. As a former Minister for Police, I note that the police do a terrific job making sure that they are vigilant in the parts of Sydney and New South Wales where the possession of knives is more prevalent so that they are all over the people who carry those weapons in public. They do a very good job of keeping us safe, as do magistrates and judges when these matters are brought before the courts. I reiterate that although knife crime offences are not increasing, their numbers are still stubbornly high.

According to the Judicial Commission of New South Wales, between 2017 and 2022 there have been an average of 1,862 violent assaults or robberies involving a knife committed each year. Also, between 2018 and 2021, the Local Court of New South Wales heard 3,115 cases relating to the offence of custody of a knife in a public place, first offence. What is of concern is that the Local Court heard matters relating to a further 1,530 subsequent offences for knife possession in the same period. One might glean from those statistics that there is a propensity for reoffending. The statistics are a concern, as are the motivations of the offenders. It is the duty of members of Parliament as legislators to do what we can to prevent violent knife crime. That means sending a strong message to people who might want to carry knives in their pockets—without a lawful—excuse that they should not do it. The Opposition says that the current penalty of two years' imprisonment is not a sufficient deterrent. We need a stronger deterrent for knife possession in public places, particularly in schools. The bill is a first step towards that.

The statistics are one thing, but the examples of this crime in real life are another. Perhaps the most infamous case that is on public display involves the death of an 18-year-old man, who cannot be named for legal reasons, who allegedly stabbed a 17-year-old after a brawl broke out near amusement rides between two groups of youths earlier this year at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Like many people in this place and across the State, I attend the Royal Easter Show. Whilst I would rather walk through the cattle pavilion and say hello to the jerseys—given that I am from a long line of dairy farmers in the Macleay region—kids will be kids and they love to go on rides. It is a concern when groups of young men in gangs—full of testosterone, misplaced tribalism and geographicalism—are walking around, puffing out their chests and misbehaving with other gangs they might come across at the show. I have often thought whilst in the crush queueing for rides with my kids that we are potentially only millimetres away from someone carrying a knife. We must send a message to those young men that they need to leave the steak knives in the drawer and use them on their steak and potatoes, and not on other people at train stations, the Royal Easter Show or at any other place.

I do not believe that the current penalty of two years' imprisonment is sufficient. The Sydney Royal Easter Show case is currently before the courts, so I will not say any more about that alleged offence. In September this year, in its program "The Postcode Wars: Street gangs, drugs and organised crime", *Four Corners* did a very good job of further punctuating these issues. The program interviewed these boofheads and wannabe copycat gangsters and showed some of the language they use. It is basically kill or be killed. I am not talking about Ukraine; I am talking about walking down the street or sitting near a train station in western Sydney. One gang member said:

... our area is our family. Anyone that goes against us is going against our family.

They mostly carry knives and hammers. The gang member continued:

When it involves violence, it usually ends up with blood spilt.

One bloke bragged about how he stabbed a young man seven times in the neck, chest and back with a box cutter last year. He said:

It was either me or him, you know, he's in the wrong area at the end of the day.

You can get stabbed for getting off at the wrong train station or walking down the street. The stabbing left the victim in hospital and it landed the young gang member in juvenile detention for a year. The Opposition does not want that to happen. We do not want blokes to be stabbed or gang members to go into Juvenile Justice. I do not pretend that there are not people walking around with knives in the Maroubra electorate, which is in the east—there are. There are also people walking around with knives in regional New South Wales. It is not just a Sydney phenomenon. Through the bill the Opposition is saying to these young people not to commit knife crime and to leave knives and other weapons at home. Get a job or study and make yourself a better person or do some community work. I acknowledge that usually the precursor to all of this is the poor upbringing suffered by young people who come from bad homes. The Opposition does not want them to be charged and go to jail. We want them to lead good and productive lives. If there is one message that should come out of the promulgation of the bill, it is not to bring a knife into a public place or to a school.

I have already spoken about the boofheads with their testosterone and misplaced tribalism. On 29 August this year *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that a 15-year-old girl was arrested after a 16-year-old girl was stabbed at a school in Orange. I note that the member for Orange, who is a former police officer, is in the Chamber. The article states:

Officers from the Central West Police District were called at about 1pm to Canobolas Rural Technology High School on Icely Road, where they say they found the victim with stab wounds to her chest and arm. The girl was treated by paramedics

...

The 15-year-old was taken to Orange police station where police say she is assisting with their inquiries. A NSW Department of Education spokeswoman said emergency services were called to the school following an altercation between two students.

...

A crime scene has been established ... "The circumstances behind the motivation of the alleged stabbing are still to be established ...

I am sure they have been by now. The member for Orange can elaborate further on that when debate on the bill resumes next week. Labor wants to stamp out completely unacceptable incidents like that. To get up of a morning or an afternoon—depending on when you choose to get up—and brush your teeth, comb your hair, put on your best pair of Adidas and then go out to the garden shed and grab an eight-inch blade to stick in your pocket to take with you is ridiculous. But that is the day and night for some people in this State. We want to send a strong message to those people to stop, to not do it. The bill is a good start. Schedule 1 to the bill states:

... gives effect to the object described in the above overview by re-enacting, in the *Crimes Act 1900*, an offence of having custody of a knife in a public place or school that is currently found in the *Summary Offences Act 1988*, section 11C.

It is removing the offence from the Summary Offences Act and creating a new offence in the Crimes Act. Schedule 1 continues:

In re-enacting the offence, the amendment also—

- (a) doubles the maximum penalty for the offence from 20 penalty units or imprisonment for 2 years, or both, to 40 penalty units or imprisonment for 4 years, or both, and
- (b) provides that previous convictions for knife-related offences must be taken into account as an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sentence for an offence under the re-enacted provision.

Schedule 1 also amends consequential amendments of the Criminal Procedure Act and the Summary Offences Act. I briefly read the bill before I conclude, because it is a short bill. The bill inserts new section 547F into the Crimes Act. It reads:

- (1) A person must not, without reasonable excuse, proof of which lies on the person, have in the person's custody a knife in a public place or school.

Maximum penalty—40 penalty units or imprisonment for 4 years, or both.

Members should take note of subsection (2) because, in consultations on the bill, industry, trade groups and religious groups wanted us to take into account their particular circumstances, and we have. It reads:

- (2) Without limitation, it is a reasonable excuse for this section for a person to have custody of a knife if—
  - (a) the custody is reasonably necessary in all the circumstances for any of the following—
    - (i) the lawful pursuit of the person's occupation, education or training,
    - (ii) the preparation or consumption of food or drink,
    - (iii) participation in a lawful entertainment, recreation or sport,
    - (iv) the exhibition of knives for retail or other trade purposes,
    - (v) an organised exhibition by knife collectors,
    - (vi) the wearing of an official uniform,
    - (vii) genuine religious purposes, or
  - (b) the custody is reasonably necessary in all the circumstances during travel to or from or incidental to an activity referred to in paragraph (a), or
  - (c) the custody is of a kind prescribed by the regulations.
- (3) However, it is not a reasonable excuse for this section for a person to have custody of a knife only for self-defence or the defence of another person.
- (4) Without limiting the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999*, section 21A(1)(a) and (2)(d), a previous conviction for a knife-related offence must be taken into account as an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sentence for an offence under this section.
- (5) The regulations may provide that this section does not apply to, or in relation to, a specified class or description of knife.

(6) In this section—

*knife, public place* and *school* have the same meaning as in the *Summary Offences Act 1988*.

*knife-related offence* means an offence under the following—

- (a) this section,
- (b) the *Summary Offences Act 1988*, section 11B or 11E,
- (c) the *Summary Offences Act 1988*, section 11C before its repeal,
- (d) another offence punishable on conviction by imprisonment for 2 years or more if a knife was used in the commission of the offence,
- (e) an offence under a law of the Commonwealth or of another State or Territory punishable on conviction by imprisonment for 2 years or more if a knife was used in the commission of the offence.

Clause 2.1 of schedule 2 to the bill—"Consequential amendments"—amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 by inserting new item 16E, "Custody of knife in a public place or school" in schedule 1 to the Act after table 1, part 3, item 16D to give the election of venues to prosecution or defence so as to not clog up the courts. Clause 2.2 amends the Summary Offences Act by omitting sections 11C and 29A. I note that the Attorney General has commissioned a review by the NSW Sentencing Council for firearms, knives and other weapons in New South Wales. That is an important step. This is not meant to be a competition. As the Attorney General knows, we will cooperate with all sensible propositions and legislative amendments that are brought before the House where community safety is concerned.

However, there must be a stronger message, stronger deterrents and stronger sentences where breaches of the law are concerned in relation to the dangerous act of carrying knives in a public place or school without lawful reason. It is a precursor to harm, and it is unacceptable. As New South Wales heads into the busy holiday period when large public gatherings are held, the community should not have to worry about people sitting or standing next to them on a train, on a bus or in a queue carrying a knife without a lawful excuse. Anyone who walks out the door with a blade in their pocket is open to the possibility of using it, and that is unacceptable. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (REGISTERED NURSES IN NURSING HOMES) BILL 2020**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:37):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I acknowledge the people gathered in the gallery today to support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020. They seek State-based legislative reform to improve the quality of life of the residents of nursing homes, including family and friends whom they love and care about or residents whom they care for. The bill is about the people in our lives whom we love, cherish and look after. I introduced the first edition of the bill five years ago, which was especially important to me. Other than being the first ever bill I brought before the House, it sought to right the wrongs that inadvertently resulted from legislative change removing a requisite minimum of registered nursing staff and resulting care for the most vulnerable in our community—the frail and aged living in nursing homes.

Since the drafting of section 2 (m) of the Private Hospitals Amendment Act 1971, it has been the requirement to keep at least one registered nurse in a nursing home in New South Wales. That requirement was included in the Community Welfare Private Health Establishments Act 1982, the Nursing Homes Act 1988, the Public Health Act 1991 and the Public Health Act 2010. Previous requirements covered in legislation were a blanket measure across all nursing homes. Unfortunately, that requirement was made defunct with the then Federal amendments to the Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997 and a small change to the definition of "nursing home". It would appear that the New South Wales government at the time believed that registered nurses were needed in nursing homes at all times.

Former Minister for Health Jillian Skinner grandfathered this provision to all nursing homes that were in operation before 1 July 2014. This came in the form of the Public Health Amendment (Nursing Homes) Regulation 2014. Therefore, nursing homes that commenced operation after 1 July 2014 do not have to legally keep registered nurses on shift. The bill I bring before the House today—like the bill I introduced five years ago—merely seeks the restoration of a mandatory minimum level of registered nurses to each and every nursing home, thereby lifting the level of nursing care to that which existed prior to 2014. If anything, the health care of our aged care residents should be improved, not degraded, which is what has occurred at some aged-care facilities after the

2014 legislative change. Facilities saw the legislation-induced loophole as an opportunity for efficiency measures and increasing profit margins, all at the expense of care for our aged and frail.

Five years ago those opposite voted against the bill, dismissing the diminished care of our elderly in many nursing homes because it was out of sight and out of mind. People forget that if they are lucky to grow old, they may need the care of a registered nurse at a nursing home someday. I ask members to look at what has happened since. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety highlighted the widespread absence of a minimum level of nursing care staff in nursing homes and care staff across the board. The horror stories relayed to the commission of nursing home residents were unfathomable. Neglect of the elderly in some facilities was directly attributable to the lack of a requisite minimum of nursing care staff.

I point out that there have been, and still are, many nursing homes that deliver their residents the very best of care. Some facilities already provide a minimum of at least one registered nurse at their facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are, however, not overly common, especially in profit-driven establishments. In the time I have represented the communities of the Orange electorate, constituents have reported to me instances of neglect of care for their loved ones in local nursing homes. In some cases, death has resulted. As these matters are potentially subject to coronial investigation, I will not detail further, but the lack of appropriately nurse-staffed facilities was no doubt a factor.

Some nursing home facilities are not just deficient in or absent of registered nurses, but operate with reliance on a skeleton crew of overworked personal care staff or assistants in nursing. They are run off their feet, and when the proverbial hits the fan they need to call an ambulance because they lack the clinical skills to assess, treat and manage many health conditions or detect a potentially life-threatening deterioration. When an ambulance is required to convey a nursing home resident to hospital, it contributes to ramping and clogged and bed-blocked hospitals. With a minimum requisite number of registered nurses at each nursing home, we are avoiding unnecessary presentations to hospitals.

Since those opposite voted against my bill in 2017 we have sadly seen COVID-19 arrive and creep into nursing homes across the nation. We all watched in horror as news reports on television showed deceased patients being wheeled from nursing homes, their deaths arising prematurely from contracting coronavirus. The scale of COVID-related deaths in nursing homes exposed the lack of nursing care staff to appropriately care for their residents. There is no way of proving whether or not an increase in the minimum number of staff at facilities would have prevented some COVID-related deaths, but I would be confident in saying some would have been avoided. It should not take a royal commission and a pandemic death toll to initiate legislating for minimum requisite nursing staff at nursing homes. If my Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party colleagues and I could see the need over five years ago then we all can—if not then, certainly now.

Subsequent to the bill before the House being introduced to the other place by my colleague the Hon. Mark Banasiak, this became a campaign issue in the 2022 Federal election. The new Federal Government committed to its election campaign promise, and just a few weeks ago the Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill 2022 passed both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. That bill, among other aspects of improvements to nursing home care, amended the Aged Care Act 1997 to require approved providers of residential care and certain kinds of flexible care to ensure a registered nurse is on site and on duty at all times at each residential facility they operate. I understand that the member for Keira will be moving an amendment to make this bill consistent with the Federal Act, removing any unnecessary complication.

Members may ask why we still need to pass this bill for this State. The bill will mandate a minimum of at least one registered nurse being present at every nursing home at every hour of every day. I intend to introduce an amendment that provides for regulation to specify a higher requisite minimum number of registered nurses for facilities where the number of residents dictates an additional number of registered nurses to appropriately care for our aged. Members may ask why else we ought to pass this bill. We all know that legislation can be rolled back, repealed and amended, and nothing is set in stone. The changes brought about in 2014 are evidence of that. By passing this bill into legislation, we ensure a benchmark—a safety net—to prevent the loss of legislated minimum registered nursing care in the event Federal legislation is overturned in the future.

There are those in this Chamber who question where the workforce will come from if this is legislated. As of 1 July next year, that will be a federally legislated requirement of nursing homes in any case. If we did not ever dictate a requisite minimum, we would have far fewer police on our streets, for example. Our aged nursing home residents have been taxpayers who supported our society over their entire lifetimes. They should enjoy the highest quality of life and health care that nursing can provide. This bill has special significance for every person in New South Wales who has an elderly grandparent, mother, father, brother, sister or friend living in a nursing home.



Let us install a backstop. Let us provide regulatory mobility to adapt to increasing nursing care requirements. Let us provide our elderly with the protections of minimum nursing care, which we ourselves would want should we be lucky enough to attain an age where such care is needed. Let us improve the quality of life for those precious people living in our nursing homes and give them the dignity that they deserve. To paraphrase a quote attributed to the wise Mahatma Gandhi, the greatness of a nation can be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable. I do not think any member would argue that the aged and frail living in our nursing homes are not among the most vulnerable, and our society must be judged poorly in the absence of necessary mechanisms such as those proposed by this bill to ensure we treat our nursing home residents better than we have done.

I thank the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for its valued input on behalf of its members—some of whom are in the gallery today, and no doubt many more are watching live online—and its support for this bill. I thank all of the dedicated and hardworking nurses, many of whom work in trying conditions and go above and beyond to care for their patients and residents. To those seniors and frail persons living in nursing homes across the State I say that we want the best for them, and I hope that common sense and reason prevail in this Chamber today and members support the bill to support them. Finally, this is not an overly complicated bill. It is fairly simple and not voluminous. It comprises two pages. The long title states it is a bill:

... to amend the Public Health Act 2010 to bring the definition of a nursing home into line with relevant Commonwealth legislation so as to ensure that the requirement for a registered nurse to be on duty at all times at a nursing home is continued.

That is not something overly onerous to ask for. I hope politics is not played in relation to this bill. This is not a game. We are talking about those most precious people in our community who have worked hard all their lives, paid their taxes and done the right thing, and who now live in nursing homes. We want to ensure that they have the best level of care provided to them. By supporting this bill all members of the House would show that intent. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:49):** On behalf of the Government, I oppose the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020, which was introduced by the Hon. Mark Banasiak on 26 August 2020 in the Legislative Council. I thank and acknowledge the member for Orange and the Hon. Mark Banasiak for their input. I note the positive motives behind the bill. The member for Orange said that for too long health care in aged care has been out of sight and out of mind. He spoke about his personal experience, and I can speak about my journey with my father who was in aged care throughout this year until his passing a few months ago. It is important for all of us in this House to make sure that we provide the right care for the elderly and, as the member for Orange said, the vulnerable in our community. I take a moment to thank the beautiful people at the Jindera UPA who looked after dad and gave him much love, care and attention in his final few months. That is something that my family very much values.

In that sense, I will speak about why the Government does not support the bill. People living in residential aged-care facilities in New South Wales and across Australia have a right to have their clinical care needs met by an appropriate number of nurses who have the right skills and training. However, the New South Wales Government does not support this bill for a number of good reasons. First, the Federal Government has policy, funding and regulatory responsibility for the aged-care system. It regulates the standards, staffing and quality of care in this sector. That is why the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety directed its recommendations on this issue to the Federal Government. Second, the Federal Government addressed this issue through the Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Act 2022, which passed Federal Parliament on 27 October 2022. Third, this private member's bill has some deficiencies that the Federal reform does not have. Fourth—and this speaks to the introductory remarks by the member for Orange—if this private member's bill passes this Parliament as introduced to this place, the aged-care sector will likely be the subject of two regulatory regimes, which will lead to the risk of confusion and potentially inconsistent legal requirements.

I understand that there may have been an attempt to address a potential inconsistency through the circulation of a last-minute amendment, but the Government's position is that this bill should be opposed regardless. It is important to understand how this policy issue has developed. Responsibility for the regulation of nursing homes was transferred to the Commonwealth through the commencement of the Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997 and the repeal of the New South Wales Nursing Home Act 1988 in 2005. Despite this transfer of responsibility to the Commonwealth, section 104 of the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 was retained by New South Wales. Section 104 requires a registered nurse to be in a nursing home at all times in facilities offering high-care placements. In 2014 amendments were made to the Commonwealth's Aged Care Act 1997, which removed the distinction between high-care and low-care placements, making section 104 of the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 temporarily inoperable.

From 29 August 2014, the New South Wales Public Health Nursing Homes Regulation 2014 retained the requirement for a registered nurse, but only for a facility that was a nursing home for the purposes of the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 immediately before 1 July 2014—that is, a facility that provided high care. New South Wales is the only State in Australia that has retained such a provision. The bill before us inserts a new definition of "nursing home" into the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 with the intention to require all New South Wales nursing homes to have a registered nurse on site at all times. A select committee was established on 21 October 2020 to inquire into and report on the provisions of the bill. The select committee delivered its report on 10 June 2021 and the New South Wales Government provided its response on 10 December 2021. The report made seven recommendations. I note that recommendation 1 had two parts. The report recommended, among other things:

**Recommendation 1**

That the Legislative Council:

- amend the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 during Committee of the Whole to incorporate a requirement for registered nurses to be on duty at all times in nursing homes at the appropriate level for the number of residents

However, the position of the New South Wales Government has not changed. It will not support this bill. As I stated previously, the Federal Government has policy, funding and regulatory responsibility for the aged-care system. It regulates the standards, staffing and quality of care in this sector. Not only is this a matter for the Federal Government, but also the Federal Government has addressed this issue. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established on 8 October 2018 and it examined all elements of the aged-care system from care in the community through to residential aged care.

The final report of the royal commission was tabled on 1 March 2021. Of the 148 recommendations contained in that report, there are specific recommendations focused on staffing and the quality of care provided in residential aged-care facilities, which intersect with the issues that this bill seeks to address. Specifically, recommendation 86 of the final report details an incremental approach to a minimum staff time standard for registered nurses and personal care nurses within residential aged-care facilities, including at least one registered nurse on site at all times by 1 July 2024. Both the former and the current Federal Government accepted this recommendation. The current Federal Government responded to this recommendation by introducing the Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill 2022, which requires at least one registered nurse on site and on duty at all times in residential aged-care facilities from 1 July 2023.

The Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill 2022 was introduced to Federal Parliament on 27 July 2022 and then referred to the Senate's Standing Committees on Community Affairs for consideration on 28 July 2022. The committee's report was released on 2 September 2022 and the bill passed the Federal Parliament on 27 October 2022. The Federal reform had some essential elements that the private member's bill before us does not currently have. Firstly, it recognises that you need to set a reasonable commencement date rather than simply imposing a requirement for a registered nurse to be on site and on duty at all times in all residential aged-care facilities from the date of assent of the bill. The fact that the bill before us commences upon assent demonstrates a complete disconnect from the realities of the labour market and the nature of the aged-care sector. It is simply not a viable proposition. The Federal reform has an earlier commencement date than what was recommended by the royal commission. However, it is still far more sensible having been set at 1 July 2023.

Secondly, the Federal reform has a mechanism allowing the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Health to provide particular residential aged-care facilities with an exemption from the requirement. This is a necessary element of a reform of this nature, and it is absent from the private member's bill. As explained by the Senate's Standing Committees on Community Affairs, the Federal exemption mechanism may be able to be utilised where residential aged-care facilities are co-located with a health service that has registered nurses present, or if facilities are in remote, rural or regional areas where providers are unable to recruit sufficient staff with the requisite skills. I understand that the Opposition recently circulated an amendment that would provide New South Wales recognition of the exemptions provided at a Federal level, but ultimately there remains the question as to why New South Wales needs to act in this space.

Thirdly, the Federal reform is obviously able to set a national standard providing for consistent requirements across all Australian jurisdictions. The Federal Labor Government has responsibility for this policy area and has already implemented the desired outcome on a national basis through a far more reasonable reform. Why would the New South Wales Parliament insert itself into that area through the passage of this bill? Action from the New South Wales Parliament is unnecessary and could lead to confusion. The Aged & Community Care Providers Association [ACCPA], which is the new national industry association for aged-care providers, wrote to the Minister for Health indicating that the private member's bill should not be supported. It stated that the Commonwealth legislation would:

... complement existing approved provider responsibilities in the aged care legislation, including maintaining an adequate number of appropriately skilled staff to ensure the care needs of care recipients are met, and to provide such care and services as are specified in the Quality-of-Care Principles. Both this new Commonwealth legislation which now provides for this standard of nursing and the fact that the governance and regulation of Commonwealth funded aged care services is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, including staffing requirements, makes this at a State level redundant. As such, ACCPA recommends that the NSW Government does not support this Bill in the NSW Parliament.

Members should not have confidence that section 109 of the Australian Constitution would invalidate the amendments should they become law. If they do, dual legislative regimes could require nursing homes to have a registered nurse on duty at all times. While amendments may attempt to mitigate those confusing and potentially inconsistent legal requirements, the fact remains that any confusion in this area is completely unnecessary. A sensible approach to the regulation of the aged-care sector must be taken by the level of government that is responsible for its regulation and funding, and that has occurred. The Commonwealth Government has implemented a national reform in order to deliver what the bill seeks to achieve.

In contrast to the private member's bill, the Federal Government has undertaken reform in a measured and appropriate fashion. I note and acknowledge the positive motive behind the legislation from the member for Orange and the Hon. Mark Banasiak, but jurisdiction rests with the Commonwealth and it has acted in response to that important area of care, so the duplication of the process is unnecessary. The bill before us has no advantages over the Federal reform and some key disadvantages. The proposed amendments will undermine the Federal reform recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety by inserting unnecessary and confusing State requirements in an area of Federal responsibility. For those reasons, the New South Wales Government opposes the bill.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:02):** I contribute to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020. I begin by acknowledging the work of the member for Orange and the Hon. Mark Banasiak in the other place, who initially introduced the legislation on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I acknowledge my good friend and hardworking colleague in the other place the Hon. Courtney Houssos for her work on the bill. I also acknowledge members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, some of whom are in the gallery today, for their advocacy on behalf of not only their profession but also the patients and residents they serve. Their work is very important, and sometimes that is forgotten.

Unions in the healthcare sector, such as the Health Services Union, the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation, advocate not only for their colleagues, as they should, but also for their patients and residents, many of whom cannot advocate for themselves. I wholeheartedly and sincerely thank those unions for their advocacy. I state from the outset that after discussions with the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Commonwealth Government, Labor will move an amendment to the bill. I will outline that in this speech in case the bill does not pass the second reading stage. I want members to understand exactly what they are voting on, particularly in light of the issues raised by the member for Albury. While I acknowledge his contribution to debate on this very important bill, Labor is advancing those discussions.

We understand there was concern in the industry about whether some of the Federal and State changes would clash. My amendment will address the concerns raised by industry and, to some degree, those raised by Government members in debate on the bill. The amendment would allow time to transition to the new Federal requirements and those stipulated in the bill. But let us be clear: Labor supports safe staffing levels in aged care for all workers for the benefit of residents. The amendment I propose to the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 will provide an exemption to be granted and enforced under the Commonwealth's Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill 2022 and the Public Health Act 2010 by inserting proposed new section 104 (4), which states:

- (4) Subsection (1) (a) does not apply to a nursing home if an exemption from the Aged Care Act 1997 of the Commonwealth under section 54 (1) (a) has been granted to a person who operates a nursing home and is in force in relation to the nursing home.

That exemptions amendment, which has been circulated to members, ensures consistency. I make that very clear because it addresses some of the concerns of the member for Albury. I note the member for Orange and the Hon. Mark Banasiak from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have also proposed an amendment to the bill regarding the minimum number of nurses on duty. The amendment states:

*prescribed number* means the higher of the following—

- (a) one,
- (b) the number prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of subsection (1)(a) determined by reference to the number of residents or patients at the nursing home concerned.

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association and Labor supports that amendment because there is an issue in aged care. It was decent of the member for Albury to acknowledge that it has taken a Federal Labor Government

at the Commonwealth level to start addressing some of those concerns. While there is a way to go, this week aged-care workers were granted a 15 per cent pay rise. According to comments from the Secretary of the Health Services Union, they want more than that. But it is important that we have started the process of real reform at a Federal level. I do not begin to imagine what it is like to work in an aged-care environment, but many years ago a loved one spent seven years in aged care, so I understand the challenges and difficulties and the enormous amount of work that is done by aged-care workers, nurses, allied healthcare workers, personal carers and support workers.

It is a shame that the aged-care system has been allowed to be run down. As legislators, we have a duty to make changes and enhancements for the most vulnerable and those who work with the most vulnerable, and that is what we are about to do through the bill and Labor's amendment. The member for Albury questioned why the bill is necessary. It is necessary because governments come and go and this bill provides a stopgap or safety net. The member for Orange, the Hon. Mark Banasiak, the Hon. Courtney Houssos and I want to provide the sector with strength and integrity as well as adequate care and health provision for the most vulnerable in our nursing homes. At the moment it has not reached that standard. We know that. We must be honest. Sometimes in this place there is a bit of a failing of government. We tend to think that a view from a particular group is the reality, but that is often not the case. It is our job as legislators to challenge that view. One of the ways we do that is to undertake widespread inquiries. The royal commission and many other inquiries unfortunately have found that we still have a long way to go. We in this Parliament still have a long way to go in providing adequate health services to elderly people.

I acknowledge the work of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I mean that wholeheartedly because I think it is important for members of major parties to do so. I also acknowledge the work of the Hon. Mark Banasiak, the work of the member for Orange, Phil Donato, and other members who have expressed support for the bill. This bill is important for all of us. We hope that this bill will result in better care and better health standards for the most vulnerable people in our community. I certainly support the bill. Now that there is clarity around what this amending bill seeks to do, I hope the Government also supports it.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:11):** I am delighted to make a short contribution to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020. I acknowledge my good friend the member for Orange for bringing this legislation before the House. I also acknowledge my colleague and good friend Ryan Park, who is the shadow Minister for Health.

**Mr Christopher Gulaptis:** You have a lot of friends.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I do have a lot of friends. I am friends with all creatures, great and small. I acknowledge the work of Ryan Park in this policy space and in other very important policy spaces where shortfalls exist. As the member for Orange stated and the member for Keira alluded to, COVID highlighted many things, but what it highlighted the most is the important work and passion of our frontline health workers and how they care for the community, particularly the most vulnerable. Not too many people in our community and across society need support more than our elderly people and those who reside in aged-care facilities. I note that during his contribution to debate the member for Albury acknowledged the good work of our Federal Labor colleagues in this space, as members should. As the member for Keira stated, that is very positive. But there are many moving parts, and obviously there will be more areas that will benefit from improvement. At the end of the day, that is why we as legislators exist: to introduce and amend laws and ultimately to make people's lives better by ensuring that we have effective programs, resources and policies in place.

The member for Albury referred to legislation overlap, and no doubt the member for Orange will deal with that in his reply. The Federal Parliament deals with legislation that overlaps with legislation passed by State Legislatures in the fields of education, criminal law, health, industrial relations and many others, but it is important that legislation from both levels of government complement each other. It is not a competition. It is all about having legislation in place that ultimately will put provisions in place to make lives better. I have always believed that the best outcomes are achieved by working together. As legislators, we know that. Working with the Federal Parliament and, where we can, our State counterparts for the greater good is so vitally important that we should always strive to do that. I do not agree with the member for Albury. I note that the amendment proposed by the shadow Minister for Health and member for Keira, which he appropriately highlighted to the House, addresses those matters.

At the end of the day, there is absolutely no reason at all why the Government should not support this bill. Members of Parliament are elected to introduce legislation and it does not matter who introduces it. For example, the Opposition supports a lot of the Government's legislation. We work with the Government and if the legislation is sensible and for the greater good, the Opposition will support it. Disappointingly, that is clearly not reciprocated by the Government in relation to this legislation. As I said earlier this morning in a different context, sadly I believe that politics gets in the way of pragmatism. If we are pragmatic about legislation, the very existence of

all 93 members of this lower House is to serve not just as representatives of our political parties but as servants of the people. We are here to do what we can to make their lives a little bit better tomorrow than their lives are today. The pursuit of their prosperity must always prevail. I believe that is the standard for every member of Parliament, irrespective of their party affiliation and irrespective of where they stand on certain matters.

A lot of people have made representations in relation to this issue and have called for change. I again acknowledge the Federal Labor Government's very diligent approach and the steps it is taking to address this matter. I also acknowledge all the associated stakeholders, industry groups and unions. For a very long time the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association have been fighting for the improvements outlined in this legislation. I note the presence in the gallery of nurses, midwives and other health workers and I thank them for taking the time to come into the Parliament to support debate on the bill. It is most important that I thank all of you for the service you provided us during COVID and for continuing to cope with challenges presented by very turbulent times, as you would well know, in our health system.

In conclusion, I thank the member for Orange for introducing the bill. It is a sensible step to take. I thank my friend and colleague the shadow Minister for Health for his appropriate amendment and for the work he continues to do to make our health services system as good as it possibly can be for the people of New South Wales, particularly those who are most vulnerable and particularly seniors who live in aged-care facilities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:17):** My contribution to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 will be brief. I thank the member for Orange, Phil Donato, for introducing the bill to the House. It has been a long time coming because of COVID and other setbacks. For the bill finally to be before the House today is fantastic. I know that aged care really is the province of the Federal Government, but I think we need to shine a spotlight on health. This is my chance, once again, to have a say because aged-care services is one of the biggest issues in my electorate of Murray. When I was elected, the first thing I did was to ask the Hon. Greg Donnelly what we needed to do to set up a committee to look into rural health. He told me to go away and write the terms of reference. I was intending to do that but did not because, fortunately, he wrote the terms of reference for me. As a result, the rural health inquiry was initiated. Subsequently, the inquiry received over 700 submissions and the Hon. Greg Donnelly was absolutely overwhelmed. The parliamentary committee visited rural areas and learnt a lot about health.

The State Government must address rural health outcomes immediately, including aged-care facilities. Even though aged care comes under the control of the Federal Minister, it cannot be separated; it is all part of the same bag. Again, this is my chance to have a say, state my position and plead with the Government that staff are the most important ingredient in our health system. Members from the health sector are in the gallery, giving up their time to support the bill of the member for Orange. I thank them for attending today.

My dad recently passed away. He was in an aged-care facility. I know firsthand the pressures that the aged-care system is under. It was not the staff's fault; they were dealing with COVID. But my dad's passing was not what it should have been. The legislation will support the Federal Government legislation. The State Government should embrace the bill. We must acknowledge how poor the system is. It is one small step, an acknowledgment that we can do better. We must do better and we should start today. We should stop kicking the can down the road and support the legislation. It would be a great help to people in rural areas to understand that the Government really does care. At the moment, I do not think anyone in the bush thinks that the State Government really does care.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:21):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in support of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020. I speak today because the issue of support for the care of people in nursing homes has been raised with me in my electorate, as I am sure it has with all members. I will take some time to go through an overview to the background and highlight why it is important that we support the bill. There has been a lot of discussion in the House about ratios and nurses, and that is critical, but it is just one small part of the puzzle.

As we know, the nurses and midwives have made an award claim. I put on record that we fully support that claim, as they know. There has been some debate around ratios. The Greens will introduce a bill in the other place that seeks to address—where legislatively possible—the requests of the nurses and midwives when it comes to their award claim. We believe that every element of the award claim should be supported. That includes ratio claims not covered by NSW Labor's commitment, in particular around paediatric and mental health care, neonatal intensive care units, community mental health, short stay wards, and drug and alcohol outpatient clinics. It is important. The Greens will be pressing all parties in this place to support the nurses and midwives' award claim. Half is not sufficient. We must ensure that patients are cared for with those ratios, whether they are in neonatal intensive care units or community mental health or outpatient clinics. Every element of the award must be

supported and we encourage all parties to do that in the run-up to the election. This is a critical part of what nurses do so that the people they care for can be protected and loved.

The bill was introduced on 11 May 2020 as a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party private member's bill. It was referred to a select committee on 21 October. The committee reported on 10 June 2021. The object of the bill is to ensure that the requirement in the Public Health Act 2010 for a registered nurse to be on duty in a nursing home at all times is continued. The mechanism for that is by updating the definition of the term "nursing home" so that it is consistent with the terminology used under Commonwealth legislation. We have heard members discuss that. Under the Federal Aged Care Act 1997 the definition of aged care includes residential care, home care and flexible care. In New South Wales aged-care facilities are also subject to the Public Health Act 2010. Section 104 currently requires a nursing home to have a registered nurse on duty at all times. The definition of nursing home relies on how "residential care", "allocated place" and "high level of residential care" are defined in the 1997 Commonwealth Act.

In 2013 the Aged Care Act 1997 was amended to remove the distinction between low and high levels of residential care, rendering section 104 of the Public Health Act 2010 inoperable. The New South Wales Government then introduced the Public Health Regulation 2012, which ensured that section 104 would still apply to facilities formerly designated as high care before 1 July 2014. This has left a gap with nursing homes that commenced operation after 1 July 2014 that do not require a registered nurse to be on duty 24 hours a day. Many complicated legislative issues in the health space lead to gaps, inconsistencies and problems, in particular between State and Federal responsibilities as to how funds are allocated and disbursed, which we recently debated. We know the bill will help to ameliorate that challenge.

The bill seeks to amend the Public Health Act 2010 to insert a new definition of nursing home that encompasses facilities at which a high level of residential care is provided or a facility of class prescribed by the regulation. The definition extends the requirements to adhere to section 104 of the Public Health Act 2010 to have a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day to all nursing homes. There was a successful amendment clarifying that having one registered nurse on duty was a minimum, and that a minimum safe level of staffing could then be prescribed by the regulations. The Minister has the power to implement regulations.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established on 8 October 2018. It examined all elements of the aged-care system, from care in the community through to residential aged care. The final report of the royal commission was tabled on 1 March 2021. It was a worthwhile and important royal commission. It highlighted some of the terrible care situations, but also some of the systemic and critical problems in the system. Recommendation 86 in the final report details an incremental approach to a minimum staff time standard for registered nurses and personal care workers within residential aged-care facilities, including at least one registered nurse on site at all times by 1 July 2024. The select committee of inquiry that I referred to earlier made seven recommendations. Recommendation 1 states:

That the Legislative Council:

- amend the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 during the Committee of the Whole to incorporate a requirement for registered nurses to be on duty at all times in nursing homes at the appropriate level for the number of residents
- proceed to debate the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020, and pass the bill.

Recommendation 2 states:

That the NSW Government:

- through the National Cabinet process, urge the Australian Government to implement a mandatory staffing mix ratio in aged care facilities, including on site registered nurses, personal care workers and allied health professionals, based on the needs of residents to ensure their safety and dignity at all times
- investigate implementing this mandatory staffing mix ration for registered nurses, personal care workers and allied health professionals for New South Wales nursing homes if the Australian Government does not act within the timeframe recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill 2022 was passed on 27 October. That will introduce requirements at a Federal level. That has been discussed in this place many times before. All of this context and background I give highlights yet again a lot of talk and a lot of discussion. But how are we providing the care on the ground and, importantly, the dignity for people in nursing homes? How are we doing that? The bill seeks to address that promptly. I thank the member for introducing the bill. It is fantastic to have another bill from a crossbench member that is sensible and thoughtful, and seeks to address inconsistencies and problems.

I conclude by highlighting the speech and assessment of the bill in the Legislative Council by my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann, who outlined the issues in detail. She is The Greens spokesperson for health and leads the fight to ensure that we support every element of the nurses and midwives award, which is critical, and that we

recognise the importance of supporting legislation like this, which is not only sensible but also compassionate. In the end, if we are dealing with people in nursing homes and the resources and support are not there, we cannot provide them with the support, dignity and quality of life that they deserve. The Greens support the bill. I thank all those members who have been supportive in discussing this issue. We recommit to ensuring we have care setting ratios throughout the public sector and in the nursing and healthcare environment in New South Wales. I thank the member for bringing the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:30):** On behalf of the people of Newtown and as a representative of The Greens, I offer my support for the bill. I add to the contribution of the member for Balmain and the contribution of The Greens' health spokesperson, Ms Cate Faehrmann, in the Legislative Council. As many members know, she has been pushing for the recognition of the care setting ratio claim by New South Wales nurses and midwives, which will not only ensure the better health, safety and care of patients—our families and loved ones—but also protect and support the health and safety of those who are providing the care.

Before I turn to the detail of the bill, it is important to reflect on two recent experiences. I am lucky to have the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in the Newtown electorate. A lot of people think it is their local hospital but it sits in the electorate of Newtown. I recently joined the nurses' and midwives' strike. What confronted me more than anything else was to hear amazing emergency department nurses apologising to their colleagues, comrades and friends for the state and standard of care they are providing, which results in people being pushed to other parts of the hospital that are not up to standard because they are overstretched and overworked.

A lot is happening in the health system with the pandemic, which cannot be helped, and there are a lot of reasons for that. Our healthcare system is in crisis but we can do something to solve that problem. All of the nurses and midwives who are working in our amazing hospitals, mental health facilities, maternity health facilities and all the other areas in our healthcare system know that the solution is to commit to ratios. The Greens are committed to that. I give my commitment to the nurses and midwives who are in the Chamber or who are listening to the debate that if crossbench members have significantly increased numbers in the next Parliament, ratios will be front and centre on the agenda. At the moment we do not have a clear commitment from members on either side of the Chamber. Yet again a crossbench member has put forward a bill, like yesterday's bill for renters' rights, to stop the Government and the Opposition unity ticket in the interests of the people of New South Wales.

I turn to the objects of the bill. The bill will ensure that the Public Health Act 2010 continues the requirement that a registered nurse be on duty in a nursing home at all times by updating the definition of "nursing home" to be consistent with Commonwealth legislation. The bill does not propose a new regulation or propose an improved standard, as my colleague Cate Faehrmann pointed out in the other place. It seeks only to patch up a gap that has allowed New South Wales to slip below the basic standard of care outlined by Federal regulations. This sensible bill is supported by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, the NSW Aged Care Roundtable, Aged Care Crisis Inc. and the Quality Aged Care Action Group. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association noted that the bill "will offer a safety net for vulnerable elderly that current legislation does not" and ensure that "our most vulnerable elderly have access to nursing care 24/7 at the end of their life".

