



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 10 May 2023

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 10 May 2023

The Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper) took the chair at 12:00.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge a number of guests who have joined us in the gallery today. I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the Premier and member for Kogarah: representatives of Sydney Water employees, including Angus McFarland, the Secretary of the Australian Services Union NSW and ACT. I welcome them to the first Parliament of Australia. I also welcome guests of the member for Lake Macquarie—I know; it is amazing—who have joined us today: Christine and Larry Le Brocque, Neil Graham and David Cairns. Former councillor Wendy Harrison has joined us, whom some members know. I also welcome Judy Beresford and Hillary Jenkins to the Chamber.

Announcements

PHOTOGRAPHS AND BROADCAST OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER: I advise members that media photographers and broadcast camera people have been approved to cover today's proceedings, especially question time. A photographer for the department of the Legislative Assembly will also be present.

[Notices of motions given.]

Ministerial Statements

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN TOUGHER

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:19): On 14 April 2023, 29-year-old paramedic Steven Tougher—a dad, son, husband, brother and friend—was killed on duty in the service of us all. Last week the community of the Illawarra came together to farewell Steven, a local son of the region. They were joined in a powerful show of love and loyalty by a thousand-strong community of emergency services workers, including paramedics, nurses, doctors, health workers, fire, police and many more. They flocked to the streets of Wollongong to form a silent guard of honour to show their respect for Steven. They flanked Steven's grieving family and friends.

Today, on behalf of the Government, the Parliament and the people of this State, I offer my deepest sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of Steven Tougher. In particular I offer my condolences to his wife, Maddie; his mum, Jill; his dad, Jeff; and his sister, Jess, who are with us in the Chamber this afternoon. In the face of unimaginable grief, unspeakable loss and with "hearts smashed", as Jeff has described it, the Tougher family have given. When the whole world would expect them to close ranks and withdraw into their grief, they did the opposite. They let us in. They opened up to us and shared the best of Steven with all of us. They spoke to us.

As leaders in this place and in our communities, there is a lot for us to learn from the Tougher family. In the face of a tragedy such as this, there are so many things that need to be said and so many people we need to speak to. Sometimes it is hard to know where to start, which makes Steven's family's generosity in sharing their son with us all the more remarkable. They are a family that sees Steven with clear eyes and deep pride and a family that nurtured Steven's vocation to serve his community. As Steven's dad, Jeff, said, "Steven had that uncanny ability to connect with people, to truly understand their needs and to provide care with genuine warmth and empathy." He said his superpower was his compassion. He had a strong sense of natural justice, was larger than life and filled a room with warmth. His career was solely focused on helping others and saving lives. Steven was first an assistant in nursing, then an enrolled nurse and then a registered nurse. Finally, in 2021, he graduated as a paramedic. In his short time with the ambulance service, Steven served many communities—Camden, Campbelltown, Dapto, Bowral, Kiama, Warrawong and across the Illawarra.

Like the Toughers, thousands of families of emergency services workers around this State are full of pride in the work that their loved ones do on behalf of our community. But they are equally anxious about the wellbeing

of their loved ones each time they leave the house. On 14 April and on the days and weeks since, thousands of emergency services workers have fronted up and filled their shifts. On behalf of the Government, the Legislative Assembly and the people of New South Wales, it is my privilege to honour Steven Tougher's sacrifice and service. I again offer my sincerest condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues. Steven's legacy is best measured by the people he helped, the tragedies he averted and the lives he saved.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:23): I join with the Premier to speak in memory of Steven Tougher. I acknowledge Steven's service to NSW Ambulance, and the pain his family, friends and colleagues are feeling. Steven was a son, a sibling, a father, a friend and a fellow paramedic to many. He had just married the love of his life in March, and his second child was just a few months away from being born. I will read some of the beautiful words spoken by his wife, Madison Tougher, at his memorial service. She said:

Knowing how many lives you've touched during your time here makes me feel so privileged and proud to tell people that I am your wife. I vow that our two beautiful children will always know what a selfless, hard-working, kind, compassionate person you were. They will forever know how their dad was a hero who helped people through their most painful and sickest times.

Words cannot express the shock that we all felt when we heard the news that a paramedic had been stabbed. No-one in the ranks of our emergency services organisations should go on a shift and be injured, or worse. But that is what happened to Steven Tougher on 14 April—just a few hours before his shift was supposed to end. It is clear from the outpouring of love for Steven that he was known for his kindness, empathy and unwavering commitment as a highly professional paramedic. During his time with NSW Ambulance, he would have helped countless people in his community of south-western Sydney. NSW Ambulance released these words following his passing:

Steven Tougher was a much loved and respected family man, friend, and paramedic, whose loss is deeply felt by all of us at NSW Ambulance, and across the broader community of New South Wales, where he dedicated himself to the service of others. NSW Ambulance have been inundated with messages of support, expressing heartfelt condolences.

I am confident that Steven's legacy will live on through each person to whom he provided care and support. His death is a reminder to us all of the risks and challenges that our first responders face every day. It is a call for us to be thankful for the selfless service of staff and volunteers. We all owe our paramedics, nurses and doctors an immense debt of gratitude. All of us in this place must work together to ensure that everyone feels and is safe in their workplace, especially our health and emergency services workers, who perform an essential public service in what can be extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

On behalf of the Opposition, I sincerely thank the more than 4,600 colleagues of Steven in NSW Ambulance and the tens of thousands of staff working in the health sector across our State. To Steven's family, on behalf of the Opposition, I offer my deepest sympathies and condolences. Steven's family, friends and colleagues have been robbed of a husband, a dad, a son and a mate by a senseless act of violence. It is devastating that nothing we can do can bring Steven back. But I hope that the inevitable grief of his family, his friends and his colleagues can be tempered, even if only a little, by the sure knowledge that Steven's life was one well lived in the service and support of others.

The SPEAKER (12:27): On behalf of the crossbench and everybody in the House, I offer my sincerest condolences to the family of Steven Tougher and to his colleagues and friends. This was a great tragedy that we wish we had never seen and that we never see again.

Question Time

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:29): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Federal Labor Government's 90-day infrastructure review is examining important infrastructure projects in New South Wales—including the Mulgoa Road, Homebush Bay Drive and Moorebank Avenue upgrades—what discussions has the Premier had with the Prime Minister to spare those projects from Labor cuts?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:29): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his important question. I make it clear that Government members expect promises made by the Commonwealth Government to be respected and honoured, and we expect promises made by us in opposition to be fully implemented as well. The reason for that is that New South Wales has pressing infrastructure needs. We have obligations to the people of New South Wales to deliver those needs, and we do not want to see New South Wales go backwards. Australia's largest State and biggest city need infrastructure in order to grow. That certainly has been the conduct, tenor and basis of the conversations that we have had with the Federal Government, both at my level with the Prime Minister and with the infrastructure Ministers responsible. It is important we do that primarily because the infrastructure pipeline in New South Wales is under severe pressure. The Government was left with a situation where Sydney Metro West was publicly identified to cost the people of New South Wales about \$15 billion.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked about the discussions he has had with the Prime Minister to spare those projects. He needs to be directly relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the Premier appreciates the guidance, but there is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We need those Commonwealth funds because the infrastructure pipeline in New South Wales is under serious pressure. This Government was passed the largest debt that any government has handed to a successor government in the history of New South Wales. Over \$180 billion had been racked up by the previous administration. Not only that, but projects such as the Sydney Metro West project, which we were repeatedly told would cost \$15 billion, was subsequently discovered to cost \$25 billion. That was not revealed in the election campaign, in the debates or in Parliament. Not a single time in the last Parliament did any Government Minister stand up and say—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: The Premier was asked about what discussions he has had with the Prime Minister about saving three specific projects, and he has not said a word in response.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wahroonga. I heard the question and I have been listening to the Premier's answer. The Premier is being relevant at this stage. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The question was really simple: why infrastructure funding for New South Wales is important. I am pointing out why it is important: because nothing was disclosed by the previous Government. Sydney Metro West actually cost \$25 billion. Metro Southwest actually cost \$20 billion—\$9 billion over budget. This Government is reckoning with the legacy of the previous Government.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:33): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is taking immediate action to keep its promise to stop privatisation?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:33): That important question was central to the election campaign and will be central to this Parliament. The reason for that is the previous administration in New South Wales relied on privatisation as its central economic principle, which is the leading reason why it racked up \$180 billion worth of debt in the past 10 years. As I said previously, that is the largest debt handed from one government to another government in the history of New South Wales. Those days are over.

Let us look at the consequences of privatisation. Those opposite sold Eraring Energy for \$50 million in 2023, and there were secret negotiations to try to buy it back for \$240 million. They sold Vales Point Power Station for \$1 million, and the new private owner of that power station onsold it for \$200 million. Compare that with Queensland, for example. Over the past five years, the Queensland Government has made \$5 billion as a result of keeping those assets in government hands.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will stop heckling the Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: At the end of the day, as a result of the culture of privatisation, New South Wales taxpayers have had to spend millions of dollars trying to buy back essential infrastructure or spend billions of dollars in compensation to allow people to use assets that they used to own. Those days are over. Legislation that we will introduce later today will include Sydney Water in the New South Wales Constitution. Members on this side of the House believe that drinkable water is an essential constitutional right, and it will be interesting to see what the Opposition does in relation to that important constitutional change.

If one looks at the fundamentals, Sydney Water and Hunter Water combined will produce \$7.7 billion in dividends for the New South Wales Government between 2012 and 2026. If the Government privatised that and followed the United Kingdom model, what would happen to the prices that regular consumers would have to pay? Would they go up or down? We have just fought an election campaign on privatisation, and the verdict of the people of New South Wales was unambiguous. Now we need a response from the Leader of the Opposition. *[Extension of time]*

That is important because it puts a trigger on any proposed legislation for privatisation from the New South Wales Government. Returning members of Parliament remember the previous election, in 2019, when a solemn promise was made by the Liberal Party and The Nationals for no further privatisation. Straight after polling day, guess what happened? They put WestConnex on the chopping block and sold it off in a fire sale. Putting Sydney Water in the Constitution means that a future government cannot do that without altering the Constitution of this

State. It is a fail-safe against a future conservative government selling off the assets owned by the people of New South Wales. The incoming shadow Treasurer was canvassed as to his views on that bill. He said:

We need to see what the terms are ... a component of the anti-privatisation agenda also has to be a guarantee of the future drinking water supply ...

That implies that the ultimate agenda from the incoming Opposition is more privatisation. Nothing could be simpler: Do Opposition members want to put Sydney Water in the Constitution or not? The floor is theirs. Will they put Sydney Water in the Constitution and support bipartisan action by this Parliament against the reckless privatisation of the assets held by the people of New South Wales?

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:38): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. The Federal Labor Government's 90-day infrastructure review is apparently examining important infrastructure projects in New South Wales, including in the regions, like the Muswellbrook bypass, Merriwa to Willow Tree Road and Newell Highway upgrades. What discussions has the Minister had with her Federal counterpart to spare those projects from Labor's cuts?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:38): It is really interesting to hear The Nationals talking about infrastructure. The first question in question time today, from the leader of the Coalition, did not mention any regional infrastructure at all. Now The Nationals say that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The issue is that they have blown it. The shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads went up and down this State making promises he could not keep.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hornsby will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Those opposite promised in the 2019 election to reclassify and transfer roads, but how many did they do? Zero roads. They did not actually do what they said they would do. There is infrastructure in this State that really should have been done. They had 12 years—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: Standing Order 129 was at the request of the Labor Party to make answers directly relevant. The Minister was asked about a number of projects and any discussions she has had with her Federal counterparts. Not a word has been directed to that matter in her answer.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister is being broadly relevant. Members of the Opposition, including the member for Hornsby, the member for Miranda and the member for Oatley, are making it difficult to hear the Minister's contribution. Opposition members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I put on record how little has been done on that side of the House, after all the promises made by those opposite over the past 12 years about regional roads. It is a legacy of half-finished projects. The member for Bathurst has just lost his possie on the top of the tree. They were going to do this and they were going to do that. How many seats have they lost? If they want to know what has happened with roads in the regions—they lost Monaro. They went down in Bega. They went down in Lismore. They went down in Barwon. They went down in Murray. They went down in Orange. They went down everywhere. If those opposite seriously think that they are the party of regional New South Wales, they have no idea. They have lost it.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Has the member for Maitland completed her answer?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has completed her answer. There is no point of order. It is also too late to seek additional information. I know Opposition members have received the answer that they wanted.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:42): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on what immediate action the Government is taking to address the teacher shortage crisis in New South Wales schools?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:42): I thank the member for Fairfield for his question and congratulate him on his election to this House. He will do great things for his community in south-west Sydney. The first thing the Government will do to urgently address the teacher shortage crisis is something the previous Government utterly

failed to do: This Government will actually acknowledge that there is a teacher shortage crisis. In government, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition not only oversaw a mass exodus of teachers but also refused to do anything about it. To add insult to injury on this important issue, the former education Minister refused to acknowledge that a crisis even existed. It had real impacts.

The Opposition might think that is funny, but it is actually having a tragic impact on children in our schools. On the weekend I spoke to a teacher from a disadvantaged school in Moree. The teacher, Damoon Mehrpour, told me that many of his colleagues are on stress leave because they cannot cope because the teacher shortage crisis is having such a tragic impact on the children they care about. He told me about a year 9 maths class that has been cancelled for the rest of the year because they do not have enough teachers, and how teachers have been brought to tears by this crisis. Those opposite are laughing about this. The previous Minister, Sarah Mitchell, called it a beat-up.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: This Government acknowledges that there is a crisis. I can promise teachers that our Government is listening. This Government is beginning the hard work to fix this crisis and, at its heart, is valuing the work of teachers. The truth is that if you put a teacher in front of a child, that child can learn—if you do not, then they cannot. The Government supports cutting excessive teacher workloads, which has already begun. Teachers should be in front of classrooms and teaching, not behind desks and filling out paperwork. That is why we have committed to cut the time spent on admin work by five hours per week. We have begun. We have halved the number of programs that were due to be rolled out. We have paused pilots and programs. We are undertaking a line-by-line audit and we are giving teachers more time to implement the new curriculum and syllabus. We have already begun negotiations to value teachers—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for North Shore will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: —by paying them fairly, because pay is a function of respect. We will not be imposing an unfair wages cap on teachers. [*Extension of time*]

Teachers will once again, under the Minns Labor Government, have a seat at the negotiating table. We have already begun the process of converting 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff positions to permanent, and every one of them will be working in a school by the beginning of day one, term 1, 2024. The Government will stop the waste of millions of dollars on failed programs like the \$14 million Recruitment Beyond NSW where \$4 million went to just one recruiter. What did it deliver? It delivered 13 teachers. That is \$300,000 for each teacher.

I was reflecting on that and thinking that someone should have told the member for Bathurst. It might have been enough to get him back in the classroom because he will be looking for a new job. That shows you just how much respect the Opposition has for teachers. He is one of the only teachers on the Opposition frontbench and they have already rolled him—that is how much respect they have for him. This Government recognises that we are facing a chronic teacher shortage and we are responding. We have been elected to respond. It is one of the main reasons the government changed hands in New South Wales. I will be honest, it will not be solved overnight but I promise this—

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: We are acting with urgency on behalf of the teachers and students of New South Wales. Work is already underway and we are going to be doing absolutely everything possible—

Ms Felicity Wilson: Like what?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. The Clerk will stop the clock. At this historic moment I will make a statement. I have been on the Speaker's panel for four years—as an Assistant Speaker for roughly one year and now as the Speaker—and the member for North Shore is the first person I have placed on a call to order. The member for North Shore will act with decorum in this House. The Minister has the call.

Ms PRUE CAR: I conclude by saying that tells you everything you need to know about the members of the previous Government and the respect they have for educators in our classrooms. They would rather interrupt an answer so that they do not have to hear the truth. They have sent the teacher shortage crisis in this State to new levels and the Labor Government has been elected to fix that.

DISABILITY INCLUSION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:48): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the majority of people with disabilities are not NDIS participants and rely on mainstream government supports, will the Premier

support my calls for an inquiry by this Parliament into disability inclusion in New South Wales, including the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy by New South Wales government departments, disability employment targets and disability advocacy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:48): I will take the question on notice and report back to the Parliament.

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:48): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast. Will the Minister update the House on what immediate action the Government is taking to implement safe staffing levels in New South Wales hospital emergency departments?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:49): What a member! I thank the member for Heathcote for her question. I do not think I have met a person in Heathcote whom she did not doorknock. It was an incredible campaign. She has worked so hard for the community. I know that the communities of Sutherland and the northern Illawarra will appreciate her advocacy. She is a fantastic local member, who is going to bring a lot to the role. She is also going to be advocating very hard for the Bulli Urgent Care Centre, a clinic that will eventually be open seven days a week—it should have happened a long time ago. So well done to the member for Heathcote. She is already kicking goals.

I, too, acknowledge the Tougher family, who are with us in the gallery today. This has been an incredibly difficult month for them, and I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their kind words. We are all better because of your advocacy and we are all better from letting us into your grief. You have shown what an incredibly resilient and caring family you are. We will continue to work with you on what will be a difficult journey going forward.

I have been honoured not only over the past few weeks but also over the past four years to have met with so many healthcare workers across New South Wales. I acknowledge the Health Services Union and Adam Hall, who represent paramedics, allied healthcare workers and other healthcare workers across the sector, and who are with us today. I have also been enjoying my random visits to hospitals. I have one tonight, but I cannot tell members where I am going. They love them. They let us in this time! This Government is determined to make sure that we put essential workers and staffing our hospitals front and centre.

We took a promise to the people of New South Wales to introduce safe staffing levels in our hospitals and we are committed to delivering on that promise. We are starting in our emergency departments. We will do that by providing an additional \$175 million over the next four years to hire 1,200 additional nurses and midwives. These nurses and midwives will be graduates, new recruits from interstate, hires from parallel sectors and retained nurses—skilled and experienced nurses who would otherwise have left the hospital system. We are wasting no time in implementing our commitments. In fact, the Premier and I have already established the safe hospital staffing levels taskforce that will begin the implementation phase of reform that should have been done a long, long time ago. On this side of the House, we understand that bricks and mortar do not care for patients—allied healthcare workers do, paramedics do. [*Extension of time*]

We understand that it is allied healthcare workers, nurses and paramedics who provide the care, respect and touch needed when we or our loved ones go to hospital. They are the people on the front line. On this side of the House, we are focused on human capital. We are focused on our frontline essential workers—those workers who work around the clock in our hospitals, out on the roads, as paramedics, in our ambulance stations and across our community health services and allied health services for the community. We will back them every step of the way. In addition to safe staffing, we are also announcing a commitment to bring 500 paramedics to regional and rural New South Wales—a key election commitment that should have been delivered a long time ago.

This Government is focused on the men and women who live in the towns and villages across regional and rural New South Wales. In fact, my first visit as Minister was to Wagga Wagga with the member for Wagga Wagga, and then out to Junee with the member for Murray, focusing on rural and regional health services. Next week I will head out to Walgett and I will continue to make sure that rural and regional health care is given the priority we need. Our focus on this side of the Chamber is very simple. It is laser-like focus on improving health services through improving the staffing and resourcing levels of our hospitals and frontline health services. Whether they are in rural, regional or remote New South Wales or in our large metropolitan areas, we are determined to make adequate staffing and resourcing of our hospitals and healthcare services the biggest priority. That is what the people of New South Wales deserve, that is what the men and women who work in our New South Wales healthcare system deserve, and that is what our patients and their families deserve.

WATER SECURITY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:54): My question is directed to the Premier. Even though during the election campaign he said, "I don't pretend to have any expertise about regional New South Wales", does the Premier think Federal Labor's removal of funding for Dungowan Dam and delaying of funding for Wyangala Dam is in the best interests of water security for regional New South Wales?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:55): The Federal Government is entitled to do a review of infrastructure projects.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

They are not? To put this in context, the Commonwealth Government has looked at a 10-year infrastructure pipeline. It was brought in by the Prime Minister when he was infrastructure Minister in the previous Government. The reason for that is a pipeline worth of work could stretch beyond the forward estimates, beyond the next Parliament. What happened after 10 years of Barnaby Joyce running around the Commonwealth Government is he filled up that 10 years worth of infrastructure pipeline. God knows what he got up to. I reckon Adam Marshall would have a fair idea what Barnaby Joyce got up to. It is understandable that the incoming Commonwealth Government would look at where Australian taxpayers' money is being spent.

I want to have a closer look at Dungowan Dam because it has been raised by the member opposite and I think that every member should understand the economics of that particular project. It was originally budgeted to cost \$480 million. The current price tag is \$1.3 billion. To put it in context, most projects like this need a benefit-cost ratio [BCR] of one to one. Restart NSW has a one to one ratio return in order to justify the spending of New South Wales and Commonwealth money. I think that is a basic and important precedent to put out there. The BCR for Dungowan Dam is 0.09. Notwithstanding the fact that the project will cost \$1.3 billion, guess how much the previous Government put alongside that particular project? It was \$45 million. So that is \$1.3 billion compared with \$45 million. This goes to a trick that the National Party are pretty good at pulling on the eve of an election campaign. They look at projects that cost billions or multiple hundreds of millions and put a small amount of money next to them. The reason is a cynical trick.

Mr Kevin Anderson: What about water security for regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: The member for Tamworth will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is a cynical trick. They do not want the truth. You do not like the truth. It is a cynical trick.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business rises on a point of order. This is an opportunity for all members to settle down.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked specifically about water security. He has said nothing about that in his answer.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. We will discuss the matter later. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is a cynical trick, where they pretend they will fund a major piece of infrastructure but put a tiny amount of money next to it. We saw it with the Great Western Highway—a \$10 billion project. Guess how much money they put next to it? They put \$1 billion next to it. It is the same over and over again.

Mr Kevin Anderson: What about water? What about water security? What is your answer then? What is your answer?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If you were so committed to it, why didn't you fund it after a decade in power? *[Time expired.]*

NSW RENTAL COMMISSIONER

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is taking immediate action to protect renters in New South Wales?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:58): I thank the member for Parramatta for her question. I know that the member is a strong advocate for rental reform for people in her electorate, both renters and rental providers alike. No doubt the 15 per cent swing that she achieved proved how good she was against the Opposition's

candidate. We all know how hard and how challenging the rental market has been, but this week I found a new definition for short-term rental accommodation in the National Party leadership. I have never seen somebody who signed a short-term rental—

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order so that I may hear the point of order.

Mr Matt Kean: Clearly, the National Party has nothing to do with rent at all. Mr Speaker, please direct the Minister to return to the question.

The SPEAKER: I rule that the point of order is an interesting aside that has achieved the result it was designed to achieve. I ask the Minister to be more relevant to the question and return to his answer.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: We all know that in the short-term rental market vacancy rates in New South Wales have reached historic lows, putting increased pressure on renters who are looking for a rental property. Rising interest rates and the rising cost of living make people more vulnerable to housing stress, but that is why this Government is getting on with the job of implementing its election commitments to protect renters and to make renting fairer. I am pleased that the important role of the NSW Rental Commissioner has been advertised—an important voice that has been missing for 12 years. The Rental Commissioner will be a critical part of this Government's coordinated response to rebalancing the rental market and providing renters with improved protection and improved rental experience. He or she will be an advocate and a strong voice for renters in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will come to order.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: In a balanced approach, they will work closely with rental advocacy groups, rental providers and agents to identify issues impacting renters and to inform future reform. They will work towards improving conditions for New South Wales renters by advising and consulting on the Government's commitments to ending no-grounds evictions and developing a list of reasonable grounds for all evictions.

Ms Donna Davis: Can the Minister please provide additional information on how the Government—

The SPEAKER: I am sure the Minister can provide additional information. A two-minute extension has been granted.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: As Barack Obama would approve, yes, I can. The commissioner will introduce rules to prevent rental providers from unreasonably refusing a tenant's request for a pet; implement a portable bond scheme, saving renters thousands of dollars as they move from one property to another; and identify options for longer term agreements, giving renters stability and also giving rental providers stability in tenancy as well.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will come to order.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Of course, future policymaking reforms will ensure that we continue to make improvements in the rental market and for rental providers by analysing good data that the commissioner will collect. The Rental Commissioner will be asked to identify barriers to increasing housing supply for renters, because you cannot get rental affordability if you do not have rental availability, and that is what this Government will focus on trying to do. We must ensure that all future reforms and any other proposals do not add extra pressure to the rental market. The Premier has ruled out rent freezes because we know that such an approach ultimately will reduce supply and make things even worse for the people in the rental market we are trying to help.

Over the past few months I have had some very meaningful discussions with stakeholders about our Government's rental reforms. My overriding message is that collaboration is the key. We must balance the need to make renting fairer for renters with ensuring that rental property providers are encouraged to stay in the market, or indeed increase market supply. It is in the interests of renters' advocacy and industry groups to work collaboratively with the Government on reform to strengthen the rental market as a whole.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: The Minister does not require a countdown from members in the Chamber. I appreciate that they may not realise we have a clock.

ENERGY PRICES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:03): My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Energy. Federal budget papers confirm that the average household's energy bill will increase by \$380 next financial year. The New South Wales Coalition proposed \$250 energy bill relief for every household in the State. How many New South Wales households will be hit by this price increase because of the Government's decision to limit energy bill relief?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:04): I will take the question on notice.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

SPORT SAFETY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (13:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to work with major codes, venue operators and community groups to look at harsher penalties aimed at protecting sporting volunteers and referees?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (13:05): I thank the member for East Hills for her question—what a breath of fresh air! I point out that the member for East Hills is a celebrated athlete who has participated at an international level. It is really good to have someone of that ability asking this question. I am pleased to inform the member that the New South Wales Government takes safety and respect at sporting events extremely seriously. As the member knows, the sporting field is somewhere we all need to feel safe and respected. Sadly, this is not always the case.

[Interruption]

This is a serious issue. The member should just tone it down. Like all people in New South Wales, I was sickened and disgusted when I saw the attack on Khodr Yaghi. It goes without saying that what occurred is totally unacceptable. In fact, it was despicable. Without volunteers and referees, grassroots sport in New South Wales would simply not exist. We owe these unsung heroes more, and the Minns Labor Government will work to deliver greater safety, more respect and better outcomes for sport in New South Wales.

What we saw last weekend was outrageous. Sadly, while incidents so severe are thankfully rare, they still occur far too often. The fact is one is too many. With so many families across New South Wales participating in organised sport on a regular basis, the need for volunteers and referees has never been greater. They need to know that we have their backs. If we expect them to keep selflessly giving up their time for the good of our society, we must look after them. We must make sure we have their backs. I am sure that, like me, the member is sick of hearing about parents withdrawing their kids from sport due to abuse and violence by so-called adults. *[Extension of time]*

That is why I am pleased to inform the House that today I announced that the Government will explore stricter policies to punish violent and abusive behaviour in sport while campaigning to encourage more respectful behaviour on the field. Importantly, we will be looking at options to carry penalties across codes so that violent thugs cannot code hop. We will look also at stopping individuals who are violent in community sports settings from attending government venues. If you are abusive at the under-12s, we will not be letting you into the A-League. We will also consider escalating sanctions against teams and clubs where violent individuals are not being managed. Mr Yaghi's alleged attacker was already suspended earlier in the season for starting a fight. The member for East Hills would be right to ask why he was still allowed to be there.

The Minns Labor Government will work closely with sporting organisations, venues and communities to investigate new penalties and sanctions aimed at protecting our referees and volunteers. These will need to be tailored to individual sports, and I will be consulting extensively to make sure we get a scheme that works to protect everybody. It is simple: Referees, volunteers and players need to feel safe and respected. The Minns Labor Government will stand shoulder to shoulder with our sporting communities against thuggish, violent and cowardly behaviour.

PAULINE HANSON'S ONE NATION

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (13:10): My question is directed to the Premier. On 2 April he said, "We're not going to work with One Nation." Will he confirm that no Labor MPs nor anyone on their behalf has communicated with One Nation directly or indirectly to secure the election of One Nation's Rod Roberts to the deputy presidency of the Legislative Council?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:11): It is an interesting question from the member for Hornsby. I think the nomination was moved by a member of the Animal Justice Party. It had nothing to do with the Labor Party. My understanding is that it had unanimous support. Members of the Coalition supported that nomination. It was unopposed. Fancy walking into Parliament and demanding an explanation about One Nation when his own party in the upper House backed him in.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr Matt Kean: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, concerning relevance. The question went to whether any Labor MPs or their delegates directly or indirectly communicated with One Nation to secure the deputy presidency of Rod Roberts.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Hornsby. The Premier has hardly started his answer. I agree that the Premier is in full flight, but he has certainly not been irrelevant to the question in any sense. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: How about the question demanding an answer from the Government about a unanimous motion in the upper House? No-one bothered asking anyone in the Legislative Council how the Coalition voted. But it is not only that. I thought it was curious that, straight after the election campaign, the Hon. Mark Latham in that other place disclosed to the people of New South Wales that the Coalition tried to do a preference deal with One Nation but he rejected it. Imagine being rejected by Mark Latham! In our first question time the member for Hornsby comes into this House and wonders about collusion between major parties and One Nation, and then we find out there was a secret deal to do a preference deal with One Nation—a preference deal in Oatley, a preference deal in Ryde and a preference deal in Lane Cove.

What a rotten party—determining before the election campaign that the best thing to do to hold onto power under enormous pressure was to cosy up and do a preference deal with One Nation. What a shocking turn of events. At the end of the day, the nomination was moved by the Animal Justice Party. Coalition members in the upper House supported that nomination. If the member does not like that course of events, maybe he should take it up with the shadow Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: I recognise and welcome our first school group visitors for the Fifty-Eighth Parliament, guests of the member for Campbelltown. I believe they are students from Broughton Anglican College.

RAIL NETWORK

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (13:13): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Passengers on our train network have seen years of disruption and delays, including an entire network shutdown, a system-wide digital system failure and fallen powerlines that trapped passengers. Will the Minister inform the House of the immediate action the Minns Labor Government is taking to repair our train system and restore passengers' confidence in public transport?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (13:14): I thank the member for Strathfield for his question. I congratulate him on his re-election and on his advocacy, each and every day, for the thousands and thousands of passengers who rely on our train network. We know all too well that rail failures under the former Liberal Government became a fact of life in Sydney, so the first briefing that I received as Minister for Transport was on Sydney Trains. What I learnt was nothing short of shocking. Reliability on the train network that we inherited from those opposite is at an all-time low. May of last year was the last time the network achieved on-time running. It is more than a year since the network hit the target to deliver trains to passengers on time. What has happened? We have had a year of unreliable service. That means people have lost confidence in our train network. They cannot rely on it to get them to work on time or to get their kids to school.

I will take members back to March. It is a month they will remember well. We had three standstill failures across the network in that month. The first one was on 8 March, when the entire digital train radio system failed, stranding thousands of passengers in the afternoon peak. Just two days after that we had a live overhead wire fail and fall down on a train, trapping 500 passengers for 90 minutes and again causing massive delays across the broader network. Then on the day of the State election—also a day that members will remember well—there were multiple signal failures that originated in the Strathfield area and then spread across the entire region through the afternoon and evening.

This is the mess that we inherited from those opposite. I was briefed on those incidents by Sydney Trains and Transport for NSW, and they advised me to undertake an internal review. But it is clear to me that an internal review is not sufficient. We need independent experts. We need a rail rescue team to get to the bottom of this. That is why I have acted immediately to start the process of restoring passengers' faith in the reliability of our

train network. We moved urgently to commission an independent rail infrastructure systems review. That review will examine Sydney Trains' governance, accountability, asset management and planning systems. [*Extension of time*]

The review will make recommendations about how to improve the reliability and resilience of our train network to ensure that the network stays safe for everybody. Let us make no mistake here: This is a huge task. We are reforming the largest and most complex passenger rail network in the country, much of which is over 100 years old. But we need to create a more durable network to improve the way we recover from incidents that interrupt services. That review will help to chart a way out of the mess we inherited from those opposite. I have appointed Carolyn Walsh to head up that review. She is exceptionally well credentialed. She led the establishment of the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator and is chair of the National Transport Commission. I have every confidence that she and her team will move quickly to provide advice to the Government about how to implement fast and durable solutions. In fact, she will be providing me with her preliminary report this week, and the Government will receive a final report in October.

We are getting on straightaway with the process of restoring reliability and resilience to our rail network because passengers deserve no less. Our reforms will take time, but they will make a real difference and result in a train system that passengers can again rely on. When I was sworn in as the Minister for Transport, I assumed responsibility for what the previous Government never did—that is, improving the experience of the millions of passengers who rely on our train network. We are a government that is up-front about the problems we have inherited. Unlike the former Government, we will be honest about the costs of delivering new services and of projects. We will be honest about when they actually will be delivered. And we will be up-front if those delivery dates and costs change. We are taking action to create a reliable and resilient train network that passengers can once again rely on.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:19): Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on doing an excellent job this question time. My question is directed to the Minister for Health in his capacity as the Minister in this place representing the Minister for Housing. Given the huge increase in rents and growing social housing waiting lists, will the Minister increase the Private Rental Subsidy to ensure that those people eligible for priority social housing can access a safe, secure and affordable home?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:20): I thank the member for Sydney for his question. I think all of us, regardless of our political persuasions, would acknowledge the work that he has done for a long time in relation to housing, housing affordability and renting. I acknowledge that work, and I know that the Minister in the other place, the Hon. Rose Jackson, acknowledges it. The member specifically raised the Private Rental Subsidy. I am advised by the Minister that she is looking into rental reform and has been having regular discussions with the department around those issues. That is in conjunction with the commitments that we took to the election to ensure that every person in New South Wales has the opportunity to have a roof over their head.

I also acknowledge that the Minister for Housing talked about changes and reforms that the Government is looking at introducing to make it a lot fairer for renters in New South Wales. We are looking at further private rental reforms—some that the Minister has outlined—and a program of changes to maximise how many people can be assisted in line with those reforms. It is important that we also increase the housing supply to assist with the housing crisis. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces on behalf of the Government in that area.

We are also working with our Federal counterparts to deliver New South Wales' share of 50,000 social and affordable houses over the next five years. In my electorate, and I think in most members' electorates, housing is a real issue. Social housing and affordable housing are real and genuine issues, and we must all be able to have sensible conversations with our communities about them. I am having those conversations in my electorate about affordable housing coming to the region that I am so grateful to represent. We must take the lead in this regard. I acknowledge the Minister for Housing for getting that work underway, and I also acknowledge the member for Sydney for his significant influence on that.

We know that this work will take time. But we are listening to those affected by rent prices: families, individuals, pensioners and, of course, small business owners. It is important that we not only listen to them but also bring in policies that have a meaningful impact on them. Other private rental support options, including Rent Choice, Together Home and the Community Housing Leasing Program, are all strong programs that many of us are familiar with. They have been carried on from previous governments and will continue going forward. It is important that those programs worked well. It is important that we, as members of Parliament, drive this type of

change. We are always looking for ways in which we can improve the situation for those in housing stress, particularly renters.

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:23): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister please update the House on Government efforts to support flood-affected communities in the Northern Rivers?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:23): I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, and echo the comments of the member for Sydney. I also congratulate all new members in this place. It is pretty special to be here. I hope that all members have the best of times and that we work together to make the best of differences, for all of our communities. I thank the member for Lismore for her question. Over the weekend I was extremely fortunate to spend more time in the Northern Rivers region—my first as Minister. As shadow Minister I had been in the region a number of times—I think five—and none of us have forgotten what happened over a year ago. Indeed, we wanted to make sure that we sent that message. I carried the same message as Premier Minns, Treasurer Mookhey and fellow Ministers Jackson and Scully, in visiting the community, talking to them and making sure that they were confident and comfortable that we would continue the work that is going on.

Anybody who has been there would know that the spirit on display is incredible. It is a place where people have not been broken. They have certainly been bent and they have been twisted, but the community has not been broken. That is incredibly special. Everywhere along the road, and in businesses and houses, you see love hearts, whether they have been drawn or are on sheets or in windows. They are a symbol of, and a testimony to, the spirit of the people. They are also in defiance of everything that those people are facing and a shout-out to their resilience. That is inspiring and says an incredible amount about a community that has faced more than any other community in recent times in New South Wales. Both sides of the House know the trauma experienced in that community and the anxiety that they still feel every time it rains. Indeed, on one of the afternoons it was looking a bit cloudy, and you could just sense everybody's panic straightaway. There is still the smell of water at different places. There are things that are very clear. There is still debris in trees. But the community keeps going.

We know that the floods that went through Lismore and the Northern Rivers were the most expensive natural disaster in Australian history. At the time, the SES received over 32,000 calls and requests for assistance, and they were ably supported by all of our emergency services and, later on, by Federal agencies. More than 10,000 properties were damaged in the floods and around 1,000 residents are still in temporary housing. Our responsibility is to listen, to learn, to support and to make changes that further deliver that support. Members who have been in Parliament know me well enough to know my sincerity in saying that our response must be above politics. To that end, I acknowledge publicly my predecessor, the member for Cootamundra, and the tireless and empathetic way in which she dealt with this recovery, and worked with our office, when I was in opposition. *[Extension of time]*

As Minister, I will be guided by one question: What can we do better? We do not have to throw the baby out with the bathwater. If we can fix things, we will fix them. What can we do better? I also acknowledge, as I did with the member for Cootamundra, the member for Ballina and the member for Tweed. Together they worked incredibly well along the coastal line to ensure that they stood with the community across party lines. Because when it comes to things like this, politics must be put aside and community put first. No-one asks which way someone votes when they are struggling, homeless or in desperate need of support.

For some facts and figures, the recovery is well underway. We know that Service NSW has approved more than 9,500 small business grants, 500 return to business grants and 400 medium business grants, and there is ongoing assistance as well. In addition, 18,000 applications have been received for the Back Home grant. With the Rental Support Payment, the Disaster Relief Grant, and the Storm and Flood Disaster Recovery Small Business Grant, everything that can be done is being done to support this community to rebuild and restart.

While I acknowledge other members, I cannot go past the rockstar herself, the member for Lismore. Members should walk down a street of Lismore. I thought I was pretty popular in Punchbowl, but I cannot hold a candle to the member for Lismore and her tenacity and relentless drive. She does not knock on a door; she kicks the door down and tells you what she wants. Her belief in her community support is the stuff that every one of us 93 members must remember when we are faced with our own tragedies in our communities. We can learn from what these members have dealt with and the way in which they responded. I conclude by noting what a difference there is between the first visit I made, which was a week after the floods, when people's lives were literally outside the front door, and now, with businesses thriving, communities growing and spirits lifted. That is why we are in this place—to make a difference and to make people's lives better. We will continue to do that every single day.

*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 10 May 2023.

SUPPLEMENTARY ORDINARY RETURNS

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983, I table a copy of the Supplementary Ordinary Returns by members of the Legislative Assembly as at 31 December 2022. I order that the documents be printed.

*Motions***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That business of the House be interrupted on:

- (1) Wednesday 10 May 2023 at:
 - (a) 3.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Camden, for Monaro and for Clarence; and
 - (b) 5.45 p.m. to permit the presentation of the inaugural speech by the member for Wakehurst.
- (2) Thursday 11 May 2023 after the routine of business following question time to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Riverstone and for Parramatta.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Central Coast Council

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly reinstate Central Coast Council elections, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 by extending the time limit for making a complaint and repealing section 89B (4), received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

Tallawarra Power Station

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly require the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to lead a peer review of independent third-party testing of the plume from Tallawarra B during commissioning, received from **Ms Anna Watson**.

Pymont and Ultimo Public Transport

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to improve public transport connectivity in Pymont and Ultimo, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

South Head National Park

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly restrict vehicle use in South Head National Park, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

Trap, Neuter, Release and Rehome Programs

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly ensure that trap, neuter, release and rehome programs are lawful, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot Scheme

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly make the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot scheme permanent law in the whole of New South Wales, received from **Mr Justin Clancy**.

Kogarah Public School

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly allocate funding to help secure a rebuild of Kogarah Public School, received from **Mr Chris Minns**.

Guildford Road Traffic Lights

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Minister for Transport to urgently provide a right-hand turn arrow from Guildford Road, travelling west, into Woodville Road, received from **Ms Julia Finn**.

Great Koala National Park

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly immediately create the proposed Great Koala National Park and place a moratorium on all logging of public native forest within the park, received from **Ms Tamara Smith**.

Ourimbah Nissen Hut

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to call on the Central Coast Council to take possession of the Glen Road Ourimbah Nissen hut land at 1A Jacques Street, Ourimbah, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

Motorhomes and Tolling

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Minister for Transport and the Treasurer to amend the toll system so that motorhomes registered for private use are charged as Class A vehicles, received from **Dr Michael Holland**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Victor Dominello—Timber Industry Work Practices—lodged 8 November 2022 (Mr Christopher Gulaptis)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Sydney Koala Populations—lodged 16 November 2022 (Mr Greg Warren)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Iyoria Aboriginal Elders Belonging Estate—lodged 16 November 2022 (Mr Jamie Parker)

The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman—Central Coast Council—lodged 21 December 2022 (Mr David Mehan)

The Hon. Natalie Ward—Granville, South Granville, Auburn and Lidcombe Traffic—lodged 16 November 2022 (Ms Lynda Voltz)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Gundary Solar Farm—lodged 21 December 2022 (Ms Wendy Tuckerman)

The SPEAKER: I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.10 p.m.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

At 14:13 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect members to fill seats in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Mark Latham, resigned, and the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, resigned.

At 14:36 the House reassembled.

The SPEAKER: I report that the House has met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day to elect two members to fill the seats in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignations of the Hon. Mark Latham and the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, and that the Hon. Tania Mihailuk and the Hon. Scott Farlow were duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sittings. I order that the minutes be printed.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: COMMITTEES

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit a motion to be moved forthwith for the appointment of a Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Establishment and Membership

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders:

- (1) A Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics (referred to as "the committee") be appointed to:
 - (a) consider and report upon any matters relating to privilege which may be referred to it under Standing Order 92 or by resolution of the House; and
 - (b) receive and consider reports from the Independent Complaints Officer and undertake such other functions as are referred to in the resolution establishing the Independent Complaints Officer.
- (2) The committee is the designated committee for the purpose of exercising the functions in part 7A division 2 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, relating to parliamentary ethical standards including the review of the Code of Conduct.
- (3) The committee consist of five members—three Government members, one Opposition member and one crossbench member being: Jason Yat-Sen Li, Lynda Jane Voltz, Janelle Anne Saffin, Leslie Gladys Williams and Alexander Hart Greenwich.
- (4) Alexander Hart Greenwich be the chair of the committee.
- (5) Any three members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.
- (6) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (7) The committee have power to confer with any similar committee appointed by the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: COMMITTEE REFERENCE

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion forthwith concerning the referral of an inquiry to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reference

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:40): I move:

That the House provide the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics with the following terms of reference:

- (1) That the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on matters relating to the position of a member who:
 - (a) has been suspended from the service of the House until the verdict of the jury has been returned on criminal charges laid against him or her; and
 - (b) is subsequently re-elected in the next Parliament prior to any such jury verdict having been returned, or the proceedings having concluded.
- (2) That the matters for inquiry should cover:
 - (a) whether consideration should be given to taking action against a member in such circumstances;
 - (b) if so, the scope of action that should be considered; and
 - (c) any other related matter.
- (3) That in conducting its inquiry the committee give consideration to any relevant cases in previous Parliaments in New South Wales, or in other Australian jurisdictions, where a member has been expelled or suspended from the service of the House and subsequently re-elected.
- (4) That the committee report by 8 June 2023.

Members will have noted in the way the motion has been framed that neither the member's name nor electorate has been disclosed. That is for valid reasons as that person is entitled to a fair trial. Privilege applies to any statement made in this House that could not be made outside this House without being subject to legal proceedings for contempt. All members should ensure as much as possible that, if they participate in any discussion of this nature, they reflect the oblique way in which the motion is framed and the way in which I have made this contribution.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (SYDNEY WATER AND HUNTER WATER) BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Chris Minns, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (14:44): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In the recent election campaign, the Government promised the people of New South Wales that it would seek an amendment to the Constitution Act 1902 to protect Sydney Water and Hunter Water from privatisation. Today the Government honours that commitment. The Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 amends the Constitution Act to make it much harder for any future government to privatise Sydney Water or Hunter Water. Under the current legislative framework—essentially the State Owned Corporations Act—a future government could try to facilitate what we would term a backdoor privatisation. That would be without the agreement of the New South Wales Parliament, and there would be no guarantee that a future government had sought the permission of the people of this State. Instead, it could do it by having just its own two shareholding Ministers give written approval for the privatisation of the main business activities of Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Under the previous Government, we saw such things done many times before. In fact, it became an entrenched part of its *modus operandi*.

We have seen the effects of 12 years of privatisation—the selling off of our electricity assets, our ports and our toll roads. Essential assets were sold often at low prices, with the public paying an ever-increasing amount simply to use the same core services that they used to own. We saw dividends no longer being re-invested back into the New South Wales budget but going straight to private operators, and then government after government having to look at compensation schemes because people could not afford to use the services anymore. We promised to put an end to that, and I am proud that this is indeed our first bit of legislation.

Under the proposed changes, such a privatisation attempt would be blocked. Privatisation of Sydney Water and Hunter Water could not occur by stealth. It could only happen under the full glare of public awareness and after scrutiny by this Parliament or, if there is an attempt to bypass the Parliament, in the courts. In the Parliament, any disposal of a water corporation or one of its main undertakings could only happen with the explicit support of a majority of elected members of both Houses. The bill amends the Constitution Act 1902 by inserting a new part 10 dealing specifically with continuing public ownership of Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Under new section 57 (1), neither the corporations themselves, nor a main undertaking of the corporation or any subsidiary, can be sold—or otherwise disposed of—without a new Act of Parliament to approve that. New section 57 (6) confirms that the main undertakings include business activities necessary to enable the corporations to carry out any of the following:

- (a) the storage or supply of water,
- (b) the provision of sewerage services,
- (c) the provision of stormwater drainage systems,
- (d) the disposal of waste water.

While the focus of the bill is to protect the public ownership of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, it is not intended to limit or constrain their day-to-day operations. For example, new section 57 (2) makes it clear that the bill will not prevent the sale or disposal of a landholding or other asset or service in the ordinary course of business—but this is on the condition that the main undertakings of the corporation remain in public ownership. The bill will also not preclude Sydney Water or Hunter Water entering commercial arrangements that deliver value for money

and improved customer service outcomes in order to fulfil the corporation's statutory functions, providing that it does not involve the sale or disposal of its main undertakings.

Between them, Sydney Water and Hunter Water supply services to almost six million people in Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains and in the Illawarra and Hunter regions. This is a vital resource that the Government is determined to keep in public ownership. I acknowledge that it is extremely unusual for any State Parliament to insert into the Constitution provisions related to what might be termed a matter of policy. The normal province of State constitutions is matters to do with the operation and powers of the Legislature, the role of the Governor and other matters central to a great democracy. This extension of the ambit of the Constitution Act to include a policy matter is not something that the Government takes lightly. It is not something we intend to make a habit of.

While concerns about privatisation generally were a feature of the recent election campaign, it was only on the matter of safeguarding the public ownership of Sydney Water and Hunter Water where this Government made an explicit promise to amend the Constitution Act, and it is regarding those two entities where the Government has a specific and unambiguous mandate. Significantly, there is a precedent for amending a State constitution to include protections against privatising publicly owned water assets. Victoria did it 20 years ago. While the Government is determined to make it much harder for any future government to privatise those corporations, it also does not want to try to pre-empt the decisions of future parliaments on a policy matter.

In the present context, I hope that the Opposition recognises the democratic mandate given to the Government to introduce the bill. The citizens of the State have made their views clear that previous privatisations have gone too far and a line in the sand needed to be drawn under those important corporations—Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Something very similar happened 20 years ago in Victoria as a result of and a reaction to the privatisations by the former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett. In Victoria the Liberal Party and The Nationals voted for the amendment to the Constitution Act proposed by the then Bracks Government to safeguard the public ownership of the State's water assets. I hope a similar precedent is followed by the Opposition in this Chamber. The bottom line is that Government members believe safe, reliable, publicly owned water is a constitutional right and should therefore be in the New South Wales Constitution. I commend the bill to the House.

[Interruption from gallery]

The SPEAKER: I will show some indulgence to those in the gallery because of the significance of the matter, but I ask that they curb their enthusiasm.

Debate adjourned.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (RENTAL FAIRNESS) BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (14:54): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023. The bill marks the beginning of the implementation of the Government's commitments to improve residential tenancy laws and make renting fairer for all in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government went into the last election with a set of firm commitments to improve the situation for renters in New South Wales and is taking the steps needed to deliver them. With over one-third of the New South Wales population renting, the Government is committed to ensuring that renters are not second-class citizens; that they have access to secure, safe and affordable housing; and that the rules around renting are fair for all parties.