I note the contribution of the member for Murray in which she spoke about her father. We should all think about the challenges that our parents and grandparents and we will face when we get older. It is phenomenal to think that in a healthcare setting people will not have 24/7 access to registered nurses. People in aged-care environments are some of the most vulnerable in our communities. We can and must do more. Over past decades the number of qualified health professionals in aged-care facilities has steadily but drastically declined. Nurses in our aged-care homes are overworked, underpaid and under-resourced. Over and over again nurses and aged-care staff have been telling us that they are at breaking point. The COVID pandemic meant that people were on the front line of the healthcare crisis, which has been exacerbated by the compounding pressures in people's jobs. There is more demand, under-resourcing, underfunding and more stress on aged-care nurses to provide that care, in particular to groups that are vulnerable to COVID.

The Greens recognise the need for chronic staffing shortages to be fixed and urgent intervention to alleviate unreasonable workloads. Genuine investment is needed to address longstanding safety and wellbeing issues. Aged care must be treated as a fundamental human right, and aged-care nurses, who look after some of the most vulnerable in our communities, must be given the proper resources and support to do their jobs. The presence of registered nurses can mean the difference between life and death in aged-care facilities. That is critical to remember. Many years ago, before I was elected to Parliament, I remember going to the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association with then Greens leader Richard Di Natale. In 2015 we pledged to recognise the need for registered nurses to be in aged-care facilities 24/7. So many years have passed since then and still nothing has happened. The issue is not a new problem. It has been pushed for a long time. By not delivering this much-needed reform, the Liberal-Nationals Government has failed.

Every person in a nursing home should have access to on-hand medical care. They should have pain relief. They should have someone who can assess their changing symptoms and seek appropriate escalation. They should also be able to be treated in their nursing home and they should be able to seek care from a full-time mandated registered nurse. That will alleviate the pressure on other workers in the aged-care facility who are not trained or qualified and who know the health system is under pressure and who need guidance and support. It is for that reason that The Greens support the bill. I acknowledge and thank the member for Orange for bringing the bill to the House.

Last week I had the opportunity to visit CASS, which is an aged-care home, family day care and community centre run originally for Chinese Australians but which now offers support and services across Sydney. I acknowledge the work of the amazing workers inside that aged-care facility. They achieve incredible outcomes for their local community, in part because they acknowledge the culturally specific nature of the care they are providing. I recognise the expertise of those aged-care workers. How much more culturally appropriate, specific and specialised personal care could aged-care staff provide to our elderly and loved ones if they had the safety and security of knowing that a registered nurse was on site 24/7 to provide medical care.

This reform is critical. I do not think anyone is sure whether or not the bill will pass. The numbers are all over the shop at the moment. I urge other crossbench members to support the bill introduced by the member for Orange so that we can see some movement and some shifts. I hope that a new Labor government in March 2023 will listen to the calls of the nurses and midwives, The Greens and others and implement ratios across this State to finally solve this problem.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:38):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 in support of my colleague the member for Orange. The bill is really a no-brainer. By the time people get to the end of their lives in a residential aged-care setting, they are often not in good health. The Opposition wants to make sure that people have the best possible care. The bill mandates a registered nurse to be available in those settings 24/7, which is a sensible measure that the residents, who have been part of our community and have contributed to society their whole lives, deserve. There should not even be a question or an argument about the bill. It should have bipartisan support across the Chamber.

The bill will look after the residents and staff in aged-care settings by providing them with 24/7 registered nurse coverage. It will look after the Government by providing better care in those settings, which, according to reviews into residential aged care, is an insurance policy that governments should certainly take out. It will also look after families. No-one wants to see their loved one go into a residential aged-care setting, but if they have to then we want to make sure that they are looked after. The bill is a sensible step to provide a level of care that looks after the person in aged care, the family members who are worried about their loved ones and the staff. My message to Government members is that the bill is also a good insurance policy for them.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:40):** In reply: I thank all members who made a contribution to this very important debate, including the member for Albury, who was the only member to speak on behalf of the Government. I like and respect the member for Albury. I think he is a thoroughly decent human being. But he drew the short straw today having to try to defend the Government's position to not support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020. It is telling that he was the only Government member who had the guts to get up and speak. I thank the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Keira, and the members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, Murray, Balmain and Newtown. I also thank the member for Barwon for his very brief but important and telling contribution to the debate.

I will canvass some of the issues that were raised by the Government, through the member for Albury, relating to why the Government does not support the bill. The member said that the measures proposed in the bill are a Federal responsibility. He said that Federal legislation passed the Commonwealth Parliament a couple of weeks ago, so it would be a duplication to pass this bill in New South Wales. I say to the member for Albury—and to the Government more broadly—that, as many members who support the bill have said, the bill relates to ensuring that an appropriate level of care is provided for the most vulnerable members of our community: residents in aged-care facilities. Many of them would probably not choose to be there, but due to circumstance, age, medical conditions or perhaps family not being able to care for them, they have to go into an aged-care facility and be looked after by the kind, compassionate and terrific enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing who work in those facilities who do the best they can in very difficult and trying circumstances.

No doubt COVID would have been very stressful and difficult for staff working in that environment. They had to wear a mask for 10 to 12 hours a day, up to seven days a week, because they wanted to protect not only their residents but also themselves and their family members at a time when COVID was quite alarming and cases in the community were high. They did not want to be responsible for taking the virus home and spreading it amongst their family and friends, some of whom may have had underlying medical conditions. I appreciate all the members who spoke in support of the bill. No doubt Government members would probably say the same if asked



individually. We are all very appreciative of the work that our aged-care staff do. Unfortunately, it would appear that politics has been played in this space.

The bill should be beyond politics because it is about looking after the best interests of the most vulnerable in our community, ensuring that they are provided with the best possible level of care in aged-care settings and not taken to hospital unnecessarily, causing bed block and delays, because aged-care staff do not have the qualifications to administer more serious or higher level drugs. The bill is also about looking after those living in aged-care facilities who have served our communities and worked hard all their lives. It is not lost on any of us in this place that it is a basic human right to be provided the best level of support and care. It might be us one day. I offer my condolences to the member for Albury and the member for Murray, whose fathers both passed this year. I too lost my father this year. I ask Government and crossbench members who may be wavering to show compassion and humility towards vulnerable people in our communities and support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36

Noes .....40

Majority.....4

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Butler, R (teller)  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Donato, P (teller)

Doyle, T  
Finn, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
Lynch, P  
McDermott, H

Mehan, D  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Parker, J  
Piper, G  
Scully, P  
Tesch, L  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Zangari, G

#### NOES

Ayres, S  
Conolly, K  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A  
Davies, T  
Dominello, V  
Elliott, D  
Evans, L  
Gibbons, M  
Griffin, J  
Gulaptis, C  
Hancock, S  
Henskens, A

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

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

#### PAIRS

Barr, C  
Dib, J  
Kamper, S  
Lalich, N  
Saffin, J  
Watson, A

Bromhead, S  
Kean, M  
Clancy, J  
Lee, G  
Anderson, K  
Hazzard, B

**Motion negatived.**

## **ROCK FISHING SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:54):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Many people love to fish. For most people, their idea of a great day out fishing is to throw a line in the river and sit back and wait. Rock fishers prefer a bit more excitement when they cast; it is not for the faint hearted. Standing on a sandstone platform overlooking the ocean as waves break all around sounds like one of the most dangerous ways to catch a fish, and the statistics show that to be true. According to the Royal Life Saving Society Australia, on average, 4 per cent of drowning deaths occur while rock fishing. It is the second most common cause of drowning in New South Wales, behind swimming. Despite the dangers, over a million Australians do it every year; fishos love their sport.

Rock fishing has so far defied any attempts at being banned. Policing a ban would be all but impossible, given the expanse of coastline that would need to be patrolled at all hours. Therefore, the purpose of the bill is to protect the lives of those who love rock fishing and will continue to do it. The original legislation required only a life jacket as safety equipment. On average, eight people die each year from rock fishing in New South Wales. Five men died in one month at Honeycomb Rocks near Hill 60 at Port Kembla. Off the coast in Randwick, 21 people have died since 2001. Clearly, the current legislation is not working. There have been attempts to educate fishos about the dangers. Thousands of dollars of New South Wales recreational fishing licence fees from the Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust Fund was allocated over several years to rock fishing safety and education awareness programs.

Those programs targeted how to safely fish from coastal rock platforms, including important messaging aimed at improving the knowledge of fishers, understanding coastal weather patterns, and highlighting safety apparel and other key fishing devices to assist rock fishers in fishing safely. The program drew on the knowledge of experienced rock fishers. The associated campaign, Don't Put Your Life on the Line, was widely acclaimed. It was so successful that it was adopted by other Australian States and by some European nations as best practice. But it all came to nothing. What followed was the Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016, which contradicted best practice and removed from that best practice education program any reference to appropriate footwear and other safe rock fishing apparel.

There is also a notable failure to educate people from a non-English-speaking background, even though a significant number of those who died were from a non-English-speaking background. Many campaigns were participated in by experienced rock fishers but best practice advice that asked to assess and test various types of life jackets was ignored, despite requirements under the Act. Likewise, suitable footwear is as important as lifejackets. Footwear, life vests and wetsuits when rock fishing were completely overlooked. In the bill, "appropriate footwear" means:

- (a) for a high risk rock fishing location consisting of a granite surface—lightweight, non-slip boots, and
- (b) for all other high risk rock fishing locations—shoes with cleats or spikes.

That only applies to rock fishing locations that are exposed to ocean swell. A wetsuit is permitted as optional suitable safety apparel. A wetsuit takes upwards of five kilograms of lead to neutralise its buoyancy. It is as effective as a life jacket for floating, but has the additional advantage of allowing the fisher to dive and swim under waves. To an extent, it also protects fishers from cuts and hypothermia in cold water. It could mean the difference between life and death for a fisho washed from the rocks.

Fining offenders has always been problematic. The Act has been moved back and forth between the Department of Primary Industries, Fishing, police, the Emergency Services portfolio, the Local Government portfolio and back again. No Minister can provide concise accurate answers on the amount of money raised through fines and how it has been reallocated and returned through the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund. Only nine fines were issued in 2019, which shows the lack of enforcement. Awareness and maintenance of rock fishing locations is handled expertly by volunteer groups like the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW and the New South Wales branch of the Australian National Sportfishing Association. Those groups have a wealth of knowledge and experience and spend considerable time and funds providing public safety. The New South Wales angel rings, which are orange lifebuoys located at high-risk locations, have saved nearly 100 lives. It is time legislation took note of that experience and supported the efforts of those organisations.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:58):** I contribute to debate on the Rock Fishing Safety Amendment Bill 2021. The Government opposes the bill. I have the utmost respect for the member for Barwon but, sadly, not for this bill. Introduced by the Hon. Mark Banasiak, MLC, the bill is probably one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation that I have seen in this place in a long time. I am glad the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. I call on all members representing Central Coast electorates, be they Labor or Liberal, to oppose this bill. Labor voted for this bill in the upper House, which I was gobsmacked by.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** We've changed our mind.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is not complicated. It is one page.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Adam, we've changed our mind.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is an appalling piece of legislation, sadly. I say to the Hon. Mark Banasiak that he might want to pop outside to the Speaker's Garden and have a chat to members of Surf Life Saving NSW, who are here for a function today, about what they think of this legislation. I am not sure whether the member actually ever spoke to Surf Life Saving NSW to learn their opinion. On behalf of the more than 8,000 surf lifesavers on the Central Coast, I can say that they were aghast when this piece of legislation popped up. I had representations opposing this piece of legislation from literally every surf lifesaving club on behalf of their 8,000-plus volunteers. I am very proud of the work done by Surf Life Saving Central Coast when the legislation was introduced to opt in to the mandatory wearing of life jackets. We worked very closely with the Central Coast Council, which was also the first council in New South Wales to opt in to the safety measures requiring rock fishers to wear a life jacket.

The one thing I agree with in the second reading speech of the member of Barwon is that rock fishing is a very dangerous sport. In fact, that is the world's greatest understatement. It is actually the world's most dangerous sport. Fishing is an incredibly important part of many people's lifestyles. I have 15,000 fishos in my electorate who enjoy fishing, including rock fishing. But we need to ensure that fishing, especially rock fishing, is done in the safest possible way. Unfortunately, this legislation does not do that. If anything, it removes the safety mechanisms that were put in place, after a lot of consultation with people such as the first responders to an incident involving a rock fisher. I am pleased to say that there have been no drowning deaths on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast for as long as I have been the member for Terrigal—almost eight years now. That is because of the incredible work and dedication of our surf lifesaving volunteers on the Central Coast and the public education, with which they are involved.

I note the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. I hope he and the members representing the electorates of Gosford and The Entrance will join the Government in opposing this bill. The member for Wyong is a member of a surf lifesaving club, and I am pretty sure that some of the most dangerous rock-fishing locations on the Central Coast are in his electorate. He knows as well as I do how many times our surf lifesavers have been called out at all hours of the day and night to rescue rock fishers. Probably what saved the lives of those rock fishers is the fact that they were wearing a life jacket. I congratulate Stuart Harvey, the former president of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, who led the charge on this issue statewide on behalf of the organisation. Prior to the introduction of the opt-in system, Stuart met with me—and I am sure with the member for Wyong as well—to outline their grave concerns about the lack of life jackets being worn by rock fishers.

Stuart has done a great job bringing awareness to just how dangerous rock fishing is—not just to the fisherman but also to the volunteer surf lifesavers who have to risk life and limb to save them. At no point was there any discussion about banning rock fishing. It was about educating people, making them aware of the dangers and their responsibility to wear a life jacket. We have done an excellent job with that. An excellent education program has been conducted on the Central Coast for our rock fishing locals and visitors alike, with multilingual signs erected. The bill provides that rock fishers can wear a wetsuit in place of a life jacket. Well, that is great. A wetsuit will at least help maintain the body temperature on the corpse and keep all the body parts in one place as the surf lifesavers drag the deceased person out of the water at Crackneck or elsewhere.

Sadly, I am deeply concerned that there was little or no consultation with probably the single biggest stakeholder, Surf Life Saving NSW. As I said, I suggest that the Hon. Mark Banasiak pop outside and have a chat with George Shales, Steve Pearce and all the other surf lifesavers congregated in the Speaker's Garden. I can tell members that they were appalled by this piece of legislation and the potential dangers it poses not only to rock fishers but also to the thousands of volunteer surf lifesavers who risk life and limb to remove rock fishermen from the water when they are unfortunately caught by a rogue wave and swept into the ocean. I am pleased the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. I know that he was delighted when Surf Life Saving Central Coast led the way in ensuring that Central Coast Council was the first to opt in to the system. I give full credit to Central Coast Council,

which realised the value of ensuring that rock fishermen—fisherpersons, I should say. They include men and women of all ages.

**Ms Melanie Gibbons:** Fishers.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Yes, fishers. The council realised the value of ensuring fishers wore the necessary safety equipment, and we have seen that people are doing the right thing. Sadly, 55 people drowned on patrolled beaches last year. They were not necessarily rock fishers but we know that rock fishers are a component of the people who are rescued by surf lifesavers in New South Wales. Allowing rock fishers to wear wetsuits rather than life jackets presents an opportunity for, quite frankly, unnecessary deaths. As the member for Terrigal, I have the second largest number of surf lifesaving clubs in New South Wales, after the member for Pittwater. In my electorate I have seven surf lifesaving clubs with around 4,500 to 5,000 volunteers, who do an incredible job. The surf lifesaving clubs on the Central Coast do almost 100,000 hours of volunteer time every year keeping our beaches safe. Their record is a testament to the great work that they do: almost 100,000 hours and no deaths on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast for more than eight years now.

Again, that is because they have led the way with education, including rip education for young people, people from western Sydney and visitors alike. Those clubs have a fantastic, award-winning rip awareness program. It is all about bringing the public along in understanding the dangers of our surf. While it is an enjoyable part of our lifestyle, most people on the Central Coast are well aware of just how dangerous the surf can be to both locals and visitors alike. Recently in this Chamber I said how delighted I am that the Central Coast leads the way in the number of First Lap swim vouchers redeemed. I note that the Minister is sitting at the table giving me the thumbs up. More than 10,000 people on the Central Coast have redeemed that \$100 voucher. That is more than \$1 million dollars going to Central Coast parents to ensure that young people between the ages of three and six are taught how to swim and the dangers of water. I congratulate the Minister on another fantastic program, delivered by our good friends at Service NSW. That program also highlights how dangerous the water can be.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Announcements*

### **CALIFORNIAN SISTER STATE RELATIONSHIP TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

#### **Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That this House agrees to the following Resolution:

WHEREAS:

- (1) The year 2022 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the State of New South Wales Sister State relationship with the State of California, and upon this occasion both States are rewarding of special commendation for the resounding success of their relationship based on goodwill and the goal of peace.
- (2) On 14 November 1996, both Houses of Parliament of New South Wales passed a resolution to enter into a Sister State relationship with California and on 30 May 1997 the Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 19, authored by Senator Jim Brulte, was chaptered, officially inviting New South Wales to enter a Sister State relationship.
- (3) The resolutions of both Legislatures noted the leading roles that New South Wales and California play as commercial, industrial and financial centres of their respective countries, as well as leading centres for the production of high-technology goods, wine, films, gold, sports and leisure activities, in addition to which they highlighted that New South Wales and California are the most populous States in their respective countries and share a common language, similar early history dominated by mining and agriculture, diverse and multicultural populations, and a Pacific Rim orientation.
- (4) On 9 June 1997, the relationship was formalised through the signing of a cooperation agreement between the State of California and the State of New South Wales by President pro Tempore of the Californian State Senate Bill Lockyer, Senate Rules Committee Member Jim Brulte, President of the New South Legislative Council Max Willis and Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly John Murray.
- (5) Leaders of both States committed to make efforts to engage in social, economic, educational, scientific and cultural exchanges, and in the ensuing years many exchanges have taken place in a variety of critical public policy areas, including in 1999 when a California-Australia Biotechnology Conference was held in San Diego to connect the biotechnology industries in the respective regions and promote sound practices.
- (6) The California State Senate and New South Wales Parliament have a robust relationship, conducting several reciprocal legislative exchanges over the past 25 years and maintaining close contact between leaders of the respective bodies on issues of mutual importance, as exemplified by New South Wales maintaining a Trade and

Investment office in California for over 10 years, and Investment NSW's regular engagement with its counterpart, the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, to support mutual trade and investment.

- (7) Both States continue to build a pathway towards a net carbon-free future, with the State of California committing to 100 per cent renewables by 2045, while the State of New South Wales has laid the framework to become a world leader in green hydrogen power generation and renewable energy.
  - (8) The two States also have a shared history of being enriched by thousands of years of First Nations' civilisations, as well as our vibrant diverse and multicultural communities.
  - (9) The States of California and New South Wales also share a deep understanding of the dire challenges faced in situations of drought and extreme fire conditions, causing the firefighting agencies in both jurisdictions to share best practices and resources in fighting and preventing bushfires, including when the United States of America deployed 362 firefighters to provide vital assistance in the 2019-20 bushfires in New South Wales.
  - (10) From 13 to 17 August 2022, the President of the New South Wales Legislative Council, the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, and the Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Jonathan O'Dea, travelled to California and on 15 August 2022 visited the California State Senate Chamber to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this long-lasting friendship between the States.
  - (11) From 8 to 12 December 2022, a delegation from the California State Senate will visit New South Wales to also acknowledge and celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this important relationship between the two States, which will further cement the relationship and lay the pathway for ongoing and mutually beneficial reciprocal visits into the future.
1. This House commends all those responsible for establishing, maintaining and deepening the Sister State relationship between the States of California and New South Wales over the last 25 years and into the future.
  2. This House requests the Legislative Assembly to adopt a similar resolution.

Legislative Council  
10 November 2022

MATTHEW MASON-COX  
President

I order that consideration of the message be set down as an order of the day at a later time.

### *Motions*

## **HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:08):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of the hospitality industry in New South Wales.
- (2) Notes the Government is providing fee-free short courses for people looking to secure jobs or further their career in hospitality.
- (3) Notes the Kickstart Your Career in Hospitality program aims to alleviate labour shortages and provide pathways for people looking for rewarding and well-paid careers.
- (4) Commends the Government for working with the hospitality industry.

The New South Wales Government is consulting with industry and coordinating government investment and support to ensure our hospitality sector is humming as we head towards the holiday season. Our hospitality industry is an important driver of jobs and powers our visitor economy as well as our night-time economy, major sporting and entertainment events and festivals. Our 24-hour Economy Commissioner and his office are busy revitalising our CBDs and neighbourhoods, encouraging people to take in everything that is great about our State. Hospitality is peaking and pent-up demand touches everything that people have missed the most during the COVID pandemic. To meet this demand the industry needs skilled staff, young people, mature people, students and parents. We need people-people to come and work in this dynamic and growing sector.

To encourage that the New South Wales Government has consulted with industry and put together our Security and Staffing Industry Roundtable Action Plan, which offers solutions to attract great people into hospitality careers to fill the skills shortage caused by the pandemic. As we head toward 2025, all hospitality-related occupations are projected to grow. We need more chefs, waiters, cooks, managers, baristas and bar attendants. We have developed our innovative Kickstart Your Career in Hospitality program, promoting pathways to enter the hospitality industry with fee-free quick courses that will build lifelong careers to help more people access these opportunities in pubs, clubs and restaurants across New South Wales. Those fee-free courses are designed to be short and quick but also scalable so staff can take up additional training opportunities, to develop further skills over time.

Someone who gets their first job in a cafe, pub or a club can go on to do amazing things. Hospitality offers lifelong careers in cooking, hotel management, customer service, business operations and much more. We are offering free responsible service of alcohol [RSA] and responsible conduct of gambling [RCG] refresher courses. We want to make it easy for people to quickly and freely renew their certifications to remove any barriers that are

preventing them from re-entering the hospitality sector. The Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government is in the Chamber. He loves making certification quick and easy—

**Mr Victor Dominello:** Seamless.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY:** —seamless and freely available on the Service NSW app. It is not just bar staff and waitstaff who require a responsible service of alcohol certificate. Others who work or volunteer where alcohol is sold also need it, including security, crowd control and promotional staff. Recently I attended Picnic Point Primary School's sixtieth anniversary alumni cocktail party, and former teachers and students like the Minister for Transport, David Elliott, were invited to attend. To hold events such as these some of the volunteers need to have an RSA to assist with great fundraising initiatives, so I encourage all the P&C committees in the East Hills electorate and across the State to look at their calendars for the next 12 months. If they require an RSA to hold some of their events, now is a great time to get a RSA certificate.

The same applies to a responsible conduct of gambling certificate. If someone works around poker machines, they need to have specific training to identify and minimise gambling harm. Reducing red tape makes it easier for those who worked in the industry to come back and pick up a few shifts. Anyone whose certification expired from February 2020 can renew their RSA, or RSA and RCG together, for free until February 2023 without having to retrain in full. As of June this year more than 30,000 people have completed free RSA and RCG refresher courses through Liquor & Gaming NSW. Hospitality employs more than 300,000 people across New South Wales, many of them in our regions, and is worth more than \$14 billion a year. Hospitality encompasses pubs and clubs, restaurants, small bars and nightclubs, craft breweries and giant stadiums. It powers music festivals and fairs and is at the heart of every community.

The Domain behind Parliament House is currently a hive of activity as construction of the stage and festival amenities are being put in place for the summer season, kicking off with FISHER this weekend. More than ever we all appreciate being able to go out with friends and family and receive a warm welcome, excellent service and a great experience. Through our Kickstart Your Career in Hospitality program, the New South Wales Government is determined to support and grow this critical sector of the economy, which is essential for making New South Wales the best place in the world to live, work, invest and play.

The hospitality sector is the engine room that drives our night-time economy, our visitor economy, and our major sporting and entertainment events. In 2021 in New South Wales, the visitor economy supported more than 107,000 businesses and over 296,000 jobs. Venues NSW hosts more than 500 major sport and entertainment events each year with more than five million people attending. New South Wales is leading the nation with the greatest establishment growth. International and domestic travel is back. *Ovation of the Seas* sailed out of Sydney Harbour yesterday with some of my great friends from the entertainment world whom I have worked and performed with over 13 Tamworth Country Music Festivals. They will be performing in the Cruisin' Country Festival and they are ready to rock it. I give a shout-out to Simon Ross from Trainwreck and the Simply Bushed boys, Chris and Paulie. Don't misbehave too much on that ship. Events are back, entertainment is back and the New South Wales Government is backing hospitality.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:14):** The hospitality industry in this State is in crisis. Members of the Government know it is in crisis. If we walk down the streets of Sydney we could fire a canon and not hit anybody. The hospitality industry is in crisis for a number of reasons. We all know from our own electorates and from interstate that the most significant reason is a massive staff shortage and availability of staff to provide the necessary services to the industry. The solution in part relates to the pandemic. It is not as simple as the Government making an announcement on 27 July that it will give free TAFE courses to espresso machine operators and customer service managers in mentoring and supervision, or statements of attainment in food handling and safety, in food, beverage and gaming, and in hospitality—as though somehow or other creating free TAFE courses is a solution to an extremely complex problem.

The solution is not easy. The decisions made by this Government over 12 long years to skill people in this State have certainly not helped. I refer to the \$3 billion cut in 2013 from education that involved substantial cuts to TAFE. From 1 June 2015 the Government substantially and dramatically increased the cost of TAFE fees. The member for Keira, who was then shadow Minister for Education, told this House in June 2014 the consequences of that decision. He stated:

Under the Baird Liberal Government TAFE fees will dramatically increase from 1 January 2015—pricing many students out of essential vocational education training ... These massive fee hikes will also lead to long-term skill shortages in many industries across the State.

Several years ago I told the House that we did not need to have a crystal ball to know that there would be long-term consequences. Some eight years later the current Minister responsible for TAFE thinks the solution is to give free TAFE courses. We all know that TAFE is essential in skilling this State's workforce. Eight years ago we knew

that if TAFE was not respected and funded this State would be left with a substantial problem: skills shortages. Massive skills shortages in our electorates, particularly in rural and regional electorates, are impacting the economy and those shortages have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The hospitality industry's solution to the shortage of skilled labour is to open borders and to increase immigration. Prior to the pandemic that was the source of staff for the hospitality industry. But even that decision, which is a Federal Government decision, is not that easy. In this State—in fact, in this nation—we have a rental crisis. If you increase substantial immigration to get the labour necessary to support the hospitality industry—something that the hospitality industry is crying out for—where are they going to live? The rental premises are not there. There is pressure on existing workers who cannot get accommodation in the Sydney metropolitan area, let alone in rural and regional areas. So the problem is not as simple as suggested by the member for East Hills.

Do I welcome the fact that the Minister responsible for TAFE has responded in some small way by trying to encourage people to do some of these courses? I do. It is a good, small step forward and he should be commended for at least being responsive in some degree. If somebody is looking to work in a particular area, it is good to provide a fee-free TAFE course. But to suggest that somehow or other the Government has done such a fantastic job because they have made this decision, and to hold out false hope to the hospitality industry that this is some magical solution on behalf of the New South Wales Government to all their ills, is just a fallacy. There are some very substantial problems in the hospitality industry that challenge this Government, that will challenge the next government and the Federal Government, and they relate to a whole series of areas, including planning, industry policy, the economy and investment in various commercial areas. It is a difficult and complex area. But to stand in this House and say that some minor decision—as good as it might be—by the Minister responsible for TAFE is a solution to the hospitality industry is really equivalent to listening to a stand-up comedian.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:22):** It is interesting that the member for Heffron says there is a crisis in hospitality and Sydney is not thriving. Mr Temporary Speaker even posted, I think it was 23 hours ago, that it is 100 days until the Sydney WorldPride festival. Sydney is on fire. New South Wales is on fire. The State is bouncing back from COVID. I thought it was really interesting that those opposite were lording the fact that the Federal Government was going to provide 100,000 fee-free TAFE courses. But there is a problem with that—namely, that is about 100,000 behind the State of New South Wales. In New South Wales we have double the number of fee-free courses provided by the Federal Government for the entire nation. It is about ensuring that people of all ages and all capacities have the ability to take on the courses that provide real outcomes, real jobs and real opportunity for people moving forward—whether it be in hospitality, mechanics, you name it.

Last year I had the pleasure of announcing that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, through Landcom, is working with Central Coast Council to build a new TAFE in Gosford. I was delighted to see the member for Gosford welcome that announcement. We recognise that TAFE is a fantastic institution, especially on the Central Coast. It is great to see the number of enrolments on the Central Coast have gone up—I think more than 4 per cent at Gosford TAFE. We will provide 20 additional courses at Gosford—admittedly in an outdated building. We look forward to delivering a new TAFE for the people of the Central Coast and finalising, through Landcom, the deal to bring students of all ages off the mountain and into the CBD of Gosford. Some 3,500-plus TAFE students will be able to enjoy the outstanding courses that TAFE provides on the Central Coast.

I know the member for Wyong is excited about a new TAFE in Gosford; I certainly am. The teachers at Gosford TAFE are also excited. When the Minister met with them, they were absolutely thrilled to bits that they will get a new state-of-the-art facility. The first vertical TAFE in New South Wales will be delivered on the Central Coast for thousands of students—but I digress. The motion of the member for East Hills should be commended. It shows that we have a light at the end of the tunnel after COVID. I turn to the importance of hospitality in New South Wales. This Government, because of its economic stability, was able to provide the financial support that hospitality needed to survive during lockdown. We saw businesses going to the wall in other States across Australia because their governments were not in the position to provide the protection that businesses needed, especially in hospitality. But this State stood up and protected those businesses. It meant making some tough decisions, like freezing public sector wages, but we knew it was also the right thing to do. The Minister in the Chamber was part of that. I congratulate him on his efforts to ensure that hospitality and small business had a safety net and protection delivered through Service NSW.

Realistically, this is about kickstarting a career in hospitality. The time has never been better to look at a career in hospitality, not just in New South Wales but especially on the Central Coast. We have some wonderful facilities on the coast—restaurants, cafes, breweries. You name it, we are doing it on the Central Coast. We now have record unemployment on the Central Coast. Youth unemployment is down to 6 per cent and adult unemployment is down to 3 per cent. Our region is thriving. We are seeing alfresco dining taking off. To be able to release businesses on the coast to continue to provide outdoor seating has been an absolute winner. I congratulate the Minister on that measure. Our people have embraced it.

Those opposite have talked down TAFE and talked down hospitality, but what we have seen is the direct opposite. We have seen a massive supercharging of industry, especially around hospitality, on the Central Coast. I am so proud of the Government's support for businesses through TAFE courses. The 200,000 fee-free TAFE courses have made a real difference. I commend the member for East Hills for her excellent motion.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (12:26):** As the shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism I make a contribution to debate on this motion. I have been talking at length to the sector right across New South Wales—not just in Sydney but down the South Coast, out in western New South Wales and up on the North Coast. I have been talking to people in centres such as Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Bega and Bathurst to get a real understanding of this issue. This is an important motion because there are key shortages in the hospitality and tourism sector. Recently I was surprised to see that the New South Wales Minister for Hospitality and Racing, Kevin Anderson, was calling on the Federal Government to discuss as a priority the staffing crisis facing the hospitality sector. I would have thought that the New South Wales Government may have already convened a summit of stakeholders to look at this issue.

When one looks at the figures, it is quite alarming. In Sydney alone there are an estimated 1,500 vacancies for bar staff, 1,000 vacancies for waitstaff and 2,000 vacancies for kitchen staff. The city also needs 1,000 additional managers, 2,500 additional baristas and 2,000 hotel housekeepers. You do not have to be a genius to understand that this is having dire consequences on the industry and that the Government has come to the party far too late in addressing these skill shortages. Ironically, the skill shortages started before the COVID pandemic. It did not just happen during COVID. The industry was already asking for support. I agree with the member for Heffron that it is good that the Government has introduced fee-free courses. I acknowledge that the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, the member for Newcastle, is in the Chamber. He would acknowledge that all TAFE courses used to be free. They are only now becoming fee free because the Government previously put on fees. It increased fees massively across the sector. I have the figures.

Current TAFE enrolments are finally returning to where they were when we left government. Since then, there has been a downward trend in TAFE enrolments. The Government says, "We are offering fee-free courses," to which Labor would say, "Well, yes, but they used to be free. You put fees on and now you are reversing that and you are seeing things change." But that has had dire consequences. Although people are going out again, restaurant bookings are being cancelled and restaurants and hospitality venues are having to close because they cannot get staff. Hotels across the city and the regions have had to reduce their capacity because they cannot get staff to operate their spaces. The Government must look seriously at that and come up with proper solutions sooner rather than later.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (12:30):** I thank the member for East Hills for moving this very important motion so that we can talk about the importance of the hospitality industry to communities across the State. It was disappointing to hear members opposite talk negatively about an industry that suffered through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government provided support to the industry to ensure it got through the pandemic and bounced back after it. We know the importance of the night-time economy. All members in this place should support those businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our State and particularly our Sydney CBD area, of which we are so proud.

The Sydney night-time economy is a main attraction for tourists in this State. The 24 Hour Economy Commissioner and his office are busy revitalising our CBDs and neighbourhoods and encouraging everyone to get back out and about—as everyone in this place should, rather than criticising Government initiatives that, frankly, would not have been in the budget if those opposite were in power. Those opposite have always been irresponsible on economic management. We are revitalising the economy and rolling out free courses. The Government is supporting hospitality because it is truly at the heart of our State's economic recovery.

Some 290,000 people in this State are employed in accommodation and food services. In the 2021 financial year the sector was worth almost \$14 billion to the New South Wales economy. As we head towards 2025, all hospitality-related occupations are projected to grow. We need more chefs, waiters, cooks, managers, baristas and bar attendants, which is why on 30 June this year Local Government NSW hosted a security and staffing industry roundtable in response to concerns about the lack of staff and security personnel. The Government's action plan offers solutions to attract great people into hospitality careers to fill the skills shortage created by the pandemic. In case those opposite have missed it, the skills shortage is not limited to New South Wales; it has been felt around the country. At least the Government has a positive plan to combat the crisis and get people into jobs to keep venues open and encourage everyone in this State to get out and about.

The fee-free courses are designed to be short, quick and scalable so that staff can take up additional training opportunities and further develop their skills over time if they so desire. That is why the Kickstart your career in hospitality program is so important. It was created in consultation with industry to provide job-relevant training and career development at pubs, clubs and restaurants across New South Wales. We want participants to realise



that a job in hospitality can be a fulfilling and long-term career, as it is for many people in our communities. We want young people, mature people, students and parents. We want "people people" who are happy to be out and about, providing an experience for everyone who engages with the hospitality sector. I am pleased that the member for East Hills has brought this very important motion to the House. I encourage all members to support this motion on the hospitality industry and to get out and about in their communities and support everyone employed in hospitality, because it is great not only for our communities but also for households and jobs.

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (12:34):** As the very proud member for Monaro, I note that my electorate is one of the most fantastic tourism areas not only in our State but also in our country. I speak almost daily with businesses and those involved in the hospitality industry, so I am very aware of everything that is going on in that space. To hear the doom and gloom from Opposition members is quite disappointing—as if we have not had enough of that over the past few years—because the Government is trying to do all it can to ensure that our hospitality sector gets back on its feet. Government members are doing what we can to encourage and support that by consulting with industry, coordinating government investment and supporting our hospitality sector as we hum towards our holiday season.

The value of our hospitality industry is exponential. We all know it is an important driver of jobs. It powers our visitor and night-time economy through major sporting events, entertainment and festivals. The statistics alone are extraordinary. The most recent available figures for August 2022 show that 289,700 people were employed in the accommodation and food services industry, which constitutes 6.8 per cent of all people employed in New South Wales. In our most recent figures for 2020-21, the economic contribution to the New South Wales economy of the accommodation and food services industry is \$13.9 billion, constituting 2.3 per cent of the total industry value added in New South Wales. As part of that, all hospitality-related occupations are projected to show growth to 2025, with the strongest growth expected for sales assistants, waiters and chefs.

The hospitality industry is peaking with pent-up demand and we are going to need more people. That is what this initiative from this progressive Government is all about. To meet the demand we need skilled staff. We need young people, mature people, students and parents. We need "people people" to come and work in this dynamic and growing sector. To encourage that, the New South Wales Government has consulted with industry and put together our Security and Staffing Industry Roundtable – Action Plan, which offers solutions to attracting great people into hospitality careers to fill the skills shortages caused by the pandemic. We are very aware of what has gone on in that space and we are doing what we can to address it. The fee-free courses on offer under our Kickstart your career in hospitality program are designed to be short, quick and scalable so that staff can take up additional training opportunities to further develop their skills over time. That is critical in the industry going forward.

The Government has shown that hospitality is a perfect first job and a perfect last job. There is so much opportunity and scope in the sector. When someone gets their first job in a cafe, pub or club, that could be a lifelong career or a short-term option. It is all about options and opportunities. The Government is offering free responsible service of alcohol and responsible conduct of gambling refresher courses—following the success of the Our shout for RSA Training program, which will fund 10,000 fee-free responsible service of alcohol courses. We are doing all we possibly can. The uptake of the program has been extremely positive. It has helped to address the immediate shortages in the industry. We as a Government will continue to do all we can in this space.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:39):** In reply: I thank the members who contributed to debate on the motion: the member for Heffron; the member for Wyong and shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism; the member for Terrigal; the member for Miranda; and the member for Monaro. I am not sure whether the member for Heffron goes out but if he is not booking a table ahead of time, then he is not eating, particularly in Sydney at the moment. My former staff member William Dere Dere Nalangi, who sings in the band Top Shelf Live, is so busy and booked out that I cannot even get him to come to our electorate office Christmas party. I thank the member for Terrigal for his contribution. I am very happy to hear about the brand new TAFE for Gosford. I am sure that will provide students in his community with world-leading education to skill up for the roles that are needed not only for the residents and businesses of the Central Coast but also for other industries in the Upper Hunter and in regions near Terrigal and Gosford.

The member for Miranda said that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has a plan to have people upskilled by ensuring they have the courses they need for the jobs they want and the courses for positions that small businesses need to fill. I also thank the member for Monaro, who said that we need "people people". Having worked in the entertainment and hospitality industry for many years before being elected to Parliament, I know that being a people person is a great skill to have for those who want to work in the hospitality industry. There are some great career paths. It is a very interesting life, that is for sure, and people who work in hospitality meet some wonderful and diverse people. I also encourage our HSC students who are just finishing high school to consider some of the free TAFE courses that are being offered. They could keep themselves busy by undertaking

a course in the responsible service of alcohol or the responsible conduct of gambling or a barista course. They could get vouchers for those roles to boost their summer fun. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **TRAINEESHIP AND APPRENTICESHIP CANCELLATIONS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:41):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that during a skills crisis, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) Apprenticeships and Traineeships data for the December 2021 quarter shows that 34,415 students cancelled their apprenticeship or traineeship.
- (2) Notes that traineeship cancellations were up 56.1 per cent and apprenticeship cancellations were up 19 per cent.
- (3) Notes that these results follow years of attacks on TAFE NSW by the Government including sacking thousands of teachers and selling campuses.
- (4) Urges the Government to end the attacks on TAFE and take action to address the current skills shortage.

Cancellations have increased by approximately 34 per cent, or 34,415 students, which is quite an incredible figure. This comes on the back of the 12 years of attacks on TAFE in this State and 12 years of a Government not believing and supporting the public provision of vocational education. In relation to cancellations, I wish to speak briefly about the availability of courses being a contributor to non-completion of courses. I do not have to look further than the South Coast at the \$17 million Bega Multi Trades Hub where people cannot even study carpentry. I find that very interesting, particularly in a region that is still rebuilding from the Black Summer bushfires when people lost their lives.

The bushfires covered 60 per cent of the Bega Valley shire, destroyed 467 homes as well as a thousand sheds and outbuildings. I feel that when people are rebuilding, a few carpenters might be handy and opportunities for young people to get this trade right now would be huge. In a \$17 million trades hub, they cannot even get a qualification as a chippie. If young people want to do their apprenticeship, they have to undertake a two- to three-hour return journey. I can see how that would become very tiresome, particularly for a young person with a P-plate driver licence. Earlier this year the Minister, having been asked about that on ABC Radio, said:

My advice is that carpentry has never been offered there in Bega so it's not a question of a cut.

Well, is that not just a positive start! The presenter would not be put off and said:

Given the fact that we're facing a housing crisis here and that building trades are at an all-time high, surely it seems like it could be worth allocating, developing some more skills down here, in particular in Bega.

In response the Minister said:

I accept that there are travel times to get to that carpentry course, but of course any tradesperson down in south-eastern New South Wales is obviously going to have to travel to their work environment ...