Renters are facing one of the toughest markets we have seen for decades. Across the State, families are feeling the pressure. Low housing supply and escalating interest rates are impacting affordability for all renters and making things especially tough for owners, many of whom are just ordinary mum-and-dad investors. The latest *PropTrack Rental Report*, released in April, showed that rents have increased by 11.1 per cent over the past 12 months. Reports by the Property Council and the Reserve Bank of Australia have confirmed that the proportion of income that tenants are paying towards rent has increased, with more tenants in financial stress. A recent report by LongView and PEXA highlighted that tenants are often competing for properties that are lower in quality and that all tenants face poor security of tenure.

It is in that context that the Government will make a number of changes to make renting fairer in New South Wales, some of which are reflected in the bill. The first is the appointment of a dedicated Rental Commissioner to be a voice for tenants and to work with tenants, owners and the community to progress the Government's reform agenda. The Rental Commissioner will also identify barriers to increasing the housing supply for renters, identify gaps and practices that erode renters' rights and gather data on renting that will help to inform future reforms. The process of recruiting the Rental Commissioner is already underway, with the position being advertised as we speak.

The second change is to amend the rules around ending a tenancy so that tenants can no longer be evicted without any reason. The Government will work with the Rental Commissioner, all stakeholders and the community to identify additional reasonable grounds for ending a tenancy. The Government has also committed to making it easier for tenants to enjoy the same rights to keep pets as others in the community by preventing owners from unreasonably refusing permission for a pet.

The Government will also address the issue of over-collection of information from tenants and the protection and use of tenants' personal information. Work on all of those commitments is happening now, and the Government will be seeking input from all stakeholders and the public as the changes take shape. The Government will also work with stakeholders, particularly the housing industry, to identify opportunities to increase the supply of compliant, safe and resilient homes. Rental affordability relies on working to achieve rental availability. The Minns Labor Government cannot progress this solution overnight, but it has committed to finding responsible ways to incentivise the delivery of more housing to relieve the stress on those seeking affordable housing.

The bill will enact another two of the Government's election commitments: to eliminate the practice of secret rent bidding and to establish a portable bond scheme. Those two important changes will help level the playing field for tenants and assist with the costs of renting. The changes to rent bidding will fix loopholes in New South Wales' current rent-bidding laws and boost transparency for everyone in the system. The bill does this by extending the existing ban on solicited rent bidding so that it also covers owners and third parties, not just real estate agents. Those changes will also fulfil the Government's promise to remove secret rent bidding, where one applicant for a tenancy offers a higher price and secures the property without the other applicants knowing about the higher offer or being given an opportunity to match it. The bill enacts that change through a new requirement for owners and their agents to notify applicants of other offers from applicants who are in the running for the property that are higher than the advertised price.

The changes also include an important regulation-making power that will enable the secretary to collect information from owners and agents, meaning the Government will finally be able to gather accurate data on the operation of this change and on the rental market more broadly. The Government's election commitment to introduce a portable bond scheme for renters will ease the cost pressures renters face when they move into a new property. Currently, they are required to pay a new bond before they receive their old bond back, which increases financial stress on tenants. The changes in the bill ensure that the Act contains appropriate powers to design and establish an effective portable bond system.

With this bill, we are doing exactly as we said we would. We are setting up a fairer system where balanced reform allows all parties to work together and build trust. Owners need renters and renters need more owners in the market to reduce prices. We do not want a rental system that pits owners and renters against each other, and we recognise the important role owners play in providing properties to rent. It is critical rental housing supply is not further constrained, particularly in the very tight market renters are experiencing right now. But we also recognise the rental laws in New South Wales have favoured owners too heavily at the expense of renters. The rental laws need to be more equally balanced. I am confident these reforms will help to improve outcomes for both owners and renters in the current rental market.

I now turn in detail to the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023. Currently, the Property and Stock Agents Regulation 2022 requires real estate agents to advertise a rental property at a fixed price and bans them from asking renters to offer more rent than the property is advertised for. However, this rule currently only applies to real estate agents. It does not include landlords, or any of the property technology platforms, including online rental application tools. The bill moves the current requirements relating to fixed-price advertising and the ban on soliciting of higher bids from the Property and Stock Agents Regulation to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. In doing so, the bill closes the existing loophole and ensures that owners are covered by the rent bidding ban, bringing New South Wales into line with rent bidding bans in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand.

Unlike other States and Territories, for the first time in Australia the bill also explicitly extends the ban to any third parties who may encourage renters to offer more for a rental property. This is particularly relevant for online rental application tools that have now become a staple of the application process for renters. They not only collect the information for the application—including the amount of rent offered—they also evaluate and assign

ratings to applicants to help agents and landlords with their decision on who they will choose as the tenant. The bill will also prohibit those application tools from soliciting higher offers from prospective tenants. New section 22A (3) of the Act provides that third parties cannot, either directly or indirectly, solicit offers of rent that are higher than the advertised price.

Secret bidding will be eliminated through transparency requirements. While the bill bans agents and landlords from asking tenancy applicants to offer more than the advertised price, agents and landlords can accept higher rent offers made voluntarily by an applicant. In the current environment, these operate as secret offers, given and accepted without other applicants ever knowing an offer was made or what the final agreed price was. The bill will change those practices and make them open and transparent. New section 22B introduces a requirement for an owner or their agent to notify all those who have applied for a property about higher rent offers that other applicants who are being considered as prospective tenants have made. This will create an even playing field for all applicants, giving them knowledge about rent negotiations that are occurring and providing them with a chance to match that offer or make a higher offer themselves if they wish to.

Importantly, the bill does not require all higher offers to be communicated with other applicants, but only those which are made by someone who would be an acceptable applicant. An acceptable applicant is defined as someone with whom the landlord would be prepared to enter into a tenancy agreement. This limitation avoids wasting everyone's time, as it does not require communication of offers made by an applicant with whom the landlord would not be prepared to enter into a tenancy agreement.

Landlords and agents are required to advise tenancy applicants in writing of a higher offer from an acceptable applicant within one business day of receiving the offer. Verbal advice may also be given. Importantly, the advice to applicants must advise the amount that was offered and must be given before the applicant who made that higher offer is either advised that they are the successful applicant or a holding deposit is taken from them, whichever happens first. The requirement for a landlord or agent to notify applicants of higher offers ceases to apply once a holding deposit has been accepted for the property or if a tenancy agreement has been entered into.

If a landlord or agent is considering an offer of higher rent from an acceptable applicant and intends to conduct an open house for prospective tenants, the landlord or agent must take all reasonable steps to update any advertisements for the property with the higher rent amount that is now being considered. This will avoid misleading prospective tenants into attending an inspection when the rent negotiations are sitting at a price higher than the previously advertised price. In recognition that a higher offer from an acceptable applicant may have been received by the time an inspection by prospective tenants occurs, the bill also requires owners and agents to advise any prospective tenants attending an inspection or inquiring about a property of the higher offer received from an acceptable applicant at that point in time. The bill provides for a maximum penalty for breaching the notification requirements of \$11,000 for a corporation and \$5,500 for individuals, with on-the-spot fines of up to \$1,100 for every breach of those new requirements.

The Government recognises that changes to regulation might potentially impact a volatile rental market in different ways. That is why the Government will ask the Rental Commissioner to keep those changes under review and to recommend amendments to them if needed. To enable monitoring and evaluation, the bill includes a regulation-making power which will enable the secretary to collect information from relevant persons on the operation of the new requirements if necessary. I look forward to working with the new Rental Commissioner and representatives of renters, owners and agents to set appropriate evaluation measures to inform future rental reforms.

The second commitment being progressed by the bill is the Government's commitment to setting up a portable rental bond scheme which will allow tenants to directly transfer bonds from one property to another, while ensuring property owners have access to funds they may need. Tenants face significant costs when moving from one property to another, including the usual costs of boxes and packing materials, movers or vans, cleaning, utilities, and arranging time off work to prepare for and manage the move itself. The Tenants' Union of NSW estimates moving costs to be between \$2,500 to \$4,000 on average.

Tenants are also required to pay a rental bond up-front at the time of entering into a tenancy agreement, despite the fact that most tenants have already paid a bond on their previous rental. For the 2021-22 financial year 63 per cent of bonds were repaid in full, meaning there is a period when they must find money for a new bond to secure a new home while still waiting for the bond from their previous home to be released. A tenant in New South Wales is facing an extra rental bond cost of \$2,200 for a property that costs the median rent of \$550 per week. That means less money in the bank for new furniture, appliances, school uniforms and other incidental costs that can occur with moving house.

The sum of \$2,200 is equivalent to the cost of buying groceries for 11 weeks, based on an average Australian spend of \$185 a week. If the condition of the previous rental home is disputed, there may be a delay

before the disagreement is resolved and any previous bond paid out. The Government's portable rental bond scheme will lessen the financial burden of moving house for renters. The scheme will prevent tenants being out of pocket for two rental bonds at the same time by allowing tenants to use the rental bond from their old rental property for a new rental property, before the first bond is released.

The bill facilitates the implementation of the portable bond scheme by adding to the regulation-making powers that already exist in section 186A of the Act, which allows a portable bond scheme to be established through the regulations. The bill will add further powers to the existing regulation-making provisions. They relate to administering the scheme, guaranteeing bond payments, ensuring flexible systems are used to administer the scheme, and ending rental agreements if there is non-compliance with the scheme's terms and conditions. The bill amends the Act so that all the necessary powers needed to progress an effective and customer-focused portable bond scheme are in place. However, that is only the first step in implementing the portable bond scheme. The detailed application of the scheme will be enacted through regulation, allowing further design work and consultation to occur on the details of how the scheme should work.

Rental bonds are held on trust for renters and landlords. The final amendment in the bill also relates to rental bonds. The bill clarifies that rental bonds held by the New South Wales Rental Bond Board are held on trust on behalf of New South Wales landlords and renters. That is a legal clarification because, in practice, those bonds are already held on trust and are ready to be paid out at the end of a tenancy agreement. The Act already allows interest from bonds to be used for a number of purposes, including funding for tenant advice and advocacy services for New South Wales renters. The amendment will not change that.

As I have indicated, the bill is just the first step in implementing the Government's changes to New South Wales renting laws. This Government has a comprehensive reform agenda that recognises the realities of the current New South Wales rental market, while also establishing sustainable rules that will continue to strengthen that market. The Government recognises these measures will not be successful without the united commitment across government, industry and the community to take meaningful action to help those who need it most. In this environment it is easy to point the finger at owners, but we also recognise the need to support good owners who are providing an important service.

I acknowledge that the past few years have been incredibly challenging for those seeking to find a home for their family, which has created untold pressures on those families. This Government is committed to ensuring that renters are protected and that there is a more even balance between their rights and those of landlords. The bill will provide much-needed relief to those who need it most. As we consider the comprehensive reform agenda this Government will roll out, I recognise the support that the Tenants' Union, the Real Estate Institute of NSW, PropTech Association Australia, CHOICE, Shelter NSW and the Property Services Expert Panel provided in finalising the bill. From working so closely with those peak bodies, I can see a mutual commitment to tackling the rental crisis. The candour and meaningful contributions from those stakeholders have given me confidence that together we can support good landlords while also ensuring fair and transparent rental laws to protect tenants.

The Government recognises that the biggest impact on rental prices will be lack of rental housing supply. This will remain the case and that is why we will continue to work with industry to unlock supply. The Government has a plan for delivering more compliant, safe and resilient housing, but that will take time. We also recognise that current rental laws do not provide renters with the protections necessary to have a secure and stable home. The people of New South Wales deserve a more balanced and equal rental system that allows landlords and renters to mutually benefit. The bill shows that the Government is acting quickly and will continue to improve the lives of renters, without constraining rental housing supply.

We will continue to progress our election commitments to the people of New South Wales, including amending no-grounds terminations, making it easier for renters to have pets, better protecting renters' personal information and appointing a New South Wales Rental Commissioner so that renters can have a voice. In the weeks and months to come, I look forward to bringing further bills to this Parliament to continue this important work. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Community Recognition Statements

MACKENZIE GARCIA

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:13): I take this opportunity to congratulate Mackenzie Garcia of Shell Cove on her successful season as Fran in the So Popera production of *Strictly Ballroom – The Musical* at the WIN Entertainment Centre in April this year. Mackenzie completed her schooling at Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts and as a 12-year-old toured Australia and New Zealand playing Jane Banks in the Australian production of *Mary Poppins*. After completing her HSC, Mackenzie studied a Diploma of Musical

Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and a Bachelor of Musical Theatre at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide. While at university she performed as Cosette in *Les Misérables* and Vivienne Kensington in *Legally Blonde*. She also performed in the Adelaide Festival's *L'Hotel* and was a chorister in the StoreyBoard Entertainment production of *Chess – The Musical* at Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide. Mackenzie has recently been cast in a CDP Theatre Producers production of *Dog Man: The Musical*, in the role of Lil Petey, which will be performed in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth in the next few months. I congratulate Mackenzie Garcia on her outstanding achievements and, on behalf of the Shellharbour community, I wish her the very best of luck in her future endeavours.

HAL MOIR

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:14): I acknowledge and congratulate one of my constituents, Mr Hal Moir of Terrigal, on his recent recognition for 10,000 hours of volunteer service to the NSW Police Force. Hal, who is a Volunteers in Policing [VIP] member, was recently recognised for his more than 20 years of service at an awards ceremony on 30 March, held by the Brisbane Water Police District. Hal Moir first began volunteering at Brisbane Water Police in 1999 and has since assisted police on hundreds of occasions, including volunteering at community events, painting stations and cooking barbecues. For more than 10,000 hours Hal has helped Brisbane Water Police make the district a safer community. Volunteers like Hal work tirelessly behind the scenes. I again congratulate Hal and thank him for his length of service and volunteer contribution to the NSW Police Force. Hal has been at almost every event involving the Brisbane Water Police that I have attended as the member for Terrigal. He is a steadfast, fantastic VIP.

2023 ELDERS OLYMPICS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (15:15): I am delighted to inform the House that the 2023 Elders Olympics were recently held on Worimi land in Port Stephens. This friendly competition of teams from 28 Aboriginal lands includes a mix of traditional Aboriginal games and modern relays and events. Port Stephens has a strong history at the Elders Olympics, with the Worimi Wuburay Elders winning gold in 2012, 2013 and 2015, and Karuah's Indigeco Elders taking gold in 2021. I congratulate the 2023 gold medal winners from Kempsey, Booroongen Djugun, and silver medallists Westlakes Aboriginal Elders. But I give an extra loud cheer to our local bronze medallists, Karuah's Indigeco Elders, for their incredible efforts as this year's hosts, and a special mention to Aunty Bev Manton for all her hard work. In summing up the event, NSW Aboriginal Land Council member Abie Wright said:

Elders are the bedrock and lifeblood of our community, you have been through the struggles and hardship, you have laid the foundation for our future, and the paths we all can walk today.

This is a deadly event and I look forward to a spirited rematch next year.

TANYA PEARSON ACADEMY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:16): The Tanya Pearson Academy, based in St Leonards in my electorate of Willoughby, is a world-renowned ballet and dance academy that has trained generations of students from across Australia and the world since its founding in 1971. This month I had the great pleasure to return to the academy to visit its new home, the Tanya Pearson Arts Centre, and again witness the talented ballerinas and dancers perform. This new state-of-the-art arts centre is an impressive purpose-built facility boasting seven studios. The new facilities will ensure that generations of students to come continue to learn and flourish. I congratulate Xanthe Geeves and Gregor Thieler on realising this vision and I wish the academy well for this exciting new chapter. I also thank each of the students for their outstanding performances on the day. They do their families and our community proud with their creativity and dedication. It is wonderful to see the arts flourishing in Willoughby, and I am grateful for the wonderful contribution the Tanya Pearson Academy makes to our cultural life.

WOODFORD RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:17): On Saturday 15 April I was delighted to attend the Woodford Rural Fire Brigade's celebration of 100 years. The brigade is proud to be one of the oldest in New South Wales. On Friday 12 January 1923 a group of dedicated volunteers met under the chairmanship of Gustavus Waterhouse, a successful businessman and philanthropist, to establish a bush fire brigade in the village. At the time, the Great Western Highway was just a track through the bush. It was founded mainly to protect the community from bushfires, but its activities now include attending motor vehicle incidents and assisting with storms and floods. One of the brigade's biggest and proudest traditions is its ongoing dialogue with the local community to assist residents with bushfire preparedness. Brigade president Mark Ashmore said:

The people of Woodford banded together 100 years ago to create something for their common good. We do the same now, and I'm sure we still will in another 100 years.

On behalf of the local mid-mountains community, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Captain Keven Wright and his wonderful band of volunteers.

BOOMALLI ABORIGINAL ARTISTS CO-OPERATIVE EXHIBITION

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:18): Today I bring to the attention of the House an outstanding show entitled *Rectitude*, a Boomalli members exhibition curated by Kyra Kum-Sing. The Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative was established in 1987 to support contemporary Aboriginal artists and has enabled hundreds of Aboriginal artists. Its longevity and success are a testament to the vision of the founders and the dedication of the artists, staff and volunteers. The exhibition explores the theme of integrity and what it means to artists from New South Wales Aboriginal language groups. The exhibition looks at cultural responsibilities and accountabilities and how artists can develop and adhere to culturally safe practices and protocols. The exhibition is an opportunity for the public to see the breadth and depth of the talented members of Boomalli. I was honoured to meet several artists at the opening, including Wanita Lowe, Blak Douglas, Sharon Smith, Darren Charwood, Brianna Geary, Kyra Kum-Sing, Wirrin Lowe and Nioka Lowe-Brennan. The exhibition is on until 17 June and I encourage members to visit Boomalli at 55-59 Flood Street, Leichhardt.

YOUTH SLASH AND BASH SURF COMPETITION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (15:19): I congratulate you on your new role as Deputy Speaker. I acknowledge all of the amazing young surfers who took part in the Youth Slash and Bash surf competition held at Hams Beach and Frenchmans Beach from 5 to 7 May. The event was established in 2019 and has now become the largest junior surfing event in Lake Macquarie. I know that the event organisers, Kylie Murphy-Robards and Dan Frodsham, aim to grow this event to be the biggest junior surfing competition in this great State. This year's event was also a sell-out with a smashing 150 entries. Obviously, such a high rate of participation was fantastic for local businesses and helped put our local area right on the map. Not only did we see some gnarly tricks from the young stars, but family and friends were also brought together over the three days of the competition. I really enjoyed checking out the competition and attending the presentation on Sunday. I congratulate all the competitors and the organisers.

JOHN CHANT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:20): Today I acknowledge water industry champion John Chant, who retired after an astonishing 62 years working for the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and Murrumbidgee Irrigation. To put it simply, John has devoted his career to water, irrigation and helping generations of farmers and businesses in the Riverina get access to what we call liquid gold. There is nothing John does not know about water. That precision and professionalism began when he was just 15 years old when he started his first job as a clerk in Sydney. That led to a posting at Menindee Lakes, where he met his beloved wife, Brenda. He then went to Darlington Point, Forbes and finally settled in Leeton. A large part of John's career was managing legal issues, policy development and corporate planning. In the '90s he doggedly lobbied politicians in Canberra to get the best possible deal for the Murrumbidgee irrigation area, at one point working as CEO to ensure that the process was a smooth one. He has always been a fierce advocate for the Murrumbidgee irrigators and the local community is indebted to him for his service.

CAMPBELLTOWN GIRL GUIDES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:21): Congratulations, Madam Deputy Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank you for your good contributions. I am delighted to speak this afternoon about the Campbelltown Girl Guides, who this year celebrate 75 years of service. I was delighted to be in beautiful Kentlyn one Sunday morning to acknowledge their sound contribution that began not long after World War II. All the executives, managers and girls have contributed so much, not just to the community of Campbelltown. By extending goodwill, lessons and learning of teamwork in each other and in young women, they have prospered into the great women they are today. Women who began in the Campbelltown Girl Guides in the early days were in attendance and it was good to see the mentorship they have provided over 75 years. The mentorship that continues to be provided is truly inspiring. Well done, Mrs Norrie. I thank them for everything they have given. I wish the Campbelltown Girl Guides all the best for the next 75 years of service.

MANILLA VIADUCT COMMITTEE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:23): It gives me great pleasure to recognise the Manilla Viaduct Committee, headed by community stalwart Ian "Biggles" Bignall and his passionate committee of Manilla locals. The committee is a team with a dream—a dream of saving and preserving the historic Manilla viaduct, which is an incredible 365-metre timber rail bridge spanning Manilla Showground. I have been working with the

community to preserve Manilla's proud rail infrastructure history. The viaduct is a very important part of the showground and the town that draws tourists to that lovely community. As we worked towards saving the viaduct, it was great to hear that the Heritage Council of NSW has agreed to consider listing the viaduct on the State Heritage Register, which is a move that would enshrine protection of the structure in law, ensuring it remains in the hands of the Manilla community forevermore. As the member for Tamworth and as the shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage, I am immensely proud to support this proposal. I warmly congratulate the committee on achieving this next step in the fight to save the Manilla viaduct.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:24): I congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your new role. Next week marks the official start of National Road Safety Week, which runs from 14 to 21 May and is an annual initiative of the Safer Australian Roads and Highways—the SARAH group—and aims to highlight the impact of road trauma and ways to reduce it. The SARAH group was launched by Peter Frazer, OAM, after the tragic loss of his daughter, Sarah, at a road crash in Sydney's south in 2012. Each year New South Wales road users take the pledge to "drive so others survive". The safety messages for National Road Safety Week extend to regional New South Wales, which is particularly important, with country roads making up 67 per cent of our State's road toll. Community events will be held across regional New South Wales and local landmarks will be lit up for the week, including the Big Merino in Goulburn and the Kiama Lighthouse. Any death on our roads is one too many, which is why we are all committed to our goal of reducing road trauma to zero in New South Wales. I urge everyone in this House to make the pledge: Drive so others survive.

AUSTRALIAN STREET ROD FEDERATION HOT ROD SHOW

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:25): I note the incredible success of the Australian Street Rod Federation's twenty-fifth national anniversary hot rod show held in Hawkesbury at the Clarendon showground over the Easter weekend. The event drew crowds of car lovers, with lots of incredible cars, trucks and utes on display, and entertainment for the whole family. I know there was plenty of anticipation and excitement leading up to the show, with hundreds of car enthusiasts prepping their vehicles well in advance of the show. I extend my congratulations to the Australian Street Rod Federation on a job well done. All your hard work has truly paid off. It was an event close to my heart as my brothers have been rebuilding hot rods for decades and they showcased their vehicles at the show. More than 20,000 visitors came to the Hawkesbury and attended the show. Hawkesbury's hospitality industry appreciated the trade at neighbouring venues. Well done, Australian Street Rod Federation.

LARRY KEATING

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:26): After 50 years in education, Mr Larry Keating is still incredibly passionate about his calling. As the principal of St Mary's Catholic College in Gateshead since 2004, Mr Keating has overseen the college's expansion into a years 7 to 12 high school and maintains his focus on creating a positive environment and good learning outcomes for all students. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle presented Mr Keating with a 50-year service award in recognition of reaching his milestone at the beginning of the 2023 school year. Mr Keating has been a mainstay in Catholic education in the Hunter region. He has taught at a number of local schools, including St Pius X and St Paul's Catholic College. He first set foot in St Mary's as a teacher in 1985. Under his leadership the school has gone from strength to strength. Mr Keating impresses all who meet him with his passion for education and his unwavering commitment to creating a positive learning environment for all. I know I also speak for the member for Swansea. I congratulate Mr Keating.

BENNY ROZGA

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (15:27): I acknowledge Bathurst local Benny Rozga for his efforts to rally the community to get behind fundraising efforts for 18-year-old Tallis Tobin. Tallis has been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, which is a very uncommon disease for someone so young. Benny is a close friend of the Tobin family and has organised the "Get Tough for Tallis" event which was held on 5 May. A number of auctions and raffles were held—and scissors made an appearance as well. Part of the event included Benny having his locks cut off for this great cause with an auction allowing the highest bidder to wield the axe on his hair. This is a classic case of a community rallying around someone who is doing it tough. Benny says it was amazing to bring people together, not only for Tallis but also for his family and friends who are also suffering. The Tobin family are overwhelmed by the support they already have received and are incredibly grateful. I wish Benny and all his fundraising team all the very best, but most importantly our best wishes are with Tallis.