The Minister also said that that was fine because they could do some other courses. He named plumbing specifically. Wrong! Recently I heard about a plumbing apprentice who had to travel to Canberra to do his course. His email stated that three times he has gone to Canberra, only to be told that the teacher is not available on the Friday. After the first time, they were promised they would be informed by text if the class was to be cancelled. Yesterday he arrived in Canberra only to be told that the teacher had decided to take the day off. What on earth is going on with the new TAFE in Bega? Why did the Government bother to build the TAFE there, if these kids have to go to Nowra or Moruya and Canberra? It is a very good question. Before I came into the Chamber, I double-checked. There is no plumbing course on offer at Bega TAFE.

On TAFE's website, people can search the courses available location within a radius. The search can take in locations up to a 100-kilometres radius. That is what I did to find out about plumbing at Bega, and the result was nothing. Having to travel from Bega to Canberra is pretty bad, but what is worse is travelling from Coffs Harbour to Newcastle. This happened when bricklaying and wall and floor tiling courses were cut at TAFE—and "cut" is the accurate description of what happened in this case because apprentices were midway through their study. A second-year apprentice decided to stick it out and travel to the nearest campus where he could continue. The problem was that the next nearest campus of public vocational education offering this course was in Newcastle, which is a nine-hour round trip. He was getting up at 3.00 a.m. to make that trip.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of his classmates simply dropped out. Again I checked the course availability before I came into the Chamber. Newcastle is still the furthest campus north where students can undertake a certificate III in wall and floor tiling courses as well as bricklaying and block laying courses at TAFE. Only one campus offers a roof tiling apprenticeship and that is in Nirimba in western Sydney. If the Minister had been devastated by

floods, as the Lismore community and other communities between Coffs Harbour and the Queensland border have, I would imagine that the Minister would be not just devastated but quite shocked that the TAFE system of public vocational education does not offer those courses. I am quite shocked that the Government is not trying to do something about it. Actually, I am not shocked; I am not really that surprised because this comes after 12 years of disinvestment in TAFE, 14 campuses earmarked to be sold off, enrolments plummeting and teachers being sacked.

Something that Bega and Coffs Harbour have in common is that they both have a multimillion-dollar trades hub. The hub at Coffs Harbour cost \$13.3 million. I saw a very pretty picture of the member for Coffs Harbour cutting the ribbon at the trades hub with the former managing director and the former Minister. All that picture conveyed to me was that there is one way in which this Government is consistent: It loves to spend money on the building but it does not bother funding what is supposed to happen inside. If people do not believe me on that point, they have only to look at the new Maitland Hospital.

**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) (12:49):** I have not heard a more low-energy presentation in the House than the contribution from the member for Newcastle. That is hardly surprising. Frankly, he is a complete dope and his motion shows that. For example, who would come into the House and move a motion claiming to quote figures from the December 2021 National Centre for Vocational Education Research [NCVER] report that 34,415 students cancelled their apprenticeship? Guess what? That is not the figure in the report. He has got the wrong figure because he is a dope. This is systematic of a man who constantly and consistently talks down TAFE.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Point of order: The Minister should call others in the Chamber by their appropriate title.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I uphold the point of order.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It denigrates him and shows what sort of Minister he is—low grade, low value.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Newcastle will resume his seat.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** He has to go to the bottom. He doesn't have the brains to do it intellectually.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Newcastle will resume his seat. Government members will cease interjecting.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** He starts with a motion that has the wrong figures from December. Then his motion does not have the most current figures, which are March of this year. He claims old, wrong figures, then does not have the current figures. That is symptomatic of what we see in the member for Newcastle. He is not a shadow Minister, he is a shallow Minister and he is either intentionally misleading the public or he does not know the real figures. Either alternative is completely unacceptable to the people of New South Wales, who expect him to do better.

What about the Leader of the Opposition? When he was elected as the Leader of the Opposition he said, "I'm going to be Mr Positivity. I'm going to be a positive Leader of the Opposition." Ever since I have been the Minister for Skills and Training, all the shallow Minister, the member for Newcastle, has done is talk down TAFE. Every time he opens his mouth he talks down TAFE. Let us look at not the old, wrong figures but the current figures. As at 31 March 2022 New South Wales had over 115,000 apprentices and trainees in training—up 10 per cent. Completions of apprenticeships and traineeships, according to the NCVER, are up. What about commencements? They are up too.

Over the two years to March of this year, despite all of the challenges we have had with COVID and the rest of it, New South Wales has recorded a 42 per cent increase in apprenticeship and traineeship commencements. Females alone—up 59 per cent. In the most recent NCVER data, apprenticeships and traineeships completions—which the member wrongly quotes in his motion—are up 13.2 per cent for the year to March 2021. That includes a 25.3 per cent increase for trades and a 12.5 per cent increase for women undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships.

Let us come to the often repeated falsity by the shallow Minister on the other side about the New South Wales Coalition gutting TAFE. He says it so many times that one would think it was true. Let us look at the investment that the Coalition Government has made into the people at TAFE. That can be judged by looking at the financial accounts for TAFE, audited by the Auditor-General. The staff bill for TAFE expenditure in the last full year of the Labor Government in New South Wales in 2010—\$785.1 million. Guess what? In 2022, under the Coalition Government—\$1.064 billion. That is a 12 per cent real increase over inflation over that period; a 36 per cent absolute increase in expenditure on staff at TAFE during the life of this Government. Those opposite never

talk about that. They always lie about TAFE being gutted, and about us spending less money. We have had two record operational budgets in TAFE. We have made huge capital investments in TAFE over the past three years, over \$700 million, and all the member for Newcastle can do is lie about this record investment in TAFE. He is just a liar. It is falsity; it is false figures.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr David Harris:** Previous Speakers have ruled that it is unparliamentary to use the word "liar". I ask that the Minister rephrase his poor use of the English language. Secondly, the Minister should address his comments through the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will refrain from using unparliamentary language and direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It is either knowingly false or he does not know the truth. Either alternative is a disgrace. He is not a shadow Minister, he is a shallow Minister.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Newcastle will come to order.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** He had seven minutes to say one positive thing about skills and training in New South Wales. He had seven minutes to say one thing about a vision for vocational education and training in New South Wales. What did we get? We got nothing, which is the dribble that always comes out of his mouth. Nothing about the investment in institutes of applied technology in New South Wales. Nothing about the connected learning centres—22 across the State. Nothing about all the great things—the two years of record expenditure on vocational education and training. Nothing about the two years of record operational budget in TAFE and nothing about the fact that Federal Labor is plagiarising our fee-free courses that we have had since 2018. Labor is devoid of any ideas on skills and training. All it can do is come up with false assertions, fed to it from somewhere—I do not know where. We are investing heavily in skills and training. Labor is a joke. The shallow Minister for Skills and Training needs to listen to his leader and say something positive because there are plenty of positive things to talk about.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The House will come to order. Members will cease interjecting.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (12:58):** I support the motion of the member for Newcastle. I preface my comments by saying that it really lowers the whole way the Chamber is viewed when Ministers launch personal attacks instead of sticking to facts and figures. Before coming to this place I was a school principal; calling names amounts to bullying. I take offence when a Minister devotes the majority of their speech to personal attacks. That shows a low level of intellectual capability and debate. We need to do better in this place. TAFE is a very important issue, so are skills and training. It is not surprising that the State is faced with a skills shortage. I will look at apprentice and training commencements by quarter from 2003 to 2022 and I will use real facts and figures. The Minister can look at the graph, which I am happy to lend to him.

The number of apprentices and trainees in this State and across the country has declined, and that is related to the introduction of fee-paying courses. There are a whole range of reasons why students drop out and do not continue with courses, but the member for Newcastle is right when he says that one of the main reasons is distance. For example, apprentices in Broken Hill have to go to Dubbo to do their courses. As an apprentice, it is an expensive exercise. The Minister must recognise that. It is a very expensive exercise for young people, for people who are in transitional training and moving from one industry to another, for single mums and for women re-entering the workforce to travel for two or three days at a time to attend TAFE courses a long distance away. The cost of the course is not the only expense, they also have to pay for accommodation. There are a few regional MPs in the Chamber, including from the Central Coast, but the expense of travelling to attend TAFE would mainly affect the member for Northern Tablelands' constituents. Travelling long distances to study results in high dropout rates. That is not being negative; that is stating a fact. Research shows that when it is difficult for people to undertake a course, there will be a higher dropout rate. So let us just recognise that.

The second point is that cuts to middle management in TAFE gets rid of people who support multicultural students with languages and people with physical disabilities. Those jobs have disappeared from TAFE. They are not supporting students anymore. Once upon a time those vulnerable students received assistance to complete their courses, but now those people are not employed to give them assistance, which results in a higher dropout rate. Let us focus on the actual facts and understand that as governments and politicians we should make it as easy as possible for people to enter training and apprenticeships and support them to be successful. The Opposition is

saying that students need to be supported to be successful and not have a Government that yells insults at Opposition members.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It is a joke; it has got no intellect.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:02):** I take offence to the member for Newcastle saying that we have no intellect on this side.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Come on. When you resort to names, what do you think that says about someone? It is pretty basic stuff.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Newcastle will be silent.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** I thank the member for Newcastle for bringing this motion before the House today because it gives me the opportunity to put the record straight about TAFE NSW. I am pleased to report that TAFE NSW is leading the nation for apprenticeships and traineeships. We have the highest number of apprentices and trainees in training in any State or Territory in Australia. Based on the National Centre for Vocational Education Research report as of 31 December 2021, New South Wales had 106,445 apprentices and trainees in training, representing 30.5 per cent of Australia's total. New South Wales had 26,360 more in training than Queensland, which is the next largest cohort. In New South Wales, for the 12 months to 31 December 2021 there were more than 57,000 apprentice and trainee commencements, representing more than 26 per cent of the Australian total. That is an improvement of more than 10 per cent when compared with the 2020 figures. I note that the figures talked about by the member for Newcastle are figures that suit him. They are not the actual figures that we move forward and I would like to talk about.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It is in the Minister's brief.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** It is in the period that you want to talk about, not in the period going forward. The increases were a fantastic result, particularly when considering the impacts of drought, bushfires and COVID-19 during 2021. Madam Temporary Speaker, I ask that I be heard in silence and be treated with respect by the member for Newcastle, as I did when he was speaking. It is a testament to New South Wales employers for keeping their apprentices and trainees on board during COVID-19 and to our training providers for finding new and innovative ways to maintain training. It is also a testament to the Liberal-Nationals Government's record investment in skills and training, as my good Minister has explained, in this year's budget of over \$3 billion. That included a record \$2 billion operating budget for TAFE NSW and a staggering \$319 million capital investment in TAFE NSW. That is almost three times the amount Labor committed in their last budget when they were in government. How quickly they forget that. How can the member for Newcastle defend such an appalling record? It is true that COVID-19 was a challenging—

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** You did a great job in Richmond with your horse courses.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** We just gave \$2 million to Richmond for a new vet clinic, so do not talk to me about what we do not spend. The March 2020 to September 2020 period held uncertainty for apprentices, trainees, employers and the whole training market, with apprenticeship and traineeship commencement numbers reflecting that. From July 2018 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government started paying the course cost for 100,000 new apprentices, which meant students no longer had to face a fee of \$2,000. From January 2020 the New South Wales Government started paying the courses for 70,000 new traineeships, which meant students no longer had to face student fees of up to \$1,000. In the 2022-23 budget the New South Wales Government is continuing to invest in extending the delivery of fee-free apprenticeships. I do not know how the member for Newcastle can put forward this motion judged on his figures and not the real figures that the Government has to offer.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:06):** The State is in a workforce crevasse. The situation across New South Wales is dire, and the Liberal-National Government's actions towards TAFE have had a massive impact on students. I fully support the member for Newcastle's motion. It breaks my heart that 34,000 students cancelled their apprenticeships or traineeships last year. Apprenticeship cancellations are up 19 per cent and traineeship cancellations are up 56 per cent. They are the backbone of our workforce. Last Friday night I was at a graduation for the Central Coast Group Training. I asked for the apprentices to put up their hands and then I asked the people who had been apprentices to put up their hands. It is heartbreaking that there were so many cancellations in the past 12 months, not just for our community but for New South Wales and the future of good training in our State.

I ask Government members to think about why that has happened and what they have done to TAFE during their 12 years in government. They may have had a budget cash splash to try to win votes at the next election, but the diabolical gutting of TAFE has been horrific. One example of that is boatbuilding. There used to be three

fabulous boatbuilding courses, one in Wollongong, one in Newcastle and one in Sydney, taught by many teachers. What is there now? There is none in Wollongong, none in Newcastle and one in Sydney, with less than half the number of teachers and shortened courses. What is that doing for our boatbuilding industry in the future? Not enough. I now turn to TAFE teachers. They are currently asking the Government for a decent pay rise. They are not matching high school teachers' salaries. We need to work out why we cannot attract good teachers into TAFE. We need to be able to attract teachers. The Government has halved the number of TAFE teachers.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** We have great teachers in TAFE. Why do you keep talking down the teachers in TAFE?

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** There are loads of fantastic teachers in TAFE. But we need to make sure that they receive good pay in order to attract good-quality teachers. The administration load of TAFE teachers has gone through the roof. The hours of courses have been cut. Teachers are devastated about having to teach quality courses in fewer hours. There is a massive casualisation of TAFE teachers, with 77 per cent being casualised. Teaching and related staff have halved under the watch of the Liberal Government. In Gosford, the number of teachers has reduced from 106 to 67. That is a 36 per cent reduction. In Wyong 140 teachers have been reduced to 78. That is minus 62 teachers in that community. What is the Government doing to support people with disabilities in TAFE? There used to be people available on site to encourage people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people from Aboriginal communities to get into TAFE. Now there is nowhere near that support. Government members have gutted the workforce of TAFE and the future of New South Wales. What they are leaving after 12 years in government is a very disappointing outcome.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:09):** Post hoc ergo propter hoc. There has been a lot of talk in this debate about intelligence. I am not the most intelligent person, but even I know my Latin: After this, therefore because of this. It is the typical old false logic that we heard from the member for Newcastle—all dogs have four legs, therefore my cat Cyril must be a dog. That is about the strength of the member for Newcastle's argument: One-quarter of figures from nearly 12 months ago show a decline, therefore the whole system must be bugged.

The Minister said that the latest figures show that apprenticeship and traineeship numbers are up. The last quarterly results from the same agency that the member for Newcastle quotes from show that New South Wales has 23,000 more apprentices than the next highest State, which is Queensland. New South Wales comprises roughly 30 per cent of the population of Australia but has 44 per cent of the total national TAFE enrolments. So we are punching above our weight in that regard. That is far from the false logic of one-quarter, therefore the whole system is stuffed. It is clearly not.

The Minister also said that this Government has consistently in budget after budget allocated record levels of funding to our public vocational education training provider, which leads the nation in that training. I note the member for Wyong's contribution. I always appreciate his comments because he is a very sensible member. He spoke about the challenges of regional students having to travel further distances in regional areas. He is right; they do. I had to when I was studying. People in the regions have to travel a long way for all sorts of things, even to come to this august institution. I have to travel further than the member for Wyong to get here, but that does not mean that this place is stuffed—to again use the member for Newcastle's false logic.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It is in the Minister's brief.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Holding up a bit of paper does not make a case either.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It is in his notes.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** An argument has to be logical, cogent and, most importantly, accurate, and the Opposition's argument is not. Throwing out the line "my dog has four legs, therefore cats are dogs" does not work either.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery guests of the member for Oatley, year 12 student leaders from the following schools: Georges River College, Oatley Senior Campus, St Ursula's College, Bethany Catholic College, Danebank Anglican School for Girls, Marist Catholic College Penshurst and Blakehurst High School. I had the pleasure of meeting them in the Fountain Court before question time. I also welcome guests of the

member for East Hills, 2023 school captains and vice captains from De La Salle College in Revesby Heights, Mount St Joseph Catholic College in Milperra, East Hills Girls Technology High School in East Hills, East Hills Boys High School in East Hills, Sir Joseph Banks High School in Revesby, Georges River Grammar School in Georges Hall, Condell Park High School in Condell Park and Picnic Point High School in Picnic Point.

I welcome to the gallery guests of the member for Maitland, Councillor Philip Penfold, mayor of Maitland City Council. I acknowledge guests in the gallery of the member for Upper Hunter, Steven Reynolds, mayor of Muswellbrook Shire Council and Shaelee Welchman, Muswellbrook Shire Council. The member for Upper Hunter joins with the member for Maitland in welcoming Philip Penfold and his son Will Penfold. Importantly, I acknowledge the following guests of the member for Pittwater: Anna Stokes, Louisa Stokes, James Paterson, Jessica Crosby and Anna Conisbee. Finally, I acknowledge the guest of the member for Coogee, Father Bernie Thomas, the Parish Priest of Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, who recently celebrated 20 years of service since his ordination. I congratulate him.

### *Question Time*

### **ENERGY PRICES**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:17):** With the leave of the Parliament, I acknowledge the students from my old alma mater who are here today, Marist Catholic College Penshurst. It is good to see them. I thank the member for Oatley for letting me know that they are here. I appreciate it—no, I am just joking. My question is directed to the Premier. Today is the two-year anniversary of the energy Minister's promise that energy bills will be lower by \$130 for households and \$430 for small businesses each year, every year. Given that electricity prices have gone up by 25 per cent in the past three months and are expected to jump by an additional 56 per cent by 2024, did his energy Minister make a promise he could never deliver?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:18):** I thank the member for his question. As we know, the energy Minister—and I am acting Treasurer; let us not forget—made it quite clear that through the energy road map, which was randomly supported by the Labor Opposition, between 2023 and 2040 households would save on average around \$130 per year, had we not gone down that path where prices would have otherwise been. As the member pointed out in his question, that was two years ago. There have been significant changes in global markets over the past two years and also a war in Ukraine, which is having a significant impact.

I note that the Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, only a few months ago in the lead-up to the election said during the global challenge being experienced that he has committed to savings of \$275, not \$130. Has the Leader of the Opposition written to him? No, not even a letter to his little mate Albo. I will write it for him, if he likes. In fact, I welcome the musings coming out of the Commonwealth at the moment. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out the increases in electricity prices nationally and the trajectory of those increases, but the Federal Government spoke about further regulatory involvement and price caps. The Liberals and The Nationals support any measures by the Federal Labor Government to put downward pressure on household budgets and families across the State.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: The question was specifically about the Premier's energy Minister, not the Commonwealth energy Minister. I would like an answer. The Minister made that promise to the people of this State and it is obvious that he could not deliver it. I would like to know why he made that promise.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I was very clear. The \$130 saving for households was based on the average from 2023 to 2040, had we not taken the action based on where prices would have been. The \$275 from the Federal Labor Prime Minister was set at a time when there was escalating conflict in Ukraine.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Leader of the Opposition has not even written to his Federal Labor mates to ask them. The New South Wales Government committed \$7 billion in cost-of-living support, which equates to the cost-of-living support from the Federal Labor Government for the entire country.

### **FIRST HOME BUYERS**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:21):** My question is addressed to Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are delivering for first home buyers across New South Wales?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (14:22):** That is a great question from the member for Riverstone. I was in his electorate today.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We visited Chloe and Derek, who have just bought a property off the plan. They are very much looking forward to the upper House passing historic legislation today which will allow young families across New South Wales to get into the property market faster. They said to the member for Riverstone and to me that they will be taking up that initiative if the bill is passed tonight because they know that it takes two to 2½ years to save for stamp duty and by that time they will have fallen further behind. If the legislation passes, it will unlock the opportunity for households for first home owners and help young people get the keys to their first home. The Liberals and The Nationals know that getting the keys to one's first home changes lives and provides security and opportunity for generations to come. That is exactly what that reform will do.

The students in the gallery today will want to purchase their first home one day. Members opposite have multiple homes—five or six. Potts Point Park over there is a property mogul and slum lord, taking properties away from the next generation. Members on this side of the House want to give them back to the community because we know that buying a first home is a challenge anywhere in this State and is becoming more and more difficult. We want everyone in the gallery, including those young students, to achieve the great Australian dream. Not having to pay tens of thousands of dollars in stamp duty will make a real difference to those young students being able to enter the property market. We know that the Leader of the Opposition and Labor have said that if they win the election, they will reverse the bill. They will make all the students sitting in the gallery pay tens of thousands of dollars in stamp duty. They want to bring stamp duty back on every first home buyer in this great State.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** But those students do not need to worry about it because Labor will not win. They will be able to access this scheme should it pass the Legislative Council later today. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** If the Legislative Council passes the bill, we may not go on to abolish the Council next term. This is an opportunity for the Legislative Council to show its worth and objectively look at the bill. In his contribution to debate on the bill—the Deputy Premier will be interested in this—the shadow Treasurer stated:

We find ourselves in this wonderful position where the National Party is about to vote to give a lot of benefit to people in some of the richest areas of the country.

We know people in regional New South Wales will be taking up this scheme. Let us see where the most interest has been. By electorate, the most interest in the scheme has been in Granville, then Hawkesbury, Riverstone, Seven Hills, Liverpool, Parramatta and Drummoyne. This is an opportunity. Forget the class warfare waged by those opposite. We know that home ownership unlocks opportunity. We want first home buyers to reach the great Australian dream wherever they live across our great State. That is exactly what this landmark, historical reform that the Legislative Council will consider later today will achieve.

The difference between the Liberal-Nationals and Labor is that we want to cut taxes and provide more support for families across the State, whereas those opposite want to impose tens of thousands of dollars of stamp duty on every first home buyer in New South Wales. Only the Liberals and Nationals can set up a brighter future for every person across this State for generations to come. The Liberals and The Nationals will deliver the ideas and the reforms that change lives.

## ENERGY PRICES

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:27):** My question is directed to the acting Minister for Energy. Does the Minister still stand by the Government's commitment of two years ago that energy bills would be \$130 lower for households and \$430 lower for small businesses every year from next year, when prices are actually set to effectively double in the next two years?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (14:27):** I appreciate the question from the member for Londonderry. You know what? If I knew that all it would take to get a question from the Opposition was to send Matt Kean to the other side of the world, I would have done it earlier. I thank the member and appreciate her question. Minister Kean is doing important business. I am not sure if the member misheard what the Premier had to say, but he gave a clear, succinct answer about how proud we are to support a renewable energy plan that those opposite backed in. It is a plan that in the long term will drive energy prices down.

In the short term, we are delivering hundreds of millions of dollars in rebates and support to businesses and families that need it across New South Wales. In fact, we are providing more than \$330 million of support by way of grants, including the Low Income Household Rebate, the NSW Gas Rebate, the Seniors Energy Rebate,



the Family Energy Rebate, the Life Support Rebate—and on and on it goes. The member may not understand what her Federal Treasurer counterpart is saying. He seems to get it. The tweets, the lies and the misinformation from those opposite are either deliberately misleading or indicate that those opposite do not understand it.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Firstly, the Minister cannot use the word "liar" because that is disorderly.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Give him a go, Horace!

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Secondly, he was asked whether he stands by the commitment made by the Minister for Energy. He is halfway through his answer and he has not gone near the subject.

**The SPEAKER:** I refer to past precedent in this Chamber. The word "liar" or accusations of lying are inappropriate. The Minister has the call.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Perhaps I could apply "mendacious" or a number of other different words. In the great words of the member for Northern Tablelands, give the guy a go. I am trying to respond appropriately to the question from the Opposition, which misleads the public about the energy policy of this great State. I refer those opposite to the earlier answer from the Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Tweed, I remind members that the Minister should stay seated until the question being asked is completed.

#### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Police. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support our police force?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:30):** I thank the member for Tweed for his question and acknowledge the work he does as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services. Every week we hear stories from across the State of extraordinary acts of courage and commitment by members of the NSW Police Force. Our police run towards danger, when the natural instinct would be to run the other way. That can take a physical and mental toll. Last week we were proud to announce our biggest ever investment in the physical and mental wellbeing of the NSW Police Force. Over the next five years, the New South Wales Government will invest an additional \$79 million in Pulse, a new program designed to better look after members of the force from their first day on the job to their last.

Just like our approach to policing, it is about taking care of the problems that we can see and also the ones we cannot. For the first time we will see mental health clinicians embedded in stations and specialist commands across the State, focusing on consultancy and counselling. Through periodic health checks, officers will have access to nurses, dietitians and trainers to improve their overall health and wellbeing. In simple terms, it is about taking care of the people who take care of us. Pulse is just one arm of more than \$100 million in new funding that will help recruit, retain and better take care of the 22,000 members of the NSW Police Force through every stage of their career. But it does not end there.

Last week we also announced a further 0.5 per cent pay increase from 1 July for sworn officers. That is on top of the 3 per cent increase in 2022-23 and 2023-24 delivered by the Government's revised wages policy. I am proud that police have been the first to identify productivity-enhancing reforms under the Government's revised wages policy. It is a testament to the hard work and collaboration between the Government, the NSW Police Force and the Police Association of New South Wales. We all want to build a modern, world-class police force and take care of the people who take care of us. This increase and these reforms will do exactly that. They will create more flexible work options and develop opportunities to ensure that our officers continue to build capability throughout their careers.

I applaud the work that our police officers continue to do in our State. Unlike those opposite, who talk the talk about backing our police, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are walking the walk. We have delivered better pay and better care for officers throughout their careers, better incentives to recruit police and encourage them to put down roots in remote areas and better powers to target the changing face of crime. *[Extension of time]*

What about those opposite? They say that they support our police, but then they preselect a man who publicly opposed our anti-terror laws and opposed the use of drug-detection dogs.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** It relates to Standing Order 129.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Members opposite say they support our police. But do they support them when they pre-select a man who publicly opposes anti-terror laws or drug-detection dogs? Not only that, they punted the Hon. Mick Veitch, a hardworking member of the Legislative Council, for this bloke. It is one thing to say they back our police, but it is another doing it.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** It is not enough to turn up at a function—

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Minister is clearly in breach of Standing Order 129, relevance. He has been given an extra two minutes and he has not come anywhere near answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Deputy Premier, who should return to the question asked.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I speak to policemen and policewomen on the job each and every day. When the phone rings, they do not know what is happening at the other end. It could be a car accident that has caused multiple fatalities. It might be a domestic violence incident or, as we found last week, lions were on the loose at the zoo. We would all run away from the danger, but our police run towards it. Because of their continuing efforts to provide safety for individuals and the public, on behalf of the Liberal-Nationals Government, I sincerely thank the police for the work they continue to do.

#### PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTRY LEGISLATION

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (14:35):** I direct my question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Has the Minister been advised by his department of what impact the Government's private native forestry bill will have on its commitment to double the koala population?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (14:36):** I note that the bill is before the House.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** The bill is before the House, but I note that in the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech he mentioned the word "environment" a grand total of—

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 129. It was a very specific question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Minister.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** As I was saying, the number of times the environment was mentioned in the budget reply speech by the Leader of the Opposition was like a big doughnut—zero. The bill is before the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot hear the Minister over the noise.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** We have committed \$2.2 billion in this most recent budget to environmental initiatives, which we are incredibly proud of, including \$190 million for the Koala Strategy. It is one of the best in the country, a key pillar designed to preserve critical koala habitat.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Whilst the bill is before the House, I note the question, but the member for Summer Hill is in no position to provide any comment on environmental initiatives in this place.

#### SPORT INVESTMENT

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:37):** I address my question to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House about the Government's investment in sport?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the second time. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

**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) (14:38):** The answer is, yes, I will. I thank the great member for Vacluse for her question because she has been passionate in her support for sport, particularly women in sport, before and since she has been a member of this House. Yesterday it was fantastic to have the Western Sydney Wanderers A-League women in Parliament House for a great reception. A number of members of Parliament were present to meet those women, who are great ambassadors for their sport. Some of them are definitely future Matildas. One of the most outstanding players in the team is in year 12.

Last year this Government invested over \$200 million in initiatives to support women and girls in sport. That investment included the very successful Active Kids vouchers and 58 infrastructure projects that included facilities and components specifically intended to increase female participation in sport and programs and initiatives that reduce the barriers and grow participation for women and girls in sport. Our infrastructure programs include the Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund, the Greater Cities Sport Facility Fund, the Regional Sport Facility Fund and the Centre of Excellence Fund. They all focus on delivering for our sportspeople and our community sports organisations. Our sporting bodies are important to the cohesiveness of our communities, particularly in Western Sydney where we have the most multicultural, diverse and harmonious community in the world. Why is that?

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Blacktown on three calls to order.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It is because bodies like our sporting clubs bind together our communities. The way they bring people together is great and they promote understanding by different people. One of the Government's programs to promote women in sport includes the women in sport strategy, Her Sport Her Way, which includes an integrated package of 29 initiatives that aim to increase the number of women and girls playing sport, invest more in female-friendly sports facilities, maximise investment in women's sport, and support women in leadership roles in the administration of sport. It is incredibly important. It is not just in our grassroots sports but also our big facilities promote community participation in sport. [*Extension of time.*]

That point was made very clearly yesterday by the chair of the Wanderers when he talked about CommBank Stadium. He said it is not just an elite sporting venue, it is a venue that has brought together so much of the western Sydney community and has been a great binder of western Sydney. While he was saying those words, I thought about how the member for Maroubra cannot even say "CommBank Stadium". Labor opposed the stadium—a great facility for western Sydney. They opposed all the infrastructure that this Government has built, including CommBank Stadium, where the Matildas have played Brazil, China and Chile. The Parramatta Eels women's team have played rugby league there. At Allianz Stadium the Western Sydney Wanderers A-League women's team are playing several games. Members opposite think the only thing about those great facilities are the corporate boxes. But those facilities drive sport and community, they bring people together. Opposition members just do not understand the community.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** They do not care about the community. They do not understand that we are building facilities that bring the community together.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** All they do is oppose, oppose, oppose. We cannot trust Labor to invest in our community. It is only the Liberal-Nationals Government that will build a brighter future for our State.

#### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:43):** I direct my question to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Lake Macquarie.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! We are about to see history made.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I will start again. My question is directed to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Lake Macquarie. How has the Public Accounts Committee ensured oversight and transparency in government expenditure, including recommendations of further legislative change?

**The SPEAKER:** That question is being asked pursuant to Standing Order 127 where a member, being the chair of a committee, may be asked a question relating to the affairs of the committee.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:45):** I thank the member for Sydney, my good friend, for his question, which certainly did surprise me. I thank him for his interest in the issues of public accountability and governance in New South Wales. That is so important. I recognise the entire crossbench, my colleagues who do

so much in supporting me. I thank them for that. I am going to name lots of people in my answer because lots of people have been involved with the Public Accounts Committee—by the way, for the interest of the member for Sydney, a committee that was established in 1902. The Public Accounts Committee has been running continuously for 120 years.

The Public Accounts Committee is an extraordinarily important committee. It may not sound that it is but, as Mr Speaker knows, its remit is extremely important to the State. For instance, in ensuring oversight and transparency, the COVID pandemic had a huge impact on so many things, including democracy in this House, where the Parliament oversight of the Executive was set to one side. So the Public Accounts Committee put in place a number of measures, including direct contact with the Treasury and hearings with the Treasury to make sure that there was at least a semblance of accountability.

The Public Accounts Committee can be fleet of foot if it needs to be. It is not normal for those sorts of things to happen, and hopefully we will never have to do it again. Indeed, we will not have to do it again because of a constitutional change by the member for Balmain earlier this year, which was also historic. I acknowledge very quickly the members of the committee who are here today: the deputy chair, the member for Upper Hunter; the member for Holsworthy; the member for Castle Hill; the member for Monaro; and the great member for Keira. Other Opposition members have served on that committee and have taken their membership seriously. I recognise the member for Maroubra who served with me on that committee for a long time. [*Extension of time*]

One of the most important things that the Public Accounts Committee can do, and this Parliament in supporting the Public Accounts Committee, is to pay respect to the request of the Auditor-General in seeking the powers it needs to examine the activities of the Government. Earlier this year we had handed down through our remit the statutory quadrennial review of the Audit Office of New South Wales by O'Connor Marsden. Yesterday that was referenced here in Parliament, with the introduction of the Government Sector Audit and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 by the member for North Shore, on behalf of Treasurer Matt Kean. I recognise the attempts of the Government to do what it can to implement the recommendations of the O'Connor Marsden report, and the most important recommendation was the follow the dollar powers.

I recognise that Mr Speaker was a former chair of the Public Accounts Committee. In all that time we have been fighting to get follow the dollar powers for the Auditor-General. That is one of the most important things we can do to support that office. That is now going to be delivered by the Government, along with a number of other matters, including access to Cabinet documents. That is a very big step for any government—whether it is this Government or a Labor government, it does not matter. This is about giving the powers to examine the finances to the Auditor-General—the rolled gold seal of the Auditor-General in New South Wales. Whoever is in power next year, look after the Public Accounts Committee and look after the Auditor-General. Thank you.

## RURAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (14:50):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Liberals and The Nationals are reducing the cost of transport for regional communities?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police) (14:51):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question and for the work that he does on behalf of his community. The work that he has done has seen the Singleton and Muswellbrook bypasses underway—one of the very few projects in regional New South Wales that was left alone and we are fortunate the Federal Labor did not cut. Time and time again it has been proven that only the Liberals and The Nationals in government actually deliver for all of New South Wales. At the last election the New South Wales Government announced its vision for regional New South Wales. What it was doing was playing a decade of catch-up and a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. That is what they left us when we came into government. This was about a vision of putting people first, like our regional seniors. We put our regional seniors first and we introduced a \$250 regional seniors travel card.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We said this would assist with the cost of travel. But no, what did those opposite say? Labor said this is actually an election bribe. They ridiculed a program that is supporting elderly people in our State. They did not support it. They did not want to back it in. They stuck to their guns right up until the time when their constituents were saying, "Hey, this is a great program. We are going to really benefit from this program. We think it is fantastic." Then they decided they would back it in. More than a million regional seniors travel cards have been handed out over the past three years, which has made a difference to the hundreds of thousands of seniors across regional New South Wales. They are better off because of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals in government.

As a father of three—my kids call regional New South Wales home—it is important to help the next generation. In the regions, nobody wants a handout, but occasionally they need a hand up. The New South Wales Nationals are creating the next iteration of our regional cost-of-living programs: the regional apprentice and university student travel card. This brand new \$250 travel card is going to lower costs for apprentices, trainees and university students who are living in regional New South Wales. It will assist them as part of their travel, work or education. It is about investing in the tradies, the teachers and the technicians of tomorrow. We know that most students are not flush with cash. It is about easing the pressure on their hip pocket. This \$250 prepaid debit card can go towards petrol, public transport or even electric charging stations. *[Extension of time]*

Regardless of whether someone is a 16-year-old apprentice mechanic or a 60-year-old university student, they may be eligible for the travel card if they live in the bush, which will help to boost their budget. Yesterday Labor published a press release about the new travel card. It stated:

NSW Labor has put questions to Minister Sam Faraway on multiple occasions about eligibility for the card, and how it will operate.

That was released by the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. It was her media release. I want to help the Opposition because I am in a good mood. I remind the shadow Minister that she can use technology like the internet to find out about the scheme. The internet was developed in 1983. By using the internet, the shadow Minister can find the criteria. Labor members are so lazy. They cannot look up the criteria for the card, even though it is right in front of them.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The Deputy Premier should stop yelling across the table.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** My point of order relates to Standing Orders 74 and 129.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** He is causing disorder in the House.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The member for Heffron will resume his seat. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member for Cessnock has shared it on his Facebook page not once but twice because it is a great new card. People have commented, "Great initiative" and "OMG, I need this". My favourite is "Not happy with Labor at all this term and I've been Labor all my life." That is a fair comment. While we are delivering, the Opposition is dribbling. We are the only party that stands up for the people of regional New South Wales.

#### PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTRY LEGISLATION

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:56):** I direct my question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Given the Nature Conservation Council stated that the Government's private native forestry bill will "lock in future tree clearing and make it even harder to stop the downward spiral koala populations are on", does the Minister support the bill?

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 77. The member for Blue Mountains is asking the Minister to anticipate the nature of upcoming debate on the bill.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The follow-up question is about the impact of the legislation on koala populations. It is no different to earlier answers given by the Premier on land tax legislation that is before the other place. The Speaker must take a consistent approach to points of order.

**The SPEAKER:** The question relates specifically to a bill that is before the Parliament, as opposed to debate on the bill. I have sought advice from the Clerk and in ruling I rely on the precedent set by Speaker John Murray, who said:

A question may ask for information on bills before the House to enable better informed debate.

I rule the question in order. However, the Minister may decide how he will respond.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:00):** I welcome the opportunity. This is amazing. I have not been asked a question on the environment all year from the mob opposite—zero, doughnuts. I am more than happy to speak about the Government's amazing funding contribution for the environment.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129.

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

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** The Minister only has three days left.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** As I was saying, over \$2 billion was provided in the budget for environmental initiatives. As part of that, the State will make the biggest investment in koalas in the nation by providing \$190 million. A critical part of that will go to critical koala habitat conservation. I have not had a question from the mob opposite all year.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** The fact is \$190 million will be invested into the NSW Koala Strategy, the biggest investment in the country.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** We will continue to support, grow and expand critical koala habitat.

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

### AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY SUPPORT

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:02):** I address my question to the Minister for Agriculture. Will the Minister update the House on the issues confronting our agriculture industry and what the New South Wales Government is doing to help?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:02):** I thank the member for Monaro for her question. At the moment the agriculture industry is going through a tough time with flooding around regional New South Wales. My thoughts are with people who normally would be looking forward to a bumper harvest at this time of year. Hopefully at some point in the near future the rain will stop. Unfortunately, the weekend does not look great, with more rain forecast for the end of the weekend. The wet weather has impacted every part of the primary industry sector, including cropping, livestock and seafood. Every sector has been impacted by flooding, but there has been incredible collaboration. For example, last Thursday the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services took part in an important movement of sheep in Forbes in the Central West. Essentially, an island had formed on a property with about 1,200 stranded ewes and lambs. A chopper was brought in, thanks to collaboration with the SES.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will remain silent. It is hard to hear the Minister's answer over her voice.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** Yes, I am finding it very difficult too. We sent in the chopper with a cage attached to transport about 10 ewes and lambs at a time to a safer area. That is one example of how our agencies work really well together. Earlier a lot of us were out with Surf Life Saving NSW, which also helped by using drone footage to inform us of what is happening in flooded areas. I give a thumbs up to Surf Life Saving NSW. Five of those aerial rescues for stock were done during the current flood crisis.

Despite all of the natural disasters we have had, our agriculture sector is booming. In fact, next week we will be celebrating Ag Day, and members should all be very pumped about it. Ag Day is here again! I will give members a little heads up. Hopefully, we will exceed where we got to in the past 12 months with a value of just over \$21 billion. I am tipping it will be a little higher today and I will tell members more next week. This year the Government announced \$1 billion for agriculture. I am pleased to note that Federal Labor has almost done the same. There is a little green shoot there—the Federal Government has allocated \$1 billion. For the State, there is \$1 billion. For the whole country, there is \$1 billion.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** That's a lot of ewes.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** That is a lot of ewes, but it is more than we are seeing from Metro Minnsie, that is for sure. If members recall, the big-ticket item of the Leader of the Opposition for agriculture was a new biosecurity commissioner, which is not worth anything—\$10 million for weeds—whereas the Government is spending a billion dollars. Metro Minnsie really does not compare.

**Ms Kate Washington:** What are you doing for beekeepers?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** For beekeepers, as the member for Port Stephens well knows, we have allocated \$18 million in compensation.

**Ms Kate Washington:** They're broke. They haven't got anything after three years of hard work.

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

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** If the member for Port Stephens wants to make a productive contribution, she should be serious. Under Metro Minnsie, there will be no vision for agriculture and no support for primary industries. Only Government members will continue supporting our rural and primary industries.

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

#### PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTRY LEGISLATION

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. As the Minister refused to provide an answer to my previous question, does he support his Government's own legislative agenda?

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I want to hear the point of order. Members will remain silent. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 128 (2) (b). Because of the way in which the question began, it is clearly argumentative and should be ruled out of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: It is probably one of the most fundamental questions that goes to the heart of the Westminster system—that it is not a minor question.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** If the answer elicits anything but a positive response, there are very serious consequences, as the Leader of the House knows.