HARVEY SMITH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:28): I congratulate Harvey Smith in year 6 Red at Waverley College on receiving an honourable mention in the Young Archie competition for 2023 with his portrait *My Poppy*. Harvey has really captured his Poppy's sense of humour in his portrait as he portrayed his Poppy very much enjoying himself on Christmas Day. The Young Archies began in 2013. This annual competition is judged by the Art Gallery's family programs manager and a guest judge. It is based on merit and originality to highlight and support emerging young artists just like Harvey. Harvey's artwork, along with the finalist and other artworks that received honourable mentions, will be exhibited online and at the Art Galley of NSW from 6 May to 23 July 2023.

ALANA WILLETTTS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (15:29): Today I recognise an outstanding local musician, Alana Willetts, who is quickly establishing herself in the local music scene. She began singing at the age of nine and honed her skills at Wild Heart Creatives. Alana was inspired to pursue music as a career after performing a chorus of Dolly Parton's *Jolene* at an interactive show at Disneyland. She has already performed at various local events, including Carols on the Course in Leonay, Carols at the Paceway and talent quests at the Penrith Show and Luddenham Show. This year Alana was selected to feature as an artist for Pulse Alive, an arena spectacular showcasing talent from students in the New South Wales public school system. She was also chosen to participate in the Pulse Alive rural tour, which involves travelling to country towns to perform and participate in workshops. Alana is graduating from high school this year and aims to get herself out there more, perform more frequently and release a single. I thank and congratulate Alana. I wish her all the best and look forward to hearing of her future successes in music.

*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): As my first real duty as Deputy Speaker, it is a delight to announce the inaugural speech of a Labor member. It makes me very happy. Before I call the member for Camden, I warmly welcome all the people in the public gallery, including the member's husband, Mr Damien Quinnell, and daughter Molly. I believe we also have representatives from the Australian Workers' Union, such as Paul Farrow, and other wonderful guests. A photographer has been permitted to take photographs in the Chamber. I am delighted to call the member for Camden.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:31): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Congratulations on your new position. I acknowledge that we meet on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. I also extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here with us today. I stand here before you today as the newly elected member for Camden. I am incredibly proud and honoured by the faith and responsibility bestowed on me by my community. Before I tell you about the Camden electorate, I will take this moment to thank the previous member, Mr Peter Sidgreaves. Peter, thank you for your service to the community through Camden Council, through being Mayor of Camden and through the State Parliament.

I thank also my friends and previous members, Chris Patterson and Geoff Corrigan. Chris, from the first time you coached my son's under-6 soccer team, you have been a wealth of knowledge and experience. Geoff, you have been my political mentor and friend, and your never-ending support during the campaign was such a boost, particularly on those hard days. I will always turn to you for guidance and a dose of reality, but I promise not to disturb your morning swim or your golf game.

Camden has a long history of bringing people together. As the boundary area for three great Aboriginal tribes—those of the Dharawal, Dharug and Gundungarra peoples—the region has served as a natural trading and festival space, with the Cumberland Plain's fauna creating the perfect location for meetings and corroborees. Mount Annan was known to these Aboriginal tribes as "Yandel'ora", which means "the place to lay down your weapons and gather in peace". I like the sound of that. When British settlers arrived, they effectively and in some cases brutally drove those people off their land, but not before witnessing a corroboree of more than 400 participants and spectators in 1820.

It is perfunctory to outline an area's Aboriginal history at the start of one's speech and then move on to a more modern or current narrative, as if 60,000 years is somehow less time than 230. And, while this speech will follow a chronological order, I want to make it clear I do not view Camden's Aboriginal culture as a historical footnote. Occupation was not the end, but rather another chapter—a chapter that is necessary to understand the modern Camden. I view Aboriginal culture in Camden today as a continuum from yesterday, a history that is still

being retold or created anew via initiatives such as Camden's terrific Indigenous football program with Camden Tigers and the very moving yearly commemoration of the Appin massacre.

When Governor Hunter noticed a group of cows gathering naturally in one location in 1795, he coined the phrase "cow pastures", and we have been naming roads this ever since. More importantly, this is the name of our park run, which is held every Saturday for free. That in the twenty-first century we continue to name local features after Hunter's witty observation shows our ongoing connection to the past. But the story of Camden does not start with cows or wool. We have a long and treasured, yet sad and disrespected, Aboriginal history. I very much hope that during my time as Camden's local member I can play a small part in increasing awareness of the truth of our Aboriginal history and further the endeavours of reconciliation.

Many people have spoken about the influence of John Macarthur during Camden's colonial settlement period, but today I will turn the spotlight on the unsung hero Elizabeth Macarthur. She married John in England in 1788 and relocated to Australia a year later. After her husband's forced eviction from the colony, in 1809 Elizabeth was compelled to take over the business interests, including the care and management of their sheep flock at Camden Park. Her management and business acumen were such that she strengthened their wool product to a point that eventually Macarthur merino competed in the lucrative British wool markets.

Elizabeth Macarthur was able, at a time when women were considered to be merely ornamental and while her husband was in exile, to tend, manage and build a business, all while raising eight children. When her husband died in 1834, she worked with her sons to create the township of Camden, and her legacy was immortalised with her namesake granddaughter, Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow, who brought dairy farming to the area. Today I become one of a long list of women contributors to the living history of the Camden area, like Saint Mary MacKillop, patron saint of Australia, who established a local Catholic school—the very school my children attended. Although I can only attempt in some small way to be as influential to the area as these great women, I know I look to draw immense inspiration from them.

When Dorothea Mackellar wrote *My Country*, she might have been speaking of us. I have not had a more intimate experience of droughts and flooding rains than in Camden. The Nepean River, which dominates our landscape, also dominates our lives at certain times of the year. I do not need to remind you of the devastating floods we endured just a year ago. During times of disasters, we often witness people at their best, such as when the community came together to help businesses like the Camden Sports Club replace new equipment and flooring damaged by a major flood in March, only for an even larger flood to occur in April, resulting in even worse damage. This resulted in a further call to arms, answered again by volunteers.

A story that encapsulates this time for me comes to mind. In March 2022 the floodwaters were expected to rise during the night, but the speed of the rising waters shocked everyone. A local farmer was distraught to wake and find that his flock of cows, many of whom were pregnant, were missing. The cows, some of whom had given birth in their distress during the night, proceeded to swim through the floodwaters at the town farm and were located on the safest land they could find—the playground at Camden Public School. One calf had taken a wrong turn and was stranded on the grandstand at Onslow Oval, eventually being rescued by residents in a tinny. The relieved farmer then walked the flock down the street to the delight of local schoolchildren. In a fitting tribute to the annual walking of livestock down to Camden Show, the town managed to find some enjoyment amidst the chaos and fear. That is what Camden people are like.

We are only a two-hour drive from the CBD of Sydney, a fact that will come up later in my speech, and I challenge any member here today to name an area with more cafes per capita than Camden. We have fantastic music groups and festivals, restaurants, pubs, a botanical garden, historic homes and farmers' markets. Our incredible Anzac Day service was informed that it is the largest outside the metropolitan area, with over 20,000 in attendance, while we also boast a \$4 lemonade, which was pointed out to me only a couple of days ago—you can't get that in many places anymore.

There is a great deal of historical content regarding Camden. The excellent walking tour provided by the historical society down splendid Argyle Street, with its Victorian and Edwardian buildings, or the beautiful vistas framed with either spring jacaranda purple or the autumn foliage as you approach from the north, should not be the only reason to visit. In former times we would have also spoken about El Caballo Blanco and Oran Park Raceway as destination points, but Camden has fundamentally changed since then and continues to change apace. Camden is the perfect mix of Sydney suburbia and country town, something we need to fiercely protect so that future generations can continue to see the link with our past.

I did not grow up in Camden. In fact, I have only lived there for 15 years, meaning that I have another three generations to go before I am a local. I grew up in the St George area—Connells Point, to be exact—and I had an idyllic childhood. When my father turned 80, I did some rudimentary family research and discovered that I was a descendant of Thomas Tegg, who sailed out from London to start a book printing business like his father

before him. For many years the *New South Wales Pocket Almanac* was written and printed by Thomas Tegg, with copies held in the State Library just next door. In 1913 my great-grandfather, Henry Weston Tegg, then a local alderman in Maitland, was hailed as a hero for rescuing people in his tinnie during the great flood of the region. The links to Camden are inescapable. That flood not only took the life of my great aunt but also caused my grandmother and grandfather to move to Sydney, settling in Brighton-Le-Sands.

My father grew up to become an electrician and later a lighting technician on film sets. He loved making movies and interacting with legends of the screen, and would always make sure you knew exactly who he had worked with, including Ava Gardner, Robert Mitchum and Anthony Perkins of *Psycho* fame. He was incredibly proud of making *Don Quixote* with Rudolf Nureyev, *Ned Kelly* with Mick Jagger, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* with Peter Weir and *Storm Boy* with his favourite actor of all time, David Gulpilil. He would happily tell stories about his time on set. He spent many months away from home, but no-one ever doubted that the great love of his life was my mum. As boisterous and confident as my dad was, he was balanced by my gentle and quiet mother. We kids always knew that, no matter what happened, we were in real trouble if we upset mum.

My mum comes from a long line of strong women—a true feminist with a cheeky streak. I recall a meeting my parents had with the architects when they were designing the renovations on our home. My mother asked if it was possible to remove the kitchen. She did not like cooking, and an electric frypan and microwave were all she needed. Was there any way we could renovate it into another bedroom? After several minutes of quietly explaining how this would affect the resale value of their home, Mum acquiesced and revealed she was only kidding—but no-one was ever truly sure.

My Nan—my mum's mum—was brilliant and a true matriarch of the family. She descended from Sir Rowland Hill, creator of the Penny Post. Quick-witted, sharp of tongue and a devotee of the great Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, she disliked fools and children equally. Both Nan and Mum were famous at Scrabble and the Friday game was something to behold. My mother constantly played with words, creating shortcuts for everything. If you were asked to P the D before you C the C and G to B, it meant you needed to pack the dishwasher before you close the curtains and go to bed. She always keeps you on your toes.

A late baby in the household, I was a bit of a "surprise". But I could not have been luckier. After my birth, my father retired from the film industry and started his own business, The Film Vault, allowing him more time with his beloved family. After attending St Vincent's College, a school with an impressive alumni present today in this Chamber, I started my music teaching degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. I was keen to quickly complete my teaching degree so that I could progress into the postgrad opera degree, but as soon as I stepped into the classroom I was hooked. Teaching quickly became my passion, and I began tutoring piano and singing. I also discovered a passion for representing my fellow students, becoming president of the student union. Those last couple of paragraphs explain why I would be much more comfortable singing this for you today than I am speaking it.

Then, in 1998, two things happened that would change my life forever. The first thing was having a snow skiing accident that would result in a long stay in St George Hospital. I also met my future husband, Damien. Once again, the flamboyant and loud would be matched with the quiet and strong. The next couple of years were a whirlwind of getting my teaching degree, getting married and moving to England, where we spent nearly two years working and travelling. The subsequent period involved us moving back to Australia, setting up home in Camden and raising three wonderful children. In 2012 I started a business, Bandemonium, with a close friend, delivering instrumental education to students throughout Sydney. At our peak we were teaching 1,500 students in 30 schools across State, Catholic and independent systems. From Bundanoon to St Ives, I witnessed teachers stretched to their limit and looking for a way out—and too many of them have found that exit ticket.

Being a union rep for the Independent Education Union at my beloved St Anthony of Padua Catholic College meant that I heard stories of the problems teachers were facing daily. But it was when I started doorknocking my local suburbs that I heard stories from the greater community. One day when I was out doorknocking, I walked up to a nondescript house. The young woman who answered the door was clearly unwell and started the conversation by apologising that she was still in her pyjamas. After assuring her that I would be in my pyjamas, given half a chance, I introduced myself and explained why I was there. She proceeded to tell me that she had recently been admitted to Campbelltown Hospital by ambulance after fainting.

She spoke highly of the care she received from the paramedics and hospital staff but mentioned that her primary issue, which turned out to be an infection, was exacerbated by the staff not having a chance to read her mental health file—a mental health file that was created in the very same hospital and included the need for daily anti-psychosis medication. This lady, who was very quick to assure me that she was not violent or needy, went from being an easy treatment to spending, at that stage, two weeks recovering both in emergency and at home, unable to work or even drag herself outside to get food. Our hospitals are overstretched. Our fantastic staff are working beyond their limits. That lady demonstrated how easy it is to slip through the cracks of overworked

hospital staff, and that the necessity of managing the mental health needs of our community is changing our triage priorities.

Camden has had unprecedented growth in the past decade. We are welcoming new residents weekly—which is wonderful. However, our infrastructure is not coping. During the 2022 floods it became increasingly clear that a single road in and out of the area was not adequate, and the fact that it can take more than two hours to get to Sydney is a major problem. Many people I have spoken to are commuting daily for over 1½ hours each way, which affects family life and community engagement.

We need more schools, access to health care and emergency services. Moving to the area should not result in the punishment of a lack of infrastructure. It is no longer adequate for the people of Camden to continually be leaving the area for employment and sporting events, and to enjoy the arts. The new Western Sydney airport will provide an outstanding opportunity for Camden and the greater south-west to be more self-sufficient, but we must ensure it is not just a tarmac surrounded by more residential roofs.

My journey has not been taken alone. Many people have been involved in my being here, but there are too many people to thank today. However, I would be negligent not to mention a couple of exceptions. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, has been a supporter of Camden and an integral part of my campaign. His almost daily adventures accompanying me doorknocking were greatly appreciated. I also publicly acknowledge the Premier and Deputy Premier for their encouragement, kindness and unfailing support. It meant more than they will ever know. Thank you to Liam Rankine and James Callow for helping me keep Camden in the conversation when no-one else believed. Thank you to my parents-in-law, Sylvia and Peter, for their never-ending love and encouragement. You have both been such a wonderful support.

Thank you to some key branch volunteers, many of whom are here today: Brian and Ann, Melinda, Jason, Monica, Eliza and Ash, Jack, Adam, Rick and Debra. They all worked tirelessly over many hot months. Also, thank you to the volunteers and family who helped during pre-poll and on election day. Thank you to the wonderful firefighters, teachers and nurses who encouraged me to keep going during the campaign—people such as Huwen and Steve. You all have a special place in my heart, and we carry on this privileged task together.

Without doubt, the greatest thanks go to my family. To my children, Benjamin, Molly and Grace, thank you for sharing me with the community. To Damien, my greatest supporter of all, you have always had more faith in me than I have had in myself. I could not have navigated the past six months without you. We had a plan, we tirelessly executed that plan and the result is this inaugural speech. Your calm, organised demeanour helped me to manoeuvre the roller-coaster of local campaigning and life in general.

I find myself asking: What is the point of a local member in an age when constituents can and do tweet the Premier personally? The answer, I believe, is local representation, listening to people, meeting people where they are, participating in their successes, their disappointments and their sadness. It is advocacy for those who struggle to advocate for themselves. I have spent my life fighting for my students and their families. I have fought for the neurodivergent, trauma victims and their carers. But nothing prepared me for the mother I met in Currans Hill who cannot find a school for her son with autism. Her stories of his frustrated outbursts when trying to cope with the mainstream system will stay with me for the rest of my life. She works with the school—which she highly praises—to teach her son to read, but he needs specialist help and we do not have enough places.

Parents like her do not have time for advocacy; they are just keeping their heads above water. They do not have time for lengthy submissions. They are too busy trying to hold down a job while managing various therapy visits and doctor assessments. They need support and they need people who are willing to speak on their behalf. This is the type of local member I intend to be: someone who is willing to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves, a voice for the silent and a voice for Camden. I thank my colleagues for their indulgence this afternoon.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I thank the member for Camden for her inaugural speech. In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, I now call the member for Monaro—I should say the member for persistence—to present his inaugural speech. I welcome all of his family and friends who are in the gallery this evening.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (16:01): As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted—Madam Deputy Speaker, in all seriousness, I congratulate you on your position. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we meet on, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and their Elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the country I live on and represent in this Parliament: the Ngarigo, Ngambri and Ngunnawal people. I also would like to acknowledge the two members who have represented Monaro over the past 12 years, John Barilaro and Nichole Overall, because, although I have strong policy differences and

differences in approach, it is a vital part of the democratic process to have a choice, and both were willing to put themselves forward.

Twenty years ago I delivered my first inaugural speech in this place. Eight years ago I lost an election, and I said at the time that that was it for politics. A few months ago I did not expect to be standing here today delivering this speech. Indeed, I was quite happily semi-retired. But I am here because I have never given up being passionate about trying to make a contribution to improving our State and improving the area I live in. Sometimes you just have to stop talking at the TV and do it again. It is a real honour to represent Monaro and it is one I have had the pleasure of before, from 2003 to 2011. I have also had the honour of serving in the Legislative Council. There is no doubt that there are a lot of differences from when I was first elected in 2003, not the least of which is that I am an obviously older—and hopefully wiser—person. What has not changed is the amazing diversity of the Monaro electorate, the wonderful communities and some of the challenges they face.

As some people watching and listening would know, I stepped in as Labor candidate with only a few weeks to go to the election. Labor's original candidate was Terry Campese. I strongly supported Terry's candidacy because he is a person who has been doing great things in our community, working particularly with youth at risk and for our local councils on things like bushfire recovery. He was also once the captain of the mighty Canberra Raiders. Of course, that was a big tick for him as well. But I want to thank Terry very early in this speech mostly for his work for our community but also for the fact that, after he stepped down, he did not disappear. In fact, he did the opposite. He turned out every single day to try to help win Monaro. I am very grateful for that commitment.

There are a number of reasons I agreed to run. First and foremost was that I have never lost the desire to help our community, hoping to play a part in the future of regional New South Wales particularly. But it was not an easy decision. I had been out of politics for eight years and doing some interesting things and enjoying a lifestyle that included bikepacking in quite a lot of great country around Australia. I have to admit there is a little bit of jealousy when I see my regular bike trip companions—particularly Dennis, who is currently travelling in Europe on his bike, and Pete—off on rides. Nevertheless, despite some people being a bit surprised by the result in Monaro, I did know that if I stepped up at the last minute it would give us a decent chance of getting a local representative in a Labor government and doing some good. And I knew from the many phone calls and messages that our hardworking and extremely loyal branch members and supporters deserved to have a campaign that had a good chance.

But it was not an easy decision. Unlike 20 years ago, when I was probably rightly categorised as an ambitious younger politician, perhaps I now finally get the need for a bit more work-life balance and come in with a broader perspective. I am hoping that this time around I am better at staying in touch with my friends, the ones that are there no matter what—you know, the ones that are not in politics. They are people like one of my longest friends and my fellow water polo player Rene, along with our Thredbo family—they know who they are—and our friends around Bungendore, Queanbeyan and Canberra of course.

Perhaps that is my message to some of our new members: Don't get too caught up, remember your non-political contacts and your friends, and—one thing that I actually think I did do well last time—always make sure you are there for your children's special events. But do make sure you ask the Whip first. Cherie, who is here in the gallery, was an absolutely critical part of my decision to run. After all, she told many friends after I lost in 2015 that if I ever did it again I would be doing it with a new wife. I am very fortunate she changed her mind because there is no way I would be doing this without her. She is an incredibly important part of my life. She not only agreed but then essentially ran the campaign.

It was a really positive campaign that everyone associated with Monaro Labor can be, and is, proud of. Cherie, along with our fantastic field director Thomas Nikoloski, who is up there in the gallery as well, did an absolutely amazing job in the campaign office—thanks, Thomas, for coming along—along with our amazing Queanbeyan branch secretary Leanne Coleman, who is just tireless. I do not think she sleeps. Our agriculture Minister and my long-time friend the Hon. Tara Moriarty, who is here as well, was a key person encouraging me to run. In fact, I think she spent most of a drive back from Albury one morning convincing me that I had made the right choice. So thanks, Tara.

Of course, I had a critical conversation with our leader, Chris Minns, who talked to me about the type of government he was hoping to lead: a government focused on the longer term and a government focused on embedding reform, on building skills and on retaining teachers and nurses, focusing on the things that matter, not short-term politics. That is what I wanted to hear. I was really pleased to hear that from Chris. And then there is my mother, Gill Whan, who is here in the gallery as well. When I phoned her to ask her opinion, she said, yes, I should run and she also said, "You're wasted at the moment." I guess the thing that really surprised both me and Cherie was just how positive people were about my candidacy: our children, our friends and, as the campaign went on, strangers in the street—people who came up to me at Woolworths and on street stalls and did not just

say, "We're going to be voting for you", but actually came up and said, "Thank you for running." That was a first for me in my political career, I have to say.

For those people I know I have a huge responsibility to live up to the expectations and to live up to the positive long-term vision that I talked about so much in the campaign. Individual members of Parliament are not going to change the world. I am a realist about what we can achieve. Inevitably there will be issues when I cannot get the outcome that makes people happy. But we should always keep in mind that, in whatever way we can, we contribute brick by brick to achieving some great community and Labor goals. All of us who have the privilege of being Labor members in this place should always remember that our job is to embed progressive reform for our society. We can only do that by being in government.

I have had a vision in my head for many years—as I know many others have—of a State that improves and guarantees the wellbeing and living standards of its residents by building skills and competing with the world on the basis of being well-educated people in well-paid jobs, not joining in a race to the bottom of low wages and low skills; a State that achieves net zero and has regional and rural communities growing jobs based on the industries that come with the transition; and one that looks after its land and its waterways as well as its communities. Locally, I talked a lot in the campaign about longer-term focus, and about good government not being just about big cheques and certainly not being about decisions that put politics ahead of good policy.

Working to improve retention and recruitment of teachers, nurses and essential workers really resonated in Monaro. Too many parents had experienced their children being in the playground instead of a classroom because of teacher shortages. Too many people were seeing the results of overworked and understaffed hospitals. Of course, in an electorate like Monaro there are a host of locally focused issues. I was very pleased to be able to commit that a Labor government would build a public high school at Googong and would double the size of Jerrabomberra High School. We will also build Bungendore High School, though I have to say that the appalling way that project has been handled so far will make it impossible for me to have an outcome that makes everyone happy. Much more importantly, it has created community division that will take years to heal.

In the southern part of the electorate, I look forward to working again with the communities in the Monaro and the Snowy Mountains on their vital issues—things like health and aged care, roads and infrastructure; and key things like bringing aged care back to Bombala and sorting out what is happening with the Jindabyne special activation precinct. The one thing that has blown out as an issue in our region, as in so many other regions, is the housing shortage. Monaro communities are bearing the brunt. Queanbeyan has had an issue for many years, but now it has spread to Cooma, Jindabyne, Braidwood and just about every other community. It is not a narrow problem; it is about housing affordability, key worker housing and social housing. In Monaro the problem has been exacerbated by the workforce coming in for Snowy 2.0—welcome as that is in our community—and the demands of the coming winter season. In future contributions I will have a lot more to say about some of these things, and obviously, more importantly, I will be speaking directly to Ministers and departments about them.

Our region, like many in country New South Wales, also has issues with weeds and feral pest species. I look forward to seeing the Government election commitments implemented in those areas—another one for you, Tara. I look forward to seeing the results of the increase in funding for Landcare that the Government committed to, which will bring very positive results for regional communities and catchments. Over the past decade I have watched our communities grow and seen many positive developments as well. Jindabyne and the Snowy Mountains are now a genuine year-round tourism destination, with summer mountain biking supplementing the winter ski season. As an aficionado of both, I am delighted to have been one of those contributing to the economic activity.

I have been thrilled to see the completion of the Thredbo Valley trail over the past few years—something that started last time I was a member and which, to its credit, the previous Government completed. Queanbeyan has grown substantially since I was last the local member. In 2011, when I was last in this place, Googong had a handful of residents. Now around 8,000 people live there—a fast-growing community that needs the high school that I talked about. Bungendore and Braidwood have also developed and grown as the population in the area, particularly those commuting to Canberra to work, has grown.

I have had an interesting eight years out of politics, and it has brought me back here with some broader experience. I worked on tourism for a while at the Australian Chamber of Commerce, and then I spent four years as CEO of the National Irrigators' Council. More recently, I have been on some boards and committees. I have spent a lot of time understanding some of the challenges and realities of things like the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and I have been able to closely observe what makes a regional community successful when it faces a major economic transition—and what constitutes failure.

I have a drive to be part of building a model for long-term success, where government backs communities after they have worked out where they see the future. Change is inevitable in many of our regional communities,

and the worst thing that leaders can do is to pretend it is not going to happen. When leaders tell coal communities that we do not need to transition, or when leaders let irrigation communities think that we can reverse the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, those leaders might as well be putting a blindfold on their constituents and leading them to a cliff. We need to be addressing those issues in a positive way that brings the communities along and sets out the future.

I spent quite a bit of time as CEO of the National Irrigators' Council working on energy in agriculture—on the perverse pricing policies that encourage farmers to go off grid and install diesel generators instead of solar grid set-ups. On the transition to net zero, I am very grateful that I have a much deeper understanding of the role agriculture can play and the great opportunities that are there—that is, if we can develop a system as soon as possible that provides certainty to enable agricultural businesses to plan. In the renewables in agriculture space, my roles gave me the chance to get to know a bit more about that area, including briefly working with Karin Stark on the renewables in agriculture conference.

Over the past couple of years I have been on the Murrumbidgee Irrigation board—another great experience with an irrigation district and a community that has demonstrated the benefit of tackling change positively. It has contributed a substantial amount of water to the basin savings targets and has grown production and economic activity. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the great people I have worked with in the irrigation sector and in superannuation in the eight years I spent on the Club Plus Superannuation board.

I do want to come back to thank you. Obviously, I cannot mention everybody by name, so I apologise to those who worked very hard on the campaign who I cannot mention. Our branches, though, are fundamental—the Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra-Googong, Bungendore, Braidwood and Cooma-Snowy River branches. Without their efforts, and particularly their efforts on pre-poll, we certainly would not have won. This campaign had one massive advantage: our Federal Labor member, Kristy McBain. She is an amazing local member and campaigner. I am very grateful to Kristy and her team for their work and for a level of community activity which is without peer. Stephen, Indigo and Leanne from Kristy's office were amazing. I am very pleased that Indigo has joined my new electorate office—he is in the gallery today—along with Lee Evans, who previously worked in my office from 2007 to 2011.

Our campaign was amazing for the number of people who turned out to help. Former Queanbeyan mayor Frank Pangallo was knocking on my door asking me to run fairly early on, and was then out driving around and doing all sorts of things in the campaign. Narelle Pendergast and Linda drove around with a poster trailer. One of my fellow regular Queanbeyan swimming pool morning swimmers, Robert Beattie, was out with a truck with signs on Canberra Avenue. I thank Guy Verney, Chris Lauder, Lindsay, Tracy Murphy, Candice Cox, Sue Whelan and Tim Nicholson—all wonderful help. Kammy and his family were out at any opportunity. I thank our people from the Australian Capital Territory and ACT Young Labor and, of course, our Labor councillors—Mayor Kenrick Winchester, Bryce Wilson, John Preston and Steve Taskovski from Queanbeyan, and Tanya Higgins and Lynda Summers from Cooma—for their amazing support.

We had great support for the campaign from head office from our new colleague Bob Nanva; our new general secretary, Dom Ofner; and, most importantly, Alex Costello. I am grateful to them and very grateful also for the support from many unions—the United Workers Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union; the Electrical Trades Union; the CFMEU; and Unions ACT. A number of former and current MPs turned out to help from the ACT—Andrew Barr and many of his team as well as former Victorian MP Danielle Green.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank my family. When I made an inaugural speech in this place 20 years ago, I had two young children who were enthusiastic supporters. Now we are lucky enough to have two intelligent and compassionate adult children with fabulous partners. They all, in their own ways, played a great role in this campaign. When I was last in this place, Lachlan and Maddi were students at Karabar High School. This time around, Maddi is a teacher at Karabar High School—*Welcome Back, Kotter*. She not only helped with the campaign but became my exemplar of the need to keep young teachers in schools. Maddi's husband, Alex, has been a newcomer to politics but was enthusiastically engaged. Maddi cannot be here tonight because she is producing the Karabar High School musical, which has its first show tonight. I will be going on Friday, but chookas to the Karabar High School cast and to Maddi and the crew for *Catch Me If You Can*, which is on tonight.

Our son, Lachlan, lives in Melbourne now. He did not fly out for this because we actually spent the weekend at Magic Round in Brisbane last week and had a lovely time. He now lives in Melbourne with his partner, Megan, but he was up during the campaign and working very hard. Of course, the support I always get from him is just wonderful. Thank you to Lachie, Maddi, Alex and Megan for being amazing. Thank you to my mother-in-law, Leonie, who has been a fantastic part of Cherie's and my journey to be here again and who was up helping in Queanbeyan during this campaign, as she was the first time I did this. Along the way, she and my mum managed to clean up at a number of the raffles at the various community functions we went to. My mum, Gill Whan, is here, as I mentioned. Mum, at 88 years old, is a very busy and active member of her local community

in the Premier's electorate. She has been an incredible example all my life of a tireless worker, while also being an amazing parent and grandparent. I thank her for everything she has done.

Last time I was in, I was also able to acknowledge the great influence my dad, Bob Whan, had on my involvement in politics. Dad was in the Whitlam Government as member for Eden-Monaro and later spent many years working here for Richard Amery, the then Minister for Agriculture. Unfortunately, Dad passed away in 2015. He and my father-in-law, Roger, are always missed, particularly on memorable occasions like this. And Cherie—as I said, I just would not be here without Cherie. We have been married for 32 years. It has been amazing. I could not imagine doing any of this—or doing any other parts of my life—without Cherie. I thank her again for all her support and for being here today. As I have said several times in this speech, coming back into politics was not an easy decision. I was enjoying myself. But I am here. I still hope to enjoy myself here, too. But I am here because, as I have said to many people, the chance to actually make a difference only comes along occasionally in a lifetime, and the chance to be part of a new government in its first days is something that most people will never get.

I really relish the opportunity to be part of a new government which has its eyes firmly on the future—on fixing some of those people issues. We heard it in question time today. It is about people. It is about making sure that we have got the staff well rewarded and enjoying their jobs in the critical tasks that make our State tick. If I can play a small part in achieving that, then I will be able to leave politics again, one way or another, sometime in the future, thinking that I have done everything that I could to make a contribution to the State. I really look forward to the next four years of being able to do that. Thank you all.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Monaro for his inaugural speech. According to the earlier resolution, I now call the member for Clarence to present his inaugural speech.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (16:25): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Congratulations on your elevation to the role of Speaker in this Fifty-Eighth Parliament. What a wonderful achievement. I believe that we are all in good hands under your stewardship. Mr Speaker, I seek an extension.

The SPEAKER: You're in with a good chance, mate.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: I nervously stand here today, full of hope and optimism. I will firstly admit the nerves are mine, but the hope and optimism are for the great people of the mighty Richmond and Clarence valleys which make up my electorate. I would like to firstly acknowledge the First Nations people of the Clarence electorate and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging of the Bundjalung, the Gumbaynggirr and the Yaegl nations. I acknowledge Aboriginal culture as the longest living culture in the world.

I would not be standing here today without the love and support of my wife, Leonie; my mum and dad—mum is here and dad is on the farm—my sister, Kate, and brother-in-law, Ryan, and their kids, Will and Isy; my brother, Bear, and his wife, Sheila; and my mother-in-law, Sue, and father-in-law, Dave. Many have travelled here today to be with me in the gallery, and I thank you all very, very much. Also, there are a number of people who could not make it today, but I know they will be watching at home: Lesley Ross; Peter Johnstone; Sandra and Terry Brien; Allison Whaites; Julie and Matt McKee; Kodi Pracy; Col and Judy Humphreys; and many, many more. You have all encouraged me to aim for the stars while keeping my feet firmly planted on the ground.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the National Party of New South Wales who trusted me with our brand and our reputation to hold the seat of Clarence. To every member who put up a sign, letterboxed, doorknocked, spread the good word of The Nationals, stood on polling booths when it rained, in the stinking heat—you did it. Together we did it, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. A special acknowledgement to my campaign team—what can I say? You guys know elections and you know how to win. To Joe Lundy, Andrew Fraser and all of the HQ staff, you guys are rockstars. Our campaign in the Clarence was well funded, it was disciplined and hit the mark. I can assure each and every person in our electorate of Clarence: You will never be taken for granted. We never have and we never will.

To my new parliamentary colleagues, thank you for your support in my campaign—in our campaign. I look forward to standing here in this place to stand up for regional New South Wales. Our story in the bush is vibrant and strong. Standing up for the bush is in our DNA. A special mention to my newly elected Nationals colleagues, the member for Myall Lakes and the Member for Oxley—congratulations to you both. It is an honour to be standing here with you in this place. I would also like to acknowledge each and every National Party candidate who stood in the State election. As members well know, electioneering is hard. It is hard yakka. It is, at times, thankless and it is, at times, lonely. To each and every person who has not got the privilege to stand here today like I have, thank you; you did yourselves and our party proud.

To Chris Gulaptis—who strongly encouraged me to start with a song—thank you for your tireless work. He even named the song, but I will not divulge it. Chris, your tireless work for our electorate has been acknowledged by many, but the work you did on my campaign was second to none. I thank you and Vicki. I hope that you have a long and healthy retirement from this place. To my electorate office staff—Debbie Newton, Janet Gould, Greg Bailey, Rod Gould, and my new staff member Chris Chevalley who I welcome—thank you for your service for the people of the Clarence electorate. Your work does not go unnoticed by me, nor does it go unnoticed by the people you serve every day. Sadly for me, Janet, Rod and Greg are moving on under the terms of retirement. You are great friends, and you are always welcome back for a chat and a cuppa.

To Premier Minns, your Ministers and your Government, I wish you well for this term. When all is said and done, we are all on team New South Wales. I will support the good. I will respectfully disagree and put an opposing view when the interests of my electorate are not being served well. After all, this place is the great melting pot of ideas. The responsibility and privilege of this job is not lost on me. There are over eight million people in the great State of New South Wales and only 93 have the great privilege of sitting here. So how does a kid from a place called Coutts Crossing, 18 kilometres south of Grafton, come to be standing in the New South Wales Parliament? We all have a story to tell. As kids, we had a loving home. Mum and Dad worked hard to ensure we got a good education. We lived in a modest home in Coutts Crossing, with plenty of room to be kids and with the people I admired the most, my grandparents, Paul and Norma, Ozzie and Tup—and, later in life, Leonie's Pop, Graham Hanson—always nearby with some good advice and, I have to say, the occasional correctional guidance as required, size nine.

My first job was working for Dick and Sue Crabbe at the Coutts Crossing store on Saturday morning. Then, at the age of 16, Ron Bell gave a young bloke a start at Radio 2GF in Grafton. It was a job that I really loved and which I held for 32 years. I believe it deeply connected me to my community. I was fortunate to serve 16-and-a-bit years on Clarence Valley Council, eight of them as mayor. I have a real passion about where I was born and live, and I want to make sure that we can be the best we can possibly be. As a community we need support from governments of all persuasions so we can thrive. I accept that elections are about politicians; after all, you are guaranteed to get one after it, no doubt. But this place is not about politicians. This place is about people, the good citizens of the fine State of New South Wales and, closer to home for me, the great people of the Richmond and Clarence valleys that make up my electorate.

My electorate has a long and proud history. It was first proclaimed in 1859—the same year as Queensland. I wish I could say we have been beating them at football ever since, but I cannot. It was the home of one of the founding members of the Country Party, Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page—a giant of his time, a giant of our party and the godfather of the Coalition. In 1920, he dreamt up public infrastructure like the Nymboida hydro power station, which powered the entire North Coast. He opened it in 1924, when he was the Federal Treasurer. Sir Earle Page dreamt big and his fingerprints are still evident in my electorate today. The first member for Clarence was Mr Clark Irving. It was a seat that he held for just a few years, but it has since been held by some great names like Bill Weiley, Matt Singleton, Don Day, Ian Causley, Harry Woods, Steve Cansdell and, of course, Chris Gulaptis—some fine people who have set the bar high. But it is the people of the Clarence electorate who make us a community.

In the thriving community of Casino, Primex is being held this week. It brings thousands of visitors to town. That is closely followed up by Casino Beef Week from 20 May—10 days of all things beef and the country life. There will be some great community events: breakfast with the butchers, live music, crowning of the Beef Week Queen, the Beef Week cups—both horseracing and greyhound racing—and what I believe is the most famous part of it all, the cow pat lotto. If anyone needs a better understanding of cow pat lotto, it involves a cow, a fair bit of feed, a grid on the ground with numbers on it and an unspecified amount of time. Nature will take its course.

My electorate includes the villages of Broadwater, Rappville, Coraki, Woodburn, Whiporie and the coastal paradise of Evans Head, home of the Evans Head Heritage Aviation Museum. The heritage-listed aerodrome was one of the largest Royal Australian Air Force training bases in World War II. My electorate extends to the sugarcane fields and the fishing grounds of the lower Clarence Valley, including Yamba, with its stunning beauty and beaches right on the mouth of the Clarence River. On the other side of the creek is Iluka, with its world-heritage listed rainforests, walks, great camping and family-friendly holidays.

There is Maclean, the Scottish town in Australia, which is home to the Maclean Highland Gathering each Easter. Grafton, the Jacaranda City, is the home of the oldest floral festival in Australia—the Jacaranda Festival is a must each November—and to the Grafton Cup. Grafton was the first city on the North Coast and is, I believe, home to one of the most famous sporting rivalries in country New South Wales, the local football derby between the Grafton Ghosts and the South Grafton Rebels—or, if you are on the south side of the river, the South Grafton

Rebels versus Grafton Ghosts game. Hernani, Cowper, Brushgrove, Ulmarra and Copmanhurst are among the many villages that make up the fabric of my electorate, which is some 13,500 square kilometres in size.

To the people of the Clarence electorate, I will be your advocate in this Parliament. I will bring us to Sydney and promise not to bring Sydney to you. Our area has been dealt some rough hands. If it was not the drought, it was the fires which destroyed hundreds of homes in my electorate; if it was not the fires, it was the biblical-sized floods that displaced thousands. Thousands were displaced and today hundreds are still without a home—all of this while coping with COVID-19. We will recover. We are strong and resilient up north; we have to be.

My electorate has some challenges before it. The 2022 floods have left a scar on my community that has not healed, but it is slowly healing. I have spoken with and listened to schoolchildren who still are not back in their schools following the floods. Moving the entire school to a short-term location is a huge and commendable effort, but I and the communities want to see their students back at school. What a great shot in the arm that would be for those communities that have suffered greatly. I am not saying it is anyone's fault, but it highlights the enormity of the job at hand following the floods. Mr Bob May, an 85-year-old, was rescued from his home at Woodburn at 5.00 a.m. on the morning of the floods. He was wading through waist-deep floodwaters. He was rescued by two complete strangers, now called "tinnie heroes". To quote Bob, "Those blokes saved my life." Mr May, at his age, wants to move to higher ground. Buybacks are the go for him. The progress is slow but is being made.

Rob and Jen Kelly's farm and home are on the banks of the Richmond River. The river was running with such force that it eroded the riverbank to within three metres of the living room. The Kellys want to move some 35–40 metres away to a higher and safer location. Again, progress is slow but is being made. These two examples were amplified hundreds of times across the lower Richmond Valley. One thing I know is that floods have brought out the best in Australians—strangers helping strangers, examples of people feeding and helping others who were in total shock at what had happened.

The selfless deeds are like Fiona's from the Riverside Butchery in Coraki. Their business lost \$48,000 worth of equipment and \$25,000 worth of stock, but they still gave and are giving today. They are cooking weekly hot meals for the community because some people in her community still do not have a kitchen to cook in. The butchery continues to donate meat at cost price—and can I say that now is the best time ever to buy local. Small businesses are hurting but I hope things will get better. The road ahead at times seems bumpy and impassable, but we will absolutely get the job done. I will stand beside each and every person, family and community along the way.

Investing in health care in the Clarence remains a priority for me. I will work with the community and the Government to ensure that we continue to get our fair share and build on the infrastructure we need—like the new ambulance stations in Iluka, Evans Head and Casino. I am ready to work with the health Minister and the Government on the redevelopment of Grafton Base Hospital. But we need to look to the future. We need to dream big with the community. So we might need to start looking at what happens at Maclean and Casino hospitals. These hospitals are punching well above their weight.

I believe the Clarence electorate should be mining free. Our natural beauty, our pristine waterways, our prime farmland and national parks should not be put at risk, even if that risk is classified as minor. This is not a Greens campaign but one that is community led by local families, farmers, Aboriginal leaders, tourism managers and the general community who do not want to see mining in the upper reaches of the Clarence River. I agree. There is simply too much to lose.

The Clarence River prawning industry is on its knees, through no fault of its own. The livelihoods of 90 fishing families and 60 staff are at risk due to a control order for the movement of green prawns following the discovery of white spot in prawn farms. Overnight the livelihoods of these businesses and farms—many of them decades in the making—were taken away with zero compensation, or little to no compensation, from any government. I believe this place can do better, or I fear that prawning on the Clarence might slowly disappear.

Housing remains a major issue, and I have heard that more than once here today. We need to do better on housing. Sometimes simply finding a roof to put over our heads is out of reach for many and varied reasons. I commend the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Commission that aims to find 10,000 blocks in the Northern Rivers for development. Let's get innovative and find ways to ensure that affordable housing blocks remain affordable forever. I am sure there are schemes that we can use throughout New South Wales, but we need to get creative. I have now formed the view and the opinion that the short-term holiday rental market in residential zones is having a detrimental effect on the long-term residential housing market. The idea that was simply letting out a room to make a few extra bucks has quickly moved to an entire house, in turn taking that property off the long-term rental market. More policymaking needs to be done in that area as a matter of urgency.

Every decision this place takes can make it easier or harder for the people of our great State, can make it more expensive or less expensive to live, can cut red tape or green tape or add to it. Every decision in this place counts for my electorate and the people of our great State. I am ready to serve my thriving community, and I stand with them in the good times and in the bad. But my message to each and every person is: Dream big. We need to build the public infrastructure a modern community needs and deserves. We need to invest in our people of this great State. I will finish where I started today. I stand here full of hope and optimism for the people of the Clarence electorate. I thank them for this great honour. I also thank my parliamentary colleagues and this House for their indulgence today.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Andrew Fraser, a former member for Coffs Harbour and a former Assistant Speaker of this House. It is great to see him here. I hope the member's friends and family all enjoyed his inaugural speech. I thank the member for Clarence.

Community Recognition Statements

TOURISM AWARDS FINALIST SPENCER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:48): It is very exciting to announce that the town of Spencer in my electorate has been named as a finalist in the Tiny Town category in the NSW Top Tourism Town Awards 2023. Spencer, a gorgeous town with only 500 people, has seen it all. With major challenges including COVID, flooding and fires, the town has been through a lot in the past few years. The little-known river town has delicious food, amazing views and a fantastic community atmosphere. Spencer features a list of local operators, including The Anchor Spencer, the caravan park and museum. It is also a fantastic ecotourist destination for hiking, fishing and kayaking, and I know they also have fantastic historical tours along the river. It is home to fisher folk and oyster farmers alike. It is a great example of the tiny town that could. Its resilience and hospitality act as a role model for the area, and it is great that it has been recognised at a State level. Congratulations, Spencer!

WELLINGTON SHOW

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:49): The 147th annual Wellington Show is on this Saturday. The theme of this year's show is "celebrating rural life", and everything rural will be on show. The first events start at eight o'clock with the yard dog trials, the horse ring section, judging and showjumping. From nine o'clock the pavilions open and the judging of the beef cattle, stud sheep and fleeces begins, as well as a special commercial flock ewe competition. I will be there for the show officially opening at 11 o'clock, and the 2023 Young Woman will be announced. There will be plenty of other entertainment throughout the day, including judging of tractors, utes, cars and bikes from midday, and the pet parade and country fun challenge at four o'clock. The animal nursery, a constant favourite, provides an opportunity for children and adults alike to enjoy the animals. Of course, no Wellington Show would be complete without the classic sideshows, exhilarating rides and the ever-popular show bags. The wonderful celebration will culminate with fireworks at seven o'clock. It should be a great day for all.

EASTERN SUBURBS WINTER SWIMMING CLUBS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:50): The first Sunday in May always marks the beginning of winter swimming in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It is the time of year when all Penguins, Icebergers, Splashers and Eskimos strip down to their togs and take their first dive of the season, where wetsuits are shunned and community is at the core. Winter swimming is a great way to spend a cold, miserable Sunday morning. One of the many wonderful things about our community is that there is a winter swimming club for everyone. So whether you are looking for a club that is highly competitive and will push you to your fitness brink or one where winning is shunned and you come only for the mushy peas and soup, the eastern suburbs have a winter swimming club for you. Good luck to all swimmers this season. If you have not joined a club, it is not too late.

HEATHER KERR

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:51): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I extend my warmest congratulations to Heather Kerr from Corowa, who was awarded a life membership by the Oaklands branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW. This prestigious award is a well-deserved recognition of Heather's 37 years of dedicated service to the CWA and her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and girls, especially in rural and remote areas. Heather's passion, dedication and hard work with the CWA have been an inspiration to all. Corowa, Oaklands and the CWA can be proud to have her as one of their own. I understand that Heather has the added distinction of being the only life member of the branch at Oaklands, marking this as a very special act of public recognition. I thank her for her exceptional service and wish her all the very best as she continues making a positive difference in the lives of those around her.

WILSON'S HOMEMADE CAKES AND PIES

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:52): I recognise a local Mascot institution of more than 40 years. Wilson's Homemade Cakes and Pies is a fantastic, family-run business offering delicious cakes, pies and sausage rolls at affordable prices. Wilson's was so dedicated to ensuring that our community had the luxury of delicious sweets that it kept its prices affordable for years. I was devastated to hear that, like so many small businesses, the pandemic and inflation have taken a devastating toll. Wilson's made the heartbreaking and difficult decision to close its doors. The community support around Wilson's is awe-inspiring. Right across the community, residents have voiced their support for what is a remarkable local establishment and taken action to fundraise for its survival. I hope we see Wilson's Homemade Cakes and Pies reopen soon.

RAMADAN NIGHT MARKETS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:53): This year I had the privilege of attending the Ramadan night markets in Lakemba, which are held each year during the month of Ramadan as a way of celebrating Islamic culture and tradition in Sydney. The month of Ramadan is the most significant month in the Islamic calendar. During this month people of Islamic faith fast during the day and gather at sunset for iftar, an evening meal, to break their fast. Open from sunset to the early hours of the morning, this event in Lakemba has gained significance over the past few years not only statewide but also throughout Australia. It is not an event to be missed. The atmosphere is absolutely electric. The streets were lined with thousands of people, all enjoying food from over 70 vendors on Haldon Street in Lakemba. As the former Minister for Multiculturalism, I was proud to support and champion this event over the past couple of years. Those markets continue to attract record numbers each year, which is a testament to New South Wales' rich diversity. I look forward to supporting next year's event.

DEAN MCNULTY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:54): I offer heartfelt thanks to Dean McNulty, a local Central Coast grandfather, alongside his stepson Stewart and wife, Julie, who have been tirelessly advocating for the victims and the families of victims of serious road crimes. In January this year Dean and Julie lost their beloved grandson and Stewart lost his son James in a senseless and tragic car collision. The loss of a child is incomprehensible. However, Dean, Julie and Stewart have taken action and become the driving force behind the Justice for James petition. The petition aims to address the inadequacies of the criminal justice system in addressing serious road crimes as well as the need to consider the impact upon victims and their families. Dean, Julie and Stewart have rallied the community, accumulating over 5,500 signatures on the petition, with the number growing each day. I thank Dean, Stewart and Julie for all the time, passion and effort they have put into this cause. I send love and gratitude. I wish Dean and his family all the best for the future.

KOBY KUDRINS, JACK HAYES AND FINN CASPER

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:55): On Wednesday 1 March, three heroic Woolgoolga High School students—Koby Kudrins, Jack Hayes, and Finn Casper—saved a young woman struggling in a rip. The students had honed their water skills through their school's surfing sessions and surf survival course, which proved invaluable in this critical situation. The rescue unfolded as the students' surfing session concluded and they were preparing to leave the beach. Year 9 student Finn Casper alerted his mates to a woman caught in a rip about 100 metres down the shore. Year 8 student Koby Kudrins initially ran to help but, realising he did not have his board, he instead assisted Jack Hayes, also in year 8. Jack bravely paddled out to the woman, using the skills he acquired at school to bring her safely back to shore. The boys' quick thinking and calm demeanour prevented a terrible tragedy that day. I commend the boys for demonstrating selfless behaviour that exemplifies the best qualities of Woolgoolga High School students. Throughout the rescue, the boys applied critical lessons from their water safety training: never going out without a board, not abandoning the board, and knowing how to read the surf.