**The SPEAKER:** I will read the question. I rule the question is in order. However, the Minister may decide how he responds.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:08):** As I said earlier, the Government has committed more than \$2 billion to environmental initiatives since January this year. For example, this year we banned single-use plastic bags and this month we banned more single-use plastic items. It is National Recycling Week. The Government is investing in infrastructure to support recycling.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on three calls to order. I remind the member for Canterbury, the member for Blacktown and the member for Keira that they are each on three calls to order.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** In relation to the substance of the question, we have expanded our national park estate by more than 600,000 hectares since 2019. When it comes to koalas, we have the single biggest investment in koalas—\$190 million—by any government in this country. That is the single biggest investment in any species in the country, which will help us to achieve our commitment and target of doubling the koala population by 2050. That is a stated aim that is set, and we are achieving that through our NSW Koala Strategy.

The koala strategy rests on four pillars. The first one is growing and expanding and conserving key critical koala habitat. Sitting underneath that are more than 27 actions in 10 koala hotspots. We are working across the State with communities, with academia and with universities to bring in the best data, the best technology and the best science, and we are working with landowners to ensure that we are conserving koala habitat right across New South Wales. This comment and this question flies in the face of the fact that our Koala Strategy is the biggest in the country, and it is rolling out as I speak. It is the biggest single investment. The Government is working with both public and private landowners. We are investing in koala hospitals and we are investing in critical koala habitat to grow and expand koala habitat right across New South Wales.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** All along the coast and throughout New South Wales I have met with landowners. They are out there using funding and support provided to them through the NSW Koala Strategy.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: We asked whether the Minister supports the Government's legislative agenda. If he cannot say yes, he should resign his commission.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier will remain silent.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I appreciate that this is not the answer that the Leader of the Opposition is seeking because it flies in the face of the narrative that he is trying to create. More than \$190 million is being invested in

koalas. There have been zero questions from the Opposition all year about the environment. We are trying to have a discussion about our NSW Koala Strategy—the biggest in the country—and we will continue to preserve koala habitat right across New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has completed his answer.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:12):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on the importance of financial integrity in local government?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will wait until members are quiet before starting her answer.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn—Minister for Local Government) (15:12):** I thank the member for East Hills for her question and for her interest in financial integrity in local government. I know she has a very strong interest in it. One hundred and twenty-eight local councils manage \$178 billion in assets and spend more than \$12 billion each year on providing infrastructure, facilities and services to local communities across the State. It is certainly a huge responsibility. Residents should be able to trust the people they have elected to council, along with council staff who are making sure they are honest and transparent about their interests. When we are talking about financial integrity, I cannot help but turn to the City of Canterbury Bankstown.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73, personal reflection. What has the Minister done about the member for Castle Hill?

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I thank the member for Campbelltown. I will get to you.

**Mr Greg Warren:** We haven't even started on you yet.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will remove himself from the Chamber for one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Campbelltown left the Chamber at 15:16 for one hour.]*

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I draw to the attention of members of the House that it has been suggested that the Leader of the Opposition has privately asked the mayor of Canterbury Bankstown to pay back the money he has claimed from the ratepayers of his community to further his personal education after bumping up council's professional development cap to pay for his MBA degree. I know the member for Campbelltown has just left the Chamber, but where is he on this matter? Where is he on ensuring integrity from those on the other side? I ask the Leader of the Opposition where is his integrity in this matter?

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** He is promoting members of such quality to stand for the upper House, and he questions that integrity by asking him to pay back the money he has taken off the ratepayers of his community. The member for Campbelltown as shadow Minister stood in the Chamber and questioned—  
*[Extension of time]*

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** He questioned the amount of money that the Government has provided. He said it provided little or no support for local councils during the pandemic. That is incorrect. The Government supported councils. It provided \$1,500 a fortnight in financial support to local government employees. It also provided a \$395 million economic stimulus package to safeguard council jobs. Where was he? How come he misleads the House in that way? He needs to stand up and make sure that he is telling the truth. It is about integrity. Every one of those opposite should be questioning the integrity of who they want to represent them in their communities. No-one was standing up for the member for Bankstown. Those opposite need to have a serious look in the mirror and question the integrity of the Leader of the Opposition.

#### PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:16):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier has been promising the second stage of Parramatta Light Rail since 2014, yet the project still has not received planning approval, does not have a final business case and will not be delivered this decade, why should the people of Parramatta ever believe his promises again?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Premier) (15:17):** Do you even know where Parramatta is?

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



**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Last time I checked, in this year's budget we allocated \$600 million to Parramatta Light Rail stage two. What did we hear from the other side? Crickets. Labor is happy to raid WestInvest for Canterbury Hospital, but it is not happy to fund Parramatta Light Rail stage two. I invite those opposite to make a funding allocation for Parramatta Light Rail stage two with money that does not come from asset recycling. See if they can do it. Labor opposes the means that have built the schools, the hospitals, the public transport and the road projects across the State.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Summer Hill has asked a question. She will listen to the answer in silence.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Parramatta Light Rail stage one is opening when? Next year.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In this year's budget there is \$600 million for Parramatta Light Rail stage two. Those opposite want to talk about Parramatta.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Summer Hill that she is on one call to order. She will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They should look at all the investments the Government has made to take Parramatta to the next level over 10 years. Under Labor, Parramatta was rotting away. We have turbocharged it completely with new schools, such as Arthur Phillip High School, and public transport and Parramatta Light Rail stage one metro is on the way. There is a new stadium, which those opposite opposed; a new museum, the Powerhouse Museum, which those opposite opposed; and new ferries. I remember what Parramatta was like under Labor and now look at where Parramatta is today. Those opposite come into this place and ask questions about infrastructure, when Labor delivered a \$30 billion backlog; about western Sydney and Parramatta, when they have been transformed under the Liberal-Nationals; and about Parramatta Light Rail stage two, when we committed \$600 million.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Where was it in the budget reply? I will tell members where it was—nowhere. On this side of the House we believe in western Sydney and that is why we are investing record amounts in western Sydney.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is why we are investing \$5 billion in WestInvest. We have the biggest infrastructure investment over the next four years—\$112 billion. The Liberal-Nationals have shown a decade of delivery, with another decade to come. Parramatta will never go back to the dark old days under Labor.

### NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:20):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to rebuild our communities following disasters across the State?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes) (15:20):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question and for his ongoing work supporting his community during the recent flood events on the North Coast. I also commend him for his extensive knowledge of the great musings of Speaker Murray. Yesterday I was honoured to introduce to the House the NSW Reconstruction Authority Bill 2022. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will be at the forefront of New South Wales disaster prevention, preparedness, adaptation, recovery and reconstruction before and after disasters. The authority 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 structure, functions and powers being 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 recovery response, and of course rebuilding our communities to be stronger and more resilient. Following years of drought, we witnessed the Black Summer bushfires of 2019 and 2020, followed by the devastating floods at the start of 2020 and two years of pandemic. Severe floods once again confronted our communities in March and September of 2021 and again this year in February, March, July, September and October.

The establishment of the authority is the New South Wales Government's commitment to learning from past challenges to futureproof our great State to the best of our ability and our knowledge. Our ability to respond

to future disasters is enhanced tremendously by the 11 years of knowledge and experience shared with us by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority [QRA]. Once again, on behalf of the New South Wales Government and the people of New South Wales, I thank the Queensland Government, particularly the Deputy Premier and planning Minister Steven Miles, who is the Minister for the QRA, for allowing us to communicate and learn from their experiences. In particular, I thank the QRA staff and management, who made themselves available to share their knowledge and experiences and assisted us to establish our own authority in New South Wales.

I thank all members in this place for their efforts and actions to support their communities across the State, particularly before, during and after disasters. I also acknowledge and pay tribute to the Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery, for her hard work in managing the many disasters that have occurred. It is not an easy job. She has shown continued great strength and leadership. The authority will deliver across New South Wales, from Bega to Ballina, Moama to Moree. No-one deserves more thanks, of course, than our emergency services personnel, volunteers and members of the community who continue to bounce back from repeated disasters. I assure the House that the authority will be a gamechanger for communities across New South Wales.

### SOFT PLASTICS RECYCLING

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:24):** My question is directed to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Given that Australia's largest soft plastics recycling scheme was suspended this week, what immediate action is the Government taking to deliver the urgently needed, sustainable, large-scale program to reduce and recycle soft plastics?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (15:24):** I commend the member for Balmain for his valedictory speech last night. I am sure I share the sentiments of all members when I recognise his legacy as a wonderful community advocate. I wish him all the best. His question is very welcome. We know that people in communities around this State are passionate about recycling and the environment. This week is National Recycling Week, so it is unfortunate to hear of the demise of REDCycle. For members who are unaware, REDCycle was the entity that received all of the soft plastics. All the materials and items that are made of soft plastic could be returned to Woolies or Coles and then go to REDCycle, which would re-manufacture them.

I update the member for Balmain that yesterday, as a matter of priority, I requested that the NSW Environment Protection Authority work with the Victorian Environment Protection Authority to better understand the issues impacting REDCycle—it is based in Victoria—and to understand the impact it has had on industry partners. In the short term, we encourage New South Wales residents to put their soft plastics in their red lid bin, as these products are not recyclable in the home curb-side recycling bin. I also update the member that, as he would be aware, we passed the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act in 2021. Since that time, we have banned single-use plastics and other problematic single-use plastics and are increasing responsibility on producers when it comes to plastic packaging.

In New South Wales we are committed to tripling the amount of plastic recycling done by 2030. To do that, we have the \$356 million Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy. Two months ago, we opened the \$9 million Circular Plastics Program to support manufacturers in improving plastic recyclability and build a more circular economy infrastructure across the State. We have awarded 27 projects worth \$25 million through Remanufacture NSW, including four projects that specifically increase recycling and the re-use of soft plastics. We have also partnered to create the Plastics Research Partnership to make New South Wales a leader in developing innovative solutions to better manage plastic waste, and we are rolling out \$24 million to build more recycling infrastructure, which will improve collection, sorting and processing of plastic waste. I assure the member that we are fully committed to securing a cleaner environment and dealing with plastic waste. We have committed to tripling the amount of recycled plastic in New South Wales by 2030. It being National Recycling Week, we are proud to be delivering on our long-term plan.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:27):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Veterans. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is unwavering in its resolve to recognise and commemorate Remembrance Day?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Transport, Minister for Veterans, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:27):** I thank the member for Terrigal for his question, his interest in veterans and the remembrance of our service. I acknowledge the members of the Legislative Assembly who have served in the Australian Defence Force at various levels. That includes the member for The Entrance, the member for Prospect, the member for Lane Cove, the member for Campbelltown, who is currently in the naughty corner, the member for Tamworth and the member for Auburn. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month

marks the official end of hostilities in World War I—the war to end all wars—and over the past century the date has become synonymous with recognising and commemorating the sacrifices of all veterans.

The New South Wales Government is unwavering in its resolve to recognise and commemorate Remembrance Day and all veterans who have honourably served this great State and their country. In 2022 the New South Wales Government has officially recognised two official days of commemoration to honour our veterans and their families. On 3 November the New South Wales Government announced the designation of that day as Kokoda Day. NSW Kokoda Day will last as a yearly acknowledgement of the contributions made by Australian men and women on the Kokoda Track and also acknowledge the sacrifices of their families. The nineteenth of October has been designated as War Widows Day, a day of acknowledgement for all war widows and widowers whose partners have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country while serving in the Australian Defence Force.

Last week the New South Wales Government held its first annual Veterans Employment Roundtable at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, with a focus on transitioning veterans into the construction industry. The Veterans Employment Roundtable was ably attended by the Civil Contractors Federation, the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association. The second round of the community war memorials grants program opens tomorrow. The program will allow organisations to support the conservation, repair and protection of local war memorials. The program provides grants of up to \$10,000. There is \$250,000 annual recurrent funding, with two grant rounds offered per financial year and administered by the New South Wales Office for Veterans Affairs. One of the key New South Wales Government initiatives that I am so proud of is the Veterans' Employment Program. The program has had outstanding success and has been awarded three Prime Minister's Awards.

I am pleased to note that over 2,000 veterans have been employed within the New South Wales Government since the program began. There have been some amazing stories. For example, Captain Angie Hoist, who served in the army from 2007 to 2016, later joined the NSW Police Force. She was in the Royal Australian Army Educational Corps. Leading Aircraftman Todd Robinson, who served 15 years in the Royal Australian Air Force, has also benefited from the Veterans' Employment Program. He served as a medic in the Airfield Defence Guard and is now a casual youth officer at the Frank Baxter Juvenile Detention Centre. In addition to the fantastic Veterans' Employment Program, the Veterans Skills Program was launched last year to provide job training opportunities. The New South Wales Government is committed to making sure that veterans have a purposeful place in our society, and we will continue to do that.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Medowie Public High School**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to commit to building a public high school in Medowie, received from **Ms Kate Washington**.

#### *Announcements*

### **PARLIAMENTARY STAFF AWARDS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the awards received by a number of staff within our electorate offices and also within the Department of the Legislative Assembly and the Department of Parliamentary Services. The awards were for service ranging from 10 years to 30 years. All recipients were duly recognised for their diligence and longstanding service. That is very much valued in this place. The House appreciates the efforts of all those who received awards.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **COOMA MOTORFEST**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro) (15:32):** After a two-year break, hampered by bushfires and COVID, Motorfest in Cooma roared back to life last weekend. The Cooma Car Club launched Motorfest in 2000, and this year it attracted record numbers of vehicles and spectators of all ages and types from all places. From a more than a century old Model T-Ford to collectible motorbikes, trucks and tractors, there was something for everyone. It was also a great pleasure for me, as the member for Monaro, to ride in a Monaro on the Monaro. It was a 1968 original model kept in the same family for the past 54 years. Motorfest is also a successful fundraiser for local charities. All in all, it was a highly successful year for the Cooma Car Club, with the opening of the Cooma Motor Museum in February—a \$310,000 project funded by the New South Wales Government's Stronger

Country Communities Fund. It makes for a fantastic visit and I encourage people to call in. Originally an indoor gymnasium and cricket facility, it has been transformed into a revhead's dream. I congratulate members of the Cooma Car Club on all their efforts in returning Motorfest to the Monaro.

#### **KING PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:33):** I congratulate the King Park Public School Boys NSW Primary Schools Sports Association State knockout team, who recently won the competition for a record twelfth time. The competition for the boys began with wins over local primary schools in the south-west, including Ashcroft Public School, Ingleburn Public School and Wilton Public School. The boys then went on to win 2-1 over Oatley Public School, which earned them progression to the regional final against Ropes Crossing Public School, where they won 6-0. They blitzed the quarter finals, winning 3-1 over Cudgegong Valley Public School, and worked very hard to score a victory over Griffith East Public School in the semifinals. Their winning streak continued when they came up against Neutral Bay Public School in the finals and achieved a resounding 4-1 win. With over 700 schools across the State in the competition, this was definitely a great achievement for the boys from King Park Public School. I am extremely proud of their win and I congratulate the boys on this tremendous achievement for their school.

#### **TOUCH FOOTBALL PLAYERS LILLY CLARKE AND OLIVIA CARNEY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:34):** I recognise two of Wellington's finest touch football players who recently competed with their respective teams in the School Sport Australia National Touch Football National Championships, held in Wagga Wagga. Lilly Clarke played in the under-15s side and Olivia Carney played in the under-12s side. Both young ladies are sporting products of St Mary's Catholic School in Wellington, which over the years has excelled in touch football, apparently in part due to the enthusiasm of the school's sportsmaster and head coach, Alistaire Thompson. Of course there was rain, which has been hampering plenty of recent events. Despite the weather, the New South Wales teams kept well ahead of the pack in their respective pool games. I congratulate Olivia and the under-12s team on finishing runners-up with a silver medal. A massive congratulations goes to Lilly and the under-15s team, which took out the gold medal. I wish both young women all the best in their future sporting careers.

#### **NEPEAN RIVER PARKRUN**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:35):** I congratulate the Nepean River parkrun community, who are celebrating their sixth anniversary this Saturday. I am sure the parkrun needs no introduction, with 453 events across the country. I think it was started by an Australian and is now all around the world. The five-kilometre run has become a weekly ritual for thousands of people. At Nepean River alone, 5,700 people have completed the run, with 7,000 personal best times across 44,000 finishes. Whether you are a seasoned competitive racer, starting on a fitness journey or looking for a fun way to spend Saturday morning, the parkrun is for you. Above all, the wonderful community spirit of the Nepean River group is second to none. The lifelong friends made at parkrun become like family and they have been very kind to me. I give a special shout-out to event director Sheri Thomson, who has been the driving force behind the event and is soon due to retire. Hers will be big shoes to fill. I look forward to getting back one day and celebrating with the entire Nepean River parkrun family. Remember, do not forget your barcode.

#### **STUARTS POINT SEWERAGE SCHEME**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:36):** I acknowledge the Stuarts Point, Grassy Head and Fishermans Reach communities for their patience during the approval and design process of the Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme. These communities have been waiting far too long for the project. It has been delayed for about four years due to design change and land claim resolution issues. Now there is further concern that the project will be delayed another 18 months because it has reached the threshold for a full environmental impact statement. Kempsey Shire Council has approached me to see if we can deal with the reality that the environment and communities are much better serviced the quicker the project is completed. The longer the delay, the risk of groundwater contamination and associated public health impacts of overflow events and ineffective treatment increases. Recently during the floods, residents have been required to evacuate due to groundwater inundation and contamination from hundreds of septic tanks. It is clear that there is community distress and anxiety whenever a new rainfall event is predicted. We cannot delay this project further. I have made representations to the Minister for Planning to ask that the project is included under the reconstruction umbrella. I am hopeful for a sensible outcome because the community deserves it.

### NORAH HEAD NATIONAL SURFING RESERVE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:37):** After tremendous hard work from local community members, Norah Head will be declared a national surfing reserve on Saturday 26 November 2022. National surfing reserves are iconic places of intrinsic environmental, heritage, sporting and cultural value to the nation. They embrace all people who enjoy, understand and protect special coastal environments of universal value to the surfing world. The criteria for a surfing reserve are the quality of the waves, a place considered sacred by the local and national surfing community, and long-term usage of the beach and wave environment by the local and national surfing community—for example, having a long-term surf lifesaving club and/or board riders club with significant history. Norah Head has a rich history from the early timber days, with the jetty at Cabbage Tree Harbour, the historic Norah Head Lighthouse and the many shipwrecks dotted along the coastline. The remarkable surf break along this section of the coast is truly iconic. I congratulate Debbie McGuigan, Jill Secomb and their committee on their incredible hard work on the project.

### SHIRLEY SHUTTLE SERVICE

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:38):** I recognise and express immense gratitude for the incredible work of the Shirley Shuttle team. This volunteer-driven organisation was born in 2008 out of a need for patient transport between appointments, specifically for patients having cancer treatment. The service is named after Shirley Galvin. This extraordinary woman and her daughter Barb could not help but notice the challenge posed by a lack of access to transportation while Shirley was undergoing her own cancer treatment in 2004. Sadly, Shirley passed away in 2008, but her legacy lives on. Physical accessibility should never be a barrier to potentially life-saving treatment. Since Barb Calvin's 2008 donation of a Toyota HiAce to transport cancer outpatients to and from oncology treatment centres within the Central Coast region, the mission has only grown. Shirley Shuttle has four operational vehicles provided by Community Transport Central Coast, driven by 35 volunteer drivers, helping a total of 576 clients, including my wife. They have made 10,318 trips and covered 229,677 kilometres. I thank the inspirational team who make this possible.

### TOBY R AND PROJECT POEM FOREST

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:39):** The hope of rain following a drought inspired a beautiful poem now shortlisted for the Project Poem Forest prize. I congratulate year 5 student Toby R from New Lambton South Public School, who has been shortlisted for his poem entitled *Hope*. The Red Room Poetry initiative received more than 5,000 entries from across the country. They were all nature poems exploring Australia, from the flow of tides to the patter of a potoroo. The very gifted Toby is a top-10 finalist, with the winners of the competition to be announced on 17 November. I congratulate Toby and wish him all the very best. I will share Toby's poem with the House.

River bed carcass  
dried out by mother summer,  
leaves wither to brown  
as the clouds wane thin,  
and the drought rolls overhead  
though in all the death  
there is always hope  
from hope blossoms succulents  
which turns death to life,  
nothing to something  
as pigface spreads like a new dawn  
so with life spreading,  
and death retreating  
rain starts to fall like glitter.

### HARRINGTON HORNETS UNDER-18S CHAMPIONS OF CHAMPIONS

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:41):** I am delighted to congratulate the under-18s Harrington United Football Club, the Hornets, on their fantastic Champion of Champions win. The Hornets won the Champion of Champions match against the Engadine Eagles, winning 5-0, a truly outstanding effort against a tough team. The win officially recognises the Hornets as the best of the best. To qualify for the finals is an achievement in itself. To win is testament to the calibre with which the team performs. Well done to the players: Sophia, Tayla, Tammy, Jeina, Aaliah, Akirra, Chloe, Jade, Maddison, Kailee, Kayley, Alexis, Scarlett, Brooklyn, Que and Jasmine. I commend the entire Harrington United Football Club committee, led by president Ray Zammit. I thank him for his support and commitment to the players of the club.

### BALRANALD RACING CLUB TREASURER DONNA RENFREY

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:41):** I recognise Donna Renfrey of Balranald. In 2007 Donna became a general committee member of the Balranald Racing Club and in 2009 was elected treasurer. She has

continued in the role for over 13 consecutive years and devotes many hours of her time and effort to each race meeting. Described as a crucial member of the committee, recently at the Balranald Derby Day race meeting Donna was the first female to be presented with a life membership in recognition of her valued dedication. There were no horses in attendance during Donna's first year of involvement with the race meet due to the equine virus. Unperturbed, and knowing how important the 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. I congratulate Donna on her active and valued involvement with the Balranald Racing Club and her community spirit.

#### **PREMIER'S COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNER LORRAINE TARABAY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:42):** I acknowledge Lorraine Tarabay, who has received the 2022 New South Wales Premier's community service award. Lorraine is a well-known figure in my local community. A former banker, she has recently dedicated her time to not-for-profits and serves on the board of Kincoppal-Rose Bay School. As chair of the school's investment committee, Lorraine manages funds for the bursary program, providing financial support to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Her service extends to boards across New South Wales in support of arts and cultural organisations. Lorraine is passionate about the arts and is chair of the board of the Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA]. She serves as a member of the Venice Council for the Australia Council for the Arts and chairs the MCA's Social Impact Council. She administers the museum's newly established philanthropic venture and the Social Impact through Art Fund, and sponsors the GENEXT youth program. On top of all that, Lorraine also serves on the board of Global Women Leaders, providing strategic advice to humanitarian and aid agencies, such as UNICEF and the Australian Red Cross. I warmly congratulate Lorraine on her continuing service to our community.

#### **JACKSON AND JACOB CRAWLEY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:44):** I acknowledge two exceptional members of our community, Jackson and Jacob Crawley from Ashtonfield, who were with their father last year on Boxing Day when he sadly suffered a seizure. It would be challenging as an adult to witness someone you love suffer a seizure, let alone two primary school-aged children. However, the boys demonstrated steely courage while assisting their father, and I am not the only one who thinks so. Much to the pride of their mum and dad, Jillian and Jason, Jackson and Jacob have been nominated to receive a Citation for Courage from the NSW Ambulance to recognise their efforts during an extremely challenging and difficult situation. I thank Jackson and Jacob for their bravery and congratulate them on their well-deserved recognition. I am pleased to hear that it ended well.

#### **GYMEA COMBINED PROBUS CLUB**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:44):** I acknowledge the GyMEA Combined Probus Club for the important role its members play in fostering friendships and building networks for seniors in our community. Founded in 1987, the club meets monthly at Tradies GyMEA to bring together like-minded individuals who share a passion for social inclusion. The club facilitates regular activities, such as holiday tours, activities and group walks, such as through The Rocks precinct and the trails in the Royal National Park. This year's calendar highlights include the Probus Day picnic at Swallow Rock in Grays Point, the Sculpture by the Sea exhibition and the annual Christmas luncheon. I commend the club's committee members for their dedication in facilitating a local network for people of a similar age and interest to share. I recognise Ian Rae, Rob Gair, David Miller, Bill Casley, Neil Wallace, Barry Groundwater, Jan Pringle, Denise Groundwater, Dale Bennett, Robyn Wellings, Peter Bruce and Barbara Bruce. I also acknowledge the efforts of activities officers Tim Higgins, Grahame Caisley, Bob East and John Noonan. I commend GyMEA Combined Probus Club members for positively contributing to our community, and I extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **EUROBODALLA SPECIAL OLYMPIANS**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:45):** The Special Olympics is an international organisation for athletes with an intellectual disability. This year the Eurobodalla Special Olympians have returned home after matching it with Australia's best at the national games. Hailing from Moruya, Mr Laurie Masterson and Mr Craig Mitchell were both selected to represent New South Wales in basketball. They were among more than 700 athletes from across Australia who descended on Launceston from 17 to 21 October to compete in 10 different sports. Mr Mitchell was selected as captain of the New South Wales-Australian Capital Territory A-grade team, which narrowly missed out on a medal, while Mr Masterson was selected in the B-grade team, which took out a silver medal in a tightly fought final against Victoria. I extend my sincerest congratulations to both men for their stellar performances. I thank them for representing Moruya on the national stage and acting as role models for our community.

### **BAULKHAM HILLS BASEBALL CLUB**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:47):** I was given the honour of throwing the first pitch at the Baulkham Hills Baseball Club's first game of the season last weekend. The club competes in the New South Wales State league and has won multiple first grade titles since its founding in 1970. The game was played at Northmead Reserve and it was a great opportunity to inspect the recently upgraded foul line fence, which was provided through a New South Wales Government community infrastructure grant. The club is home to a number of incredibly talented local players from the electorate of Seven Hills and competes at a high level with other teams in the competition. A handful of players have even been selected to represent collegiate teams in the United States. Players come from the suburbs of Northmead, Winston Hills, Baulkham Hills, Toongabbie and more. The club caters for local players and keeps community spirit at the heart of its organisation. I wish the Baulkham Hills Baseball Club nothing but the best for the remainder of the season.

### **CENTRAL COAST TENANTS ADVICE AND ADVOCACY SERVICE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:48):** I congratulate the Central Coast Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service on its important work helping the community throughout 2022. Given the housing crisis that is affecting not just the Central Coast but also the country, it is great to see an organisation providing such important support to those at vulnerable times in their lives. The need for rental properties on the Central Coast has risen dramatically, and with that the need for tenancy advice services. Each day my office receives calls from renters and tenants across the coast in need of support and assistance in navigating the often complex landscape of tenancy rights and responsibilities. Armed with the knowledge that community members are able to access expert advice from the kind and compassionate team at the Central Coast Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, I know that my constituents are in safe hands. I thank everyone at the Central Coast Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service for another wonderful year protecting the rights of local community members and supporting people in need. Merry Christmas to them all.

### **BARRY AND VIRGINIA KNIGHT**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:49):** Barry Knight's family have been in Cobar for almost 150 years. He is a true local—an iron ringer. Barry has held positions on countless community committees and has dedicated thousands of hours of his time serving the community. One major achievement is the Cobar Miners Memorial, commemorating miners who have lost their lives in Cobar mines or from mining-related illnesses. The project took over seven years to complete and opened on 19 June 2021. Barry would say that it would not have been possible without Virginia "Ginny" Knight, his wife. Ginny was his supporter and an amazing community contributor in her own right. Ginny once saw a fence full of poppies honouring war veterans and thought that Cobar needed its own version. It officially opened on 13 August this year. Ginny Knight passed away in October 2021, but her legacy lives on with the Cobar Poppy Fence and other projects. Barry is not done yet. He is assisting with the new Cobar War Memorial, along with other projects. I commend and thank Barry and Ginny Knight on their tireless efforts for the good health of the community of Cobar.

### **HORNSBY/KU-RING-GAI DISTRICT RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport) (15:50):** The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai District Rural Fire Service supports my local community and communities across New South Wales. The Ku-ring-gai electorate is serviced by three brigades within the district, including the Ku-ring-gai, Killara and Hornsby brigades. During the 2019-20 bushfire emergency, members of the district played an integral part in the firefighting response. On 1 May I was privileged to be invited to the 2022 Hornsby Ku-ring-gai district group east medal presentation ceremony, where members received a National Emergency Medal and a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation. The National Emergency Medal is awarded to those who have rendered substantial or significant service during nationally significant emergencies in Australia. The Commissioner's Certificate for Commendation recognises service or outstanding action in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership or exemplary performance of a specific task. I commend district manager Superintendent Mark Sugden and all members and volunteers for their well-deserved recognition and critical service to communities across New South Wales.

### **KOREAN SPEECH CONTEST WINNER ERICA CHAI**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:51):** I congratulate Erica Chai, who won the 2022 Korean Speech Contest for high school students hosted by the Korean Education Centre in Sydney. The aim of the contest is to encourage and promote learning Korean as a second language and highlight the creativity of students as they present in Korean. Erica is in year 10 at Strathfield Girls High School and has been learning Korean for four years. Erica delivered a five-minute speech in the non-background division on the theme "Why I am learning Korean".

As part of her speech, Erica spoke about the many changes that happened to her during the process of learning Korean. The enrichment and engagement that comes with learning a second language is always accompanied by expected and unexpected growth. Erica was awarded a round trip to Korea to participate in an education program for international youth, which will no doubt provide many other excellent experiences and opportunities. I congratulate Erica on her wonderful achievement. Winning such a prize is a testament to her commitment and drive.

#### **NORTH SHORE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:52):** It truly is the most wonderful time of the year. I recently had the pleasure of presiding over my North Shore Christmas card competition. As many members in this place would know, I adore Christmas and always look forward to the great joy my local primary school students bring to participating in this competition. Over the years there have been so many astounding artworks submitted. It is always challenging to pick the winner and runners-up, and this year has been no exception. The theme for this year's competition was "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas", and some fantastic entries were submitted depicting the student's interpretations. I extend a special congratulations to this year's winner, Madeline Lee, from Loreto Kirribilli. Madeline's artwork depicted her family enjoying the festivities of Christmas with our glorious Sydney Harbour featured in the background. I congratulate our three runners-up: Sena Hazelton from Middle Harbour Public School, Florence Le Thahn from Queenwood school, and Shayne Yang from Mosman Preparatory School. I thank all the students who entered the competition and all the staff who supported it for filling my office, myself and my team with some early Christmas cheer.

#### **BLUE MOUNTAINS HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:53):** I acknowledge the Blue Mountains Hospital Auxiliary and congratulate it on hosting a fabulous benefit concert just last weekend. The auxiliary undertakes a range of fundraising activities throughout the year to raise money for our little hospital and the equipment that is needed. It supports all of the fabulous staff in the hospital, and the annual concert is a highlight of the year. We heard from the Orpheus Strings orchestra, the Leura Singers, a cello quintet, the Kanimbla String Quartet, the Orpheus juniors and our fabulous city band. I thank the community for coming to the public school to support the auxiliary, which does such fantastic work with the Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital.

#### **MARY'S HOUSE WALK**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:54):** On Sunday 30 October I had the pleasure of participating in the annual Mary's House Walk. I last completed the walk in 2018, and it was terrific to see this fantastic community event return post-COVID. The charity walk is one of the lead community events in support of Mary's House and the Daisy Centre in my electorate. Those facilities support women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Charting a 10-kilometre route across the lower North Shore, the charity walk is a fun, family-oriented event. Participants in the walk raise money from sponsors, which goes towards the vital support services Mary's House offers. I thank the many sponsors of the event for their fantastic support, including Holding Redlich, Saint Somebody and the Mater Hospital Sydney. I congratulate and thank every participant in the walk. I also thank the event organisers and volunteers for their tireless work in making it all possible. I look forward to participating in many more Mary's House walks, as we walk in solidarity and support of those in our community who have suffered domestic violence.

#### **MAITLAND U3A**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:55):** Yesterday I had the pleasure to host members of Maitland U3A, or University of the Third Age, on a visit to Parliament House. Maitland U3A offers a number of courses targeted to help senior members of our community at a variety of local venues in and around Maitland. It offers courses such as Art Group, Chess for All, Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners, Belly Dance for Fun and Fitness, ukulele classes, and Tuesday Thinkers. There is a wide variety of courses for such a small community. I was delighted to provide a tour of Parliament House and joined my guests for lunch in the Jubilee Room. They shared their experiences with online learning and the greater U3A community. It was great to have those members in Parliament House yesterday. I especially thank them for their interest and curiosity about our legislative process. I know they enjoyed question time, but they also enjoyed the chance to walk around the building, bumping into various members of Parliament and feeling the vibe of being here as we make legislation for this great State. I thank them and appreciate their visit.

#### **STAND TALL**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:56):** I acknowledge Stand Tall and the incredible motivational speakers and performers who were in Dubbo last week. Stand Tall was founded in 2012 by Jeanine Treharne, Angela Farr-Jones and Roslyn Hills in



response to the tragic level of drug use, depression, bullying and self-harm among high school students. The trio envisioned an event that would bring young people a message of hope and inspiration, presented through the true stories of successful pop culture role models with lived experience, all in the form of a rock concert. The Stand Tall event kicked off in Sydney in 2013 and has gradually grown. This year it brought a regional tour to Dubbo, Tamworth and Pambula. The Dubbo event was incredible, with almost 2½ thousand students from Dubbo, Narromine, Wellington, Trangie and as far away as Walgett hearing inspirational speakers like Olympic medallist Nicola McDermott; professional freestyle motocross riders Lance Russell and Ryley Davis; and keynote speaker, Michael Crossland; along with musical performances by Timomatic and *The Voice* 2021 winner, Bella Taylor Smith. I thank every young person who attended and embraced the message "You are not alone".

#### MURRAY-RIVERINA REGIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:57):** I congratulate all of the Wagga Wagga nominees and winners in the 2022 NSW Murray-Riverina Regional Business Awards. The National Audits Group based in Wagga Wagga was named as winner of the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion category. With offices across Australia, this homegrown Wagga Wagga business is a leading internal and external financial auditing company. More than 50 per cent of its staff are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the National Audits Group also tailors services to best meet the needs of the company's diverse client base. I say well done to Big Springs Water, which won the Excellence in Sustainability category. This is a family-owned and operated spring water company with more than 6,000 customers. Big Springs also runs a manufacturing facility offering market-leading returnable spring water bottles for the water industry. Gemma Lamont, a funeral director with Alan Harris McDonald, was highly commended in the Outstanding Employee category. She was described as someone who leads by example and demonstrates the values of integrity, compassion, empathy, professionalism and excellence. Finally, I congratulate the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber, which won the Outstanding Local Chamber category.

#### *Petitions*

#### TRAIL AND ADVENTURE MOTORCYCLING

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The House will now consider the electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons that is listed on the *Business Paper*. The petition requests that the Legislative Assembly supports trail and adventure motorcycling in New South Wales and was lodged by the member for Coogee.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:59):** Today I speak to a petition that I note has been signed by over 20,000 people. It takes a huge amount of effort to get 20,000 people to sign a petition, and it actually happened well before the due date. It is a testament to the advocacy of the petitioners who are seated in the gallery today. It is a clear demonstration that they are a significant stakeholder and recreation group that has a voice at the table and should at least be heard. Those 20,000 signatures represent 20,000 dirt bike riders, which is obviously a significant stakeholder group, yet the Minister has not met with them to discuss their very real safety concerns about riding on fire tracks and their desire to have a considered strategic conversation about the future of their recreation.

There are misconceptions about who trail bike riders are. The public stereotype of young hoons tearing around town is so far from the truth. Riders come from many different ethnic backgrounds including European, Mediterranean, North and South American, African, Asian, and Indigenous First Nations Australians. They are lawyers, paramedics, firefighters, restaurant owners, tradespeople, traffic controllers, military personnel, transport workers, teachers and many other professions. They are a diverse group of people who love what they do and they want to have a considered conversation about the future of the recreation that they love.

Ultimately this debate is about ensuring that key stakeholders in a recreation and sporting group can meet with Ministers to raise their concerns. The fact that my constituents—members of a substantial recreation community group—were told that they could not meet with the Minister to discuss their concerns is deeply frustrating. It is absolutely shameful, so I am supportive of having this discussion in this Parliament—the people's Parliament—where people can raise awareness about this issue and have their concerns addressed.

Trail bike riders want an open dialogue with the Minister to figure out an amicable way to have trail and adventure riders made legal, safe and accessible to the public. They are disheartened by the unwillingness of this Government to meet with them, discuss their concerns and find a solution. I agree with concerns of environmental groups, so I am supportive of finding appropriate land for dirt bike riders. There must be more effective usage of under-utilised land that can address the safety concerns raised by dirt bike riders without negatively impacting our native ecology. The fact the Minister has refused to have this conversation or investigate this matter is unfair to

both parties. The Motorcycle Council of NSW wants this policy to be considerate of land and ecology and is insistent that land choice be suitable. That language is reflected in this petition.

Ultimately this petition is about safety. It is about registering vehicles and recognising the over 20,000 people who want to have a respectful conversation to find a solution to saving the sport and recreation that they love. To date the Minister has refused to meet with riders to find this solution. One of the unintended consequences of the Government's approach to date is that it is fostering and facilitating illegal behaviour. There is no excuse for illegal behaviour. Trail bike riders that I have met with want to meet with the Minister to address this issue and have a conversation about solutions to this problem. Those doing the wrong thing will be punished for doing so. But having a considered conversation about solutions and eliminating this behaviour in the first place is incredibly significant. Riders want to work with the Government to eliminate illegal behaviour and activity, but this can only happen if the Minister is willing to meet with them.

Trail bike riders tell me that they do not feel safe on tracks shared with four-wheel drives. Treating trail bike riders the same way as four-wheel drivers is discriminatory to the trail bike riders and completely ignores their safety concerns. A dialogue needs to occur to ensure that everyone feels safe. Today's debate is necessary because a significant stakeholder group in our community has been ignored and left in the dark. The Government must meet with riders and work with them to find a solution.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:04):** I thank the member for Coogee for tabling this petition and for airing the concerns of riders and of the Motorcycle Council of NSW. I put on the record that this opportunity for the people of New South Wales to engage in debate on topics they are passionate about and interested in was brought to fruition by a former Liberal Premier, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. I acknowledge his work on providing this avenue for the people of New South Wales to raise their personal specific issues about which they are passionate.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is making significant investments in our national parks to tackle the challenges facing the long-term survival of our native plants and animals, to expand Aboriginal land management and stewardship, and to deliver new and improved experiences for park visitors and tourists. The level of investment in fire management, feral animal control and threatened species protection is currently at record levels across the New South Wales national parks estate.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] is the first national park agency in Australia, and one of the first in the world, to set a zero extinctions target. Around 85 per cent of all threatened species in New South Wales are represented on the national park estate, despite national parks occupying just over 9 per cent of the State. This highlights the critical role of national parks in the effective conservation of threatened species. Aboriginal land management and stewardship is at the heart of our efforts to conserve our precious environment and care for country. This Government has commenced the development of a new model for Aboriginal joint management of national parks. This new model will build on efforts to ensure land management techniques remain best practice, while also providing for continued public access and visitation.

The New South Wales Government is also investing \$450 million in more than 200 visitor infrastructure projects across the State by 2024. When developing these new visitor experiences and facilities, the focus is on sustainability and on balancing the needs of people and conserving the environment. Enabling people to access parks by vehicles is an important part of the visitor experience. Arrangements for vehicle use in national parks are set out in park plans of management and the NPWS Vehicle Access Policy. Under the policy, vehicle access, including four-wheel driving and registered trail bike use, can be appropriate in certain places in certain parks where it is compatible with the conservation and visitor management objectives of the park. There are currently over 10,000 kilometres of public roads and trails in national parks accessible for recreational motorcycle riding. Motorcycles that are registered and riders that are licensed may access this large network.

Earlier this year the Government added over 30,000 hectares of State forests to establish the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, together with additions of land to the Gardens of Stone and Wollemi national parks. The NPWS is also responsible for the management of several flora reserves. I am advised that under existing Forestry Corporation of NSW policies, off-road, off-trail or singletrack vehicle use is not permitted. Despite this, in many current and former State forest lands, I understand high levels of unauthorised off-road vehicle access have occurred. I am also advised that significant environmental degradation is apparent in many of these areas, including soil erosion, watercourse sedimentation, and damage to management trails and vegetation. The NPWS is managing these current and former State forest lands consistent with existing policies and rules. That involves managing the environmental risks of unauthorised vehicle access in these areas, including via compliance and enforcement campaigns.