YOUNG, AUTHENTIC AND SOCIAL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:56): Madam Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your new role. I sincerely congratulate and thank senior youth worker Carlee Heise, who leads the Young, Authentic and Social program on the Central Coast. YAAS is a transformative arts and cultural program tackling the coast's youth mental health problem through creative workshops, celebrations and social groups. The program focuses on young people aged 12 to 24 years old, supporting and celebrating diverse identities and abilities, including LGBTQIA+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and people with disability. YAAS is a fabulous collection of happiness and vibrancy for everyone involved. The April teen dance party was the third of its kind on the peninsula and once again attracted young people from across the coast to dance, make friends, watch and participate in shows, and generally have a great time together. Alongside Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and headspace, YAAS has created the safe space and support network for marginalised youth across the Central Coast.

I thank Carlee and all our local services who have joined together to allow such positive energy to flourish on the beautiful Central Coast.

ERIKA MUNAN

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (16:57): Dorrigo's Erika Munan is being celebrated with a Local Woman of the Year award in recognition of the significant support she has given to the Oxley community. Erika is an all-round outstanding community advocate and makes a tremendous contribution to our region. She has been the coordinator of the Dorrigo Youth Centre for four years and during that time has provided a safe environment for 12- to 18-year-olds to participate in activities and upskilling workshops, seek help or just be themselves. Erika has also managed the Dorrigo Neighbourhood Centre for the past two years and has helped to establish the free seasonal community Dorrigo neighbourhood lunch. Erika was instrumental in starting up the free-for-youth Movies on the Mountain cinema group, which is now in its sixth year. Erika is actively and passionately involved in the Dorrigo Rotary Club and the Megan RFS, all whilst raising five children and running a farm with her husband. The New South Wales Local Woman of the Year awards is an annual program that recognises and celebrates the support that women give to their local communities. I thank Erika for volunteering her time and energy to make a positive difference to our region.

IT'S NOT BLACK OR WHITE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:58): Earlier this month I had the privilege of attending the *It's Not Black or White* exhibition, held at the Red Tree Theatre in Tuggerah. The exhibition is the result of 12 months of campaigning and collaboration between the NSW Police Force and local photographer Victoria Fitzmaurice. It aims to generate conversations around domestic and family abuse—in particular, to increase awareness and shift community attitudes about victim-survivors and the long-term effects of violence and abuse. Through the haunting use of black-and-white photography, a voice has been given to those so often silenced. A voice has been given to victim-survivors, to those with lived experience of domestic and family abuse and the difficult journey to trauma recovery. I thank the NSW Police Force and Victoria for highlighting an important community issue in such a powerful and sensitive manner. I thank also those who sponsored the exhibition, which will now move to the Art House theatre in Wyong. I sincerely congratulate those women who, through their lived experience, have given this artwork life and incredible intensity to educate others.

CELEBRATING DAVID EXHIBITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:59): A large crowd gathered at the Bundawarra Centre on Friday 17 March to mark the official opening of one of the most outstanding exhibitions yet to grace its gallery. *Celebrating David* offers the community a rare insight into the life and art of Temora's David Schlunke, an internationally recognised, award-winning artist, whose thought-provoking creativity extends well beyond the canvas. I commend the Temora Shire Council Heritage Committee, who engaged Mr Rob Willis, OAM, a well-known oral historian, to record David's story and link it to an exhibition graciously provided by the artist. From a very extensive series of interviews, Rob distilled a 20-minute video encapsulating David's early life and his evolution as an artist, graphic philosopher and environmental conservationist. He added a virtual gallery of 13 of David's paintings, matched to audio providing the audience with an insight into each painting. Well done to everyone involved.

Public Interest Debate

PUBLIC SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE BAN

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (17:01): I move:

That this House supports the New South Wales Government's plan to institute a mobile phone ban in all public schools this year, which will create a level playing field across all schools and help support students by limiting the negative impacts of mobile phones during school hours.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and congratulations on your elevation to that role. Of all the things that a State government can do to support the educational outcomes of our students—which is a priority for this Government, considering how the previous Government drove them into the ground—and of all the things that it can do to support the health and wellbeing of students, banning mobile phones at schools is actually one of the most simple and basic policies. As leading child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has said, it is a policy straight out of the university of the bleeding obvious. It is an absolute no-brainer.

In fact, over the past three to four years we have seen almost every other State and Territory in the country ban mobile phones across all schools—Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Yet we had a government here in New South Wales that stubbornly refused to act on this. This was not because it is too hard. It is not; it definitely can be done. And it was not because it will adversely

affect children—it most certainly will not do that. It was because the former Government refused to listen to anyone who understood classrooms, be it parents, teachers or principals. In fact, if you want to know why an idea in education was rejected by the previous Government, just ask whether it came from a teacher or anyone who actually understands education.

The days of denial are over when it comes to our schools, because New South Wales now has a government that actually listens. What we have heard for a long time now is that mobile phones are having quite a detrimental impact on the education, learning and wellbeing of our children. They are, of course, pervasive. They create distractions. At a time when we are seeing educational outcomes fall, we have to act. We have to use every possible lever available to us as a government to improve educational outcomes. One of the biggest pieces of feedback that we have got from parents, teachers and experts like Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is that we should do something about mobile phones in schools. That is why we on this side promised before the election to ban phones in all public schools and why we are getting on with the job of doing that.

From term 4 of this year, mobile phones will be banned across all public schools in New South Wales. That means phones will be turned off and out of sight from the first bell to the last bell. Of course, that means that students will still be able to carry them to and from school, and it only applies to the non-educational use of mobile phone technology. Digital technology, including mobile phones, if necessary, will still be allowed for any educational requirement. It is commonsense stuff. What we are asking schools to do is common sense. At the moment, we are undertaking final consultation on the policy with principals, teachers and P&Cs.

It is probably a novel idea for those opposite to ask about how things might work at school, but that is something that we—I, as Minister, and this Government—are committed to doing. That will be finished by the end of this term, and in term 3 we will be releasing the final policy. We will release the implementation resources—that is crucial—so that schools will be supported by their department in rolling out consequences for a policy that the Government is asking them to implement. The upshot is, in term 4, as soon as kids walk through those gates at every school, phones will be put away and out of sight.

We know that over the past decade children have become more vulnerable to cyberbullying and online harm. That goes for what is happening not just inside the school gates but in their lives generally. We know that the rise of social media has impacted so much on how children relate to one another. We know that mobile phones are a monumental distraction. As the new Minister, I am dumbfounded as to why a previous government or previous Ministers would not act on this. Why wouldn't you want to get mobile phones out of classrooms? Why wouldn't you want to get children focusing on teachers teaching them the lessons to prepare them for their futures? Why wouldn't you want to give them more opportunities to socialise with one another at recess and lunch, to get to know each other and to talk to their friends?

Schools in New South Wales have a duty to take all reasonable measures to protect students from the risk of harm—they actually have a legal responsibility to do that. The Government must empower schools to take that action to minimise harm. The former Minister used to claim that everything the Government did had to be evidence based. Let us look at the evidence on this—firstly, the evidence from schools and staff. Some New South Wales schools could not wait for the previous Government to somehow show leadership on this issue. They knew that something had to be done, and they have already taken action.

I have been to some of those schools. I have spoken to many of them already. I am sure that many of my colleagues who speak in this debate will talk about their own local schools that have gone off their own bat and implemented their own ban. Davidson High School banned mobile phones last year. They have an amazing principal—I give a shout-out to David Rule. On 8 August last year he was interviewed by *The Project*, and he spoke about what led to the ban. "Over the last two years," Mr Rule said, "I saw a lot of disconnect between the kids in the playground. Their social interaction was really limited." He said that a lot of the mental health issues they were dealing with were a product of mobile phones. We cannot be a government that hears that and does nothing about it. I have been to Condell Park High School in the electorate of the member for East Hills, where they have been working through a mobile phone ban for 16 years, and it has been very successful.

The former Minister refused to listen to teachers and principals but this current Government that has been elected in New South Wales is listening to the experts, listening to principals and teachers, and listening to parents about the mobile phone ban. We on this side are doing it to limit distraction. We are doing it for educational outcomes, because we have been elected to do something about educational outcomes. The ban is one cog in that wheel; it is one tool we will use to try to arrest the decline in educational outcomes. As well as putting more teachers in front of classrooms to make sure that the kids can learn, we want those kids to focus on what those wonderful, qualified teachers are teaching them. There is overwhelming evidence to support this ban. We are listening to school communities. The parents of New South Wales can be assured that they now have a government that is taking leadership in this important space.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:09): I draw attention to the wording of the motion moved by the member for Londonderry in this public interest debate, which calls on the House to support "the New South Wales Government's plan to institute a mobile phone ban in all New South Wales public schools this year". The words "institute" and "ban" go beyond my Liberal values of freedom of speech and the right to choose. We are not living in a communist country. We should not be taking a Big Brother approach. But that is what the member is proposing.

This debate is all smoke and mirrors. Labor has no vision for New South Wales and is so lazy that it has announced a policy that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government had implemented already. This policy is an election con job. It was a con during the campaign. Why? Back in 2018 the Liberal-Nationals Government conducted a comprehensive and independent review that involved extensive consultation with school communities. What is Labor going to do—run another review? All I have heard since Labor came to office is that it is going to run reviews and establish committees. It is Kevin '07 all over again.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will come to order. The member for Londonderry was heard in silence. The member for Coogee will come to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: The independent review gathered together minds from school communities—families, teachers, principals. Everyone made a contribution, and mobile devices were restricted in primary and secondary schools. We trusted principals to strike the right balance. Does the member for Londonderry not have any faith in the principals who run schools? A Department of Education survey conducted in 2018 found that 70 per cent of high schools had implemented full mobile phone restrictions, so the member is only talking to the other 30 per cent. She says she is talking to all schools and she has the answers. The member for Londonderry should have gone back to 2018 when the policy was first implemented. How does she intend the ban will operate? Labor has admitted that it is impossible to implement. Premier Chris Minns said, "It will be obviously difficult in all circumstances to stop 100 per cent ... mobile phone use within school hours", and that there would need to be exemptions—for example, on health grounds or because there is a direct educational benefit.

It is time for Labor to stop being in opposition and to govern. It must provide details of how it will implement the ban. Let me ask some questions. Who is it proposed will be responsible for enforcing the ban in individual schools, given that 30 per cent of them have not yet joined in the ban? Will it fall on principals and teachers, adding to their workload? I sat in this House today when the education Minister said she was going to restrict the extra burdens on schoolteachers.

Ms Prue Car: That you have put on them.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: You are saying that they have an extra five hours a week of administrative work that we have created.

Ms Prue Car: Yes, you have.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: What burden will it create if you ban mobile phones in every single school?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Hawkesbury will direct her remarks through the Chair.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I remind the member for Londonderry of her comments and ask how she proposes to alleviate the workload that this ban will cause. I want her to consider exemptions to the policy, such as who can use a mobile phone and when. I also want the Government to think about regional families. One of the main reasons that mums and dads living in regions want their children to have a phone with them is so they can be sure their kids are getting on the bus for the long trip home.

Ms Prue Car: I said it was fine to and from school.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Yes, and the worry they might have—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will come to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: What about smart watches? Dad or mum thinks, "My daughter has a smart watch so I will be able to let her know if I am going to be 10 minutes late. I can say 'Stay where you are, I'll be able to pick you up shortly'", which relieves anxiety. How are parents going to manage situations like that? Has the Government thought the policy through?

Ms Prue Car: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will come to order.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I truly struggle to see the value in this. The member for Londonderry is reinventing the wheel to make herself look fantastic. Do what we did back in 2018.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:14): I support this great motion. As the education Minister said, banning mobile phones in schools is a no-brainer. It is supported by teachers, it is supported by parents and, strange though it may seem, it is supported by many students. I can say confidently that many teachers, parents and students in my electorate overwhelmingly support it. They want their children to go to school to learn. They want classrooms to operate as learning centres. They want their children focused on their education and not constantly on their phones. As a former teacher, I often run into my kindy students and one of them recently stopped to have a chat with me at the train station. She is now in year 9 and she sits on the student representative council, which recently discussed quite openly the fact that many students have been victims of online bullying. She said that many had been fat shamed or body shamed and see the phone in the classroom as another weapon—not just a tool but a weapon. She told me she was very happy that we now have a government and an education Minister who are listening to the students.

The former education Minister, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, knew this. In opposition, Labor obtained correspondence from parents across New South Wales. They had been pleading with the Government for a ban on mobile phones. In fact, they were pleading for help. Some of the correspondence was reported in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 19 November last year. Some of it is heartbreaking. One father who wanted to meet the former education Minister said:

We have a child who has started year 7 this year at his local high school. My child has gone from being extremely excited and passionate about being at school to last night begging my wife and I to stay home and not go to school. At lunch and recess, our child has confirmed ... instead of running around, playing or just simply having a chat, face-to-face is non-existent and that kids are now glued to their mobile phones either playing games, or more disturbing, watching videos on platforms like TikTok and or Snapchat that are extremely inappropriate and not age appropriate.

He went on to say:

Currently our child is getting rejected from other kids when asking if they want to play sport at lunch claiming "it's boring". Since when is kicking a ball ... boring to 12-year-olds?

Can you imagine being that desperate parent, to have your child not wanting to go to school because kids just want to be on their phones? It is unbelievable that it has come to this—children are being ostracised by their friends just because they would rather play sport and run around. A mother wrote:

I have a son who started year 7 this year and mobile phones are a plague. The school is doing its best to control usage ... but mobile phones remain an issue. Our children need help! In my view, it would be a dereliction of duty from parents, educators and the education system to allow these phone, internet, game or, worse, porn addictions to develop. We must ALL act together to protect our younger generations.

That mother was pleading for help. Another mum said:

I am appalled at how the teenagers are allowed to be on their phones all day at NSW public high schools. As parents, we need to be listened to. We taught our kids how to have healthy screen use and it has all gone out the window since starting high school. My son is complaining that he can't make friends and he is distracted in class because his friends are all on their phones, group projects are awful because he is the only one paying attention to the project. I don't know one parent who thinks this is a good idea.

They are the types of things I have heard in my electorate. Not one parent has written to argue against the idea of banning phones. We have heard from schools, many principals and the system that there are benefits. The benefits are positive. I do not believe the Liberal and Nationals members opposite have not heard the same from their constituents. It is just unbelievable. It is time to bring in a policy that makes sense. I commend the motion.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:19): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to discuss mobile phones. It is problematic. There is no doubt about that. I commend the Minister for looking into the issue of banning phones. When we on this side of the Chamber were in government, we introduced a comprehensive and independent review around this. As the previous Opposition speaker said, over 70 per cent of schools have gone down this track and a lot of work has been done by individual schools. Mulwaree High School in my electorate of Goulburn has implemented the pouches. I will be very interested to see what the policy entails because there was a suggestion by Labor before the election to ban them through a phone jammer or something like that—similar to what is done in jail.

Interestingly enough, earlier in the year I was approached by a local phone technology company that does digital fences around premises to assist in trying to manage mobile phones in schools. It was proposing a trial in Goulburn. We had discussed with the Minister and the department at the time whether that could be a successful avenue to manage it a bit more and to try to restrict the amount of admin done by teachers in enforcing mobile bans. Curiously, the department saw that that sort of technology was a little down the track. There were concerns over data, privacy and all those sorts of things. So I am very interested to see what the policy will be going forward to make sure that teachers are not burdened and overworked with administration trying to enable these phone

bans. I understand the importance of making sure that mobile phones are not a distraction. But it is important to get the policy right and to make sure that it is implemented in the correct way, and that teachers and also parents are on board.

The member for Hawkesbury talked about regional areas. Indeed, making sure that parents have contact with their children in some way is a big problem. How do we make sure that there is no administrative burden and that people still have the ability to engage with their kids through the use of mobile phones at the appropriate time? The policy is going to be difficult to implement and it is going to require extra workload from our teachers—that concerns me. I wish the Government a whole lot of luck in doing this. I acknowledge those 70 per cent of schools that have already implemented the policy and that are continuing to work towards making sure that mobile phones are not a distraction. There are lots of questions around the responsibility in enforcing these bans. I am very concerned about the workload on the teachers and how they interact with the parent body to ensure that it is appropriate. It is fraught with danger. There are lots of issues to be addressed. We need to make sure that we are comprehensive in our review of what the policy might look like.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:24): I support the motion and the move by the new Government to ban phones at schools. The evidence is clear. It is a no-brainer. This should not be a partisan issue. It is actually not a contentious issue. There have been numerous reviews and the evidence is there that banning phones in schools is good for students. It is good for their outcomes and their wellbeing. Better educational outcomes help eradicate cyberbullying and other forms of online harassment. It makes our kids safer. The Minister has already outlined that there is a huge amount of evidence around this from teachers, experts and academics as well as students themselves—kids who have been part of trials from schools where phones have been banned as well as those observing it, as we have heard from the member for Blue Mountains. One of the schools that has implemented such a ban is Randwick Boys High School in my electorate. I give a huge shout-out to Lance for his leadership in this space. I have spoken with him and the P&C; they absolutely love it and they have seen a huge change in the boys' behaviour. Katja spoke about the positive impact in *The Sydney Morning Herald* a couple of months ago. She said:

Kids used to just stare at their phones before Randwick brought the ban in. With phones away the students said they were playing more, boys are playing basketball during lunch, and just chatting to each other more ...

We want to see this across New South Wales. All of us, in our capacity as members and in our jobs, go to schools constantly. We are lucky enough to be able to do that. I have walked into schools a number of times and seen kids sitting around in a circle, looking at their phones, not talking to each other. I am a former educator myself. Our school system provides kids with an opportunity to socialise and develop important social skills—critical skills that they take outside of school and into their adult life. We need to make sure that they have this opportunity. There is only one opportunity at childhood and youth. Having this policy brought in is fundamental to changing the systems and making sure our educational outcomes are better. But if members really want to know about the impact of mobile phones in classrooms, they should speak to the students. This is exactly what happened in the 2018 review that the former Coalition Government commissioned. In the review, the kids said:

Sometimes, there is a class that everyone is on their phone. When the whole class is doing it, they (the teacher) just give up.

Another student said:

When I was in my class, my classmates were using mobile phones all over the lesson and my teacher was—
trying to make them stop—
but still they didn't listen.

Managing the mobile phone usage of students should not fall onto teachers. It is the responsibility of the State and of the Government to provide leadership on this. Those opposite talk about the extra administrative load. That is already happening. We need policies like this led by the State Government. As I said, the responsibility should not be falling onto teachers to manage.

One of the other things is addressing cyberbullying. I will touch on some work that has been done by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, which is also included in the same review commissioned by the former Government. That foundation does phenomenal work focused on keeping children safe from harm, be it violence or cyberbullying. It told the review that:

The impact of these behaviours (cyberbullying and image-based abuse) inside and outside the classroom is significant and contributes to distress, shame, school refusal and absenteeism.

That alone should be enough to force any government to take action. How can we not be compelled to act after that? But sadly, over 12 long years, the Liberal-Nationals Government did very little to address this issue and to support kids. Our educational outcomes are at an all-time low. Thankfully we now have a Labor Minns Government that is acting in the interests of our kids. I look forward to this being implemented.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:28): I welcome the member for Wallsend to the chair as Deputy Speaker. I understand and acknowledge that this is a challenging space and a growing area of concern for many parents, myself included. I have an 11-year-old and a five-year-old. Even for someone who is relatively tech-savvy, like me, I find it a struggle to keep up with the different ways that children are communicating these days. As my colleagues alluded to earlier in the debate, five years ago in 2018, when the take-up of mobile technology was lower than what it is today, 70 per cent of high schools had already instituted a full ban on mobile phones. Principals today can decide at a local level to institute a ban without requiring the State Government to do anything at all. Whilst it is a challenging space, I also acknowledge that this is potentially a very easy win for the Labor Party. This sugar-hit policy is a paper tiger, and I will outline why.

The member for Blue Mountains and the member for Coogee talked about online bullying in their contributions. Parents talked about the mobile phone ban when it was being discussed in the election campaign. They said that, yes, mobile phones are one aspect of online bullying, but so are many other devices that students are now carrying into the classroom. Even children in primary schools, where mobile phones are already banned, are using iPads, computers, Chromebooks and the like. They are using numerous different apps and messaging services and the online bullying continues, despite mobile phones being banned in those schools. Obviously it goes tenfold for high schools already, so what is being proposed about those other devices? Nothing, as far as I can tell.

It is far more sensible to teach kids about more responsible digital citizenship—how to behave online, how they can carry themselves online in a more dignified manner and how they can learn to manage their device use properly. We are now in the digital age, where people are spending more time online than in the real world, which is a shame. We grew up very differently in my era. The education Minister and I are of roughly the same vintage. I remember that we did not have computers in our school except for one computer lab, and now every single student carries a laptop to class every day. Surely, as the digital age comes of age even more, the policies should be more rounded. The Minister was the shadow for three years, eight months and 26 days.

Ms Prue Car: Oh, my God.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: Yes, it is on the website. Surely a better policy than this could have been come up with in that time and taken to the election. Instead, we have a sugar-hit policy that basically does nothing. It is a feel-good policy and really does not achieve a lot for the citizens and the students of New South Wales, and that is the approach we will see from Labor members. They have had a long time in opposition.

Ms Robyn Preston: More of the same.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: More of the same. We are not seeing any real vision, any real policy or any real changes except for those sugar-hit policies. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after "That this House" and inserting instead "opposes the use of prison technology in schools to jam mobile phones."

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:33): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to the public interest debate and congratulate the member for Wallsend on her appointment as Deputy Speaker. I speak on behalf of the member for Newtown and the new member for Balmain, who is sitting in the Chamber today. It is a bit exciting as it is the first time that I have stood in the Chamber with her. I notice there are some students in the gallery, so hello to them especially.

The Greens will not get in the way of Labor delivering on this election commitment, and we commend the intention of it. The fact that 70 per cent of schools have already implemented this ban gives us an indication of how difficult phone usage has become in schools. As The Greens NSW education spokesperson and as a former teacher for 21 years, given everything that I am hearing from the new education Minister and given Labor's policies at the election, I am very confident that she will make a real difference to our classrooms—not least because Labor members are addressing the teacher shortage through a raft of measures. I look forward to the robust debate to push Labor further on some issues, and that is the holistic framework that we are looking forward to.

The Greens believe that schools are well placed to manage those kinds of decisions, and we support the intent of this motion. However, we would encourage the Minister to talk to young people, and I have not heard anyone mentioning students' perspectives. I know how addicted I am to my phone, and anyone watching question time will notice that every member in the Chamber is also highly addicted to their mobile phone. Mobile phones are extensions of our arms. I recently left one in an Uber, and one would have thought that I was in the Middle East. I was in Balmain, but I was completely and utterly bereft. It was ridiculous how traumatised I was to not have my mobile phone for a few hours, so this is a much broader issue about student engagement. I am certainly not blaming teachers, but we need to look more broadly.

In my day bringing your own device was a real thing, and I was glad to see the wording around access and students. Not all students could afford a device in the beginning, and their phones were often the best way for them to engage with online learning. We look forward to better resourcing of schools so that that simply is not required anymore. But, as pointed out by others, there are so many devices. What will we do about iWatches? What will we do about the multiple ways that young people can access the internet? Let's face it: When it comes to the things that are impeding learning, a lot of it is that addictive content. I would love to have a broader conversation about the addiction that young people are facing to their phones and also to hear from young people about the many ways that that could be addressed without an outright ban, but we will definitely not get in the way of supporting Labor in its election commitment.

The Greens look forward to supporting schools across the State to be better resourced, to have more classroom teachers in front of their students and to deliver first-class, world-class education. I hope that this issue becomes a thing of the past, because to me it is a symptom of a number of things. We do not think that banning mobile phones will be an overnight panacea for the disengagement of students and other broader issues with our public school system. We look forward to those debates, and I again encourage the Minister to speak to young people. In my experience, students know exactly the answers to those issues and will come up with far better remedies than we would ever think of, because we are not in their position. Young people have literally had access to mobile phones for their entire lives, so it is a very different world. We will support the motion and we will not support the amendment. We look forward to broader conversations about education in our public schools in New South Wales.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (17:38): In reply: I thank all members of the House who have made sensible contributions to the debate on this very important issue. I thank my colleagues the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Coogee for speaking to the experience of their local schools and teachers, and student voices as well, regarding what we hope to do with the mobile phone ban. I thank the member for Ballina for her very sensible contribution. Government members agree this is in no way a panacea for all the issues that our young people face in society in 2023; nor is it a panacea for all the problems that our education system faces. But we think it will be a step in the right direction.

Something quite novel about this Government in education is we acknowledge that we need long-term reform in order to fix issues like the teacher shortage. This is not a sugar hit—that is the approach those opposite took. Thanks also go to the member for Goulburn for making a sensible contribution to the debate. As for the member for Hawkesbury, I could not keep up with what she was trying to say. Members will not hear this often from an education Minister, but I am going to talk up ChatGPT and say that maybe it would have written a better speech than the member for Hawkesbury delivered—one that made more sense. The member seemed to argue for a mobile phone ban because 70 per cent of schools have banned them already, but then claimed it is actually a bad idea. If anyone can tell me what she was trying to say, I would be most grateful.