Community consultation is key to informing management arrangements for these areas. The NPWS is engaging with the community to prepare new management plans for these areas that will confirm future vehicle

access arrangements. The Government welcomes community views on the management of national parks. The NPWS will continue to engage with key stakeholders and recreational users, including four-wheel drive and trail bike user group representatives. With respect to vehicle access, current legislative and policy settings are considered appropriate to achieve outcomes that balance the protection of conservation values with varied community recreational needs.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:09):** In the interests of full disclosure, I love motorbikes. I collect them, I love riding them, I love owning them, I love looking at them and I even love just listening to the sound they make. I started at age four and I have not looked back. While that might mean that I have a bit of a vested interest in arguing in favour of this petition, it also means that I completely understand the need for a strategic plan to develop trail and adventure motorcycle riding in New South Wales. I understand the excitement of jumping on a bike, starting it up, the vibration, dare I say the power, letting it take you wherever you want to go. But that is just the problem: There are relatively few places that riders can go to legally ride a non-road registered trail bike in Australia. That means that there are a small number of people illegally riding their bikes in national parks or on other public land, on private land or basically anywhere they can, and that causes all sorts of social disruption.

I look at towns in my electorate like Walgett and Bourke—levee bank towns—where we constantly have problems of young people riding around the levee bank, because they have nowhere else to ride. The usual thing a government might do to counter that is to work on prevention, sometimes sending out a special squad of trail bike police to root out offenders and issue fines or impound bikes, which happens. But since those who love riding bikes are never going to lose the passion, it makes much more sense to find legal and safe ways for off-road motorbike riders to enjoy the recreation they love. A system of registering bikes and riders and using registration fees to create and improve designated riding areas, similar to what has been done in Victoria, would work much better than trying to stop it happening.

The Australian fascination for anything with a motor in it goes back a long way, but the love of motorbikes can be traced largely to the 1898 tour of Australia by the French motorcyclist Mademoiselle Anthelmina Serpolette, who rode a motorised tricycle. She was a woman ahead of her time. Inspired by her machine, a year later the Lewis Cycle Works company of South Australia produced its own motor triplet cycle, inspired by the French machine. Pretty soon there were two-wheeled varieties, many of them imported from overseas, and some of the first people to take up riding them were farmers. Men on the land saw motorbikes as a versatile alternative to riding a horse, one that would allow them to go faster and they do not have to feed them—they have just to put fuel in them. It led to the first motorbike speedway event in Australia at Maitland Showground in 1923. Many of the competitors were farmers. Within a couple of decades motorbikes became common, and in 1928 the Auto Cycle Council of Australia—now known as Motorcycling Australia—was established.

Since then, the number of motorcycles purchased each year has gone up and up. Many are driven on our roads, but statistics show that a significant portion of them, perhaps a quarter, have never been registered for the road but are often used as off-roaders. It shows the persistence and growth of trail bike riding as a recreational activity. I am talking about singletrack and adventure riding; I am not talking about competitive racing. It is almost like sightseeing from the back of a motorbike. I am not talking about going at 10 tenths—although I am a two-stroke man, so I do like going a bit fast sometimes on the dirt. But that is not what this is about.

As noted in the January 2022 edition of the *Rider* magazine, according to data gathered by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, 123,530 motorcycles and off-highway vehicles were sold throughout 2021. Of those, off-road motorbikes made up around 43 per cent and road-registered motorcycles made up 30 per cent. That means there are thousands of trail bike, dirt bike and off-road motorcycle riders that are looking for a legal place to ride. There is no doubt that some of those enthusiasts, for want of any better place to indulge in their favourite pastime, are riding secretly in places they should not. I am sure that most would use a viable alternative if they could to minimise their impact. The Government should be looking at opening suitable public land for use, rather than locking it away and preventing people from enjoying it or spending money on seeking out trespassers and punishing them for trying to enjoy their passion.

One possibility could be to develop bike riding trails that can double as emergency service access tracks in times of crisis. That would have the desired effect of getting bike riders out of riding in towns and into safer defined areas that are set aside for their machines. Providing safe areas for the activity to take place would also be a boon for tourism in areas that host the designated trail bike riding tracks. As we have seen, people will travel for that sort of activity. It would also allow for control over where riders are riding and who is riding the bikes and make sure that people are not going beyond their level of skill and experience, putting themselves into dangerous situations, endangering others or destroying native vegetation and wildlife.

It is my experience that most bike riders want to do the right thing. They are actually really good people. Doing the wrong thing can be dangerous and destructive and does nothing for the reputation of this recreational

activity. If the Government makes it easier for riders to stay within the law and still enjoy their sport, then I believe more and more people will continue to get involved. What is being asked for? The petition is not asking for every piece of public land to be opened up for people to be able to ride dirt bikes. It asks for funding to develop a strategic plan to look at where off-road riding can be done safely and not have any negative environmental impacts. That is not a ridiculous ask. It is a very sensible request.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:14):** I thank the member for Coogee for bringing this petition to the House. I also thank those members of the Motorcycle Council of NSW who have joined us in the public gallery. They are motorcycle enthusiasts. It is good to see them involved, engaged and listening to this debate. As both the member for Coogee and the member for Barwon have said, this is about finding a legal and safe solution. The fact that in the space of a couple of weeks more than 20,000 people have signed a petition saying, "We just want to be spoken to like adults about this," shows there is a problem. It shows we need to sit down and deal with this issue in a sensible and rational way.

I grew up in Mount Kembla. Some of the people in the gallery might be aware of the Mount Kembla motorbike track. It has been there for 60-odd years—a long time. In fact, my uncle used to race sidecars there. He was in the sidecar—crazy. I cannot imagine doing it myself. The track has been operating for 60 years and uses former cedar-cutting trails for enduro trials. The trails became cow tracks when the cedar cutting ended in Mount Kembla and the dairy cows moved in. They are now enduro tracks. They are also used by the Mount Kembla Rural Fire Brigade when it needs to deal with fallen trees. But because a line on a map got changed a little while ago, the trails are now part of the national park. This has become a source of conflict because, although there were no restrictions for 40 years, now work is being done on the mountain bike trails at the back of Mount Kembla and there is a desire to enforce limits.

It is a bit short-sighted, not only because 40 years of existing use changed with a new line on a map, the Mount Kembla track has been used for 60 years and has produced some of the best enduro riders in the country—and indeed the world—but also because the guys who use the track have looked after it for a very long time. They invested in safe riding infrastructure, such as bridges and the like. When that is removed, motorbike, trail riding and adventure riding enthusiasts and kids no longer have somewhere safe and legal to ride. So what do they do? They ride illegally in unsafe areas. They ride through the streets of Unanderra and the streets of Berkeley. That has resulted in kids hitting parked cars, injuries to pedestrians and the deaths of teenagers. They are the consequences if we do not start to have an adult conversation about this issue.

I agree completely with the member for Coogee who spoke earlier about the concerns of environmental groups. We do not want national parks to be damaged or destroyed. We and the petitioners want a way to find appropriate land on which people can ride safely, legally and sensibly with the understanding of every other user of that land. We can address safety issues by finding under-utilised land that provides not only an outlet for a legitimate and fun recreational activity, but also a means of doing it sensibly and safely. As was pointed out earlier in this debate, the Motorcycle Council of NSW is seeking a policy that designates suitable land while preserving its ecology and ensuring the safety of riders.

This petition ultimately is about safety. It does not seek terribly much; it has two principal points. It calls on the Minister for Environment and Heritage to provide funding for the development of a strategic plan for trail and adventure motorcycle riding and to amend National Parks and Wildlife policy so that singletrack trail riding is permitted in suitable areas. The petition has a couple of key elements: developing a strategic plan, amending a policy and finding suitable areas. The second part of the petition calls on the Minister for Transport to introduce recreational registration similar to that under the current Victorian scheme, which enables better compliance with legal requirements by trail bike communities. Many people have discussed what happened during COVID, but it is a little-known fact that bikes were among the biggest-selling items during that time. We have to find a sensible solution and we have to do it in an adult manner.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:19):** I congratulate the member for Coogee and thank her for bringing this petition to the House. I also thank the petitioners for their outstanding efforts in collecting the large number of signatures on the petition. I had a long visit with a member of the Motorcycle Council that was very enlightening. I am not a bike rider, but I appreciate the pastime—there is no better place to pursue it than in the electorate of Heathcote. We have many State forests, fire trails and extensive land for horseriding—not necessarily Water Board land—in State forests and national parks. Those areas were set aside for recreational use, which is what we are talking about today. We should consider transitioning areas and exploring opportunities for motorbike riding. We could set up regional centres where people will come and try different types of tracks that are safe and well maintained, free from dangers such as overhanging branches and the like.

We also discussed the transition to electric motorbikes in the future—I know the member for Coogee is interested in electric motorbikes. There are opportunities to establish proper parks with tracks for not only petrol-driven but also electric motorbikes. There is an off-road pushbike organisation in Helensburgh in my

electorate that started from scratch. It took over old forestry tracks and trails, like the member for Wollongong described, and cleaned them up completely with help from National Parks. The tracks are well maintained. They have gutters so there are no erosion issues. Enthusiasts can pursue their sport in a safe and sustainable manner. We should look at a similar model for trail and adventure motorcycles. Trails should be established in electorates around the State so that motorbike riders can enjoy the outdoors with their families in a safe and managed way.

With the pushbike organisation, it is like bees to honey. Bike mechanics set up at the track on weekends and take the opportunity to sell their equipment. The same thing could happen at motorcycle trails in regional areas—if riders have a blowout there are replacement tyres available or mechanics to help with engine problems. There should also be a properly maintained flat area for people to park their vehicles safely. Every year 60 million people visit our national parks and support the New South Wales economy. It is a great opportunity for national parks to generate extra income by transforming areas so that people of all ages and skill levels—beginners, intermediate and advanced—can ride motorbikes safely. Governments that do not allow for recreation will fail. The same goes for shooting. I am a big supporter of allowing people to shoot on ranges and elsewhere. They should be supported by the Government. It should not stop those recreational pursuits. I commend the member for Coogee for the petition, and the work of the organisations to get to this point. I support the petition.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:24):** In reply: I start by thanking the member for Mulgoa, the member for Barwon, the member for Wollongong and the member for Heathcote for their contributions. The member for Wallsend wanted to contribute but could not be here. She is incredibly passionate about trail bikes, particularly on the topic of recreational registrations. Like the member for Barwon, I love trail bikes and dirt bikes. They were my first taste of bikes. They led me to buy a Harley, which I continue to ride today. I am deeply disappointed that the Minister did not use the opportunity to speak to the trail bike riders in the gallery and watching online. He had an opportunity; he should have contributed.

The petition is before the House because he has refused to meet with trail bike riders. He has had another opportunity to speak to them but has refused to do so. I am deeply disappointed in the Minister for that. A problem has arisen because the Government refuses to have a conversation with trail bike riders about the recreation they love, resulting in unsafe and illegal behaviour, as we heard from the member for Wollongong. We hear stories about that all the time. Trail bike riders who I know and have spoken to do not want that to happen. They want to ensure that trail bike riding can be done in a safe place, but that can only happen if the Government works with trail bike riders to find a solution and suitable land.

**Petition noted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **BURRANEER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:27):** I congratulate the Burraneer Bay Public School on its recent win at the Beachside Dash School Cup Challenge, which is run by the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation [SSMRF]. The Beachside Dash aims to raise awareness of the foundation's work in promoting and supporting medical research at St George and Sutherland hospitals, raise much-needed funds and promote the importance of healthy, active lifestyles. This year the School Cup Challenge raised \$76,000 for medical research.

Some 17 students from Burraneer Bay competed in the dash. As part of their prize, 60 students will get an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of Sydney Airport. The students have been training for months in a Monday morning running club led by school P&C president Craig Bulmer and volunteer coach Craig Alexander. Craig Bulmer is a keen runner and cyclist, having competed in six major world marathons, while Craig Alexander is a five-time world triathlon champion and SSMRF ambassador. I commend the students for their dedication and representing the school so well. I also recognise the two Craigs for generously volunteering their time.

#### **TEACHER KATE JIRELLE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:28):** I congratulate local St Clair resident Kate Jirelle on writing, directing and acting in a play inspired by her experience as a teacher. Her aim was to provide a voice that many in her position have struggled to find. The play, entitled *To Those I Left Behind*, presents the challenges faced by teachers such as administrative pressures as well as the unique perspectives of teachers from three different generations—a fairly new teacher, a middle-aged teacher and a retirement-aged teacher. Teachers are an essential part of our community and significantly contribute to the future of children. Well done to Kate for illustrating and bringing to the stage the unique teaching profession. I extend a huge thanks to all educators right across our State, who work diligently to give our children a creative learning environment and build a brighter future for the next generation. It was amazing to see how Kate has translated that profession into an artistic form. *To Those I Left*

*Behind* was chosen as a semi-finalist by the judges, a feat Kate thought she would never achieve. I congratulate Kate on that wonderful project that she passionately created and led.

#### **BLACKHEATH ART SOCIETY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:29):** On 5 November, in conjunction with the Blackheath Rhododendron Festival, the Blackheath Art Society celebrated two groundbreaking events, the first of which was historical. In the years leading up to 1992, a group of Blackheath artists were determined to show their work. They did so from their own homes or in cold, old halls—anywhere really. But they needed a purpose-built building. Some 30 years ago this year, and many cake stalls later—much to the detriment of the waistlines of Blackheathens—such a building arose from the mud on the council-owned block behind the rural fire station. It has become a great studio space and has accommodated many artists over the years. The second celebration is for Expansion, a clay group that makes a lot of mess in the pristine conditions of the studio. The group has kept its kilns in a shipping container on site. Members fire their works in amongst the general art equipment that cannot fit in the studio. Thanks to the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership grant and my support, they now have a new shed.

#### **CRONULLA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:30):** On 22 October I was delighted to attend a fundraising gala to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce. The chamber has represented the interests of Cronulla businesses since 1922. It was reported to have first convened in November 1922 by local gazette *The St George Call*. One hundred years is an incredible milestone and there is much to celebrate. During my time as MP for Cronulla, it has been a pleasure to work with the chamber to increase support for local business and drive economic success. The chamber has been integral to representing the interests of local businesses, while also respecting Cronulla's history. The Plastic Free Cronulla initiative is an example of the chamber's leadership and advocacy. The initiative educates and encourages businesses to minimise their use of single-use plastics. The initiative saw Cronulla become one of the first communities in Sydney to be single-use plastic free. Money raised at the gala went to the Dandelion Support Network, a charity that assists local family members in need. I commend the chamber executive, including President Mark Aprilovic, Annette Tasker, Brad Lord and Patch Clunes.

#### **CHENNAI SILKS AUSTRALIA**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:31):** I congratulate Chennai Silks Australia on the opening of its second Australian store in North Parramatta on 5 November. Its very first store was in Wentworthville, in my electorate, and its other store is in Westmead, which is also in my electorate. The new North Parramatta store is 600 square metres, which is six times the size of the Westmead store. That reflects the huge popularity of the beautiful saris amongst the Indian Australian and Tamil Sri Lankan Australian community in western Sydney. Owner Kay is also a designer of many of the saris that are produced by Chennai Silks overseas and sold in stores throughout India and Australia. It is a tremendous achievement. Congratulations.

#### **WRESTLER WALTER KOENIG**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:33):** I congratulate Walter Koenig on becoming a Legend of the Nepean according to *Nepean News*. That is a well-deserved title. Walter is a four-time Australian Commonwealth Games representative in freestyle wrestling, winning silver medals in 1974, 1978, 1982 and 1986. A resident of Mulgoa, Walter is a great example of the quality talent and successful sportspeople that western Sydney fosters, who go on to achieve great things for the nation. Walter should be extremely proud of his record representing his nation. He is a true legend of our area.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **TEACHER SHORTAGES**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:33):** At the end of October I received an email from a teacher at one of my local public primary schools in Londonderry outlining the impact of the teacher shortages faced by the school in just one week of term four. I must put this on record. I place on record that on Monday the school had eight teaching staff and three student learning support officers [SLSOs] away. That resulted in one stage one class being split and one support program being cancelled that day. On Tuesday the school had six teaching staff and two SLSOs away. That resulted in one stage two class and one support unit class being split for the day and a stage one class being split for one session. On Wednesday the school had four teaching staff and two SLSOs away. On Thursday the school had two teaching staff and one SLSO away. On Friday the school had three teaching staff and three SLSOs away. On each occasion the school had to manage with fewer staff, with next to no casual staff available to fill the gaps.

The truth is that these shortages do not just affect other teachers; they affect whole communities and, most frustratingly, they impact students. That is why I was incredibly disappointed—not surprised, but disappointed—to see on the news this week Dominic Perrottet's education Minister, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, saying reports of teacher shortages were not true. I am sure members are receiving emails like that across the board. Two days ago the Minister said "To claim that there is some kind of shortage of thousands and thousands of teachers is just not true. The data doesn't stack up." But, of course, the Minister conveniently forgot her own data that exposes the actual truth.

Data, which the Minister herself provided to the New South Wales Parliament only last week, shows thousands of vacant teacher positions in New South Wales schools: "As at 10 October 2022—the start of term four—there were 2,458.70 full-time equivalent [FTE] vacant teaching positions", which is more the truth and what we are being confronted with. It is disrespectful that the education Minister is telling fibs about teacher shortages instead of admitting the Government's failures and setting about fixing them. There is no limit to the lengths to which this 12-year-old Government will go to try to cover up this crisis that has been created.

Ask any teacher, parent or student and they will tell you about the seriousness of the current teacher shortages. They will explain the impact that merged and cancelled classes have had—similar to what the teacher who emailed me recently experienced. We only need to look as far as the recent NAPLAN results that show after 12 years the Perrottet Government has presided over declining student outcomes. The report shows grammar and punctuation outcomes for year 9 boys are the poorest on record—which is not exactly something to be proud of—and that 12,500 year 9 students cannot write at the minimum standard, while almost 9,000 year 9 students cannot read at the minimum standard.

Since 2016, this year's cohort of year 9 students has gone backwards in reaching the minimum standard in every subject. That cohort of year 9 students has spent their entire schooling under the current New South Wales Government. During that time, they have experienced more merged classes, more cancelled classes and more classes taught by teachers in subjects for which they have not been trained. Teachers have broken down in tears when explaining to me the struggles their local schools are going through. Teachers are pleading with the Government to fix its mistakes because their schools are not being provided with the staff needed to ensure every child gets the best education possible. Teachers and staff are at breaking point—like the teacher who emailed me from one of the local schools in my electorate. I mention that before the Government tries to shut me up on this issue.

I am proud that the New South Wales Opposition has begun to announce steps that we will take to solve the chronic shortage that has grown on this nearly 12-year-old Government's watch. Those steps include the creation of 10,000 more permanent teacher positions, conducting a line-by-line audit of all administrative tasks that teachers are required to do, and delivering a reduction of five hours of administrative work per week. The truth is if Dominic Perrottet's own Minister is intent on fudging the figures to try to cover up the teacher shortage, the constituents in my electorate of Londonderry and beyond certainly cannot trust the Government to fix them. Under this Government, chronic teacher shortages are leaving students with cancelled and merged classes every day. Student outcomes have continued to decline over 12 years and it is crystal clear that change is needed for local schools in my electorate and across New South Wales.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport) (16:38):** The reign of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II serves as a profound narrative of the power of legacy of how one life, well lived, can inspire a spirit of service across the globe from Penzance to Pittwater, and of how the life we lead and the decisions we make can reverberate across time. Extraordinary levels of education and wealth compared to most people across the globe and over time mean that the average Australian has so much choice, but with an irony: The more choices we have, the less considered and the more transactional they tend to become. It seems the more choices we have to make, the less we consider their consequences.

Institutions like the monarchy—based on lineage, not tenure or term limits—are more likely to take a long-term view of decision-making. Yet there is a tendency by democratic government to discount the future. The incentive, and obligation, is to deliver outcomes in a term of government, yet the complexity and scale of many contemporary problems requires longer term thinking. While none of us has the soft power of throne and Commonwealth, all of us in New South Wales have more power than most to make a difference in the world. As Oxford philosopher William MacAskill observed:

Few people who ever live will have as much power to positively influence the future as we do. Such rapid technological, social, and environmental change means that we have more opportunity to affect when and how the most important of these changes occur, including by managing technologies that could lock in bad values or imperil our survival. Civilization's current unification means that small groups have the power to influence the whole of it. New ideas are not confined to a single continent, and they can spread around the world in minutes rather than centuries.

Last year there were around 1,700 babies born at the Northern Beaches Hospital. How do we leave New South Wales a better place for them—and their grandchildren? How can we reorient our perspectives to think of the long game—a sustainable future? For generations our ancestors sowed and harvested and returned materials and nutrients back to the soil and sea. But it could be said that the industrial revolution and the twentieth century interrupted this natural partnership with the land and environment. We threw huge amounts of trash into big holes in the ground. Clearly that was not a sustainable model.

Recycling efforts in recent decades have vastly reduced what goes into landfill and has invigorated new industries like the circular economy. Indeed, with a lens firmly fixed on the long term, His Majesty King Charles III has long been a proponent of sustainable development. How are we working today to support a sustainable future for those 1,700 babies? That is not just a task for governments. Each of us has a collective generational responsibility to "do no harm" and, even better, to leave a legacy of restoration. We now accept that our actions are negatively impacting the global climate and we understand that the populations of the future cannot be supported by endless urban sprawl across forests and fields. If we want young people to live near jobs and families, we need to provide sustainable housing opportunities with access to quality public spaces. Resource efficiency is also critical and in New South Wales we are driving change by rethinking material used in infrastructure projects and reducing carbon.

Sustainable industries like timber provide modern building materials that are renewable, low impact and reusable. Introducing new modes of public transport to reduce car dependency, water sensitive design, improving tree canopy, passive heating and cooling are all powerful changemakers. Small interventions make a big difference. Even lighter coloured roofs for new housing can make a transformative difference to energy use and thermal comfort. In Pittwater many groups are "paying it forward", such as the Pittwater Natural Heritage Association, the Pittwater Environmental Foundation, Avalon Community Garden, Avalon Youth Hub, One Eighty, Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew, schoolteachers, Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre, Boomerang Bags, Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon, Bushcare volunteers—the list goes on. As a teacher's words can sow a seed of inspiration, you may never know the power of your positive actions. As MacAskill put it:

Our yet-unwritten future could last for millions more—or it could end tomorrow. Astonishing numbers of people could lead lives of great happiness or unimaginable suffering, or never live at all, depending on what we choose to do today.

#### **CALGARY HEALTH CARE KOGARAH AUXILIARY**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:43):** Last month I had the very great privilege of being invited to a lunch with the outstanding women and men of the Calvary Health Care Kogarah Auxiliary. Since 1966 these wonderful volunteers have served the patients and staff of Calvary hospital at the part of Kogarah that is in my electorate. Although it is now a hospital, Calvary was originally founded as Calvary Hospice by the good Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, a Catholic order whose members focus on providing love and care to the sick and terminally ill. The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary always reach out to the communities they serve and seek to work with anyone of goodwill. So within months of the hospice opening, the auxiliary had been founded as a way for any member of the public to help with the mission of caring for the sick and dying.

In the early days, auxiliary members made tea and coffee for distressed relatives—which really means they sat and listened, and quietly helped those going through some of the very worst moments of their lives. Quickly realising they could help more if they could raise some money, they opened a kiosk in the hospital, selling homemade sandwiches and cakes, and by the 1990s it had grown into a coffee shop. Profits from the kiosk, and later the coffee shop, bought equipment for the hospital. With extra income from street stalls, an annual hospital fete, musical evenings, fashion parades and a yearly art show, the records show that the auxiliary was donating around \$70,000 a year by the mid-1980s. That is an astonishing amount, almost equalling the average price of a Sydney house at that time.

The auxiliary continued its hard work right through the 1990s and 2000s, averaging \$100,000 a year in equipment purchases over that period, before hitting a record \$160,000 in 2009. Of course, times change and in 2015 the difficult decision was taken that the modern era of work health and safety legislation meant an all-volunteer coffee shop was no longer viable. Although losing the coffee shop meant a significant drop in income, the auxiliary stayed true to the sense of the mission of the Sisters of the Little Company and launched a hospital trolley service.

The members wheeled a trolley around the hospital twice a day, selling newspapers, toiletries and confectionary, and circulating a magazine library. The trolley quickly became a much-loved service because it was a way to provide conversation and companionship to the patients of the hospital, as much it was a retail operation. Those without friends or family received conversation and connection with someone who cared, twice a day, every day, and those without money were often quietly slipped what they needed, the cost made up out of the auxiliary's funds.



Notwithstanding the end of the coffee shop, the auxiliary still managed to donate between \$20,000 and \$40,000 a year, every year from 2015 to 2018, with a special effort of \$100,000 in 2019. Unfortunately, the outbreak of COVID in 2020 forced the pausing of the hospital trolley, as the necessary infection control measures meant it was no longer possible to have people moving from ward to ward across the hospital. That was a hard blow for both the patients and the auxiliary. As we emerge now from COVID, the members of this outstanding organisation are taking stock and working out how they can rebuild, looking to become once again the powerhouse they were in the past.

Last month I was honoured to be invited to their meeting, and when I heard the stories, plans and jokes crackling across the room, it was obvious how much love, care and compassion this beautiful group of people have for our community, and for those facing the worst times of their lives. It was and is dedicated and vital work, measured not just in the money donated—impressive as the amounts are—but in the tens of thousands of compassionate cups of tea and coffee, the quiet hugs and gentle words, and the newspapers and chocolates slipped to those lying in hospital beds with no spare money in their wallet. I congratulate the many volunteers of Calvary Health Care Kogarah Auxiliary who gave their time and effort over the past 66 years. They deserve thanks from my community that words alone cannot repay. I look forward to seeing how they rebuild on this side of COVID, and I will be right by their side.

### KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai—Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Minister for Sport) (16:48):** Education is transformative for young people, honing their communication skills, developing critical thinking, enhancing creativity and preparing them to meet future job qualifications. The schools in my electorate of Ku-ring-gai are a special part of my community. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring every student has access to world-class facilities with a range of initiatives to support students and their learning environments. In the recent 2022-23 New South Wales Liberal-Nationals budget, the Government committed \$1.2 billion in planned maintenance for every public school in New South Wales, including all schools in the Ku-ring-gai electorate. This is not just bricks and mortar upgrades; it ensures students have access to the best possible innovative facilities to hone their respective skills and knowledge, giving them the best opportunities for their future careers.

In Ku-ring-gai multiple schools have received once-in-a-generation funding from the Liberal-Nationals Government. Waitara Public School was upgraded with a \$40.6 million investment for the addition of 37 new permanent classrooms, a new hall, a new canteen, new staff and new administration facilities, as well as increased library space. Meanwhile, Ku-ring-gai High School received \$15.1 million in funding for a new multipurpose hall and the refurbishment of 15 existing learning spaces. Both schools will benefit from the planned maintenance, alongside every other public school in New South Wales. Ku-ring-gai High School is also benefiting from funding from the Government's \$240 million school renewal program, which accelerates projects that will improve the amenity of schools and kickstart local jobs for local communities. Furthermore, \$4.7 million was received by St Edmund's College, Wahroonga, and \$6 million was received by St Lucy's School, Wahroonga—both schools for students with a range of disabilities. I am pleased by this major once-in-a-generation funding.

Since becoming a parliamentarian, I have always maintained strong relationships with our local schools. My electorate contains every type of school: primary schools, comprehensive high schools, selective high schools, special needs schools, independent schools and Roman Catholic schools. It is not just about financial support from the Government; it is also about providing opportunities for students to come into the New South Wales Parliament to equip them with knowledge and skills for the future. Previously I have spoken about the annual Ku-ring-gai Electorate Schools Public Speaking Competition, which is held in this Chamber. After two years, I welcomed the return of the Ku-ring-gai primary school leaders morning tea for year 6 students, which was held on 3 November. In the morning, the students were taken on a tour of the legislative Chambers by parliamentary staff and the parents were taken on a more informal tour by me. We then proceeded to have morning tea in the heritage-listed Jubilee Room where I presented the young leaders with their certificates.

There were record numbers in attendance this year, which was pleasing after two years when the annual tradition was unable to go ahead. I congratulate the following young leaders who attended: Isabel Wood and Millicent Morrison of Abbotsleigh Junior School; Tom Turchini and Caelyn Tang of Beaumont Road Public School; Sofia Leung and Nicholas Lee of Gordon West Public School; Chloe Han of Killara Public School, and it was unfortunate that James Mann was sick and unable to attend; Jai Ananda and Jeremy Zhou of Knox Grammar Preparatory School; Kara Chen and Arthur Thorpe of Normanhurst Public School; Aydan May and Maryam Tarraf of Northside Montessori School, Tegan Seymour and Joshua D'Silva of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour West Pymble; Aisling Meade and Euan Reforma of Our Lady Of The Rosary, Waitara; and Ellie Whittaker and Yohann Pereira of Prouille Catholic Primary School.

I also congratulate Chloe Shao and Estelle Lee of Pymble Ladies' College, Junior School; Valentina Polistina and Jack Cousins of Pymble Public School; Charlotte Lockwood and William Durer of Sacred Heart Catholic School, Pymble; Gemma Woodhouse and Kye Phillips of Turramurra North Public School; Charlie Shearer and Charlotte Ross of Turramurra Public School; Ishaan Sahai and Shivon Chakravarti of Wahroonga Adventist School; Lucy Nam and Edward Zheng of Wahroonga Preparatory School; Neave Barker and Sebastian Linton of Wahroonga Public School; Hye-Nah Ryu and Matthew Lander of Waitara Public School; Sara Kirino and Nathan Milne of Warrawee Public School; and Rani Singh and Benjamin Cha of West Pymble Public School. I also thank all the parents, teachers and principals who attended to support our young leaders. I thank everyone who helped to make this day possible. I wish all the students the best of luck in the next stage of their school lives in high school.

### STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:53):** Previously I have spoken about the chronic lack of social and affordable housing in my electorate of Strathfield, and how a significant proportion of constituent calls received by my office relate to housing. There have been harrowing stories of residents discharged from hospital due to an illness, disability or mental health, who will be sleeping in Burwood Park unless emergency housing is found for them. I have spoken about the direct link between the lack of social and emergency housing and homelessness. It is not only social and affordable housing that is in crisis now but also rental accommodation in general.

In 2021 renters accounted for 46.3 per cent of the Strathfield electorate. That is much higher than the New South Wales average of 32.6 per cent. It is 13.7 per cent higher to be exact and is up from 10.2 per cent in 2016 and 6.3 per cent in 2011. The last few months have seen rents explode not just in Strathfield but across the State. Real estate agencies in Burwood and Strathfield report price increases of 10 per cent to 20 per cent across the board. Rents have risen between \$50 and \$80 per week in some parts of Burwood. In some parts of Strathfield, rental increases have been more than \$100 per week. Some of that is due to rents normalising after the COVID pandemic, when they dropped a lot, but in many instances the rental increases have far exceeded pre-pandemic levels. The increases are caused by a severe shortage in supply. They are also driving unprecedented general housing stress. Even in 2021, 34.4 per cent of renters in Strathfield were under rental stress, meaning over 30 per cent of household income is spent on rent. That is over a third of all renters, or 5,746 households across the Strathfield electorate.

There is a clear market failure in respect of not just social and affordable housing in Australia and New South Wales but also housing in general. Newspaper headlines offer stark vignettes of the state of our housing industry in New South Wales. Interest rate rises are putting great financial pressure on mortgage holders. Renters are not able to secure properties in spite of skyrocketing rents due to lack of supply. Yesterday one of the big four banks reported an 8.3 per cent jump in full-year cash earnings of \$7.1 billion, driven in part at least by rising rates. Major construction and building companies Grocon, Probuild and Condev have gone into administration. There were shocking construction defects in Opal and Mascot towers, rendering those buildings uninhabitable and residents who had purchased apartments facing financial ruin. The wait list for social housing in New South Wales has ballooned to over 50,000 households.

All of that causes us to ask: What is going on? Why is it happening? What is going wrong and what is causing the market failure and policy failures? It is no doubt a complex issue, but it seems that there are deep structural and cultural issues that underlie the market and policy failures around housing. At an individual level, housing is owned at a very granular, individual, household level and is seen primarily as a wealth generator and a source and repository of wealth rather than as a dwelling and a place to live. That has a number of quite profound impacts. Firstly, people who are already home owners see their home as their greatest investment. They have a vested interest in the value of that home going up and will resist most things that might devalue the home. In other words, they have a vested interest in housing supply being constrained. Less supply generally means higher prices. There is also a number of national and other incentives, such as negative gearing and capital gain tax concessions, that are turbocharging housing as an investment mentality and culture.

At the commercial or developer level, short termism is baked into the system. The development model in New South Wales is based on the developer financing the project via bank funding predicated on sufficient off-the-plan sales. Profits are then achieved by selling the properties as quickly as possible for as high a price as possible and then transferring the majority of the risk onto other parties such as builders and subcontractors. There is no long-term connection to the project, and the highly diversified, fragmented, entirely private sector, short-term, hugely debt-filled, pre-sales driven, build-and-flip development model has resulted at least in part in the housing crisis the State is facing.

### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:58):** This Government has invested more than \$9 billion over the last four-year cycle in educational infrastructure and has committed \$8.6 billion in the coming four-year cycle, totalling more than \$17 billion over an eight-year period. Those are enormous numbers. I will speak briefly about what they look like for the electorate of Riverstone. In Riverstone, I was privileged to turn the sod for the upgrade of John Palmer Public School three months ago. The work is underway and will deliver a new school library, an expansion of the school hall to include out-of-school-hours care facilities, new staffrooms, a new staff car park and the expansion of the existing staff car park, new learning facilities including a three-storey building with 29 additional classrooms, an outdoor play and learning space area, and an additional supported learning facility. This year's budget contained \$35 million for the ongoing works at John Palmer Public School at The Ponds.

Not too far away at Glenwood, a couple of weeks ago I inspected the upgrade project that has commenced at Glenwood High School. The school will have a new three-storey building with 47 flexible learning spaces and a new performing arts centre as well as the refurbishment of two other buildings and the ground floor of a third building. The flexible learning spaces will link indoor and outdoor learning areas, maximise collaboration and interaction between year groups, and include state-of-the-art technology to encourage innovation, creativity and easier communications. The budget contained \$50 million for that project.

On the other side of the electorate in Schofields, Galungara Public School, which was built during the term of this Government, now has a stage two project. That project commenced earlier this year and will include 20 new classrooms, two additional covered outdoor learning areas, two new multipurpose games courts and landscaping works. Roofing has recently gone up on both of the major blocks that are underway, together with the commencement of the installation of the facade framing for both buildings and structural steelwork. The next step in the stage two project involves installing the building envelope and facade fit-out works, the installation of internal walls and the connection to utilities. This year's budget had \$9.2 million to finish that project in the current financial year. Those are three projects underway at the same time in the one electorate.

Beyond that, there is a commitment to a new primary school in the Tallawong area. A site has been secured for that and an announcement will be made soon about the detailed planning for that project. That will include cutting-edge teaching and learning spaces, outdoor learning areas, a state-of-the-art library, new administrative facilities and all of the opportunities that come with a brand-new primary school. The new suburb of Nirimba Fields will also get a new primary school. I was with the education Minister three or four weeks ago to announce the site.

The planning process for that school has about half a million dollars in the budget. Once that planning process is complete and the necessary approvals are undertaken, construction will commence sometime next year. If that is not enough, the existing Schofields Public School is being upgraded, which is in the planning phase. Further additions will be made to that site, which is relatively new. A project was only completed there a few years ago, but given the booming population in those suburbs, additional facilities are required. Planning is underway to understand the exact needs of that site, together with analysis and prepared detailed designs for the work at Schofields Public School.

Finally at Riverbank Public School, which opened in 2015 as one of the new schools in the suburbs, they are building additional facilities. A two-storey connected hub building will be built for new classrooms and existing buildings interiors will be refurbished. A new covered outdoor learning area will be added and some landscaping and external works will be undertaken, which will make the facility fit for over 1,000 students in permanent accommodation. The Government understands that new suburbs often have a surge in population in the early years, and that is often accommodated for with demountable buildings. But we have to anticipate and design for the long-term permanent population, and that is what we are doing on the Riverbank site. The money we are investing in education is setting up the kids in our schools for the future.

### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:03):** This Government's reckless campaign of privatisation and the unprecedented burden of its policies, which have made New South Wales the highest taxing state in the country and Sydney the highest tolled city on the planet, have left our communities particularly vulnerable to cost-of-living pressures. These are issues that people are constantly approaching my office about. This Government's slash-and-burn approach to the State's assets has seen revenue-generating assets sold off wholesale. The Port of Newcastle was auctioned off on 98-year lease. Transgrid, the State's electricity infrastructure—the poles and wires—was leased for 99 years.

The delivery of public transport in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie was handed off to private provider Keolis Downer. As I mentioned in this place before, that has been an absolute disaster for the people of

Charlestown. Privatisation, particularly of essential public services such as transport, creates what an upper House committee called "a perverse incentive for the provider". In order to make a profit they must undermine the very service they were entrusted to provide. Five years after the privatisation of Newcastle buses, Charlestown residents are still suffering because of the ill-thought-through change wrought on our public transport system. I acknowledge that the cost-of-living crisis is not entirely the fault of the Government. International events are beyond even the Premier's control. But this Government has put the State's finances and services in such a parlous state that they have struggled to absorb the shock. The people of this State and the people of my electorate are paying the price.

The Liberal-Nationals Government has overseen record low wage growth for our State's essential workers, including the many public health workers in the Charlestown electorate and the tens of thousands all over the State; the train drivers that keep Newcastle and Lake Macquarie connected to Sydney and keep the city moving; the paramedics, whose jobs are already dangerous and stressful enough; the public schoolteachers, whose work is so vital to the future of our State; and the TAFE teachers, who train and retrain workers in the skills we need to keep our economy going. All these hardworking professionals, who are the core of our State's service delivery system, have been hammered by the Government's refusal to keep their wages at pace with inflation. They have been undermined by the Government's endless record of cuts, cuts and more cuts. Now, with inflation on the up, they are struggling to pay for housing and for rising food and energy costs. They are really having a rough go of it.

The Government has left our State deeply vulnerable due to its ideological obsession with privatisation, its disregard for public workers and its desperate effort to plug holes in a budget it has made structurally brittle. The Government has used fancy financial footwork so that government-owned corporation Hunter Water took on \$100 million in debt from the Treasury to pay the Government a dividend, failed to amalgamate local councils so that even more costs could be offloaded to a different level of government, and imposed ever-increasing taxes and tolls.

That has all been forced on the people of this State and the Charlestown electorate by this Government in return for offshoring manufacturing jobs, leading to ferries, trains and light rail being built overseas and arriving in New South Wales unfit or inadequate for purpose and having to be fixed. I suppose that creates some manufacturing jobs in the State. Why not create them here in the first place? The Government's corruption and mismanagement has seen icare underpay tens of thousands of injured workers to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. We have also seen plum jobs for the boys in New York City, pork-barrel spending to an unprecedented degree and a revolving door of Premiers, with two having to resign because of the ICAC revelations and a third quitting as soon as the job got tough.

People across the State are hurting. They cannot afford child care, rent, food or to get to work. The forces putting upward pressure on the cost of living may not all be the Government's fault, but its policies, obsessions and failures have allowed those pressures to trigger a crisis. After 12 years of this Government's blinkered, ideologically driven policymaking that has pushed for cuts and privatisation at any price, enough is enough. It is time to put an end to the privatisation madness. It is time to end the assault on essential workers. It is time to help the State through the current crisis and make sure that it is in a stronger position to weather the next one.

#### WESTINVEST FUND

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:09):** Today I speak about the WestInvest Fund and how it is currently delivering important infrastructure upgrades for the constituents of Seven Hills and western Sydney. The WestInvest Fund was announced earlier this year as a transformational program that will deliver important upgrades and services to communities across western Sydney. A total of \$5 billion has been made available through the WestInvest grant scheme to help fund transformational projects that will enhance communities and create jobs across western Sydney.

The WestInvest Fund will be split up between three major groups. A total of \$3 billion has been made available to government agencies for planning and support to deliver projects that will provide immediate large-scale benefit to local communities across western Sydney. Another \$400 million has been allocated to community projects in 15 key local government areas [LGAs], including City of Parramatta, Blacktown City Council, Cumberland City Council, Fairfield City Council and Penrith City Council. Each LGA will receive between \$20 million and \$35 million in guaranteed funding for projects that directly benefit their communities. The remaining \$1.6 billion will be allocated through the last round of community project grants and is open to non-government organisations like community groups, not-for-profits, local Aboriginal land councils, local councils and other groups that have a direct impact on their communities.

For a project to be successful it must deliver change across one of the six focus areas, including improving the quality of green and open spaces. The WestInvest Fund places an emphasis on groups that will deliver more

parks and natural services, which will encourage active lifestyles. An increase in green space across western Sydney will play an important role in restoring biodiversity and improving local waterways, amongst other things. Another focus is on community infrastructure, such as sporting facilities and outdoor recreation areas. Sporting groups are at the heart of our communities and they remain a priority. It is important to make sure that they can access facilities that harbour the best of their community spirit.

The Seven Hills electorate is home to many good sporting groups that use community facilities on a daily basis, including the Kings Langley Cricket Club, the Lalor Park Kookas and the Glenwood Redbacks Soccer Club. Community infrastructure has also been prioritised in the focus areas. School infrastructure and local traffic programs have been highlighted as areas for transformational change. That can include new paths for cyclists and walkers or facilities in schools that cater for an increasingly digital world. The final focus area is designed to revitalise the creative arts and entertainment sectors across the fast-growing communities in western Sydney. Groups that fall into this category include cultural organisations, restaurants, theatres, cafes and much more.

The Seven Hills electorate is home to many groups and organisations that fall into those focus areas. Recently, some successful WestInvest projects were announced by City of Parramatta and Blacktown City Council local government areas. Residents in the electorate will benefit directly from WestInvest funding granted to community groups and organisations, particularly those in the key LGAs. Some of the projects announced for the residents of Blacktown City Council include \$1.6 million for the refurbishment of Ashley Brown Reserve at Lalor Park, \$2.2 million for community infrastructure across the Blacktown LGA, \$1.2 million for quality green and open space, and \$700,000 for local traffic programs in the community. Importantly, residents of City of Parramatta LGA will benefit from a \$3.8 million upgrade to Max Ruddock Reserve in Winston Hills and \$3.7 million for the Sue Savage Reserve Multigenerational Recreational Facilities project in Toongabbie.

Upgrades at Max Ruddock Reserve will directly assist the local community, particularly sporting groups such as the Winston Hills Soccer Club and the Winston Hills Cricket Club, both of which have been operating in the local community for many years. The projects will function to enhance the aging sports facilities in those areas and go a long way towards promoting a healthy and active lifestyle across the community. It is clear that the WestInvest Fund will provide generational and transformational change to communities across western Sydney. The program is a fantastic initiative for residents in those 15 key local government areas, particularly for the constituents of the Seven Hills electorate. I am particularly looking forward to the next round of announcements to see which community groups will benefit from WestInvest funding in the coming months. I commend the WestInvest Fund to the House.

### LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:14):** Today I raise probity and governance issues concerning Liverpool City Council. My entire electorate is located within the boundaries of Liverpool City Council. These issues have been raised with me by a number of my constituents and are of interest to many more. I turn first to the enforcement section of Liverpool City Council. In some cases, its approach to the enforcement of conditions and policies is remarkably laissez-faire. On other occasions, its insistence upon rigid adherence to council policies and regulations is absolutely unflinching.

In several cases, the latter category included its rigorous action against residents who campaigned for Labor candidates at the most recent council elections. There are other similar cases, but victims are too apprehensive to agree to me raising them. Perhaps it is not surprising that one person who was a council ranger, and is still employed by council, was arrested in 2009 for robbery and kidnapping in the company of members of an organised motorcycle crime gang. One of those co-accused, and the council officer's close relative, has been the sergeant-at-arms of an outlaw motorcycle gang, at one stage changing his name to Tony Soprano.

I refer to some documents that I received from 2015. They are currently relevant in two senses. The first is that I have no evidence that the practices involved have ceased. The second is that at least one of the persons concerned is still employed at council. The documents are emails relating to debts allegedly owed to the council by various shopkeepers in the Liverpool council area. The invoices concerned were not paid. Rather than employing usual proceedings—the Local Court springs to mind—the council thought that sending uniformed rangers was a good idea. That was with a view to intimidating shopkeepers. One council ranger emailed a manager. He said:

Could I make a suggestion in relation to the handing out of the tax invoices. From my understanding the tax invoices are for food premises inspections – could the tax invoices be delivered with the up-coming inspection (re- inspection). The health officers could give the tax invoice to the premises when they attend next.

The ranger also said:

When I delivered them last time there was a reaction from a few of the shop managers asking since when the ranger delivered tax invoices.

He went on to say:

I am just worried they may feel intimidated by our uniforms and I don't think it was a good look on council's part because it looks like we are debt collecting.

The response from the manager was instructive. It said:

We do want them to feel intimidated.

I have not been able to confirm whether the ranger with bikie connections was included in that practice. Behaviour that does not reach proper governance levels such as this flourishes with inadequate leadership. There is an outrageous proposal by a cabal of Liverpool councillors to use public council funds to meet the cost of private, individual advice for individual councillors. I add that that policy has been opposed quite properly by the Office of Local Government and is being championed by the current Mayor of Liverpool. It had previously been proposed by Councillor Ayyad. Those councillors have so little knowledge of what is right and wrong that they need a lawyer to tell them the difference.

That group is now attempting to prevent the regulation of lobbying of Liverpool councillors. That trashes any concept of transparency. At its meeting on 25 May, Liverpool City Council, on the motion of Councillor Hagarty, resolved to draft a policy to regulate lobbying at Liverpool City Council to reflect relevant ICAC guidelines and recommendations. Central to the proposal was to have lobbying of councillors and the council publicly reported on the council's website. It is vital that the public know when and with whom lobbying occurs. Appropriate lobbying is part of the democratic process but ensuring that it is reported adds positively to that process. A report and a policy were submitted to a council meeting on 26 October, and a narrow majority of the council blocked it. That majority is the same group that wants council to pay for extra professional advice for individual councillors.

Daylight is always the best disinfectant, and that decision by this cabal is a backwards step for council. It can potentially undermine public confidence in the council. It was revealed earlier this year that the mayor had failed to make appropriate disclosures about a lunch he had with former Deputy Premier John Barilaro, who at that time was executive director of Coronation Property, the developer of The Paper Mill at Liverpool. That shows the urgent need for that disclosure policy. The recent decision trashes transparency at Liverpool City Council. If the cabal were serious about integrity, it would have been supportive of that type of policy all along instead of simply obfuscating, delaying and refusing to adopt the policy that was prepared.

In that context, it has been fascinating to watch the mayor's rampant pro-development lobbying for Moore Point—another development in which Coronation is involved. Just quietly, I am not sure what the residents of Chipping Norton will think about massive buildings going in just down the road from them and affecting their privacy. In that relation, the Government should also make clear the basis of the recent WestInvest grant to Liverpool City Council at Light Horse Park. That is almost adjacent to Coronation's Paper Mill and is across the Georges River from Moore Point. That WestInvest grant would, on the face of it, be of benefit to the developer of Moore Point and increase its value. It is also particularly regrettable that the council decided to prioritise that proposal over the redevelopment and rejuvenation of Miller. The details of lobbying around those proposals are entirely opaque. They must be made transparent.

#### SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:18):** November is small business month, an important month on the calendar for the communities of each and every member in this place. There are 800,000 small businesses in this State, which employ 1.8 million people and account for 98 per cent of businesses. One of the many small business industries that is being impacted is the wine industry—an industry that is close to your heart in your electorate of Upper Hunter, Mr Temporary Speaker. The wine industry is being heavily impacted this month by the proposal of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] to expand the container deposit scheme [CDS] to include wine bottles. The industry is concerned that the EPA has not properly consulted with industry about its preferred option, which is option two in the paper, as I understand.

There are three options on the table to expand the container deposit scheme to different containers and a fourth option of a dedicated kerbside glass bin. Option two, which I have indicated is the EPA's preferred option, is a comprehensive expansion of the CDS and is favoured because it has no cost to government. But there will be a \$45 million-plus tax imposed on small business owners around the State, many of which are in the Upper Hunter electorate, which do not have any tangible recycling outcomes. That cost has been predicted by the industry itself. It is such a significant cost that every member in this place should take it seriously and consider what wine producers are being asked to potentially do—that is, updating product labels to include the 10c refund mark,

applying for container approval with the EPA, reporting monthly supplied volumes, and paying monthly invoices at 15c per bottle in advance—although I understand the real cost is upwards of 20c per bottle.

Every member in this place knows that the environment is important, and we must preserve it for future generations. But it is also important that we do not cripple small businesses in the process, particularly during Small Business Month, which I am incredibly passionate about. The wine industry in New South Wales contributes 53,000 jobs from over 500,000 wine producers. It contributes \$14 billion to the economy, as I understand from the industry. New South Wales is the second largest wine-producing State. The EPA argues that it is okay to do it in New South Wales because Queensland is doing it, but Queensland is not our concern because it does not have a vibrant wine industry like New South Wales does.

There are about 800 suppliers of wine and spirit containers in the New South Wales market, of which there are five to 10 large suppliers that account for 4 per cent of containers supplied. There are also 278 wine owner-managers and other alcoholic beverage manufacturers in New South Wales. The statistics show that small wineries and distilleries and small or microbusinesses are going to be impacted. Those businesses are at the lower end of the scale. The small producers that produce those containers will be impacted. It is our job in this place to protect vulnerable businesses and people in our community. I am told by the industry that the EPA is underestimating the impact on wine businesses by around 33 per cent. But the real cost to industry is greater due to small production runs and increased red tape and compliance measures. Members on this side of the House have always prided themselves on tackling red tape and doing their best to remove it from industry. I would hate to see the EPA proceed with increasing more regulation on this industry.

The EPA is trying to fit a square peg into a round hole by treating wine as it does beer and other areas of the industry, but they are not the same. The cashflow problem for small businesses is real. The EPA is asking wine producers to pay the monthly scheme bill for bottles sold within seven days whether they have been paid or not. Many of those small businesses use distributors and it takes them up to 90 days to actually receive any income. Those wine producers will struggle to pay the bills put forward by the EPA. The kicker for me is that including wine bottles in the CDS will only improve litter reduction by around 0.6 per cent of 1 per cent over 20 years. No member in this place would hold up that statistic and use it as an argument. I encourage the EPA, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Small Business to sit down with industry to consult and work collaboratively to ensure that small businesses thrive and survive in this State moving forward.

### SIX CITIES STRATEGY

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:24):** This evening I make a few comments about something that a lot of members in this place have concerns about. Sometimes we seem to be "over-planned" without having enough actual delivery strategies in place. The latest iteration of this to hit the Central Coast is that we have been named part of the Six Cities strategy. Today the Greater Cities Commission has released what it says are the key themes emerging from its public exhibition of the Six Cities vision. I am not sure that many people would be surprised as to what is on the list, which includes:

- Housing affordability and access, particularly for young and older people.
- Interest in innovative approaches to diverse housing, including multi-generational living.
- Focus on addressing climate resilience and responding to major weather events such as bushfires, heat and flooding.
- Increase sustainable living with tree canopy, active transport and responsive home design.
- Care for First Nations voice and culture.
- Provide better transport connections between cities and within cities.
- Improve alignment of investment in infrastructure and services to support growth.
- Protect the unique identity of our cities and natural features like bush, waterways, beaches and open space.

I hope they did not pay a whole lot of money to the people who came up with that list. They could probably have asked any single one of us and we would have given them a list pretty close to that. I am not complaining about the fact they are identifying those important issues. What I am complaining about is that over the past few years we have had regional plans and then updates on regional plans. We have had regional transport plans and then updates on regional transport plans. We then had some strange economic strategy between Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast with a fancy name that I cannot recall, which seems to have disappeared. We then had the Six Cities strategy. Then just last week or the week before the new iteration of the regional plan was released, guess what? They all say the same thing, time after time. What is missing is a delivery plan to actually address the issues. We get all these great statements of intent and vision over and over again, but what we are not getting is delivery on the ground.

I live in an area that has a sea of new housing estates. I note that the member for Maitland has arrived in the Chamber. I assume she would be in the same boat, as would the member for Riverstone. People are flocking to buy those houses. In fact, in my area the blocks are sold the day they go on the market. There is so much interest, but the essential infrastructure is not following along with it. For example, when I moved to the Warnervale precinct in 1999 we were promised a shopping centre. That shopping centre has still not been delivered. Kids have started kindergarten, gone all the way through high school and gained employment in that time—and we are still waiting for that shopping centre. It is not because Woolworths does not want to build the shopping centre; it is just that it cannot get the planning done to actually deliver it. It is currently in discussions to finally deliver what was called the Warnervale Town Centre, which has now been downgraded to the Warnervale Neighbourhood Centre because the train station has been cancelled and a few other things have happened.

People have been pretty patient. Whoever wins the election in March should start to focus on delivery rather than spending so much money on planning. The plans are there. Each document changes things very slightly, but you could go from 2006 all the way through to now and the plans essentially say the same things. They identify the same strategic areas and the same transport needs. They identify everything almost identically. But what people are waiting for is that key infrastructure. It is not necessarily things like roads, because we are getting roads. It is that key infrastructure like retail and commercial that brings the jobs and the services closer to the people who need them. That is how we actually get these 15-minute cities. What happens now is that everyone gets pushed into their car, onto the road and that causes congestion.

### MAITLAND ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:29):** Today I pay tribute to so many people in my community who really stood up when we had our massive floods in July and have been working hard since then. I will take a few minutes—there is such a long list of them—to mention them by name. Their names should be recorded in the *Hansard* of this Parliament as people who have gone above and beyond. I start with Sonia Gannon, who organised the hub at Gillieston. She was an amazing helper in 2015, but she stepped up again in 2022. The way that woman wrangles other volunteers, our emergency services and our local government people—and even State members like me!—is just something to behold. She is a force of nature who is always there for her community. She was ably assisted this time, particularly, by Katie Ferguson, who also stood up. She is president of the local P&C at Gillieston Heights. Katie has also been a great advocate for our community and really helped to organise during the flood.

I will go through the rest of the list in no particular order; it is really just as the names have come in. We have had lots of people making nominations. We had Steve Collins, from 21st Century Meats at Rutherford; Melissa Brett, who was moving cattle to higher ground; Luke and Kayla McCarthy, who were also rescuing animals to higher ground; and Harley Little and Greg Irvin at the boats at Testers Hollow. We had Hannah Griffin and Jodie Griffin running a basketball clinic during the floods. I also pay tribute to the barbecue cooks: Brandon Stephens, Curtis Watts, Crystal Loken, Gee Mac, Kate Lindsay, and Tameka Weeks, who came in with bread.

We had people such as Damian Knapp delivering food to the elderly and checking in on those who were not being looked after by anyone. Callianne Liokos provided hot food to road workers. Jodie Gifford provided groceries and cooked meals, while Rebecca Neil supplied gazebos, tables and chairs to SES workers and boat people. From Gillieston Heights Pharmacy we had Olivia Dawson, Wahno Noh, Beth Lawford, Brooke Stanley and Stephen Boyle. We had people at the hub who helped out, including Rachel Applebee, who gave me a bed for a couple of nights. People with a disability were helped by Georgina Cali. Others helping at the community hub were Liz Ray-Dobson, Chris Redshaw, Rebekah Knapp and Sara Bird.

Steve Wright organised insurance for the barbecue and car show. Chris Aquilina provided a forklift for the supplies. I thank the Thermomix ladies, including Kirsten Dover. People who went around local retirement villages included Emily Molachino and Gabrielle Chiles. We had people working at the SES on the Maitland side such as Angela Harrison, Barbara Isaac, Amanda Andrews and Anna Brint. We had food supplies from Meg Lathan, Paul and Oliver from Dominos Gillieston Heights. The evacuation centre at East Maitland Bowling Club featured Steve Duggan and Bill Hopkins, OAM. Nick Merriman was on the Gillieston Heights residents' Facebook page keeping people informed, while Raymond Tuckwell helped on his West Maitland Community Awareness Facebook page.

Others who provided assistance during the floods included Dane Reilly, Nadia Ghazali, Jo Colefax, Carley Hasler, Jason Watson, Jenny Robinson, Robert Robinson, Tracy Osmond and Natarsha Lawton. They all did an amazing job at the hub. We called them the Gillo Angels, along with Sonia, Katie Ferguson and Michelle Viola. Georgina Grine from Happi Chicken supplied food to people. Andrew McIntyre from Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme has now resigned from that position, but he was great. I thank Brett Miners from Local Land Services. I thank all the crew at Lovey's Grocers IGA, including Kylie and Russell Dean. I will not



go through all the names at the IGA; I might table them for Hansard because I am going to run out of time! There is also Ash Kavanagh, Kathleen Formosa and, of course, David Evans from Maitland City Council.

I also thank Sarah Adams from Maitland Region Community Support, formerly Maitland Neighbourhood Centre; and Craig Parsons and Tracey Martin from Maitland SES. Over in Millers Forest we of course had, as we always do, Gloria Green and Bill and Pat Munton. Gloria's husband, Selby, was unwell but he has really helped out. There was April Scott from Millers Produce. Wayne Humphrey and Gerard Lawson from Port Stephens Hunter Police were amazing. Amorelle Dempster from Readers Cafe at the library donated food. We had Red Frogs Australia, represented by Alyssa Harding and Dominic Collins. Of course we had those amazing women from Resilience NSW, particularly their amazing leader, Mel Gore, and Natalie Meskauskas.

We had Allyn Purvis from the Rural Fire Service, Allan Watson and Travis Hall from the SES—and, of course, Gillo's own SES unit on her own, Olivia Lane. From St John Ambulance we had Helmut Wirth, Judy Hastings, Katrina Wirth, Jim Klumpp, Rachel Margery and Damien Wardrope. We had Mark and Nicole Standing from Telarah Butchery and many, many other people who helped. Those I have named are just a few of the local legends that stood up. I thank the House for its indulgence regarding time. It is really important that we recognise those people.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for Maitland. I concur with her comments regarding the great people of Maitland who helped out during that flood.

### **BEGA ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:34):** Last week two of my colleagues generously contributed their time to visit the Bega electorate to discuss the issues affecting my constituents. The member for Maitland, the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and the member for Wyong, the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty and shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism, travelled with me from Eden to Batemans Bay. Two roundtables were held in the Bega Valley in Eurobodalla, which were attended by local government representatives, local police, bus operators, active transport advocates and local residents with special interests in these issues.

The Princes Highway is 250 kilometres from Durras Lake to the Victorian border. It is a vital artery due to limited corridor access points and east-west connectivity. Its importance and urgency is notable to reduce disaster-related impacts, as experienced in the 2019-20 bushfire disaster. The Bega electorate acknowledges that \$15 billion is committed over 20 years to duplicate the Princes Highway to the Victorian border. However, typically for Bega—the relative Antarctic of New South Wales—it is last on the list. During consultation my constituents expressed the need for further safety improvements such as more overtaking lanes and attention to existing blackspots, and identified near miss areas referred to as accidents waiting to happen. A particular example of this is the south turn from the Tuross Heads T-intersection, which local residents have identified as dangerous and about which many have made representations to Transport for NSW. In fact, many T-intersections with the two-lane Princes Highway are accidents waiting to happen and each needs review for potential improvement.

Two other significant infrastructure issues were noted by the residents of the Bega electorate. The first was the proposed Moruya bypass. I support the need for a bypass of the Moruya township on the basis of reduced travel time and congestion, particularly during the holiday period when our population triples; improved safety for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists; increased efficiency of freight transport; and the amenity and livability of the town centre. The community has specifically identified concerns regarding access to the proposed new Eurobodalla hospital, the environmental impact of the bypass, the required property acquisitions and the impact on local businesses.

The community is also seriously concerned about the cost effectiveness of the development, which may cost up to three-quarters of a billion dollars depending on the final decision on the route of the bypass. I acknowledge that Transport for NSW has received 1,300 community submissions and more than 4,500 comments. I look forward to the informed decision of Transport for NSW on the route based on community sentiment and the data obtained through independent research.

The second issue was the impasse on the future of the MR272—that is, the 44-kilometre Tathra-Bermagui Road. It is our region's version of the Great Ocean Road. It contains five heritage wooden bridges featured in cinema, literature and musical culture. They are one-lane wooden bridges where residents and tourists give way as well as giving the bush salute, otherwise known as the "phatic finger". The Cuttagee Bridge is a 110-metre single-lane bridge with timber deck running boards and cross planks that is over 100 years old. As a consequence of age, shifting sands and flood damage, it has reached the end of its functional life. It is now subject to a five kilometre per hour speed limit and weight restrictions. This Government offered funding under the Fixing Country

Bridges Program in March 2021, which was then withdrawn in June 2021, leaving Bega Valley Shire Council in no-man's-land.

The council was forced to pass a motion in August this year seeking an update from the Government on the progress of regional road reclassification of MR272 and the renewal or replacement of the Cuttagee Bridge. That response is urgent due to the need for local transport, buses, emergency services and freight. It must consider the significant heritage and cultural value of the classic timber bridge and its contribution to local tourism. Of the 15,000 kilometres of road able to be reclassified by this Government, not one kilometre has been reclassified in the Bega electorate. The Bega electorate seeks these improvements to the Princes Highway, the commencement of the Moruya bypass and the reconstruction of the Cuttagee Bridge.

### **TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND JAMES COX**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (17:39):** I acknowledge and pay my respects to the late Raymond James Cox, who passed away peacefully on Saturday 15 October just before his ninety-seventh birthday. I had the opportunity to meet Ray on a number of occasions and was saddened to learn of his passing. Ray was a dedicated activist within my local community. He devoted much of his time to important advocacy work and conservation efforts across the northern beaches. Ray showed dedication and commitment in his mission overseeing many projects, including advocating for the open space of John Fisher Park and protecting Manly Dam war memorial park. Those local assets are highly regarded by my community, and Ray played a large part in ensuring their protection.

Ray was a much-loved member of our community. He will be missed by his family and many friends—connections he had across the northern beaches. Many of those family members and friends will gather next week on 16 November at North Head to recognise and commemorate Ray. Being an old seafarer, Ray requested that some of his ashes be scattered at sea. He was a big fan of the Manly ferries. I commit to making sure that we have his ashes scattered at sea or in the beautiful Sydney Harbour. Ray has taught us through his actions and his life about commitment and community. Vale, Ray Cox.

### **VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE SCHOOLS**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:41):** As the member of Vaucluse, I have had the exceptional experience of working with my local schools and the communities that support them. Whether it is a midyear art show, a speaking competition or an end-of-year presentation day, it is always a delight to support students in my local area. It has been a privilege to advocate on behalf of those schools to ensure that they have the best learning environments available to them, which has included over \$31.5 million invested locally for infrastructure projects and programs. I highlight some of those important investments.

Firstly, \$810,000 has been invested in Double Bay Public School for a new toilet block upgrade—very important in our schools—garden rejuvenation, painting and flooring, the installation of solar panels, and the recent full upgrade of the school's library, which I attended. Over \$80 million has been invested in Bellevue Hill Public School. That included the large 2016 redevelopment, which brought on line 27 new flexible classrooms, a new library and an upgrade of the administration area and canteen, along with the installation of a safety fence that I pledged at my first election in 2019. We have also had a new habitat native garden put in place and a playground upgrade. At Bondi Public School \$1.5 million has been invested to upgrade the sporting field and to open five new classrooms, which were sorely needed. They were formerly spaces for Department of Education officials. Solar photovoltaic modules have been installed in classrooms and a new interactive play garden has been built.

Nearby at Bondi Beach Public School, which is just down the road, about \$800,000 has gone into upgrading the school's roof, delivering a new out-of-care-hours school service and fitting out a new green room for the students to make films, which I also visited. McAuley Catholic Primary School at Rose Bay received \$60,000 for a playground upgrade, refurbished toilet blocks and a new stage for the school hall, which I had the pleasure of recently visiting and seeing in operation. At Rose Bay Public School over \$1 million has been invested in maintenance, including painting and new floor coverings. I am proud to have played a part in delivering over \$2.4 million for different projects at the exceptional Rose Bay Secondary College. We have been able to upgrade the school's playing field, to replace the old, dilapidated basketball courts with two new multipurpose sports courts and, more recently, to install a covered outdoor learning area. Alongside that, the school has been able to undertake a number of maintenance projects, including the installation of new air conditioners, electrical work and roofing.

In Bondi we have two brilliant and unique schools: Waverley Action for Youth Services Secondary College, otherwise known as WAYS, and Wairoa School. WAYS offers an alternative education to mainstream secondary education and has been proudly supported with just over \$400,000 from the New South Wales Government. It purchased two new school buses to transport young people to the school and to establish a new

science classroom. Wairoa provides educational programs for students with intellectual and other disabilities and since 2011 over \$4 million has allowed for a new two-storey permanent classroom block, refurbishment of their library and extensive maintenance works.

At Woollahra Public School over \$1.2 million has gone into refurbishments, accessibility ramp upgrades, floors, roofs and the installation of a creative outdoor learning space. At Vacluse Public School \$738,000 has been invested in a new outdoor play zone, ACOLA solar panels, a playground upgrade, decking and landscaping. At Kesser Torah in Dover Heights, over \$440,000 has funded the upgrade of the secondary girls classroom, 14 primary and secondary learning areas and new shade structures for a junior school playground.

At Kincoppal Rose Bay, \$40,000 has been used to install solar panels and fund a new trailer to be used for school activities. At The Scots College in Bellevue Hill, \$30,000 under a Community Building Partnership grant has funded a shade structure for their preparatory school. I am very proud of all the work that has been done through my advocacy and the schools' advocacy to tap that funding to improve our classrooms and amenities for our students in schools in my local area. It is a non-exhaustive list. There is always more to do, but I do thank the New South Wales Government for helping support education in my local community.

### **BANKSTOWN HOSPITAL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:46):** It has been nearly four years since the New South Wales Government made an announcement that the Bankstown community would receive a new \$1.3 billion hospital. Still, to this date, there is very little information as to where the site will be and when the building of the hospital will start. There is no single bigger issue for the people of Bankstown and East Hills than where the hospital will be located and precisely what the clinical services plan will be for the new Bankstown Hospital. Understanding where it will be located and the type of clinical services that will be available for this hospital is critical. A decision needs to be made urgently, as it is of immense importance to the people of Bankstown and East Hills.

As I have said, a site has not been chosen and a clinical services plan detailing the scope of health services at the new hospital has yet to be released. We do not have a glossy brochure either. I fail to understand why the New South Wales Government and the Minister for Health have kept a veil of secrecy over planning for the new hospital. I call on the Government to release the plans to the community immediately. I have asked multiple questions in Parliament of the health Minister to reveal the location of the new hospital. Yet all I have had from the Minister is radio silence. We have an established critical health precinct around Eldridge Road, Bankstown. There is a hospital, a mental health facility, Banks House, and soon, virtually within walking distance, a new private hospital. For decades the communities of Bankstown and East Hills have appreciated and understood this area to be the health precinct for Bankstown, as the member for East Hills confirmed this week.

Yet there are concerning rumours circulating around our community that the Government will demolish Bankstown TAFE in the Bankstown CBD to make way for the new hospital. What exactly is the impetus for demolishing Bankstown's TAFE to replace it with the new hospital? This Government must ignore the lobbyists, particularly the Labor lobbyists, and property developers that are circling. These lobbyists clearly want to add a bit of gloss to the randomised rezoning of the Bankstown CBD under the Bankstown master plan. Chris Minns has hand-picked upper House Labor candidate Khal Asfour, who is the current mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown and who has led the charge to move the hospital to the TAFE site. Nobody in the Bankstown or East Hills communities wants our hospital in the CBD. I have spoken with staff and students at Bankstown TAFE who are devastated at the idea of losing the site. I have spoken to many hospital staff and residents who are regular patients of the current hospital who do not want the hospital moved into the CBD. I will explain why.

Chapel Road North, where the TAFE is located, experiences significant traffic gridlock in peak morning and afternoon periods and the site is landlocked by high-density development. There is also a college, a high school and a primary school and a single lane to and from the CBD to the highway. It is a gridlock. It is difficult even for buses to operate. The TAFE can operate because most of the students use public transport, but patients needing hospital services cannot be expected to solely rely on public transport. We know that there will be no parking for patients if the hospital is moved to that site. The Government had relocated Bankstown ambulance station from Meredith Street. The ambulance officers who operate out of the current site on Canterbury Road would be mortified at the idea of going back to Meredith Street or having to bring patients into a hospital at Meredith Street and Chapel Road.

The best site for the new Bankstown Hospital is clearly in the current health precinct. That means it should be located either across the road at the Bankstown Senior College site or on the current site. What is equally important is the scope of clinical and specialised services that will be available to our local community. We do not just need a flashy new building. We need services that will support people, similar to the services that are available at Liverpool and Royal Prince Alfred hospitals. The member for East Hills and I are on a unity ticket here. We both want this new hospital to be in the current health precinct, either where the existing hospital is

located or across the road. We hope the New South Wales Government and the Labor Opposition adhere to the needs of the community and come clean about their plans in order to ensure the hospital is precisely where it should be—that is, in the current health precinct.

### **PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS SPORTS AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:51):** Today I acknowledge the 2022 Port Macquarie Hastings Sports Awards held at the Panthers Club on Tuesday 25 October to recognise our local champions who have shone at a representative and other levels of sporting excellence. Coordinated by the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise, the annual awards celebration has highlighted our region's rich and diverse sporting talents now for 23 years, recognising the sporting achievements of our youth and rewarding them financially as an incentive to encourage participation and to build on their sporting abilities. Today I am proud to announce in Parliament the winners of the 2022 Port Macquarie Hastings Sports Awards who have excelled in sporting accomplishments in 2022.

The 2022 Greenmeadows Health Centre Sportsperson of the Year award was presented to Aidan Nosworthy for claiming a raft of championships in sailing over the 2022 season. Aidan was successful this year in the under-12s 2022 Sabot Australian Titles, placing first and fourth overall among a fleet of 64 competitors aged between 10-to-16 years. In the 2021/22 Sabot NSW State Titles Aidan again placed first and a commendable second in the 2021/22 Flying Ant State Titles. If that was not enough, Aidan secured another second placing in the Queensland Heron State Titles this year and will now compete in Tasmania over Christmas for the national titles. Aidan's love and passion for sailing and his drive to succeed at all levels of competition is nothing short of remarkable. It is no wonder the panel selected him for the highest accolade our region has to bestow in sporting excellence. Congratulations Aidan.

Taking out the AusSport Scoreboards Junior Sportsperson of the Year—Primary School award was Locke Williamson for his stand-out performances at State level cross country, touch football and swimming. Winner of the Donovan Oates Hannaford Junior Sportsperson of the Year—High School was Tom Jenkins for securing Australian titles at the Auscycling National All School Cycling Championship and the Rocky Trail Australian Superflow Enduro Championship under-17s. Claiming the coveted Laing+Simons Port Macquarie Sportsperson with a Disability was Nate Castelli for winning gold, silver and bronze medals at the Australian Little Athletics Championships. Nate is a champion in athletics and a revered contender.

The Patterson Real Estate Junior Team of the Year was awarded to Hastings Public School for claiming a top four ranking in the State for the Primary Schools Sports Association Netball competition. The Donovan Oates Hannaford Senior Team of the Year was presented to the Hastings Valley Vikings first grade rugby union side for taking out the minor and major premierships in 2022. The Vikings led all the way in 2022, dominating their opponents in a well-orchestrated team, dropping only one game the entire season.

Securing the Hastings Physio and Health Sporting Volunteer of the Year award was Port Macquarie local Bennett Powell for his outstanding contribution to the Port Macquarie Sharks Rugby League Football Club and the mid North Coast running festival and for patrolling Flynn's Beach over the summer season. Bennett also received the prestigious Surf Life Saving Bronze Medallion for his volunteer hours. Twelve-year-old Trent Alley was awarded the 2022 Wayne Richards Sporting Scholarship for his feats in Australian Little Athletics, where he won two bronze medals and a gold medal in cross country and set an Australian record in hurdling. Trent was the youngest ever participant to win the 10-kilometre Beach to Brother Trail Running Festival in October.

I believe sport brings us together as a community, gives us purpose and provides exceptional mind and body health benefits. I congratulate the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise for hosting this wonderful event after COVID. I acknowledge the local role models in our community who accomplish extraordinary triumphs in sport each year. Congratulations again to all the awards recipients and nominees. I wish each and every one of them all the very best in their future sporting endeavours.

### **FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:55):** On behalf of constituents in my electorate I share their deep concerns for our native forests and wildlife. I record my support and my community's support for a plan to transition the native forestry industry towards sustainable plantations and to assist forestry workers and associated communities. It is clear that native forestry logging has become more sustainable over recent decades, but the environmental burden remains. The industry is increasingly financially unsustainable, and the Black Summer bushfires accelerated that challenge. Data from Forestry Corporation and the EPA shows that total hardwood timber production has fallen from just under 1.4 million cubic metres in 2009-10 to 0.6 million cubic metres in 2020-21 following the bushfires.

Members have spoken in this place on a number of occasions about the impacts of the Black Summer bushfires. Over five million hectares of land were burnt, including two million hectares, or 40 per cent, of the national park estate and 875,000 hectares, or 40 per cent, of State forests. The disaster killed over one billion animals and hundreds of billions of insects. More species continue to be added to the already long threatened species list, including the koala and the greater glider. People's lives were lost and people's lives and livelihoods continue to be affected, including by the downturn in the available supply of public native forest hardwood. The supply from the South Coast subregion was affected by up to 90 per cent. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] reported as recently as 2021 that the hardwood business is not recovering its harvesting and haulage costs.

Forestry Corporation is unable to pay a dividend for the next three years and the New South Wales Government has funded over \$67 million in assistance, much of which has gone to the hardwood business. The industry is heavily subsidised by taxpayers. The industry faces tough challenges to its financial viability. Couple that with its environmental impacts and the benefits of alternative positive employment in other industries and the decision to transition out of native forestry becomes a clearer and more obvious reality. The Natural Resources Commission reported that the wood supply challenges are undermining the viability of a number of hardwood mills, including in Nowra and Narooma. While we can reflect upon those environmental impacts and cyclical challenges to the industry, it is clear the true challenges that face the New South Wales hardwood industry are fundamentally structural, and that is happening across Australia and around the globe.

Victoria and Western Australia have already committed to transitioning out of native forestry and a range of agreements are in place in South East Queensland to do the same. Historically Tasmania is the least diversified State and it is most reliant on timber, but it has been on a variegated journey. Affected communities and industries in New South Wales deserve support. We can provide them with ongoing economic benefit by transitioning out of native forestry and into plantations. We have seen significant boosts in other areas that have commenced such a transition by developing ecotourism, creating new jobs in recreation forest and fire management and by establishing carbon and biodiversity credit management. Recently Frontier Economics, in work undertaken on behalf of the WWF, advised that a transition package for New South Wales focused on structural adjustment support could help harvesters, haulers and mills—and their employees—and could include economic diversification packages for local regions that are impacted.

Frontier Economics estimates the package at about \$300 million but also notes a number of positive budgetary offsets. They include avoiding future equity injections to Forestry Corporation and avoiding the loss-making activities identified by IPART. Separate from that is the opportunity to support the establishment of plantations, which should be undertaken on a commercial basis, and the Government can play a role in that. The transition could commence as soon as 2028-29, when the majority of current wood supply agreements expire. The Government is proud of its range of commitments to the environment. They include the net zero commitment and the 50 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030, doubling our koala population by 2050—I note the member for Port Macquarie is an advocate for the protection of koalas—growing nature-based tourism, expanding and enhancing the contribution of natural capital and increasing the use of low-carbon housing construction materials.

Those commitments align with and would benefit from a transition away from native forestry. The Government's *State of the Environment 2021* report identified habitat destruction and native vegetation clearing as the biggest threats to biodiversity. There is so much to gain from our native forests. They store carbon, are bushfire resilient, create a range of new industries and employment opportunities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New South Wales can deliver that outcome for our community's future.

### MURRAY ELECTORATE FLOODS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:00):** The electorate of Murray has been decimated by recent flooding, particularly the Murray River Council local government area. The flooding is unprecedented and has eclipsed historical flood markers. It raced across Murray and into areas that have never flooded before. Locals tell me they have never seen a flood of this magnitude or velocity. One of my constituent's driveways sits under five feet of water. His house and sheds are surrounded by a recently built levee that he hopes and prays will hold. He has lost 90 per cent of his 4,000-hectare crop. His children have relocated to live with relatives 60 kilometres away because they cannot get to school.

Eight weeks ago another farmer down the road settled on his dream 2,400 acre property. His family moved in only 2½ weeks ago. Floodwater now covers every inch of his land, bar six acres. His young family has moved to Bendigo for safety. His 3,000 sheep spent a week on a 400-metre stretch of road because he could not move them to dry ground—there was none. There have been significant stock losses, and that will only get worse as stranded stock, particularly sheep, face death by flystrike if left untreated. As a farmer, I know there is nothing worse than losing stock that one has spent generations breeding. It is heartbreaking. Another farmer told me he has lost at least \$500,000 due to the flood, plus \$500,000 in potential income because he cannot sow his next rice

crop. Those losses are multiplied again and again, across farm after farm. Billions will be lost in income, damage to infrastructure, stock losses, inundation of housing and damage to roads—and the list goes on.

Unfortunately the floodwater will linger for months. It could not have happened at a worse time. On the brink of a bumper spring, which was looking so promising, many farmers were hoping to get out of the red and into the black. Instead they face another season of financial losses. The mental cost, like the financial cost, will be enormous. We are already under-resourced in the mental health space. We desperately need additional support, not in a few months but right now—today. Farmers and communities across Murray River Council feel forgotten and that feeling will be exacerbated as roads are cut off.

Farmers who are lucky enough to harvest will face the quandary of how to get their product to market. Floodwaters have cut access across many roads and others are in such poor condition that cars cannot travel them safely, let alone B-doubles or road trains. The people who produce our staple foods need help. Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement assistance must be upgraded to category D urgently for Murray River Council. Access to additional financial support will not go close to covering the hundreds and thousands of dollars farmers have lost, but it will go a long way toward helping them to rebuild. Farmers are a resilient bunch. They are used to fighting the elements, but this one really hurts. Not only have they lost their income for 2022-23; they will be continually reminded of all they have lost as stagnant and smelly floodwater and breeding mosquitoes linger for months.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:04):** As we will commemorate Remembrance Day tomorrow, I pay tribute to the veterans in my community, as well as the service organisations that support them and honour their memory. On 11 November 1918 the deafening ricochet of guns and artillery finally fell silent on the Western Front. It marked the end of a bloody conflict that saw the death of about 10 million troops during the Great War. For Australia, the First World War remains our costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 417,000 Australians enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. Australians signed up from all parts of the nation—from our largest cities to remote outback stations.

A sizeable number of those veterans were from my electorate of Willoughby. While many of them eventually returned home, tragically others did not. The names of those heroic soldiers, sailors, airmen, nurses, and other service personnel who paid the ultimate sacrifice are etched forever into the plaques of the memorials, shrines and cenotaphs that grace our community. One of these veterans was my great-grandfather, Harry James, who fought for three years on the Western Front before returning home to his wife, Laura, and young son, my grandfather, who was born when his father was at war. Another was his brother, Jack, who never came home. He was a 19-year-old canister maker from Crows Nest. I also again acknowledge, as I did in my first speech, Ted Larkin. Ted Larkin was a former Wallaby, then a rugby league administrator and then the member for Willoughby from December 1913. Within 10 days of the declaration of war, he had enlisted, declaring, "I cannot engage in the work of recruiting and urge others to enlist unless I do so myself." Ted was killed in action on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign. I salute his sacrifice once again.

Remembrance Day is our opportunity to honour the memory of those like Ted and Jack, who gave their lives for our freedom. To this end, I am proud to be leading community efforts to seek to erect a memorial in our local area to honour Ted Larkin for his service and sacrifice. Such a monument would complement the fine memorials that exist across Willoughby, not least the beautiful Garden of Remembrance in Chatswood. I was proud recently to be involved in a successful community campaign to stop Sydney Trains from installing a large digital advertising sign that would have overshadowed the Garden of Remembrance with intrusive advertising. Working with Willoughby City Council and the Chatswood RSL Sub-Branch, I made it clear that this advertising sign proposal could never be supported by the Willoughby community. I welcome the decision to halt installation of the sign. The garden is the site of our community's main services on Anzac and Remembrance days. I am pleased that the garden will remain a place of quiet and solemn reflection for our community and veterans all year round.