The mobile phone ban is about supporting teachers with government policy so that they have the backup to implement a ban. Members opposite—and I direct this comment to the member for Hawkesbury—seek to come into the Chamber and talk about the workload of teachers, but they have relinquished the right to talk about that workload because when in government they drove teachers into the ground. They have left teachers with mental health issues. Teachers are in tears to me every day. Do not come into this place and talk about the workload of teachers, thank you very much.

This policy is about supporting teachers and keeping students concentrating on their lessons. We will consult with schools to see how they can best roll it out. Some schools will use pouches for students' phones. Some schools will also put them in the front office. Some schools will just ask children to put their phones in lockers. But—surprise, surprise—the new Government is actually going to ask principals, P&Cs, teachers and students how the policy will work in their school community.

I finish with a point that the member for Blue Mountains reminded me of when she spoke about voicing students' concerns. When I visited Condell Park High School a young girl said that she felt safer because there was a mobile phone ban and she could not have her photo taken. She felt safer. The Government will not support the amendment because it has never proposed phone-jamming technology. This is a ploy by those opposite, who refuse to admit that the evidence is clear about mobile phone use in schools.

Mr Steve Whan: Point of order: Under Standing Order 160, amendments must be relevant to the question that it is proposed to amend. I suggest that deleting all the words relating to the mobile phone ban means that the amendment is out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Before I consult with the Clerk at the table about the point of order, I welcome all our wonderful guests in the gallery today.

Mr Adam Crouch: To the point of order: The amendment is absolutely relevant because it deals with mobile phone technology. It is relevant to the public interest debate, which revolves around mobile phone usage in schools and the banning thereof.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I have consulted with the Clerk, and I can rule in two ways. On the one hand, the amendment offers an alternative proposition and could be ruled out of order. On the other hand, the amendment deals generally with the motion. As it is the beginning of the session, I will allow the amendment to stand. I warn the Opposition and the Government that amendments must be relevant to the original motion. Given that it is a new Parliament, I will allow some flexibility on this occasion. But the Speaker and I may not be as flexible in the future.

The member for Londonderry has moved a motion, to which the member for Coffs Harbour has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes53
Majority.....19

AYES

Amon, R	James, T	Singh, G (teller)
Anderson, K	Kean, M	Sloane, K
Ayyad, T	Kemp, M	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Lane, J	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Marshall, A	Toole, P
Cross, M	Perrottet, D	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Petinos, E	Williams, L
Davies, T	Preston, R	Williams, R
Di Pasqua, S	Provest, G	Williamson, R
Griffin, J	Saunders, D	Wilson, F
Hodges, M		

NOES

Aitchison, J	Hagarty, N	Park, R
Bali, S	Hannan, J	Piper, G
Barr, C	Harris, D	Regan, M
Butler, L	Harrison, J	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Saliba, D
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Scully, P
Catley, Y	Holland, M	Shetty, K
Chanthivong, A	Kaliyanda, C	Smith, T
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Stuart, M
Crakanthorp, T	Kirby, W	Tesch, L
Daley, M	Leong, J	Vo, T
Dalton, H	Li, J	Voltz, L
Davis, D	McDermott, H	Ward, G
Dib, J	McGirr, J	Warren, G
Donato, P	McKeown, K	Washington, K
Doyle, T	Mehan, D	Whan, S (teller)
Finn, J	Minns, C	Wilkinson, K
Greenwich, A	O'Neill, M	

PAIRS

Henskens, A	Quinnell, S
Roberts, A	Watson, A

Amendment negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:56): How on earth did I end up in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament of New South Wales? It is no secret to anyone who knows me that I have never, ever, wanted to be a politician. I have never strived for that. I have never plotted a course to be here, yet here I am in the class of 2023, this boy from the western suburbs of Sydney, born in Auburn Hospital in 1973—but Auburn is not on the northern beaches. The son of a high school maths teacher aged just 22 and mum aged just 19—yes, I was a honeymoon baby, I think—my grandparents were mid-to-early 40s. I was the first born, the original of the species, first child, first grandchild. We lived in Merrylands—again, not a suburb of the northern beaches—until my sister was born four years later and we soon moved to Greystanes—even further away from the northern beaches! I am a lifelong cricket tragic, U2 and Bono fan—some would say stalker. Some trivia for you, Mr Speaker: I have seen U2 32 times and one Bono solo show just recently. But I digress. I am a self-confessed northern beaches blow-in who was fortunate enough to end up marrying a Harbord/Freshy girl born at Manly Hospital, thus giving me my visa stamp and permanent residency to God's own playground. Love you, Bronwen. Thanks for all you do.

As a child, I had always wanted to live on the beaches. My dad would pack up the family car every other Sunday for our pilgrimage to the coast. Saturday was for cricket; Sunday, the beach. Now I am proudly representing this beautiful area in State Parliament. An MP, for goodness sake! What an incredible honour it is to stand here in this place, the oldest Parliament in the country, to represent the amazing people of Wakehurst and, indeed, the State of New South Wales. In doing so as a proud Independent, I acknowledge the diverse political history of our electorate, represented by only five individuals before me, including one Labor member, Tom Webster, who joins us today—welcome, Tom—and also, of course, my immediate predecessor, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, who was to join us but had to cancel at the last minute, which is unlike Brad, and it was not due to COVID. Brad, I know you still read *Hansard* every night, so I thank you for your service to our community and to the State. I thank you for the gracious handover you provided to me and my team.

I acknowledge the other former members for Wakehurst: John Booth, Allan Viney, and our first ever member, Dick Healey. In Mr Healey's first speech to Parliament delivered in 1962, his top issues were the bus crisis—I note that the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber and she is on the case, don't you worry—the local hospital; the lack of school planning; and, of course, affordable housing. Sixty years later, that list sounds awfully familiar.

I have been reading through a few first speeches from members in this place and a recurring theme seems to be a detailed explanation of who they are, what motivates them and what they hope to achieve. When asked what drives me, I reflect back on my almost 50 years on this planet and it turns out it is all the little things along the way that you do not even realise at the time are shaping you: the people who love us and sadly leave us; the people who shape us, work with us much and mentor us; the lessons we learn and the lessons we teach. It is the mates we choose and the music we listen to. It is the sport we play and how we play it. It is the decisions we make every day—big and small.

I hope to share with you just some of those formative stories this evening. To begin those stories, it is right to acknowledge your country. I pay my respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation on whose lands we gather, and I acknowledge their Elders past, present and emerging. On the northern beaches there is an ongoing conversation about the Indigenous history of our area and at the moment there is not one group to actually acknowledge, but again I pay respect and gratitude to custodians past, present and emerging. As part of that acknowledgement, I recognise the sorrow that has been caused over generations and I express my hope for true, genuine reconciliation in the future. As mayor of our community, I have had the privilege of working with many local Aboriginal leaders, and in particular I am so inspired by our young Indigenous leaders. Hello Noah and Aleta in the audience in the gallery tonight. I share their desire for all of us to work together, to listen, to learn and to walk gently on this earth as we learn from each other because it is so important.

Wow, Wakehurst. Just wow! Look what we went and did. You wanted change and we got change—the first independent MP for Wakehurst. You wanted integrity and transparency. You want local issues dealt with, not ignored. You wanted to be heard, and heard you will be. The Government has said that this Parliament—like the election—will be a contest of ideas. It will be about working with each other, not against, and not a race to the bottom, although we just saw our first division ever tonight. On behalf of the people of Wakehurst, I will be looking for exactly that approach. That is what they have come to expect from their local council and from me personally, and that is what I intend to bring to this Parliament—a track record of working with any government and any community group, and simply getting the job done. It is actually not difficult, but it requires hard work

and determination. Having had the honour of serving our community as mayor of "Awesome Town" for nearly 15 incredible years, many may think my journey to this place is actually pretty typical. In fact, it is anything but.

There will be some, including my high school principal, Mr Carrol, who will be thinking, "I told you so." There will be others looking on now in disbelief—some of them are actually in the gallery tonight. In terms of the naysayers, I am thinking of my year 11 history teacher, who said I would never make anything of myself, and also the head PE teacher who took an instant dislike to me because I was allowed to wear basketball boots to school when everyone else had to wear proper black leather Clarks. At the time they did not make Clarks in size 14, so what's a boy to do? It didn't help matters with my PE teacher that my dad was a local high school teacher up the road and, when not playing cricket or soccer himself, he would volunteer to referee the inter-school matches as an independent umpire. So when he made decisions that didn't go the way of my school, I copped my fair share of—how should we say—physical intimidation and sledging, even from my own PE teacher and schoolmates. But, as a referee and an umpire, my dad enforced the rules and the spirit of the game. My dad always taught me to play hard but fair, and to respect the rules and the spirit of the game—always.

But back to my history teacher. I still remember the day my best mate and I were kicked out of the class before we even got through the front door. The teacher took a pre-emptive strike and asked us to leave before we even sat down, so we gladly headed off to the basketball court. That is where Mr Carrol, the principal, soon found us and asked why we were not in class. Mr Carrol pulled me aside and said, "Mate, we all learn differently. School isn't for you." I had gone from a top 10 student at the end of year 10 to the bottom five within six months in year 11. There are lots of reasons and excuses for that. Principal Carrol saw past all that and told me to get a full-time job. He said that if I did get a full-time job he would give me a completion certificate for year 11. Challenge accepted.

I was already doing over 30 hours a week as a casual check-out assistant at Kmart. But according to occupational health and safety I was too tall, and probably chatted too much to the customers, so I got sent out the back to the cash office and was offered a full-time position as a trainee manager—back when Bankcard was a thing. Fortuitously, a job at the City of Sydney came up as a clerk in the engineers department, which was much more interesting and a genuine challenge, I thought. As it turned out, it was an absolute sliding doors moment if ever there was one. I met my first wife, Michelle, at the council and we had two children, James and Alexander—my two most favourite humans on this planet. James and Alex, I know the journey has not been easy on you two, but this is actually all about you. Everything I have done in public life—in fact, all of our lives, and that has been most of your lives—has been, by and large, for you and your generation. I want you growing up in a world where the environment is protected and nourished, where you and your families can thrive, where politics is done differently and done better, and where differences are celebrated and all people are respected.

Imagine that kind of world. As naive or clichéd as it sounds, I genuinely want to make this world a better place to ensure that you have the opportunities I had and that many people in this place have had. I love you both to the stars and beyond, and I am incredibly proud of what you two lunatics are doing with your lives. James is a second-year apprentice mechanic and a car nut—I just need to win you over to the brilliance of electric vehicles—and Alex is finishing year 12 and trying his hand at TAFE as an apprentice electrician, or maybe a shares trader, or maybe a personal trainer. I love that, like me at your age, you don't really know what you want to do yet but you will give anything a go. Don't worry, son—the job will eventually find you. Eventually! Just try everything and have fun. Say yes to every opportunity and never, ever burn bridges.

Back to that sliding doors moment and accepting the job at the City of Sydney. Local government has been a big part of my life, firstly as a bureaucrat always saying yes to the various job opportunities thrown at me and even creating new ones in some cases. But, gee, you learn quickly in local government. Empathy and the ability to listen are the skills I value most from my time in local government. I soon saw and loved the unique roles councils play in helping people and supporting local businesses, and I was hooked. So to the many people working in local government that have helped me along the way and who I have learnt from every day, thank you for that support and opportunity because that was the first 20 years of my life, pretty much.

So then, becoming the Mayor of Warringah. In 2007 a group of us residents in Warringah wanted a fresh start for our council as we came out of administration. I just wanted better cricket pitches—they were rubbish—so my teammates said I could do a better job than this administrator. "Run for council," they said. My reply, "Great idea. Why not?" I teamed up with the residents and said I would play my part. Everyone wanted change but few were in a position to actually put their own hand up to be a councillor. I then stupidly missed a meeting and they nominated me for the contest to be the first popularly elected Mayor of Warringah. "Don't worry," they said, "You won't get elected as the mayor. There are 12 others running. No-one even knows who you are." I was elected the mayor.

It was another sliding doors moment and I will always be grateful to those who encouraged me in those initial stages in our efforts to do politics differently on the northern beaches. My eight years as Mayor of

Warringah was then followed by a community campaign to unite the northern beaches and become one council. In the statewide forced amalgamations of 2016, it was first proposed to split Warringah, creating two smaller councils which went against logic, geography and, most importantly, the wishes of our community. I am proud of the leadership role that I took in ensuring that a bad political decision to split our community was overturned and that instead the northern beaches was united as one. My own personal journey continued because I then became the first mayor of that newly unified council. How fortunate I am. But my success in local government was our community's success and it really was a team effort by a number of people.

This evening I would like to thank my fellow councillors, past and present; the "orange" candidates at four different elections, who put their hand up to support our community team, most of them knowing they would not get elected but wanting to support us and propel us over the line; the Clayton's political party and all our supporters and volunteers—initially, Wake Up Warringah, then Your Warringah, then Your Northern Beaches, but simply the "orange" people—you know who you are. I also thank the elders who I learnt so much from, Emeritus Mayor Julie Sutton, OAM, and former councillors Phil Colman and David James; the professionals working in the local government sector, from the CEOs to childcare staff, events managers, town planners and waste collection officers—incredible people working in local government. Thank you.

I am so proud of what our community achieved together at both Warringah then the northern beaches councils because it culminated in winning the A. R. Bluett Memorial Award as the best metropolitan council in all of New South Wales—twice, one for each of the councils I was lucky to lead. What I am most proud of, though, is how we supported our community through those challenging years of COVID and through the recovery process we are still enduring. That is another story to be told for another day. But what drove me at all times in my role as mayor was that sense of service, of helping others, of finding genuine solutions to improve our community. I cannot just sit back and throw stones at the tent. I want to be in the tent, helping to solve the problems, part of the solution—the more complex, the better. I know exactly where this sense of service came from: my family and my upbringing. My mum and dad are sadly no longer with us, but I was so blessed to have them both show me the way. Each in their own style taught me so much.

Dad, the maths teacher, was constantly giving of his time and his skills to others. I hate that I did not fully appreciate him and his sacrifices until we lost him. He was gone at just 48 years old. Having fought it off as a teenager in the 1960s, melanoma came back for him a few decades later. I think that early brush with death compelled him to live life to the fullest. He had so much love for his siblings, his mates, his nieces and nephews and, of course, his four children—Suzy and me and then Ashleigh and Andrew, who were eight and six years old when he died. But I hate that he never got to meet any of his five grandsons, and I am acutely aware that I have already outlived him.

What to say about Mum? Again, I did not realise at the time how much she was showing me about family, about love, about sacrifice. She was taken too soon, just a few years ago—cancer again. I was fortunate to be surrounded by family on both sides who taught me a sense of what is right and to speak up, to act. Mostly they were strong, vocal women, and I am so grateful for that. Here tonight I have my beautiful Aunty Deb, Aunty Beth and Aunty Olga, who I think have been putting up with me the longest, and my stepmum, Kim, who has been trying to pull me into line since I was 15—all strong women. My sister, Suzy, is here from Perth. For 45 years we have been in each other's space. Thank you for travelling across Australia to be here.

Meeting Suzy today, you would never know she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis [MS] in her early thirties. Her newborn son, my nephew, was only a few weeks old and she was told she would be in a wheelchair within five years. She bravely put her hand up for a medical trial and today, over a decade later, thanks to science and experimental drugs, she is not only with us still but she is pretty much cured. And she helped get the drug onto the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. She has absolutely changed the game for other MS patients. Suzy, their world and my world is a better place because of you.

I am sure I have all my crazy Queensland relatives—including Uncle Mick, who always taught me to not take myself too seriously—watching online. Those rellos loved my campaign colour of maroon, although I insist it was pinot. And of course I have my awesome Central Coast cousins and my beautiful uncles over in San Francisco. Over the years my family has taught me so much about courage, community service, justice, sacrifice and love, and I will be forever grateful for the upbringing I had and the lessons that formed my values and sense of purpose. Aunty Deb is so nurturing and caring. It is a surprise to no-one that she has dedicated her life to nursing and mentoring others in the medical profession. She married one of the Farrugia boys across the road, Uncle Dave, a teacher who again gives so generously to his students and to his family.

Back in the early '80s, my Aunty Beth, despite being six feet tall and passing her exams, was not allowed to join the Police Force. Guess why? She was married—true story. That decision would prove to be one of the best and worst decisions for the people of New South Wales because, thanks to a lot of help from a now high-profile former officer, she was allowed to join and went on to impact the lives of many victims in her role as

a detective in the child mistreatment unit. In positive ways she has changed those lives, despite the efforts of a very male-dominated force that was out to destroy her. As well as that, she reluctantly helped reform the NSW Police Force, along with her husband, my uncle Paul, who was a police officer of note in the homicide squad. They changed the way in which the force treats its own, and their legacy continues to change the lives of our first responders.

Then there is my father's brother, Aunty Glenn, as he insists I call him. In 1984 aged 23, when I was just 11, Glenn was bashed to within an inch of his life and ended up in intensive care—a victim of a targeted gay bashing. I remember being there when he finally came out of the coma and he told my mum and dad he was gay. He explained to them that this was why he was attacked, but he begged them not to tell Nanna and Pop. At that point, my parents smiled and said, "No kidding, you're gay." They reassured him they were pretty sure his parents already knew. When I reflected on that years later, I thought how awful it was. Fancy hiding who he is and then losing the opportunity to come out in his way, in his time, and control his own story—robbed of the most basic of rights. I was 11; I did not really know what a gay man was. I just thought he dressed better than the rest of us and hung out with trendier people.

Speaking of fashionable folk, there is my beautiful Aunty Olga, whose family escaped Russia in World War II and wound up in a refugee camp in Cessnock. I am pretty sure that is where Aunty Olga was conceived. She has taught all of us about making the most of our opportunities, the importance and strength of family, and never forgetting our past. She married my beautiful Uncle Al, who gave so much to his local cricket community in Campbelltown—particularly youth development and women's cricket—and was recognised with a posthumous Medal of the Order of Australia after we lost him to cancer in 2019. I know that Uncle Al would have loved to be here tonight. He would certainly appreciate the tie I am wearing, with the black and gold of the original SCG XI cricket team. I played with them at Lord's on the day Uncle Al joined me in the Long Room for our team dinner.

Those who know me know how much I love my cricket, but I want to take a moment to explain that passion. It is not simply about the contest of the bat and the ball—as thrilling as that is. It is far more than that. Cricket is a big part of my life: the friendships I have made, the wins I have had, the crushing defeats I have dealt with, the travels I have had and, most importantly, the values I cherish. The spirit of cricket has always been vitally important to me. It is why I chose to wear this tie tonight. The spirit of cricket is hard to define. Many have tried and failed over the years, but I will give it a go.

Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork. It brings together people from different nationalities, different cultures and different religions. The spirit of cricket involves respect for your opponents, your own captain and team, the role of the umpires, the game itself and its traditional values. It involves putting the team ahead of personal interests and milestones. It requires you to play with discipline and control, and to be a good example on and off the field. The spirit of cricket is a theme with me, and it is how I try to live my life.

I think that the spirit of cricket is especially relevant when you look at our Parliament. Imagine a Parliament that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork, where all members show respect for colleagues on both sides of the aisle, for the Speaker and for the original values of the Constitution of New South Wales. Imagine a place where the community interest is prioritised ahead of personal interests and milestones, where we all exercise our role with discipline and control and strive to be a good example inside and outside the Parliament. My request tonight to the Speaker, the Premier, the Opposition and my crossbench colleagues is that we execute our duties to the people of New South Wales in that exact manner.

How about no more attempts at gotcha moments? How about just asking or answering a question without spin? How about we demonstrate to the public that question time is actually a valuable part of our parliamentary process and without the perception it has now of bullying, intimidation and immature behaviour—the exact kind of stuff we try to protect our kids from on social media or in the playground? It is not that hard to do. Substance, working with and not against people, support and respect—is any of that too much to hope for or, indeed, to ask for or even to demand? I am pretty sure it is what the community wants. Let us be the Parliament that passes the most legislation, that works across party lines and every now and then compromises on things. "Compromise" is not a dirty word. Let the Fifty-Eighth Parliament be the Parliament that gets it done. That is the challenge—so pad up, everybody.

I am not naive. I know that Wakehurst and, indeed, New South Wales face some big challenges—issues that cannot be solved by me solely but can be solved only by coming to this place, ensuring my community's voice is heard and working with all members to find and implement solutions. The list is long: the lack of affordable housing options, public transport nightmares, the cost-of-living crisis, environmental challenges and the need for greater action on climate change, and smarter planning for our community. There are local issues like the

Petroleum Exploration Permit 11—or PEP 11, as it has come to be known. How that is still alive is beyond me, but I will continue to fight it to protect our coastline.

The Lizard Rock development is where pristine native bushland is being carved up for housing in the middle of a bushfire zone. Approval was granted despite independent reports stating what a disaster that would be. The Lizard Rock development is outside any good planning principles and is not part of our agreed housing targets, and I will fight to ensure that the approval is overturned. In terms of caring for the most vulnerable, I want to ensure that in Wakehurst we create a caring, inclusive society. I think of local groups like Sargood on Collaroy, the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Fusion Pride, Aspect, Gotcha4Life and Fighting Chance. Look them up—google them. These are just some of the many local groups ensuring that the voices of the vulnerable are heard and that they are given every opportunity to participate in and contribute to society.

I see here behind the curtain Jo Berry, with her own tales to tell. Ask her about her life journey and the awesome Fighting Chance social enterprise she works with. Better still, ask her how she swims at Shelly Beach or Collaroy with nothing more than a noodle and her carer. Jo, I am so thrilled that you can join us here today. It is so great that you have the best seat in the house—just quietly—down here in the Chamber. But it is a sad reality that we cannot accommodate Jo in the gallery. I absolutely appreciate the efforts to which our parliamentary staff have gone to ensure that Jo is accommodated today. But is it good enough that she cannot just come in as a punter and sit and watch in the gallery without others having to fuss over her? So that is another challenge I add to the list.

I know that the to-do list is not unique to Wakehurst. Don't get me wrong—Wakehurst is unique and it is special. But so is Wollondilly. So are Lake Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and Sydney. So are Barwon, Newtown, Manly, Dubbo—pretty much every seat. Our communities are all diverse and brilliant. But, ultimately, whether they voted red, blue, green, teal or—heaven forbid—orange and pinot, I think they all want the same things: transparency, integrity, honesty, opportunity, fairness, common sense, cooperation and hope. In conclusion, I know many of you are expecting a quote from Bono, and I will not let you down. Some of you have heard it before, but here goes: "Vision over visibility". The insistence to look past what you can see in favour of what could be. The ability to see what is possible beyond our current reality. That is the challenge before us.

To the Wakehurst Team Regan volunteers and supporters, you guys—you had one job. You did it spectacularly. I know, of course, that you actually had more than just one job. You all had about 10 jobs each. But we did it. Look at what we did. I share your incredible, infectious excitement and enthusiasm about the change we have created and I assure you that I am up for the challenge. But there is much more to do and I need your help on the journey. To Susie Morgan in particular, as my campaign director or "Bossy Spice", as we know her—incredible. Thank you and the whole executive team. To all my family—my sister; aunts; uncles; cousins; nephews; nieces; in-laws; stepmum; Ash and Andrew; friends; colleagues; teammates; my wife, Bronwen; and, of course, my two awesome, lunatic sons—thank you for all that you have taught me. Thank you for allowing me to do what I do. Thank you for letting me be me and for each of you being you.

To the Wakehurst community, on 25 March many of you voted Independent for the very first time. I am so humbled and honoured by that. I thank you for that trust and faith, and I look forward to serving our community. One last Bono quote for the road. It is from a little-known song, and one that means a lot to me. The message is simple—"We are the people we've been waiting for." To me it is reminiscent of Ghandi's message that we be the change we want to see. To the people of Wakehurst, we are the people we've been waiting for. We have seized the moment to create a new destiny, to speak up and to step up for our community. And to my colleagues in this Chamber, fellow members of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament, "We are the people we've been waiting for." If, like me, you desperately want politics done differently and want it to be more respectful, more productive and more compassionate, then let's be those people we've been waiting for.