I thank the Chatswood RSL Sub-Branch for its support and express my broader appreciation for the magnificent role it plays in supporting our veterans and their families. I also acknowledge the Willoughby Legion Ex-Services Club for its great contribution to our veterans community. As well as honouring our veterans who served in uniform, Remembrance Day is also an occasion to honour the great sacrifice borne by their families and loved ones, especially our war widows. For almost a century since its founding in 1923, Legacy Australia has been at the forefront of helping the families of deceased veterans. Legacy ensures that family members can access health, education, medical support and community support. I know that means so much to those people, who include long-time family and friends of ours. During Legacy Week earlier this year, I was pleased to support its fundraising efforts in my local community, and last week attended its major fundraising lunch in Sydney.

To officially honour our war widows every year, I warmly welcome the initiative of the New South Wales Government to introduce an annual War Widows Day on 19 October. The date is significant as it was also the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey, the founder of the Australian War Widows Guild. This new day of remembrance is a fitting tribute to her legacy as well as due recognition of the sacrifices made by widows and families of our veterans over time. Remembrance Day itself is indeed a solemn day for us all and an opportunity to take stock from our busy lives and pay our respects to those who gave their lives for our sake. This Remembrance Day, I will be honoured to join the Chatswood RSL Sub-Branch and fellow community leaders to attend the Remembrance Day Service at the Chatswood Garden of Remembrance. I encourage everyone in Willoughby to attend Remembrance Day services as we pause to give thanks to those who fought so valiantly and sacrificially for our country and the freedoms we cherish. Lest we forget.

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

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

#### **Messages**

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

### **PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION FOR CONVICTED PERSONS) BILL 2022**

#### **First Reading**

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

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Emma Hurst, MLC, advising that the member for Sydney will have carriage of the bill in this House. I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a future day.

#### *Community Recognition Notices*

#### **AUSTIN ALEXANDER**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I recognise Austin Alexander of Lilli Pilli Football Club for his courage and determination to overcome personal hardship. Austin plays central midfield in the Lilli Pilli 13A team and in 2021 he was the 12A Lilli Pilli Player of the Season. He is well-respected amongst his teammates as both a team leader and high-performing player. In September, Austin suffered a spinal stroke, only hours after he had achieved a personal best in the 800m at school athletics. Austin lost all movement below his chest and could not do the activities he loved. Since his stroke, Austin has been relentless in his determination to get back to the things he loves through therapy and exercise. Austin has now regained function of his lower body and is back walking with assistance. Austin's coach at Lilli Pilli Football Club says that he has never seen more determination in a child than what he has seen in Austin, even before the stroke. He is fiercely intelligent, mature and beyond his years. I wish Austin the best of luck in his recovery journey and hope to see him on the field soon.

### **CRONULLA HIGH SCHOOL 2023 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General)**—I congratulate the 2023 elected school leaders at Cronulla High School. Max Goyen and Alexa Marshall were elected as school captains, and Kye Spencer and Jasmine Ranabhat were elected as vice captains. Eva Ozolins was elected president of the SRC and Sophia Papadatos was elected vice president. Elise Atfield, Josephine Birt, Jessica Blissenden, Riley Fowler, Eli Haynes-Lovell, Charli Hunter, Kurt Montgomery, Spyros Papadatos, Sarah Stanley-Jones, Brayden Ward, and Natsha Zimmin were elected as the 2023 prefects. Student leadership is a unique opportunity to develop essential skills in public speaking, communication, and leadership. As captains, Max, Alexa, Kye, and Jasmine will learn the art of relationship building and teamwork. These skills are important for both school and the modern workplace. I wish the leadership team the best of luck in their roles and studies in 2023.

#### 4K CHARITY

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—The charity 4K is an organisation that aims to support and provide opportunities for children with special needs in the Wingecarribee Shire. The 4K was established in 1989 and after operating for thirty years has raised money for numerous organisations, including the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Childflight and the Shepherd Centre. Since its establishment, 4K has raised \$3.5 million to further their cause. The charity has also founded and funded numerous community programs for young people with special needs. This includes 4K's work with, and funding of, the Bradman Foundation on the Coverdrive Program. This program provides sporting opportunities for children who need physical, mental and social support. Recently, the charity held its first annual gentlemen's luncheon since the COVID-19 Pandemic. The sold out event raised more than \$100,000 and hosted 220 guests, who were all touched by the stories shared on the day by people whose family has been supported by 4K. Thank you to 4K for their incredible work!

#### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WINERIES AWARDED

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—Congratulations to the Southern Highlands wineries that were awarded at the Australian Highlands Wine Show 2022. The 'Wines with Altitude' event saw many wineries in my electorate being awarded and recognised for their quality wines. The event awards Australian wines grown in cool climates at an altitude of 500 metres or above. The Mittagong based winery, Tertini Wines, won the Best Overall Wine In Show award for its 2021 Pinot Noir. Tertini Wines was also awarded the Best Red in Show, Best Pinot Noir and the Best Dessert Wine In Show for the winery's 2019 Noble Viognier. Artemis Wines, also based in Mittagong, was awarded for its 2022 Riesling that won the Best Riesling in Show. The Bowral based winery, Centennial Vineyards, was also awarded for its NV Limited Blanc De Blancs that won the Best Sparkling Wine In Show. The awards are not only a testament to the high quality of the wines, but also the determination required of these wineries in the challenging weather seasons we have had.

#### ROCKCAN 2022

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—In October Mittagong RSL got grooving with Interchange Australia holding its annual RockCan concert. Interchange Australia is an organisation that provides aged care and disability services across the Southern Highlands and nearby areas. RockCan is an initiative of Interchange Australia that offers a music program for people to develop their musical talents, including writing lyrics, learning how to sing and playing various instruments. The participants are able to hone their skills each week under Interchange staff and have the opportunity to perform in the yearly concerts. The RockCan concert aims to showcase the talents of local musicians, with and without disabilities. This year approximately 130 people attended the concert to relax and revel in the musical performances. The Interchange bands that performed included the Hidden Wonders, Thomas and The Terminators. The soloists Michelle Wernick and Olivia Veneran also performed at the concert. Well done to all performers! I also thank Interchange Australia for providing a great creative outlet to members of my electorate and for organising an event that I am sure was greatly enjoyed by all attendees.

#### BANKSTOWN SPORTS NETBALL CLUB

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to attend the presentation night of Bankstown Sports Netball Club on 5 November 2022. Bankstown Sports Netball Club participate in the Bankstown City Netball Association and provide competitive and social netball opportunities for netballers of all ages and levels of experience and abilities. The Club prides itself on its values: friendship, community spirit, teamwork and respect to all members. Netball is an extremely popular sport for women and girls in the Bankstown Electorate, and it was an honour to have the opportunity to congratulate the many players, members and volunteers on their successes over the course of the 2022 Netball season. I wish to acknowledge Bankstown Sports Netball Club President Ashleigh Renton, Secretary Michelle Boulais, and Treasurer Allison Wright for their terrific work in promoting netball in our local community. Congratulations to all players, teams and coaches on a successful season!

#### TRILOGY FOUNDATION CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—Trilogy Foundation is a local charity in Bankstown whose mission is to advance the education of children with special needs. The Trilogy Foundation particularly focuses on supporting children with severe disabilities and they have been operating in my community since 2015. I am proud to advise the House that Trilogy Foundation recently provided \$7000 in funding to Bankstown Public School to support children with weekly Music Therapy for two terms. I understand that this support from Trilogy is achieving very positive outcomes for the children in their behaviour and broader learning. I would like to acknowledge the Trilogy Foundation committee, President Maureen Agathocleous, Treasurer Pauline Hedman, Public Officer Glen Waud, Vice President Angela Gatt, Secretary Kirrily Hoscher, and new Committee Members



Deborah Watts and Bob Beer. The foundation is growing from strength to strength and on behalf of the entire Bankstown Community I thank them for the important role they are playing in supporting local children with special needs.

### **BIRRONG SPORTS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—As both the member for Bankstown and a local soccer mum, I was really proud to acknowledge the achievements of the Birrong Sports Football Club which was highlighted at their junior presentation day on 29 October at Villawood Bowling Club. Birrong Sports FC is the lifeblood of the local Birrong community. For many generations, local families and their children have been associated with this great grassroots sporting club. I want to congratulate the many hundreds of players who completed the 2022 football season at Birrong – it was a tough season with many washed out games, but the Club achieved some great results including Under 12 Boys Division 3 on winning their respective competition, Under 16 Boys Division 2, All Age Men's 5B and All Age Ladies Division 1 for their runners up finish. I thank the executive committee for their tireless efforts: President Tyrone Wait, Vice President Phillip Maratheftis, Treasurer Ann Wait and Secretary Michelle Davis. The Club is in great hands under their leadership. I look forward to seeing Birrong Sports grow to be an even stronger club in 2023. They truly are the Pride of Birrong!

### **LOCAL CRICKET CLUBS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Local cricket on all levels has flourished in recent years, including in Sydney's north. In my electorate of Davidson we have various cricket clubs where senior cricketers enjoy both social and competitive cricket and juniors as young as five are taught important skills. Australia hosting the T20 World Cup has boosted numbers playing cricket. Almost 11,000 junior boys and girls are registered with Cricket NSW and playing in Sydney's northern suburbs along with about 6,000 senior male and female cricketers. They play on beautiful grounds – the Wakehurst Redbacks at the recently resurfaced Lionel Watts Oval in Belrose, Lindfield District Cricket Club at Lindfield Oval, and the St Ives Junior Cricket Club, creating budding champions of tomorrow at Hassall Park. Gordon District Cricket Club's lower grade home is Bert Oldfield Oval in Killara. Gordon Old Boys include Adam Gilchrist, Victor Trumper and Neil Harvey, and Oldfield himself. Bert, who lived a lofted six away from the oval, only missed one test in his career when his skull was fractured by Harold Larwood in the Bodyline series. I commend Cricket NSW for its continued patronage of local cricket and the local clubs for their enthusiastic support of junior cricket.

### **ANNABELLE**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley)**—Recently, young Oxley resident, Annabelle Shelton was honoured to captain the Far Northern NSW 14s girls team at the National Schools Futsal Championships in Brisbane against teams from right across the country. Showing strong leadership and court skills, Annabelle has now been selected to represent Australia in the U14s girls Futsal team on their international tour of the UK in April 2023, featuring matches against teams from England, Scotland, and Wales. Annabelle is 13-years-old and a year 7 student at Nambucca Valley Christian Community School. She has represented the school at State and Regional carnivals in swimming, athletics, cross country, soccer, touch football and futsal. Annabelle is a current member of the Liverpool Academy Squad in Coffs Harbour. She played in the grand finals' winning U16s team for Bellingen Football Club in the North Coast Football region. She was most recently a member of the winning Champion of Champions tournament team and recently Annabelle was selected in a futsal talent identification program to play in Sydney next January. Her dream is to play for the Matildas at the 2032 Olympics. My best wishes to Annabelle's future endeavours and I encourage the community to get behind this young sportsperson.

### **MAMMA MIA! A PRODUCTION OF THE ALBATROSS MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I was extremely pleased to attend Mamma Mia! a production of the Albatross Musical Theatre Company at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre on Saturday 5th November 2022. I acknowledge the following AMTC Committee Members including: President Merrin Ross OAM, Vice President Ron Hawthorne, Secretary Julie Fraser, Treasurer Greg Lloyd, Committee Members: Julie Armstrong OAM, Wendy Bilbey, Graham Dyer, Paul Fraser and Angelique Riou. All performances of this magnitude depend on large hard-working and very committed teams of volunteers. I also acknowledge Greg Lloyd as Stage Manager and Leisa Ebdon as Costume Director. The amazing Band. I also acknowledge the production team – Wendy Bilbey as Producer and Laura Turner as Director. And Graham Dyer as Director. Simon Pavitt as vocal director and Tenneil Withers as choreographer.

### **THE GERRINGONG MUSIC CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The Gerringong Music Club has seen the return of the colourful and entertaining Balalaika Orchestra, 10 years after they first performed. I would like to acknowledge Gillian Spooner from the Gerringong Music Club. On Sunday 30th October 2022 at the Gerringong Town Hall, they performed a

very diverse program of traditional Russian folk music and light classics with orchestral performers and singers dressed in attractive folk costumes. Typical Russian folk orchestra features the Domra, Balalaika, Bayan, Zhaleika, and various other woodwind instruments and percussion. The orchestra – which has played in venues such as the Sydney Opera House, NSW Art Gallery, Riverside Theatre and Sydney Conservatorium of Music – continues to be led by Musical Director, Victor Serghie, who is also the principal arranger. The orchestra's 28 players and singers are a microcosm of the multicultural fabric of Australian society with performers from a diverse range of ethnic origins: Armenian, Belarusian, Chinese, Danish, Indian, Irish, North American, Polish, Serbian and Ukrainian, as well as Australian and Russian.

#### **POP UP CHOCOLATE CAFE AT THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE IN GERRINGONG**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—After operating their factory at the Old Schoolhouse in Gerringong since May, artisan chocolate makers Tilda & Cacao held a pop-up cafe in Gerringong that they hope will be the first of many. With Clay Coffee, owners Erik Lau and Sarah Cromwell are opening the doors of the Schoolhouse as a chocolate cafe over two days, to allow people to meet their local chocolate maker and see where their crafted chocolate is made. As a pastry chef and chocolatier for 15 years, Sarah is keen to make raw, vegan treats and dairy and gluten free baked goods with Tilda & Cacao chocolate for the cafe. They plan to hold more pop-up cafes in the future. The plan is to do it on a regular basis, maybe every three weeks, where each time they will do something special. The Tilda & Cacao team – which includes taste tester Rosie, their six-year-old daughter – plan to hold chocolate workshops next year for children and are also open to a permanent venture. Their chocolate is available at speciality stockists, markets and online. Their pop-up event was held on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th November 2022.

#### **HABERFIELD CELEBRATION OF GARDENS WINNERS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I extend a warm congratulations to the distinguished winners of the 2022 Haberfield Celebration of Gardens. In total, thirty-four gardens across Haberfield were assessed by a knowledgeable team of judges, and placed into five categories: Pot Garden, Kitchen Garden, Back/Side Garden, Front Garden, and Whole Garden. The winners, who delivered the highest quality arrangements for this year's competition, were announced at the Haberfield Association's Gala Presentation Night hosted on 18 October. In the spirit of this momentous occasion, I had the opportunity to meet with some of these talented green thumbs last Thursday and catch a glimpse into a true masterclass of gardening. For welcoming me into your beautiful gardens and showing such wonderful hospitality, I would like to thank: Stewart and Caroline Clegg, winners of the Whole Garden category; Vittorio Locantro, winner for his Front/Side Garden; and Maureen Burdyski and Colin Menzies, winners of the Back/Side Garden category. I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic achievements of these gardening superstars: Vittoria Franze, winner of the Pot Garden category; Patrick Marshall, Peter and Angelo Tooth, and Elena Sottolano, who came equal-first in the Kitchen Garden category.

#### **RENEE HARDING**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge and thank Ms Renee Harding, a Dapto resident who is helping to break down the stigma of complex mental health issues, a range of conditions which impacts more than 800,000 Australians. Renee has just finished her training at Flourish Australia, where she works as a team coordinator peer specialist, offering reflective conversations with people as someone with a lived experience of mental illness. Flourish helps people with a lived experience feel supported and meet their everyday challenges, allowing them to live ordinary, even extraordinary lives. It is Renee's mission to break down the stigma of mental illness and be the person others can turn to without judgement. I commend Renee for her efforts in breaking down the stigma of complex mental health issues.

#### **WULFF BREITSAMETER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Today I acknowledge the achievements of 78 year old Wulff Breitsameter, one of the Illawarra's strongest men, and quite possibly the strongest in the country in his age group. Wulff recently competed in two power lifting competitions where he was able to break two of his own records. Wulff was able to bench press 127 kilograms in Sydney and then followed up this performance with a 127.5-kilogram bench press in a subsequent competition in Canberra. In 2015 Wulff greatly achieved three gold medals while also breaking three world records at the Global Powerlifting Association World Championships in Athens, Georgia. Mr Breitsameter is a great figure to take inspiration from regarding our health and he should be commended for this. People of all ages should look to the feats of strength he is able to perform and how anybody at any age can be healthy and strong.

#### **INNER WEST ICONS PODCAST**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I am pleased to recognise the Inner West Icons podcast: an informative and creative project that celebrates the local history and stories of our vibrant community. The idea

was hatched by podcast producer Jane Curtis who, when moving to the Inner West three years ago, quickly understood why our locals are so proud of their home. Inner West Icons has proven to be an interesting and accessible entry point for so many people who would like to learn more about the area's unique historical offerings. With its first episode launching in May this year, season one of the podcast has featured five interesting deep dives into different hallmarks of the Inner West. Inner West Icons has attracted local fans, as well as curious listeners all around Sydney. There is no doubt that season one has left them eager for more! I look forward to listening to all the fascinating stories that await us in season two. I thank the true icons behind this educational endeavour and display of community pride: producer, researcher, and editor, Jane Curtis; host, Bernie Hobbs; and sound engineer, John Jacobs.

#### **AFL WOMEN'S AT HENSON PARK**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—With five AFL Women's games hosted at Marrickville's Henson Park, the real winners of this season were all the football lovers around the Inner West. The Inner West has always been home to a lively sporting culture, and throughout October, local fans had plenty of opportunities to catch a game right in their backyards. On Sunday 30 October, football fans came out in force to Henson Park for round ten, the last game of AFLW Season Seven. The long-awaited match saw the Greater Western Sydney Giants go head-to-head with the Gold Coast Suns. In a triumphant effort, the Giants took the match 44-32, winning by an excellent twelve-point lead. As the sun set, Giants fans rejoiced for the last time this year at our iconic Henson Park. It will certainly be remembered as a milestone game for the Giants and also for all our local football fans. Thank you AFL Women's for making a home here in Marrickville.

#### **JACOB WOLKI - 2022 MURRAY-RIVERINA BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Jacob Wolki from Albury who was awarded the outstanding young business leader at this year's 2022 Murray-Riverina Business Awards on 3rd November. The gala night was held at Whitton Malt House in the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Jacob has gone from selling bikes (Cycle Station in Albury), to opening the adjoining Café Musette, to butchery and more, diversifying his business interests in our community. The Wolki family have a strong business acumen and we can all learn from their five principles of business: welfare advocacy, having an environmental backbone, a community conscience, providing healing food and supporting farms to be profitable. Well done Jacob for taking on opportunities and creating a set of businesses guided by principles which bring strength and resilience to our community.

#### **MURRAY RIVERINA BUSINESS OF THE YEAR – MEET PAT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Nick Roseby and Nick Robinson, owners of South Albury business Meet PAT, who have received the Business of the Year award as well as taking the prize for 'Excellence in Innovation' prize at the 2022 Murray-Riverina Business Awards on 3rd November. The gala night was held at Whitton Malt House in the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Meet PAT was recognised for its great business performance, outstanding results and strong management. Meet PAT is finding new markets for its innovative products, both domestically and on the international market. Well done to the team at Meet PAT for combining great design with water saving smart technology to reduce waste and improve performance.

#### **MURRAY VALLEYS SANCTUARY REFUGEE GROUP FUND RAISER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group who organised a Fundraiser at Splitters Creek Albury last month called 'Famous Fakes Auction'. The group is made up of volunteers who do invaluable work assisting in helping settle refugees in our regional areas. The group of volunteers offer Multicultural Settlement Services including assistance in obtaining driving lessons, presenting forums for parenting, literacy education, helping people in obtaining employment, finding tertiary and cultural scholarships and more. The Famous Fakes Auction was an event three years in the making. Local artists created copies of famous paintings which were then donated for this cause. It's pleasing to see how the auction raised \$15,000 for the work of the refugee group. I would like to make special mention of those who made this event successful; including artist Meg Sprouster who organised the art work, the many artists who donated their work, organiser of the event Lynette Frauenfelder and committee, Vice President Sandra Blake, Penny Vine, David Thurley and the community of Splitters Creek, and connecting towns who donated generously to help raise money for those settling in Albury Wodonga.

#### **GEOFFREY WILLIAMS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—To be awarded life membership of any organisation, is to be recognised for years of long-term dedication, loyalty and passion. For more than 40 years Geoffrey Williams of Wallsend has shown his commitment to the Australian Labor Party. This was acknowledged at the 2022 State Labor Conference, with Geoffrey being presented with life membership of the party. Geoffrey was nominated by

the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, Newcastle and Northern Branch, where he served as Secretary for many years. Geoff has been a member of the Wallsend Branch of the Australian Labor Party since he joined the party in the 1965. Thank you, Geoffrey, for your contribution to the Australian Labor Party, and congratulations on your well-deserved life membership.

#### **LASER PLUMBING NEWCASTLE CENTRAL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Waratah-based Laser Plumbing Newcastle Central is a tightly run family business delivering professional plumbing, roofing, drainage and gas fitting works for commercial, industrial, government and domestic clients throughout the Wallsend electorate and around the Hunter. The business has been recognised for its fantastic work at the Hunter Business Awards several times in recent years, winning for Outstanding Plumbing Services in 2021 and 2022, and being recognised as a finalist in 2020. Company director Ian was born and raised in Newcastle, and proudly calls our wonderful city his hometown. He has had over twenty-four years in the plumbing industry, together his team has more than a century of experience in the trade. Ian reports that he has developed a real passion for delivering a profession and reliable plumbing. The company has done work for NSW government agencies, local governments in the Hunter region, and has undertaken countless other projects. My congratulations to Ian and his team on this well-deserved recognition. Well done, and I wish you all the best for the future!

#### **GLOBAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Thanks to our extraordinary local scientists and researchers, the Wallsend electorate is fast becoming an expertise hub in the global fight against cancer, with the opening of a world-first radiation oncology centre at the University of Newcastle. Led by its director, Associate Professor Yolanda Surjan, and designed to emulate a functioning radiation oncology facility, the Global Centre for Research and Training in Radiation Oncology offers access to industry-grade technology such as a linear accelerator, a CT scanner, and virtual reality technology. This centre provides a safe environment for students to gain practical skills before beginning clinical practice, allowing them to hit the ground running, improving care and patient experience. The centre has formed international partnerships in the United States and Sweden, and Associate Professor Surjan and her team have developed some short courses to help train colleagues in Vietnam. These courses have been accredited by the United Nations. Congratulations for all this vital, life-saving work.

#### **NARRANDERA-LEETON AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE SQUADRON**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I extend a massive congratulations to the Narrandera-Leeton Australian Air League Squadron on being presented with the Encouragement Shield for Best Squadron. Recently Leading Cadet William Beard, Cadet Chance Briggs and Cadet Angus Gunn along with their Squadron Officer Captain Robert Manning and Officer Christine Peters flew to Galston Gorge for a leadership training weekend. The weekend involved the Cadets learning of core leadership values through to promotion of merit. During their training weekend the Narrandera-Leeton Australian Air League Squadron was awarded the prestigious award. I am advised the weekend is extremely worthwhile in raising the level of understanding for the future of the cadets, who will most likely undertake careers in the aviation field. The Squadron wished to thank REX airlines on granting them a community discount so that the 5 members could fly to the training at a reduced cost. Congratulations once again to Leading Cadet William, Cadet Angus, Cadet Chance, OC Bob Manning and Officer Peters on this well-deserving award and I look forward to catching up with you all soon.

#### **JENNIFER BIRCH AND TREVOR KNIGHT, GRENFELL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I wish to congratulate the efforts of Jennifer Birch and her brother, Trevor Knight, both of Grenfell, following the Great Cycle Challenge. The challenge raises funds throughout the month of October for the very worthwhile cause of children's cancer. Challenge participants set fundraising and distance targets, with both Jennifer and Trevor going well beyond their initial expectations. Each of them raised well over \$1000 thanks to the generosity of family, friends and locals. In doing so, Jennifer rode over 210kms and Trevor rode over 240kms around the Grenfell area. This is a fantastic contribution to have made for the fight against children's cancer. Not only is it an important cause close to the hearts of many, but it has also set a tremendous example of reaching a goal through exercise and being outdoors - Jennifer's fundraising profile features a photo of her in front of a canola crop, with October being a beautiful time of year to peddle around the district. Congratulations to Jennifer and Trevor on this inspiring fundraising effort and all the very best as you look to do it again in 2023.

#### **DIWALI CELEBRATION IN YOUNG**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra—Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and Minister for Flood Recovery)**—I would like to recognise the Indian community of Young as they came together to

celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolising the spiritual victory of light over darkness. Diwali this year was very special as the whole Indian community joined together to host the celebration at the decorated Young Town Hall featuring traditional art, Rangoli, and rows upon rows of lights. Entertainment was aplenty during the evening and there was a variety of delicious traditional cuisine. Traditional attire was worn for dance performances and there were magicians for the kids. Diwali brought together different religious faiths on the evening including Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist in order to celebrate the diversity amongst the vibrant local community of Young. I am thrilled to see one of my small communities celebrate such a wonderful cultural event. Diwali holds great significance in terms of brotherhood, friendship, and relationships throughout life. Thank you to the Indian community and Hilltops Council in Young for organising, hosting and promoting this event.

#### **HOLROYD COMMUNITY AID**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted attend the 54th AGM of Holroyd Community Aid on 27 October in Merrylands. HCA provides emergency assistance and financial support to vulnerable members of our community. For over 50 years they have been there when people need help most. They operate an op shop on Miller Street, Merrylands and support members of the community with EAPA vouchers for electricity bills and food vouchers. We saw a drastic increase in need during the pandemic and unfortunately it appears that need continues to grow due to current cost of living challenges. Thank you to Coordinator Selina Chen, and the management committee for the invitation to attend their AGM. Thank you also to the whole team for what they do to make our community an even better place.

#### **REKHA AND SUE'S PINK RIBBON BREAKFAST**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted attend Rekha and Sue's Pink Ribbon Breakfast on 9 October 2022 at Parravilla in Parramatta. The 10th anniversary breakfast is unique in that attendees wear pink saree. It continues to raise awareness about breast cancer in the Indian community and raises much needed funds every year. Rekha and Sue want to make a real difference to Australians affected by breast cancer. All donations made to this page will help do exactly that. The National Breast Cancer Foundation is Australia's leading national body funding game-changing breast cancer research with money raised entirely by the Australian public – including \$8,814 from the breakfast. In the words of Rekha and Sue, research is the best way to prevent deaths, and improve how breast cancer is diagnosed, managed and treated. NBCF is working towards one goal: zero deaths from breast cancer. Together we can help them get there. Thank you to Rekha and Sue for the invitation to join them at the breakfast and their long term commitment to raising awareness about breast cancer.

#### **AFEFAH ESBER PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE AWARDS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 10 November Fifi Esber in my electorate office was recognised for a distinguished career working for Western Sydney Members of Parliament. I had the privilege of working with Fifi in Kim Yeadon's electorate office in 1997 and got to know her well. I was especially pleased Fifi was able to come to the Granville electorate office from 2015 to work for me. Over many years Fifi also worked as an electorate officer for the Hon Pam Allan (Wentworthville), the Hon David Borger (Granville), the Hon Barbara Perry (Auburn) and the Hon Nathan Rees (Toongabbie). I want to thank Fifi for her commitment and professionalism in my office since 2015. I know my constituents know they can always come to my office for help and they know they will always receive gold-class from Fifi, even for the most difficult case. Congratulations Fifi and I look forward to working with you for many years to come.

#### **MISSION OF HOPE MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE 2022**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On Thursday 27 October I had the privilege of attending Mission of Hope's two-day Mental Health Conference in Bankstown. 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 Muslim and other Culturally and Linguistically diverse communities in Sydney. To present this conference, they partnered with the Islamic Sciences Research Academic [ISRA] to present international and local presenters, mental health professionals, spiritual leaders, researchers, and clinicians. The main aims of the conference were to share knowledge on multicultural mental health as it relates to Australian Muslims; increase awareness of the mental health issues facing Muslims and culturally diverse clients; the need for culturally and faith-appropriate mental health and well-being resources and services; and to increase access to culturally and spiritually appropriate mental health resources to Muslim and culturally diverse communities. I would like to congratulate Mission of Hope, their partner Islamic Science Research Academic, and their team for organising this event to facilitate, engage and support our diverse community's understanding of mental health.

### MULTICULTURAL MAWLID CONCERT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—I am very proud to acknowledge the 13th Annual Multicultural Mawlid Concert, organised under the patronage of Darulfatwa in which I proudly participated on the 16th of October 2022. Muslims celebrate the Mawlid meaning the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad around the world and the first mawlid is estimated to have begun in the Year 1207 as the first mawlid festival. Mawlid Concert is a joyful event during which Muslims across the world gather and celebrate in festivals, prayer services, recitations of poetry and religious gatherings led by His Eminence Professor Sheikh Salim Alwan the Chairman of Darulfatwa. Every year Darulfatwa, the High Islamic Council of Australia, brings together Muslims Australia-wide to celebrate in the form of a concert. Darulfatwa annually organises representatives of Australian Muslims who hail from Bosnia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Africa, Lebanon, Middle Eastern nations, and many others. The Mawlid Concert's success could not have been possible if it were not for Australia being welcoming to all faiths and none. I am so proud that Australian Muslims can commemorate and celebrate freely in the best country in the world.

### CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On Sunday 30 October I had the pleasure of attending the Canterbury-Bankstown Children's Festival organised by the Children's Festival Organisation. This year's Festival was held at Abel Reserve in Revesby. It is a celebration of young people and our modern Australia. It is a beautiful event that brings our whole community together. This was the twenty second Children's Festival in Bankstown and thirty seventh in NSW. It is clear that the Children's Festival has more than met the hopes of our community. It has contributed to harmony building demonstrated by the enthusiasm of participants on display. The Festival featured on-stage performances, a colourful children's parade and dozens of outdoor games as well as poster design activities and essay writing competitions. Due to the pandemic, our community has missed out on this amazing Festival. I am thrilled that we now get to enjoy it once more and look forward to many more festivals to come. My thanks goes out to Thuat Nguyen AM and the Organising Committee on a terrific event, which showcases the diversity of a community I am so proud to be a part of.

### 100 YEARS OF VINNIES CELEBRATION

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Vinnies on reaching the landmark of 100 years of Vinnies shops. It was so special to be able to join NSW CEO Jack de Groot, Chair Richard Stewart along with the wonderful regional and local teams of staff and volunteers at the Newtown Vinnies on King Street for this celebration - and to officially open the renovated store. The Newtown Vinnies is a landmark in our electorate, being the first ever Vinnies to open 100 years ago, followed by the second Vinnies store opening in Petersham in 1929. Vinnies does such important work supporting communities, particularly in their advocacy in tackling housing instability and homelessness, and the Vinnies shops play a significant role in combatting the negative impacts of fast fashion. I thank the hundreds of Vinnies staff and volunteers that work hard everyday to provide vital assistance to people experiencing hardship.

### WOMEN'S HOUSING ROUNDTABLE

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On Wednesday 26 October we were pleased to co-host a Women's Housing Roundtable at NSW Parliament to discuss the crisis we are facing for housing, women's safety and for inequality. On behalf of the Newtown electorate I want to thank Domestic Violence NSW, Shelter NSW, and the Older Women's Network NSW for co-hosting this roundtable. I also want to thank representatives from Bridge Housing, Ageing on the Edge, Homelessness NSW, Immigrant Women's Speakout, the Community Housing Industry Association NSW, NCOSS, the Physical Disability Council, PIAC, the Tenants Union of NSW, the Gender Centre, the Australasian Housing Institute, the Women's & Girls' Emergency Centre, Women's Community Shelters, the Women's Housing Company, the Women's Justice Network, and Y-Foundations, as well as Abigail Boyd MLC and Deputy Lord Mayor Sylvie Ellsmore for attending and their tireless work to fix the housing crisis and entrenched disadvantages faced by women. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with these wonderful people and organisations to solve the housing and homelessness crisis in this state.

### BRIAN WOOD

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police)**—I would like to congratulate born and bred Bathurst local Brian Wood on a wonderful sporting accolade. Brian has been named in the list of finest 50 first grade representatives to have played for the Penrith Cricket Club. This took place recently when the club held a gala function to celebrate 50 years since the club was admitted to the Sydney grade cricket competition. During a career spanning a decade with Penrith which started in the summer of 1981-82, Brian was described as an opening batsman of the highest order who was an accumulator of runs and a weapon in the field. During his time in Sydney Brian was a member of the NSW Sheffield Shield squad as well as playing for the NSW second XI and NSW Colts. He also represented NSW

Schoolboys and the NSW Country open XI before heading to Sydney to test his skills at the highest of levels. With numerous centuries and a first grade double century with Penrith to his name, I know Brian is highly respected in cricket circles wherever he goes. Well done Brian, you are another example of Bathurst being a breeding ground for fine sportspeople.

#### **KU-RING-GAI PROBUS CLUBS**

**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)**—Probus Clubs offer an exciting opportunity for retirees and semi-retirees. Whether it involves making new friends, listening to guest speakers, learning new skills, exploring new interests or taking tours – there is much to do for the more than 110,000 members across Australia and New Zealand. Each year on 1 October, Probus Clubs promote the benefits of their organisation to the wider community – an occasion known as Probus Day. One day prior, I held an afternoon tea in my electorate office with representatives from local clubs, including John Dennis of Ku-ring-gai Chase Mixed Probus Club, Doug Shaw of Ku-ring-gai West Combined Probus Club, Alan Simons of Pymble Probus Club, Anne Hunter of St Ives Probus Club, and Robert Plant of Warrawee Probus. I can certainly say the heart of Probus is made up of its members, the senior Australians who facilitate fun and friendship in retirement. But it can only continue with the addition of new members which is why I encourage anyone over 55 to consider joining. Thank you to all Probus Clubs in Ku-ring-gai and across Australia who keep our seniors busy, engaged, active and connected.

#### **2022 PARLI-FLICKS AWARD WINNER AVA GROVES**

**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)**—It is vital that young people are engaged in our political process. Parliamentary initiatives like the Parli-Flicks Short Film Award is invaluable in engaging young people by capturing their unique perspectives on our democracy. This year, secondary students across NSW were asked to create a film that answered the question, 'Parliament! Why do we need it?'. I am pleased that Ava Groves, a student in the Ku-ring-gai Electorate, was the overall winner this year. In her video, Ava made a nuanced case for why Parliament is not perfect, but an opportunity to give everyone a say in their democracy no matter who they are or where they are from. It was informative and enjoyable, and this fusion is a wonderful way to encourage young people to engage in the political process. Congratulations to Ava, her family, and the Parliamentary Communication, Education and Engagement Team. I wish Ava good luck in school and her future endeavours.

#### **LUKE – MOUNT ANNAN HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate year 7 student Luke from Mount Annan High School who recently came 2nd in the ISKA CCP 25th Anniversary Karate Tournament. I have participated in martial arts, and I know firsthand the skills and benefits gained through practice and participation. Karate, and martial arts, can be a great way to learn more about your abilities and to sharpen your discipline, both highly beneficial skills for school and life. Luke's 2nd place position means that he will compete in the ISKA Australia open tournament in December. I commend him for his efforts and wish him the very best of luck in the December Tournament.

#### **MIRACLE BABIES FOUNDATION VISIT AND MORNING TEA**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I have had the distinct pleasure of visiting the new headquarters of the Miracle Babies Foundation, now in Liverpool. I, along with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and Melanie Gibbons MP, Member for Holsworthy, presented Miracle Babies the great news that the NSW Government has committed \$50,000 per year for two years to secure the new Liverpool location. I was also blessed to be able to attend the Miracle Babies Foundation Supporters Morning Tea recently. I was inspired to hear about the journeys from the families involved in the foundation. Journeys overflowing with hope and resilience, heartache and stress, and importantly joy. Thank you to Kylie, the team at Miracle Babies, and the families for sharing their inspiring and moving journeys. I am thrilled to be able to support the Miracle Babies Foundation and I wish them every success moving forward.

#### **HARRINGTON UNITED FC THE HORNETS – U14**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I am proud to commend the Harrington United Football Club, "The Hornets" under 14's team on their performance in the Final match for the Champion of Champions tournament. The Hornets under 14's have proven themselves to be a force on the field with their impressive performance against Lindfield FC. Whilst the final result was 2-1, Lindfield FC's way, The Hornets competed with a rare level of tenacity and passion. The Champion of Champions tournament is a battle of the very best teams and to qualify in the final is an impressive feat itself. Well done to the team: Ripeka, Libby, Isabella, Jessica,

Gicela, Charlize F, Ashlee, Sofia, Amelia, Rachel, Charlize W, Annalise, Hunter, Elizabeth, and Millie. Led by President Ray Zammit, the Harrington United FC Hornets Committee, have proven themselves to be a powerhouse Football Club. Congratulations on your wins and accolades.

#### **CHRISTIAN ROSE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to recognise a fantastic young gentleman, Christian Rose. A HSC student, Christian has never demanded the spotlight. Yet recently, this community-minded student was one of twenty-six students recognised by Chief Justice of the NSW Supreme Court, Andrew Bell for his commendable commitment to social justice and community. Christian is a Life Member and Youth Committee representative for Central Coast Ugnay Kabayan since 2019. Christian's virtues of service, compassion and peace have seen deliver programs dealing with social justice issues, including low-cost accommodation and anti-violence advocacy support, particularly for women and children. He provides technical assistance, participation at cultural festivals and promotion of events; he draws on his heritage as a Filipino-Australian to build community. Christian also coaches basketball, mentoring young people to improve their skills and encourages personal growth. Often, Christian will work with new and multi-cultural basketball players to create a sense of belonging and supportive atmosphere, all while keeping physically healthy. With a personal interest in photography, Christian can frequently be seen volunteering at community sports and events. This award recognised school students who have shown exceptional commitment to their community as exemplary role models. Congratulations Christian.

#### **WYONG WINS FIREFIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—As Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, I would love to celebrate a particular firefighting team. Firefighters from Fire and Rescue NSW Station 505 Wyong have taken home the Firefighter State Championship, known as the Alfred Webb Cup, which was recently held in Port Macquarie. Over 60 people from 15 teams competed for the title, where their skills, professionalism and training was tested in events which simulate fire and rescue situations. Incredibly, our Wyong team accrued a total of 2175 points, smashing the competition with a margin of 780 points on second place. While the event is designed to be fun and exciting for the crew members, it is a fantastic way to hone skills that are critical to firefighters in real-life situations. The aim is to develop, maintain and engage operational skills, using friendly competition to encourage improvement. It also involved the community, supporting wider education on fire safety. I could not be more proud of the Wyong crew. This is the second time the team have taken out the championship. Such achievements are indicative of their hard work, training and commitment to the cause. Congratulations.

#### **GLOBAL KIDS CLOTHES**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to thank Denise McKnight for her work with our local community which has had international impact. Patricia leads a group of volunteers from Hardy's Bay who dedicate hours to making clothes for children, from babies to 12 years, who are in crisis or living in developing nations. This brings together our local community around an international humanitarian cause. The garments are made by women who have strong sewing expertise and have the common goal of wanting to make a real difference to the lives of those in need. Denise started this organisation in 2015. Since, nearly 10,000 apparel items have been made and sent to 31 different countries. The community group meets every Wednesday, where Denise coordinates a team of volunteers to ensure a smooth operation. Most material is donated, and the garments are made with love. A fantastic by-product of this humanitarian aid is the opportunity to connect as a community; Denise's project brings together women of all ages. I would like to thank the team of volunteers for their generosity, and a special thank you to Denise McKnight for her vision and delivery of humanitarian aid.

#### **SERGEANT NATHAN TRUEMAN – NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2022**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Sergeant Nathan Trueman, Parramatta Police Area Command [PAC] on being selected as a Finalist for the Rotary Club of NSW Irene Juergens APM Fellowship Award. This Award recognises outstanding individual contributions to community-based policing by both sworn and unsworn employees. Acknowledging those who demonstrate a personal commitment to engagement and crime prevention. Sergeant Trueman has made an important contribution to our community, supporting the delivery of the Cobham Youth Justice Centre [YJC] for the past three years. Sergeant Trueman has been instrumental in creating an Oz Tag program, allowing young people to play sport against teams including Cobham Staff and other NSW PAC units including Blacktown, Parramatta and Penrith PACs. He is also a presenter at the centre supporting the Healthy Relationships Program and is currently working on the implementation of a knife crime awareness program. Sergeant Trueman's willingness to support young people to make improved life choices, greatly benefits our community. Thank you Sergeant Trueman for your service. You are a truly deserving finalist for this award. I cannot wait to see what further contributions you will make to inspire young people in our community.



**SERGEANT STEVEN PLANINIC – NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2022**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Sergeant Steven Planinic, Auburn Police Area Command, on being awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award, at the Rotary Clubs of NSW, Police Officers of the Year Awards on November 4th 2022. This Award recognises exceptional customer service provided to members of the community, and those police who contribute to the overall customer service policy by their involvement in communications, problem solving, and innovation. Sergeant Planinic's initiative and unwavering contribution to the NSW Police Legacy and the wider community is clearly demonstrated through his not-for-profit program "Beat the Blue" which commenced in 2016. Beat the Blue is geared towards educating at risk groups of drivers on road craft vehicle dynamics and road safety. Sergeant Planinic's dedication to our community is further exemplified through his development and management of a learner driver safety night program which occurs on a monthly basis. Through Sergeant Planinic's hard work, these programs have enabled greater road safety awareness and a more positive police image in our community. Thank you for your service to our community Sergeant Planinic. You are a very deserving recipient of this Award.

**NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2022 – CONSTABLE THOMAS HEISER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Constable Thomas Heiser, Cumberland Police Area Command [PAC] on being selected as a Finalist for the Rotary Clubs of NSW Metropolitan Field Operations, Police Officer of the Year Award 2022. This Award recognises policing excellence for sworn officers performing duties within the Metropolitan Field Operations Command. Constable Heiser attested from the NSW Police Academy in May 2019. Since that time, he has shown himself to be a diligent, hardworking officer who completes his duties efficiently and without complaint. To date, Constable Heiser has charged 141 persons and completed 248 proactive incidents. His dedication to his duties have been actively demonstrated through his quick and decisive nature, as well as his leadership skills. Recently Constable Heiser was able to successfully diffuse a self-harm incident, ensuring the victim's safe transportation to the paramedics. He has also prepared evidence briefs resulting in a successful prosecution rate of almost 100 per cent. This demonstrates his competence, as a rising star in the NSW Police Force. Thank you Constable Heiser for your service. You are a truly deserving finalist for this award.

**LEYTE GULF LANDING COMMEMORATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—On 22 October the Philippino Community in Liverpool, and especially the Visayan Association of Australia held a commemoration of the 78th Anniversary of the Leyte Gulf Landing. This was the landing of Allied troops in the Philippines in the Second World War which led to the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese occupation. The battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle of the twentieth century, saw the first organised use of kamikaze aircraft and resulted in the end of the effective role of the Japanese Imperial Navy in the Second World War. The Allied forces involved included a number of Australian ships. I acknowledge the role of the Visayan President Jhun Salazar in the event and the contribution of Richard Ford as General MacArthur. Also present were Liverpool Parish Priest Father Paul Monkerud and Carole North-Samardzic.

**KOREAN SPEECH CONTEST WINNER, ERICA CHAI**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—Congratulations to Erica Chai who won the 2022 Korean Speech Contest for high school students hosted by the Korean Education Centre in Sydney. The aim of the contest is to encourage and promote learning Korean as a second language and highlight the creativity of students as they present in Korean. Erica is in year 10 at Strathfield Girls High School and has been learning Korean for four years. Erica delivered a 5-minute speech in the Non-background division on the theme 'why I am learning Korean'. As part of this speech, Erica spoke about the many changes that happened to her during the process of learning Korean. The enrichment and engagement that comes with learning a second language is always accompanied by both expected and unexpected growth. Erica was awarded a round trip to Korea to participate in an education program for international youth, a program that will no doubt provide many other excellent experiences and opportunities. Congratulations to Erica on her wonderful achievement. Winning such a prize is a testament to her commitment and drive.

**MONARO EDUCATION HERO**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—I rise to acknowledge a remarkable man who for over a decade has supported regional and rural children accessing quality education despite the limitations of their locality. Mr Duncan Taylor of Nimmitabel was honoured with 'Life Membership' of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association [ICPA] Monaro Branch for his outstanding and valuable services to the education of isolated children. During his time with the ICPA Duncan has been a hardworking and dedicated member and is only one of three Life Members of the branch. The ICPA has its roots firmly embedded in regional and remote Australia. The ICPA

was founded in 1971 in Bourke NSW, following the closure of the Bourke Hostel that had provided much-needed accommodation for children living on remote properties so they could access education. Regional and remote children have directly benefited from the efforts of Duncan. Duncan is well known throughout the halls of power, he went into the regions around Australia as a member of the State Council, he listened to their concerns, and he brought them here to this place, directly to those who needed to hear it. I thank Duncan wholeheartedly for his dedication to the children of NSW.

#### **MONTE STUDENTS EXCEL AT THE FESTIVAL OF SPEECH COMPETITION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge students from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, in my electorate, for their recent success at the Festival of Speech held at Pymble Ladies' College. The competition featured 27 teams from independent Girls' Schools across the state. Monte students entered into multiple categories: Current Affairs, Public Speaking, Debating and Reading. I recognise year nine students Alannah Byrne, Annie Taylor, Elise Boyle, and Selina Ye, who won the competition's Junior Division for their strong debating performance. I also recognise Abigail Camilleri and Jorja Casamento, who participated in the Public Speaking Division. In the Senior's Current Affairs and Debating Divisions, Monte was well represented by Angelic Talevi, Charley Georgiou, Lillian Taswin, Samantha Lee, Ava Keevers, Isabelle Le Busque and Mackenzie Mayne. It requires a great deal of courage to get up and speak in front of people, particularly your peers, so I congratulate and recognise these students for their participation in public speaking. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for this group of talented girls.

#### **RNSH ORTHOPAEDICS SURGICAL DEPARTMENT FINALIST FOR GOLDEN HIP AWARD**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise the fantastic Royal North Shore Hospital [RNSH] orthopaedics surgical department for being recently named as a finalist for the prestigious Golden Hip Award at Australia and New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry [ANZHFR] awards ceremony. This competitive award recognises the top performers in hip fracture care against the hip fracture clinical standards across Australia and New Zealand. RNSH ranked in the top ten hospitals throughout Australia for the second year. A well-deserved recognition and outstanding achievement. It is great to see that our local healthcare workers consistently provide some of the best healthcare in the country. I congratulate the entire RNSH orthopaedics surgical department on this achievement. I acknowledge RNSH Clinical Director Division of Medicine Terry Finnegan and RNSH orthopaedics Clinical Nurse Consultant Wassim El-Abed. They attended the event and received the award on behalf of the Department. I also want to thank the Chief Executive of the Northern Sydney Local Health District, Lee Gregory, for his work in supporting RNSH and its operations to deliver the best patient outcomes for our local community.

#### **50 YEARS OF JP SERVICE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge and recognise Michael McEvoy and Maureen Rudd from my electorate of North Shore for achieving the incredible milestone of 50 years of service to our community as Justices of the Peace. To be a Justice of the Peace is to be a respected and trusted community member. From witnessing the signing of mortgage papers to affidavits, Justices of the Peace are involved in everyday and celebratory moments of our lives. Michael and Maureen have given many hours of time and service, and the work they have done over the past 50 years is a testament to their character, integrity and passion. I thank Michael and Maureen for their dedication and selflessness in continuing to provide essential services to residents of the North Shore and beyond for over 50 years. I congratulate them on reaching this milestone and hope that our community continues to see JPs in the future who are equally as dedicated.

#### **MR DON FIRTH & MRS FIONA FIRTH**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—I would like to recognise on behalf of the Bega electorate the many years of fundraising efforts of Mr & Mrs Firth in support of cystic fibrosis. Owners of the Bridge House Nursery in Brogo began their campaign five years ago after their grandson Sebastian was born with the life-threatening condition in 2012. Each year the couple provides funds raised from the sale of mostly deciduous trees, but also fruiting plants and native tube stock to fund research into the rare genetic disorder with no cure. Sadly, the current life expectancy for someone born with the disorder is 47 years of age, as the disease - which is caused by the malfunction of the exocrine system - affects the lungs, digestive system, pancreas, liver, kidneys, and intestines. This initiative along with others such as tours of their unique underground home and hosting morning teas has since raised over \$20,000, with \$5000 alone being raised from sales over the last year. The funds raised in 2022 will be heading to key body Cystic Fibrosis Australia. Their efforts in fundraising and advocacy around awareness of this debilitating disease is to be highly commended.

### MS THERESA MATTHEWS & MOGO LOLLY SHOP

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Ms Theresa Matthews and the Mogo Lolly Shop for their numerous nominations received this year across multiple state and national business award categories. While the shop building survived, Ms Matthews lost all her store stock during the black summer bushfires. Six weeks later, when the internal furnishings were then destroyed by floods. When the doors finally reopened, The Mogo Lolly Shop served customers for only a few weeks before the COVID pandemic meant they had to close. After such significant impacts I'm so pleased to see this longstanding local business being recognised for their contribution and tireless work to keep Mogo 'sweet'. In this year alone The Mogo Lolly Shop has been named a finalist in the Australian Small Business Champion Awards in the specialised retail small business category, recognised in the top five finalists for the NSW Small Business Awards and most recently a finalist in the inaugural Australian Women in Small Business Awards. I will have my fingers crossed for Ms Matthews to take out the Australian Women in Small Business Awards, which will be announced on November 12.

### GO VITA BATEMANS BAY TURNS 25

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)**—After the many challenges faced by business owners over the past few years, I want to congratulate Ms Bev Dunne and Go Vita Batemans Bay on their milestone of a quarter of a century in operation. Ms Dunne had previously worked as a Personal Assistant in a legal office before taking the dive into the world of health when she took over a similar health food store in Moruya. Six years later in 1997, she made the move north and opened the Batemans Bay Go Vita store and hasn't looked back since. Go Vita Batemans Bay has built a community of loyal customers and friends with their support over the decades. Ms Dunne opened the doors of her store just a few days after the Black Summer bushfires and offered a kind ear for those who were suffering. After the COVID pandemic hit, Ms Dunne opened an online store to help the community maintain access to health products, even doing deliveries from Batemans Bay to Narooma at no cost. Go Vita celebrated their birthday in style with a special gala day on Friday, October 21. Congratulations to Ms Dunne and her staff.

### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NSW

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I pay tribute to The Compassionate Friends NSW and their peer support community that offers friendship and understanding to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the tragic loss of a child. The group provide a peer support line, particularly helpful for newly bereaved family members and there are support groups in Sydney at their office, with 30 Chapters across NSW that also provide peer support groups. The Compassionate Friends NSW recently hosted a Sydney Remembrance Walk in the Royal Botanic Gardens, which I was fortunate to attend. People shared moving stories and remembered their loved ones, and the value of the group and shared lived experience was very clear. I thank the volunteers who give their time to manage The Compassionate Friends and those who organised this healing event for their care for others. I hope you will join me in remembering the children lost too soon from our community.

### IRAN PROTESTS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I would like to express my solidarity with Sydney constituents who have been speaking out and rallying in support of Iranian citizens bravely challenging human rights abuses. Nobody should be excluded from equal participation in economic and social life on the basis of their gender, as is happening to women in Iran at the hands of 'morality police'. Nobody should be assaulted, shot by the military or harassed by 'thugs' in plain clothes while they are exercising their right to protest. Living in a democracy, we have a particular responsibility to speak out in support of those who are denied a voice and their freedoms are under threat. I thank all those constituents who contacted me about these important issues, especially Australian Iranians who have lived experience and family connections that make the country's turmoil more distressing. I hope that the solidarity expressed in Sydney will give support to those suffering during this urgent humanitarian matter.

### 2022 DEEPAVALI/DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I congratulate the organisers and supporters of the successful Deepavali 2022 celebrations in Bradfield Park Milsons Point on 29 October. I joined Sydney's Indian communities, families and friends to celebrate with food, music, dance, fireworks, performances and programs, to celebrate this significant cultural event. The Festival of lights welcomes in the Hindu new year and celebrates light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. I thank the Hindu Council of Australia for organising the event, with special gratitude to Mr Sai Paravatu and all the volunteers, for their outstanding work and generous offers to present all the celebrations, and to showcase Sydneysiders' Indian culture.

The event is well supported by Multicultural NSW, small businesses and local community members. I wish our Indian communities a happy Deepavali.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS 2022 MEMBERS' SHIRT PRESENTATION**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—The Parliamentary Friends of the Western Sydney Wanderers FC gathered for the Season 2022/23 shirt presentation to members. As the co-chair along with Minister Geoff Lee MP we were proud to be the official parliamentary hosts to the W-League squad for one final time. Since the inception of the club, we have witnessed its many achievements including Asian Champions League Trophy winners; Premier's Plate winners; inception of the W-League Womens squad; junior development of youth; Power Chair Team; the construction of the Rooty Hill Football Precinct and the construction of the new stadium. Personally, I am proud to be a foundation member and supporter of the club. The Wanderers are the backbone of the Western Sydney community with its inclusion of all people no matter their background or ability. Congratulations to Chairman Mr Paul Lederer, CEO Mr Scott Hudson, General Manager Mark Jensen and the entire team for their work in fostering a harmonious club for all. On behalf of the Parliamentary Friends of WSW, we wish the team well for season 22/23.

#### **GATH MUHANA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—I wish to acknowledge the efforts of Mr Gath Muhana, Iraq National Team Manager of the Iraq football team. Gath has been manager since 2021 and as well as managing the team he also offers his services in coaching and supporting players as well as looking after their welfare. Gath has extensive knowledge and experience in managing teams for FIFA, AFC and IOC tournaments. His dedication to the team is a testament to his passion for the game and for the well-being of the players he manages. I commend Gath on his efforts and look forward to watching the team's progress in the future.

#### **CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was delighted on Wednesday 19 October to address the Castlecrag Progress Association [CPA] in my electorate. The Association is an associated community group of Willoughby City Council and comprised of local members passionate about their community. The residents of Castlecrag have much to be proud of about their suburb. Standing on a beautiful peninsular of Sydney's Middle Harbour, Castlecrag boasts not only magnificent bushland but also a unique streetscape inspired by the architecture of the Burley Griffins. Located only 7km from the Sydney CBD, Castlecrag offers its residents a bushland sanctuary of rich flora and fauna. The CPA gives voice to the interests of its residents, and it produces a regular community newsletter, known as 'The Crag'. Members of the Association have the opportunity to communicate their concerns and suggestions to the local council, relevant government figures and other relevant interest groups. I commend the work of the local residents involved with the CPA to advance the interests of the area and I was pleased to hear of their aspirations for this precious bushland suburb.

#### **PRINCIPALS FORUM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Schools are essential for building strong communities as the institutions that nurture the academic, social and personal development of our children. The Willoughby community is fortunate to host many high-quality schools and I had the privilege to host the leaders of local schools at a Principals Forum on Wednesday 26 October. Welcoming principals from primary and secondary schools, both government and independent, the purpose of the forum was to listen to these principals and learn more about their experiences, challenges and opportunities so I can help support them better. The job of leading a school is a challenging one, and the upheavals of the pandemic have made this challenge even more acute. It is important that our local students, teachers and principals are well supported, empowered and resourced to be able to thrive. I thank the many local school principals who attended and shared their knowledge and experiences. We have committed to another forum early in 2023 and I look forward to continuing our work together.

#### **HOMENETMEN ANTRANIG**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Armenian community in Willoughby make a great contribution to local civic life and I would like to recognise the work of Homenetmen Antranig (Australia). Founded in 1965, Homenetmen is an Armenian-Australian cultural sporting club based in Willoughby. Its objectives are realised by scouting, general physical education and sports, lectures, seminars and public activities, publications, clubs and sports centres. The mission of the association is to prepare physically strong and exemplary citizens with the highest intellectual and spiritual virtues. Over the past 50 years Homenetmen has developed many sporting teams and scouting groups spanning several generations and has participated as the Australian representative for sporting events at various Pan Homenetmen games and scouting jamborees held across the globe. Today, Homenetmen proudly boasts a growing scouting group of 130 members, 15 football/futsal teams and 25 basketball teams. Apart from its sporting programs, Homenetmen is active in organising social events, outings and other fundraising

activities as part of its social calendar and welcomes members and friends to support these functions. I am immensely proud of Homenetmen's achievements and the rich opportunities it affords to our young people.

#### **RECOGNISING DALE KEOGH**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Dale Keogh, the long time Club Coach of the ever-successful Budokan Judo Club, who has recently been made the 27th Life Member of Judo Australia. Dale established the Castle Hill Judo Club in 1969 and is still coaching in the area today. She is also a successful Judoka in her own right, winning 10 World Masters Championships and having been graded to 6th Dan. She has been made a life member of Judo NSW and the Budokan Club itself and has been recognised with a myriad of awards from the NSW and Federal Governments. I have previously made reference to the Budokan Judo Club in Parliament, having produced Olympians in Joshua and Nathan Katz, and being steadily led by Rob and Kerrye Katz, it is one of the most impressive sporting clubs within my Electorate. I know that the club wouldn't be the same without Dale's involvement, and I am glad that she is being recognised with this most prestigious honour. I wish the club the best for the future, and I know that whilst Dale continues to coach, there'll surely be more success on the way.

#### **DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN'S DRIVE FOR MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND PROSTATE CANCER**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I commend the thirty-one Port Macquarie and Hastings drivers who took part in a fundraiser that secured \$2600 for men's mental health and prostate cancer research. The drivers participate in a world-wide on-road event driving pre-1980s classic cars. I also acknowledge three men diagnosed with prostate cancer, Rocky Condello, Charlie Buchanan and Garry Lonergan who shared their personal journeys with prostate cancer and their connection with each other through a difficult period in their lives. The three met through a health program hosted by Port Macquarie Base Hospital and said that meeting each other has been vital for their mental health as well as the physical health benefits. They now regularly catch up for coastal walks and coffees. They walk and talk, talk and walk. According to Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, about half of all men will have a prostate condition by the age of 70. These three men are urging others to get their health checked including both physical examinations as well as blood tests. Thank you to Rocky, Charlie and Garry for raising awareness about prostate cancer.

#### **VALE RANDALL GAWNE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—It is with much sadness that I recognise the life of Randall Gawne who tragically passed away on 27 October 2022, aged 66. Described as a community champion who selflessly donated his life in service to others, Randall Gawne was farewelled on 4 November at St Agnes Catholic Church Port Macquarie. A man who held numerous positions in emergency services, Randall served in the AFP, formally the ACT Police Force from 1977 to 1990 undertaking a series of roles involving armed robberies, sudden deaths and serious assaults before transferring to the traffic branch, assisting in crash investigations and VIP escorts. Randall spent three years in the United Nations peacekeeping force, patrolling the UN buffer zone between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. At home he served at Yeppoon for the Queensland Police Service from 1995 to 2016, including a stint on Thursday Island overseeing a population of 9000 residents. Fondly remembered for his volunteer efforts at Marine Rescue Port Macquarie, Randall was awarded a Second Clasp in 2021 for his 35 years of service. He was also Zone Duty Operations Manager and unarguably saved many lives in this role. A leader in our community, Randall will be deeply missed.

#### **YOUNG DUNGHUTTI ARTIST SHEYLEACE STEVENS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate Sheyleace Stevens, a proud thirteen-year-old Dunghutti artist, living and practising on Birpai country in Port Macquarie. Sheyleace's vibrant and detailed artwork, titled "Together" was recently displayed in an exhibition held at the Port Macquarie Library. The exhibition was created and organised by Community Housing Limited, to enable tenants to share their stories and raise awareness about mental health wellbeing. Sheyleace who is a student at St Joseph's Regional College, said that painting connects her to her culture. "It defines who I am, I draw inspiration for the colours from the ocean and from the waterways in the local area. I love to paint and create artworks that reflect our deadly region." I commend Sheyleace for her talent and commitment to her art practice and acknowledge the cultural significance of her creations. Sheyleace has also been a participant of Port Macquarie ArtWalk, exhibiting her original acrylic works on canvas and intricate healing stones. I look forward to following Sheyleace's artistic journey as she continues to extend on her creative talents.

#### **LISTON COBB AND CO**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I acknowledge and thank Liston treasure and local John Burton who has brought history alive with his Cobb and Co Coach and Collectables Museum. I was privileged to attend the

opening of the exhibit in Liston last month and was joined by many locals. There was a real buzz and enthusiasm at this piece of Liston's history. Being a border community there were dignitaries and friends from Queensland there as well. John Burton built the Cobb and Co replica himself and has captured this marvellous transport vehicle that delivered mail and passengers along the tracks from Tenterfield to Warwick in the latter half of the 1800's. The opening was followed by a community lunch complete with damper to fit in with the times. At 91 this is a huge achievement for John who has worked so hard to keep this history alive. It is important we know and we reflect this history. I congratulate John and look forward to many visitors coming through and enjoying the Cobb and Co Museum.

#### **VICKI ROSE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Vicki Rose on a fantastic career in NSW Health and speak today to wish her well in retirement. Vicki has made an immeasurable contribution both to healthcare in the Northern Rivers but also to our broader community. This month Vicki finishes her role as Director, Integrated Care and Allied Health Services – Northern NSW Local Health District [NNSWLHD]. Whilst her role today is in the NNSWLHD she has worked all over Australia in health working in a range of health services across South Australia, Queensland and England. Vicki has worked in clinical roles as a social worker, as well as in leadership and management roles within the Division of General Practice, regional hospitals, community health, National Health Service in England and as a Director in NNSWLHD. Vicki has always brought the right mix of competence and compassion to her work. No matter the role Vicki always put patient care and quality healthcare at the centre of her work. Vicki and her husband Paul are wonderful community people and friends. I wish them both all the very best for the future and I know I will be seeing them around our community enjoying life.

#### **HENRY PARKES ORATION TENTERFIELD**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—A banquet dinner was hosted by the Friends of the School of Arts for the annual Henry Parkes oration and I was sorry to have missed such a great event. The biennial even is a must on the Tenterfield Calendar. Last October's guest was Professor Judith Barret, Emeritus Professor of Politics at La Trobe University. Professor Barret discussed history and potential improvements for democratic elections in Australia. The oration was momentous as it was the first since 2019. The oration commemorates Henry Parkes visit of 1889 where he called for the states of Australia to form a Federation. This history is still a sense of pride for the Tenterfield community to this day. The oration and banquet dinner was attended by over 70 people. I wish to acknowledge Christine Denis and the entire Henry Parkes foundation for continuing to promote a public understanding of Australian constitutional structures and political systems. A highlight of the evening was when Tenterfield High School Captains Heidi Aquilini and I WILL FIND NAME TOMORROW for their informed and thoughtful address about Australian democracy. Music on the evening was provided by Peter Harris. Congratulations and thanks to all involved.

#### **FINALISTS IN GAME CHANGER CHALLENGE**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—I send my sincerest congratulations to Jerrabomberra Public School students Avarie Wellfare, Norah Vreugdenburg, Charlie Win, Maya Liddle and Lucy McAlpine on making the grand final of this year's NSW Department of Education's Game Changer Challenge. The group enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip of a lifetime to compete at Olympic Park in Sydney this week. Over the past few months, while working on their project, the team has developed and introduced a "Zen Zone" at school, which is aimed at addressing anxiety and mental health issues with students post-Covid. And whilst it is still a work in progress, Zen Zone has had a huge impact on the school already and is a highly valued asset to the busy playground. The Game Changer Challenge is the NSW Department of Education's annual design-thinking competition, which this year was delivered entirely virtually in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. The JPS team was one of 14 grand finalists vying for the coveted title of Game Changer Challenge 2020 Champions. A total of 84 teams participated in seven virtual semi-finals held throughout October and November.

#### **SENIORS HAVE A NEW HOME AT LAST**

**Mrs NICHOLE OVERALL (Monaro)**—Today I congratulate the Queanbeyan Seniors Association who are set to take up residence in a new, permanent home at the former Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre following Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council's decision to allow exclusive use. This is a result of the hard work of its committee members and President Brenda, who for four-years have campaigned for a permanent facility to house their expanding membership. The association's dedication and tenacity is to be commended. The Seniors' Association numbers are continually expanding and now they will have the space they need to continue to grow. This new facility allows the programs on offer to increase, allowing more of our seniors to access the centre and enjoy this important social outlet. I am pleased to have been able to offer advice to the association and support their lobbying of council for this facility. On every visit to the Queanbeyan Senior Citizens Association,

I have been treated kindly and made feel welcome. I look forward to many more visits in the future to this fantastic group of men and women

#### **MICHAEL GRANT – GRAINCORP AREA MANAGER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Moree GrainCorp Area Manager Michael Grant for once again being on hand to assist in the 2022 Moree flood. Mick and his crew helped with preparations before the flood to sandbag shops and offices in the CBD as well as helping residents. They then door knocked neighbourhoods to offer help with the muddy clean-up. This isn't their first time. They were on hand during previous floods showing community care with a laugh and a hug that lifts everyone's spirits. It is this kind of support that keeps a community resilient in times of crisis and we are all very grateful. I sincerely thank Mick Grant, Huss Cam, Shaun Mills, Peter Davidson, Brendan Morrison, Gavin O'Neill, David Tape, Connor Aitkin, Rachael Martin, Shane Stanford, Damien Hamel and GrainCorp. I commend Mick and the crew for their commitment to community service under difficult and dangerous conditions.

#### **SALLY LAURIE – MCGRATH FOUNDATION BREAST CARE NURSE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Moree's very own McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse Sally Laurie who commenced her new role in mid-August. Sally is based in Moree and will also service towns of Wee Waa, Narrabri, Bingara, Wialda, Boggabri and Mungindi assisting both women and men with breast cancer with their families through the often-confusing health system and explain the entire process with providing psycho-social support. Having grown up in North West NSW and having a background in palliative care and surgical oncology, Sally knows all too well the importance that every person should have access to a breast care nurse without having to travel the distance. Sally said, "the best thing is seeing the look of relief on her patient's faces for the first time knowing there is someone locally to help and support them every step of the way". The McGrath Foundation has about 185 Breast Care Nurses providing the free service to people in communities around Australia with the aim to increase that number to 250 by 2025. I commend the McGrath Foundation on their mission in working towards that no one goes without care and I congratulate Sally on her new role.

#### **URALLA CLINIC – 2022 PEN CS AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Uralla Clinic Practice Owner Michael Batt and Practice Manager Dannielle Batt on winning the 2022 Pen CS Award for Data Quality Improvement at the Australian Association of Practice Management National Conference on the Gold Coast. Mrs Batt explained that the new technology identifies patients due for regular check-ups and keeps the clinic's doctors, Dr Syed Ahsan and Dr Salma Hsaid, nurse Steph McPhee, and receptionist Steph Woodridge up to date in allowing more time to focus on patient care. As part of the Pen CS award, Mrs Batt was invited to attend a seminar to learn cutting edge skills. I congratulate Mr and Mrs Batt on being awarded the 2022 Pen CS Award for Data Quality Improvement. I commend the Uralla Clinic on their efficiency, their endeavour to continue to bulk bill, and their commitment to the community as they try to keep healthcare affordable as the cost of living rises.

#### **PRESTONS NETBALL CLUB AWARDS PRESENTATION**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise some award recipients at this year's Prestons Netball Club Awards Presentation. I would like to congratulate Ms Ann-Marie Reid for receiving the Newcomer Award. This is presented to a new player who has never played with the Club and is someone who has improved dramatically and stands out. Despite her hesitation to play, Ann-Marie said it was her daughter who encouraged her to play. Club President, Lisa Young, said Ann-Marie is one talented netballer, and is glad she decided to register and play. I would also like to congratulate Ms Robyn Padt, who was awarded the Estelle Lawler Spirit Award. This award is inspired by Ms Estelle Lawler who joined in 1974, and from then, dedicated so much of her life to Prestons Netball Club. Robyn has been a member of the Club for 6 years and according to Club President, embodies everything that the award is about – always displaying team pride and positivity. Congratulations to both recipients and to Prestons Netball Club for another successful season.

#### **MRS VAN DER MEULEN**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise Prestons Public School Principal Mrs Liz Van Der Muelen for recently being presented with a 30 years of service certificate by the Department of Education. She was presented this award by Mr Dace Elletson, Director of Educational Leadership. The Department of Education presents certificates for 20, 30, 40 and 50 years of service to eligible staff of good standing in recognition of their service to students in New South Wales public schools. It is an impressive milestone to reach. This award recognises the important contribution school staff make to the public education right across this State and highlights their dedication and service. I know the Prestons Public School community

is very proud of their principal to have her recognised for at a State level for her continued hard work. This is a great achievement for Mrs Van Der Muelen and I again offer my congratulations to her.

#### **TONY AGIUS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Tony Agius, of Casula, for receiving an Officer of the Order of Liverpool Award at this year's Order of Liverpool Awards Ceremony. Tony was recognised for being a volunteer for the NSW Rural Fire Service since 2016, and for serving as Senior Deputy Captain for Casula Brigade. Over the years, Tony has been involved in several life-saving endeavours, fighting bushfires, assisting motor vehicle crash victims and search and rescues. He has been described as always being on hand to help fellow community members during some of the most difficult times. At the ceremony it was said that in many instances, he has put the safety and welfare of others before his own. His courage and service does not go unnoticed. I again would like to congratulate Tony for receiving this award and would like to thank him for all he has done in ensuring our community is kept safe and protected during emergencies.

#### **BRADBURY AMBARVALE BEARS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—There are so many wonderful sporting clubs located throughout Campbelltown. Whether they be soccer clubs, rugby league clubs, AFL clubs, rugby union clubs, netball clubs, cricket clubs, baseball clubs, swimming clubs or athletics club, they all only succeed due to the work of committees, volunteers and parents. One of the clubs I have had the pleasure of working with for a number of years is the Bradbury Ambarvale Bears Football Club. Recently the club was awarded the Macarthur Football Association Club of the Year, for a club that has under 500 players. The award is given to the club who performs admirably both on and off the field. It was a tremendous achievement given the great work all clubs throughout the Macarthur Football Association have done. While the good results on the pitch are always wonderful, it's the work off the field that truly creates that community club feel. Whether it be parents sticking their hands up to coach, referee or manage the canteens, or other residents joining the committee – every role is crucial to the success of the club. Well done again to the mighty Bradbury Ambarvale Bears Football Club

#### **DYLAN JONES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to Dylan Jones on being recognised as one of the most talented AFL players for his age in the country after being selected to play in the Under 16s World Team last month. Dylan was one of only 2 players from NSW to be chosen for the World Team and it's a reflection on the quality of talented sports people that live in my electorate of Mulgoa and in communities across Western Sydney. It takes an incredible amount of hard work, skill and passion to achieve what Dylan has achieved. He should be incredibly proud of himself and what he has been able to accomplish. Congratulations once again Dylan. I look forward to seeing more of your successful sporting career.

#### **GLENMORE PARK HIGH SCHOOL – LISETTE GORICK**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Recently I had the pleasure of opening Glenmore Park High School's Performing Arts and Learning Centre which will serve to boost and support Performing Arts students in the surrounding area. I want to especially thank Lisette Gorick for her strong advocacy for this project over the years which ultimately helped to make this happen. Good Principals in our schools who advocate strongly for their students ultimately achieve the best result for their students. Our communities expect nothing short of the effort that people like Lisette put in for their students and the new learning centre certainly proves that Lisette has delivered for her students. Once again, thank you Lisette for working so hard to ensure that Glenmore Park High School has a world class facility to support students for years to come.

#### **ALLAN RAYNER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Today I would like to pay tribute to a giant in my electorate of Mulgoa. Allan Rayner, was the Ropes Crossing Fire Station Captain and suddenly passed away on October 25, serving his community for just shy of 47 years as a firefighter. His family, community and colleagues describe Allan as a wonderful grandfather, father, and husband. He was nicknamed Smokey and was passionate about his people and training. Allan was a humble, self-effacing and he recognised that to be a successful leader he had to rely on the contributions of his team. We all know the terrible fire disasters that have ripped across this nation in recent years and Allan was involved in the most infamous bushfire seasons in the early 1990's and the 2019/2022 Black Summer Bushfires. The community will sorely miss Allan. Individuals and leaders like Allan truly make a positive difference in the community. Rest in peace Allan.

#### **CHARGRILL CHICKY**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I commend the incredible team at Chargrill Chicky on winning the Fast Food/Takeaway Services of the Year category at the 2022 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards.



Established in 2019, Chargrill Chicky is a family-friendly chicken and takeaway store located in Miranda with high-quality produce and excellent customer service. Knowing that there is no substitute for the best quality of food, the team at Chargrill Chicky create delicious meals for our community such as gourmet salads, burgers, casseroles, and their famous Portuguese style chicken. I acknowledge the team at Chargrill Chicky's for providing affordable and tasty food in a welcoming environment with a smile. I recognise Abdul Alim Chowdhury, Shuyab Ahmed Chowdhury, Mamun Khan, Jainul Islam, Buakam Tavewaan and the wider team at Chargrill Chicky on this achievement. This NSW Small Business Month is a fantastic opportunity to highlight local businesses like Chargrill Chicky that are an important part of our community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Chargrill Chicky on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **CRONULLA SUTHERLAND DISTRICT JUNIOR RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the Cronulla Sutherland District Junior Rugby Football League for facilitating yet another successful football season. Established in 1964, the District has over 5,000 players across 13 clubs including the Aquinas Colts, Como Crocs, Joeys, Gynea Gorillas and Taren Point Titans in the Miranda electorate. This was the competition's first full season since 2019 and saw the return of the Tommy Bishop Shield. On 17 September, I attended the District's event to celebrate another year of achievements. I acknowledge the Crocs' Jay Putterill for receiving the 'Phil Murray Club Volunteer of the Year Award' and Kevin McDermott for receiving 'Trainer of the Year', the Gorillas' Paul Homann for receiving 'Tackle Coach of the Year' and the Titans' Brian Teplicanec for receiving 'League Tag Coach of the Year'. I applaud the District's Executive Committee for organising a thriving competition which is now the second largest in the State and has the highest female participation in NSW. I particularly recognise Nathan Waugh, John Mannah, Amanda Kayes, Adam Wrightson, Simone Osfield, Tyrone Collins, and Jenny McNamara. I commend the Cronulla Sutherland District Junior Football League on fostering a love of rugby league within our community.

#### **CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the members from Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club who have been a familiar presence on our beaches for over 100 years. Cronulla has been keeping beachgoers safe since 1907 and has a rich history in both life saving and competition. The Club is particularly proud of its Blue Fins Program which aims to give young people with disabilities beach safety and water awareness skills and offers inclusion within Cronulla's programs. None of this is possible without the commitment of each individual at Cronulla. I recognise the 2022/2023 club officials including Brad Turner, Matt Aitken, Scott Phillips, Suzanne Storrie, Scott Jackson, Michael Banister, Glenn Carter, Darryl Easton, Robert Short, Kieran Day, Richard Garnsey, Neale Johnstone, Chris Barber, Annalyse Crane, Daniel Wood, Bronessa Smith, Isabella Turner, Pat Bourke, Robert Walker, Tristan Howsion, Cassandra Mannion, Daryn Metti, Richard Hedley, Russell Brinckley, David Dalla-Camina, Mark Redrup, Patrick Bourke, Rodney Dunn, Graham Burt, Nick Halliday, Stuart Brain, Michael Roye, Greg Cooper, Jackie Bryant, Robert Short and Darryl and Wendy Ward. I thank all members at Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club for their continued dedication to our community and ensuring that no lives were lost last season.

#### **EPILEPSY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—Today I recognise that the month of November is Epilepsy Awareness month. This is an incredibly important cause to support, as 250,000 Australians have been diagnosed with epilepsy. People with epilepsy require significant support, treatment, and medication. It is groups such as Epilepsy Action Australia that provide this crucial support and so I join with the Manly community to thank them for all the great work that they do.

#### **SEAFORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly—Minister for Environment and Heritage)**—Today I recognise Seaforth Public School which has won a national story award for excellence in performing arts and raising awareness about the environment. The students performed 'Drought, by Jackie French' as part of the 2022 National Wakakirri Story-Dance Festival. Wakakirri is Australia's largest performing arts event for schools with over 180 participating in the event. With such a large a field of competitors all the students involved, and their teachers Miss Wood and Mis Van der Saag, should be incredibly proud of this tremendous accomplishment. The entire Manly community and I are so proud of what they have achieved, and we wish them all the best for future competitions.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport)**—I acknowledge Northern Beaches Council for being announced the winner of the 2022 AR

Bluett Memorial Award. Awarded since 1945, this award is the pinnacle of local government achievement – recognising the best performing and most progressive metropolitan and regional council out of the 128 across NSW. From an extraordinarily difficult birth, Northern Beaches Council has grown into a community-centric organisation which personifies the best qualities of local government. And this award has now independently assessed Northern Beaches as the most successful council in NSW. The AR Bluett is just one powerful example – Northern Beaches Council has also been recognised for design awards such as a National Design Award for the excellent heritage restoration of Currawong, and awards for sustainability, customer service, communications, and community events. So much of this is because of the dedication and passion of Northern Beaches Council's staff, many of whom are themselves part of our wonderful local community. I would like to congratulate Mayor Michael Regan and Councillors, and Chief Executive Officer Ray Brownlee PSM and his Executive Team, who are leading all the talented staff at Northern Beaches Council with professionalism, open ears, and open hearts.

#### **EVAN PRIESTLEY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Eight-year-old Evan Priestley from Ashtonfield is a determined young individual who continues to reach goals, raising much needed funds for other children and adults with a disability in our community. In Evan's mum Emily's words: Ev has Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, and everyday life can be very difficult. He has a lot of physical challenges and overcomes them all with his cheeky sense of humour and perseverance. He is participating in "Ready, Set, Move!" - an initiative to raise funds to enable children and adults living with a disability to enjoy the freedom of riding a bike. He will be riding 13 kms across the month of November, which will be quite a challenge for him. Last year Evan raised money so that another child with a disability could ride a bike like his. He succeeded, and this year a little girl was presented with an adapted bike of her very own because of his efforts. This year he is fundraising again and would love some support from anyone able to assist! I commend Evan for his continued passion and dedication in ensuring vital funds are raised to assist others living with a disability in our community.

#### **WELLINGTON LIFE-SAVERS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—Wellington's Terry Melhiush and Yeoval's Peter Munro and Tony and Bronwyn Johnson, all retired recently after a combined 102 years as NSW Volunteer Ambulance Officers. Clinical volunteer units are only established in locations where NSW Ambulance has identified a need for response capability – there's only 350 volunteers across the whole of NSW! Terry joined after witnessing an epileptic seizure. He didn't know what to do and, determined to be able to help next time, he signed up as a volunteer ambulance officer! Terry's spent the last 32 years working alongside Wellington's paid ambulance officers. On top of his day job as a council mechanic, and 22 years as a retained firefighter, he's joined paramedics at car accidents and medical episodes, including cardiac arrests. In Yeoval, Peter was instrumental in establishing the town's volunteer ambulance group and served for 26 years, while Tony and Bronwyn served for 22 years each. Despite the very real chance of attending a tragedy involving a friend or loved one, all four said serving their community in this way has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Thank you all, for your contribution to the Wellington and Yeoval communities!

#### **GULGONG SCHOOL SECRETARY AWARD**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo—Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales)**—Gulgong Public School has been recognised for the outstanding work that the staff have been doing over the past 4 years, with a Secretary's School Achievement Award! This prestigious award was only given to 10 out of more than 2200 public schools across NSW! Gulgong was nominated for their Visible Learning Project, which uses evidence-informed strategies to shift the school's culture. Using learning goals, success criteria and targeted feedback has provided clarity for students, helping them see exactly what they need to do to be successful in every lesson. It has increased classroom engagement, and attendance rates sit well above 90 per cent. Congratulations to the whole teaching staff and school community, including David Lewis, Sarah Price, Megan Auckett, Kristel Barnes, Lauren Piccolo, Gail Arkell, Gill Armstrong, Tess Lewis, Steven Haney, Martin Howes, Jenny Woolley and Kylie Duffy. This is an amazing result for a small school of only 320 students in our region – and shows that public schools in NSW continually provide excellence in education right at our doorstep!

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO LANE COVE P&C**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes)**—A massive congratulations to the Lane Cove Public School P&C on raising \$2,339.33 at their Bunnings BBQ over the weekend. It was great to see so many parents getting stuck in over the course of the day helping to raise this money. The P&C should be immensely proud of their efforts.

**DIWALI IN LANE COVE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes)**—It was great to join so many from the Lane Cove Indian Community to celebrate the Hindu festival of Lights, Diwali. Together with over 100 members of our community we celebrated the diversity that makes our community so rich. A special thank you to Balu Moothedath for organising such a wonderful and well attending event.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:12 until  
Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 12:00.**