The Fifty-Eighth Parliament is an exciting place to be, full of opportunity and spirit. I thank the Clerk—it is Regan, by the way, not Reagan—and all her parliamentary staff, and the former Speaker and the current Speaker for all the training, guidance and support they provide to us MPs. Seriously, you guys rock. It is truly an honour to be in this place. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity, and I intend to use every day to make the most of it for the people of Wakehurst and the people of New South Wales.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Wakehurst for his inaugural speech and thank everyone for attending and being part of this momentous occasion.

*Private Members' Statements***SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE PROJECTS**

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:27): It is so good to finally be on this side of the Chamber, after 12 long years in opposition. I thank the people of Shellharbour and my community for re-electing me as their member of Parliament, and I thank the whole of New South Wales for electing a Chris Minns Labor-led Government. We will not let you down. This Labor Government cares about residents of Shellharbour and the broader Illawarra and recognises that the previous Liberal Government ignored the legitimate requests from these residents for a fair share of infrastructure spending. During the election campaign, I was fortunate enough to be able to make some amazing infrastructure-related commitments to the residents of Shellharbour, throughout the electorate, and I will not let my community down on any of those commitments. I will not stop banging on doors and tables, if required, to get this done for my community.

For the residents of Dapto and West Dapto we will begin, in the next few weeks, to plan for a fair access to the M1 Princes Motorway and the Albion Park Rail bypass. It was a travesty that the previous Government did not build entry or exit points on the M1 between Dapto and Yallah so that local residents and workers could easily access the motorway, but we will get it done. For families in Flinders and West Dapto, planning works will soon begin for new public schools, which are so desperately needed in those two fast-growing areas. I have been calling on the previous Government for 12 long years even just to purchase the land required to build the schools, and it never bothered to do it. It was happy to allow thousands of new residents to move to the Illawarra but refused to deliver the schools that those families desperately needed. We will deliver a new high school in Flinders and we will deliver a new primary school in West Dapto.

For students at Dapto High School, a new covered outdoor learning area, or COLA, is on its way. It will include a resurfaced basketball court and new fencing, lighting and a sound system. Finally these amazing students will have access to an outdoor learning area that the vast majority of students across the State already have. They will not be treated like second-class citizens under a Labor Government. They are not asking for an Olympic-sized swimming pool or ponies or stables. They just want the basics, and that is what they are going to get under a Labor Government.

For school leavers and other adults looking to gain new skills, Labor will build a TAFE Domestic Manufacturing Centre of Excellence in the Illawarra. The centre will help rebuild our domestic manufacturing capacity and assist to resolve our statewide skills crisis. Only Labor does these things. For local community sporting groups across the Shellharbour electorate we will provide fair funding based on need and not postcode. We are all sick of the sports rorts that we have had to endure over the past 12 years. We will start by upgrading the Reed Park amenities building at Horsley and improving fencing at Howard Fowles Oval in Lake Illawarra. We will improve lighting and amenities at Warilla and Barrack Heights sporting grounds. The time for sports rorts is over. For women who are victims of family and domestic violence we will build a new women's trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra. A world first, the centre will provide specialised dedicated and individualised wraparound support for women recovering and healing from the trauma of family and domestic violence and abuse.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Something you've always been passionate about.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I certainly have. I have been talking about this now for 10 years. Another major area of neglect by the previous Government was public housing. The lack of supply of public housing, combined with the disgraceful lack of maintenance spending on existing houses, is something that members of the former Government should be ashamed about; I doubt they are. The way they treated members of society who were doing it tough and needed our help to put roofs over their heads was a disgrace. We will treat our most vulnerable with the care, compassion and dignity that they deserve.

There is plenty to do, and I can assure everyone in the Shellharbour electorate and the Greater Illawarra that they will get a fair go under a Labor Government. Finally, I would not be able to fight for my community for another four years without my wonderful family, staff, the union movement and Labor Party volunteers who turned out during the campaign. I say thank you to all of those people who assisted. I note that one of the media outlets referred to my campaign as something from communist China—it was just a sea of red. I was very proud of that.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:32): It is an honour to stand here today as the re-elected member for Goulburn in the New South Wales Parliament. I am humbled by the choice of my constituents to place their trust in me to continue to represent their interests. I accept the responsibility that comes with that trust, and I remain committed to working tirelessly to deliver the results that the people of the Goulburn electorate demand and deserve. I express my heartfelt gratitude to my campaign team, local Liberal Party members and

every volunteer for their hard work and dedication in helping me win a challenging election. Their experience, leadership and tireless efforts each day during the campaign made all the difference to me to be standing here today. I thank each of them for their support and contribution to this victory.

The previous term, in which I was first elected, was unlike any other we have seen in history. The words "unprecedented", "record" and "once-in-a-lifetime" were used far too frequently in the past four years. We faced enormous challenges that we are still both recovering from and adapting to. When I was first elected the entire region was in the grip of a drought, which now seems so long ago. It was then devastated by bushfires that swept through Wingello, Bundanoon and Bullio. Of course the rain was welcomed, but the subsequent flooding deeply impacted the recovery of land and infrastructure—impacts that we are still feeling today. It goes without saying that almost immediately after that, every one of us was touched by the ongoing pandemic. But, true to form, our great State demonstrated remarkable resilience and strength in the face of each of these challenges. I am so proud of the way that our communities came together to support each other.

There is still much work to be done and, as the member for Goulburn, I will fight for not only recovery but also advancement in our region. It was during the pandemic that many people grasped the magnificence of living regionally, and now the Goulburn electorate is experiencing the regional rush out of the metropolitan centres. With many experiences for tourists—from the natural wonders of Wombeyan Caves and Bungonia Gorge to remarkable heritage and delectable vineyards or farm gates to explore—it is no surprise that moving to the region has been the next step for many. However, there is no denying that the migration rush is altering the face of the Goulburn electorate.

We are growing; that is certain. A greater, permanent population has increased pressure on our housing, infrastructure, services, traffic, and health and education facilities. Energy companies are trying to build solar farms without regard to local housing strategies, and waste disposal companies are trying to set up shop amongst residential homes. New South Wales must continue to protect and invest in our regional communities, in our green spaces and regional infrastructure, and in our people of the regions. We must ensure that our farmers, police, councils, schools and hospitals have the resources that they need. Our community's aspirations are not unreasonable, nor are their concerns.

Every level of government plays a part in the quality of life enjoyed by a community. I will work to identify and implement real outcomes for the government services that make up the social and economic fabric of our community. Art, music and library programs that help build imagination in our children and creativity for adults, footpaths that are maintained to prevent falls and ensure the longevity of our ageing population, roads and bridges that connect our neighbours and transport the produce that feeds and clothes our nation—in government these are the things that we must deliver to support our communities.

In this, my first speech of this term, I pledge to all of my constituents that, for as long as I have the honour and privilege to represent them, I will always put the communities and the people of the electorate first. I will dedicate the next four years to proving to my constituents that their trust in me is well placed because for me, first and foremost, politics is about the people I serve. Once again, to the people of the Goulburn electorate I say I am with you. I look forward to giving you my all, building our strength and fostering a great sense of community that will take us forward. Thank you for believing in me.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I take a moment to acknowledge Sam, Barry and Laura in the gallery. These young people are very passionate about our democracy, and we welcome them here.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (18:37): The Stronger Country Communities Fund has made a significant contribution towards improving regional communities, including the area that I have the pleasure of representing, the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie. Since its beginning, the fund has provided hundreds of millions of dollars, and more than 60 projects on the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie have received funding. I have always been a strong advocate for funding for those areas. Today I am excited to be able to announce that in round five of the funding allocation more than \$3 million was provided to my electorate for irrigation and drainage works and upgrades to the amenities at Buff Point Oval and to renew the amenities block at Halekulani Oval. We all know how important local sport is, and this will be a great improvement.

Further to that, \$520,000 will be put towards drainage and irrigation installation for the Buff Point sportsground, and an additional \$1.2 million will be used to replace the Buff Point amenities building. Of course, that will include female amenities, which we know are incredibly important. Some \$1.3 million will be put towards upgrading the amenities at Halekulani Oval. These ovals are much-loved community assets and are home to the Budgewoi Bulldogs Rugby League Club. The facilities are also utilised by local netball and cricket clubs, schools

and the wider community. Despite frequent use of the facilities by locals, the ovals have received minimal upgrades over the past few decades. That has led to the amenities blocks not being big enough to host teams, with female players required to get changed at home. The Buff Point Oval drainage system has also not been working for three years, which has prevented teams from training. It is truly a great outcome for the local community that these works will take place, as it will provide a boost to the local sporting scene. I was very proud to advocate for the clubs and the broader community for these projects to be realised.

In addition to this, the Minns Labor Government will be providing the Budgewoi Bulldogs with \$120,000 to install floodlighting, as well as additional lighting to the existing poles at the Halekulani Oval. Currently, the eastern midfield does not have floodlighting, which has prevented the club from hosting night games and training. Lighting for this field will ensure the club can utilise two fields and provide opportunity for extra training and for holding night tournaments. The club and the community have long desired to see night-time games on their doorstep. I thank the Minns Labor Government for this now becoming a reality. I know that club president Matt Rogers and fellow members are incredibly appreciative.

In Lake Macquarie, Swansea pool was allotted \$900,000 from the Stronger Country Communities grants, which will fund the Swansea Swim Centre. The funding will be used to replace the plant room and install a fibreglass liner to the 50-metre pool, which has not had an upgrade for about 60 years. The facility services the eastern catchment of Lake Macquarie, with residents from right across the Swansea electorate regularly utilising the pool for activities like Learn to Swim, squads and water polo. A power upgrade to the centre will enable the delivery of the Lake Macquarie City Council aquatic facilities strategy, which will futureproof the pool.

Since becoming the member for Swansea, locals have constantly raised with me the need to upgrade the Swansea pool. These upgrades will ensure that the community and these groups can use the facility for years to come. The pool's future has also been supported by the Lake Macquarie City Council 20-year plan to improve pool facilities across the region. I take this opportunity to thank Mayor Kay Fraser for her support in delivering this incredible milestone. I have long petitioned council to upgrade Swansea pool and to make it more accessible. Clearly, with its support, we have been able to achieve that. Priorities for the Swansea pool include a new indoor Learn to Swim pool, car park and splash pad.

I have also been working with our local councillors to advocate for the facility to be open all year round. Our community has wanted to see improvements for many years. This is a great outcome. I look forward to seeing these changes take place, to seeing everybody at the pool and to seeing Learn to Swim all year round. We are extremely passionate about our swimming in the Swansea electorate, so these facilities are a great initiative and will certainly enhance the capacity of the electorate that I represent.

ZIG ZAG RAILWAY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (18:42): Mr Temporary Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment. I have no doubt that you will be the greatest Temporary Speaker that this House has ever seen. I want to talk about one of the iconic attractions in my local electorate: the Zig Zag Railway. The Zig Zag Railway, which is located in the town of Lithgow, will soon be back in operation. This historic tourist destination is about to reopen. The previous New South Wales Government contributed \$5 million towards this project. Over the past 11 years it was closed down because it did not meet the regulations of the independent safety regulator. It also was impacted by fires and by floods. It has been a long journey to get the railway into operation once again.

Volunteers of the Zig Zag Railway have turned up every weekend and during the holiday periods. They have restored seven kilometres of the track, which has been built on the side of the Blue Mountains and overlooks the picturesque scenery of that area. A number of locomotives have also been restored to their original glory. That incredible work has been undertaken by those individuals. In the last week the organisation has been given the green light to begin running passenger trips after final restrictions were lifted by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, granting Zig Zag Railway full accreditation to run as a tourist railway.

The revitalisation of the Zig Zag Railway, the last of its kind in Australia, is key to attracting visitors to the Central West. This is a local drawcard that will have people heading further over the mountains for an authentic steam era experience—from train and history buffs to families with young children heading for a great day out. The Zig Zag Railway will once again be celebrated as part of our heritage well into the future. When visitors come to our regional towns to see the attractions that are on offer, they stay in local accommodation, they buy souvenirs from local shops and they dine in our local eateries. The opening of the Zig Zag Railway has the potential to bring back the 60,000 visitors that used to visit that area each and every year. This is about driving visitor economy, about getting more heads on beds in the local area, getting people to eat out at our cafes and our restaurants, and it is going to provide a huge economic recovery to that community.

The Zig Zag Railway is one of New South Wales' greatest engineering feats. It provided the first rail passage across the Blue Mountains and opened up regional New South Wales. As I said, it is expected to bring around 60,000 tourists to Lithgow each and every year. By helping to restore this iconic railway, the former New South Wales Government also supported jobs in the Lithgow area. The railway will also boost tourism across the Blue Mountains and strengthen the local economy. The Zig Zag Railway has been a highly popular tourist attraction for over 40 years and is a great example of New South Wales' industrial heritage. It is important to have this attraction reopen. I invite all members to visit this iconic tourist destination the next time they are passing by.

Very shortly the official date for the reopening of the Zig Zag Railway will be announced. People have a long affiliation with the Zig Zag Railway and those who went there before the fires and floods in that area would know that Thomas the Tank Engine used to run up and down those tracks—which brought smiles and fun to families and people of that community. We cannot wait to see it back, and that is just around the corner. Indeed, I will share in the excitement of being part of the announcement of that new date shortly. It is an attraction that the Lithgow community and the people of New South Wales will be very excited to see back in play. Once again, congratulations to everybody who has been involved in this journey. It has been a long one, but it will be well worth the wait once we get there.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Bathurst for reminiscing about Thomas the Tank Engine.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:47): Congratulations, Mr Temporary Speaker, on your election. Tonight I express my sincere gratitude to the people of Canterbury for re-electing me and entrusting the Labor Party to represent them in the New South Wales Parliament. The Canterbury community is incredibly diverse and vibrant, and I am humbled by the trust they have placed in me and in the Premier to represent them in this Parliament. Our community has faced many challenges in recent years—from the COVID-19 pandemic to the ongoing struggles of our healthcare system. Despite these difficulties, the people of Canterbury have continued to demonstrate their resilience, strength and commitment to building a brighter future for our community.

One of the most pressing issues facing our community is the state of our healthcare system and, in particular, the need for the redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital. Tens of thousands of people from my community, the St George shire, Strathfield, Summer Hill, Lakemba and Punchbowl depend on Canterbury Hospital for primary health care. The 900 staff at Canterbury Hospital have done an amazing job in very difficult circumstances, particularly over the past three years. They have been crying out for more support. I am so proud to be standing on this side of the House and so proud, after many years of campaigning, that we will see the redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital thanks to Premier Chris Minns, health Minister Ryan Park and all of our community together—the healthcare workers in the Health Services Union, the Medical Staff Council, our faith leaders, our business leaders and the 10,000 people who signed our petition. When those opposite were in government they ignored it time and again.

We would give notices of motions. We would raise the issues and produce the data. We would point to the people who were suffering. Over the past couple of years and during COVID we were on the ground with the community. Our community were facing struggles and were extremely anxious because they had to leave the area to work. We had to work together with all our community to get people vaccinated and doing the right thing. And they did it in droves. But we were on the ground with them. The former Government did not listen and it lost a lot of respect. It lost the votes of many people who had supported it previously. I say to the member for Oatley and the other members from his area that they lost support because they never supported the redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital.

Only the current Premier and health Minister went there in November and made that announcement. It was absolutely amazing. Again, a Labor government will rebuild Canterbury Hospital—not those opposite, not those Tories, not those conservatives, who talked a big game about supporting everyone across the State, no matter their diverse background or their faith, but did not support Canterbury Hospital. They did not support the people of Riverwood or Punchbowl or Belmore or Lakemba or Canterbury or Kingsgrove. Former Premier Iemma relayed the information to me that the Labor Party had double-digit swings in the polling booths around the hospital. My electorate borders the electorates of the Premier, the member for Summer Hill, the member for Strathfield, the member for Bankstown and the member for Oatley.

Mr Mark Coure: I had a swing of 9 per cent towards me in Riverwood.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: No, you didn't. You had a massive swing against you in Riverwood and in Beverly Hills. Why? It is because you neglected the hospital. You neglected the people.

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

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I will. In our community we are absolutely proud and grateful to Premier Minns for making that announcement. We are going to see the hospital delivered.

KIAMA ELECTORATE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:52): Mr Temporary Speaker, I also congratulate you on your elevation to your position. I acknowledge the elevation of the Speaker, my friend the member for Lake Macquarie. Having known him since our days in local government, I could not think of a better member of Parliament to take on this important role both inside and outside the Chamber. The fact that he was elected unopposed is an honour reflective of the respect in which he is held by all members of the House. I hope this respect is sustained as he navigates the vicissitudes of this ancient role in a very modern Parliament. First, it is great to be back. I thank the people of my electorate for their incredible support. For a variety of reasons my election victory was one that many thought was simply not possible. I had literally everyone against me, from the popular press to all sides of politics. But regardless of what politicians and pundits might have thought, the people I did have on side were the ones who truly mattered. They were the incredibly generous, supportive and remarkable people of my community.

The scare tactics, the smears and sanctimonious lecturing did not work. But what I did have on side were the people of my community. I am very grateful for their loyalty and for the results that we secured. Having grown up, lived and worked in my region my entire life, I love my community and its people. I am just as committed to securing outcomes that matter today as I was the first day I walked through the doors of this Parliament. I give my community this commitment: My loyalty and dedication to their service will never falter. I know they expect results. I will work hard every day in order to deliver on those expectations.

I take this opportunity to thank my campaign team. They worked incredibly hard. No matter the strength of the headwinds, we stuck to the plan, we kept the faith and we won. More than 200 volunteers helped on our campaign. I am indebted to every one of them, who backed me when the chips were really down. I will never forget their generosity and friendship. I give a particular shout-out to my mum, Margaret, who worked all day every day on pre-poll. In fact, mum got the best pre-poll result. I have no doubt that her presence had a much more positive impact than mine.

When I walked into this Parliament in 2011, I entered the Chamber as the first Liberal member for Kiama. Today I enter the Chamber as its first Independent member. I know that many people in my electorate voted Independent for the first time. Whilst my values have not changed, my status as a member of a party has. My values remain economically rationalist and socially progressive. Philosophically, I am a classical liberal, but I am no longer a member of the Liberal Party. Having been returned to Parliament as an Independent, I have every intention of remaining true to my values but acting independently. As such, no party can assume or take my vote for granted. I have never liked the term "conscience vote" because as a member of the Liberal Party I have always exercised my conscience on every vote. Perhaps the calculus of factors has changed but my values remain.

I want to work with the Government in order to provide sound and sensible decision-making. I am fully aware that this Government requires crossbench support to deliver its agenda. I have already indicated that I will provide in-principle support to the Government's commitment to place Sydney Water as an entity in the State Constitution. I will provide in-principle support to lift the labour expenses cap for frontline public sector workers. As a parliamentarian, I will be holding this Government to account for the promises it makes and the actions it takes. Our community expects election commitments made by the Government to be delivered in full. A promise is a promise. This includes an additional \$20 million for the Tripoli Way bypass in Albion Park to help reduce traffic congestion; funding for a new school in Calderwood; funding for regional homelessness service Salt Care; funding for the Minnamurra Public School for a nature playground; and funding for the Illawarra Light Railway Museum, the Cambewarra Pony Club and the Kiama Downs Surf Life Saving Club.

Recently I met with the new member for South Coast and the Shoalhaven mayor. I look forward to working with the Government on its commitment to deliver the East Nowra Sub Arterial and investments to breathe life into the Shoalhaven riverfront—probably the most underutilised asset in the Shoalhaven. I welcome the commitment by the member for Shellharbour to provide access ramps off and on the motorway at Dapto. I note her commitment to start work in July. I also welcome the member's commitment to return maternity services to Shellharbour Hospital. Having secured more than a billion dollars in capital funding from the previous Government for much-needed health infrastructure, I also look forward to working with the New South Wales Government on delivering not just new facilities but more doctors, nurses and staff to better support our community.

I will use this Parliament to champion local issues like the Nowra bypass. Whilst we have secured planning money from the State and Federal governments, we need more than planning money; we need doing money. As an Independent member of the Parliament, I look forward to working with my friends on the crossbench and with all members of Parliament to secure outcomes for my electorate and, indeed, for the great people of New South Wales. I say this to all members: My door is always open to anyone. We have an opportunity to use this Parliament to chart an exciting new course and to create a new chapter for our State. I sincerely hope that this Parliament is not about left or right, but truly about up or down.

MASCOT TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:57): I convey the concerns and frustrations of thousands of people in my electorate with the increasing traffic chaos in Mascot. The high-density Mascot train station precinct has undergone several major development and infrastructure changes in my time as the member for Heffron—changes that have entirely and irrevocably altered the very character of the area. Lightning-fast growth has brought thousands of extra vehicles to Mascot, an area where the road network efficiency should have been key due to the proximity of both Port Botany and Sydney airport.

Instead, over the past decade I have stood in this Chamber 14 times to warn previous Liberal governments that the very utility of the State roads network in my electorate of Heffron would be compromised by one word—one fiction relied upon by those opposite to sell some notion that they had any clue about how to build a better Sydney. That word was WestConnex. It was a marketing strategy before it was a plan; a thick, meaningless line on a map before it was a project; and a lemon before it was even investigated for feasibility.

If those opposite had taken the time to examine the specifics—like whether or not they could realistically funnel 60,000 eastbound vehicles per day into suburbs like Mascot, Alexandria, Eastlakes, Rosebery and St Peters—they would have thought twice about their legacy. To my residents, their legacy is one of folly, failure and frustration. Because once these toll roads to nowhere started being built, the hapless government of the day realised that cars on those roads would need to be able to exit somewhere, and our local road networks have been the ones to suffer for it.

In fact, the 2015 environmental impact statement [EIS] for the new M5 projected that travel times in a small area of our community would improve by as little as 30 seconds as a result of road widening and other associated works. Meanwhile, that same EIS warned that traffic on suburban streets throughout Heffron would increase by almost 50 per cent. At the time I recall saying in this Chamber, verbatim, that the project would "create an absolute catastrophe that no government will be able to fix". I even took the former Minister for Planning, Dr Rob Stokes, down to St Peters to see firsthand the impact that WestConnex would have on the traffic in my electorate. Congestion on nearby roads—including Botany Road, Bourke Street and Gardeners Road—has predictably intensified.

Sure enough, once the St Peters interchange opened, those predictions began to materialise. Then, like a bandaid over a leaky pipe, a new trend arose throughout Mascot of prohibiting right-hand turns on State roads. That is a direct product of the Liberal Government's failure to listen to what I told them about how the St Peters interchange would negatively impact the area. I would not exactly call that making lemonade from the Liberals' lemons. Then in the lead-up to Christmas last year, while residents were booking their first real holidays since the pandemic, Transport for NSW sent letterboxers to tiptoe through the Mascot streets. They bore no glad tidings, though, just an A4 sheet of paper notifying my constituents that an executive decision had been made that would affect their evening commutes. Like a robber in the night, that grinch of a government sneakily removed yet another right-hand turn from the corner of O'Riordan Street into Gardeners Road—all before residents even had a chance to return from their holidays.

That change has meant that anyone living on Church Avenue, Kent Road, Jackson Drive, Muller Lane or Galloway Street received one last parting gift from the former Government—a slow, circuitous commute home. No-one writing out their New Year's resolutions thought, "You know what? I'd like to spend more time in my car." What is more, there was no attempt to seek community feedback. Since then hundreds of Mascot residents have written to me about how that single change has added up to 30 minutes to their evening commute each and every day, and all that because—you guessed it—Gardeners Road does not have the capacity to accommodate the traffic volumes leaving the M5 and M8 motorways. Congestion on major roads, including Botany Road and Bourke Street, has intensified. It really is another kick in the teeth for a community that was already in gridlock due to the disastrous decision to not listen to it over the WestConnex plan.

OATLEY ELECTORATE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:02): After what was a long and gruelling election campaign, I am proud to be back in this place as the re-elected member for Oatley. I thank the people of Oatley, who have placed

their trust in me to once again represent them in the New South Wales Parliament. Rest assured I will continue to work each and every day with all my strength to fight for the people of my local community, ensuring that our local area gets its fair share. I may be biased, but I truly believe that my electorate is the best electorate in New South Wales. I am so proud to represent my community and my constituents in this place for yet another four years. Growing up locally and now living, working and raising my family in our community, I know that the people of Oatley are hardworking and compassionate.

For the past 12 years I have represented my community with pride, striving each and every day to transform our local area. Under the previous Coalition Government we saw a massive injection of investments and funds into the people and the infrastructure in my community, including over \$740 million to redevelop St George Hospital with a new emergency department, acute services building, birthing suite and much more. We also upgraded our local railway stations, such as at Oatley and Narwee, and started construction on commuter car parks at Beverly Hills and Riverwood. We have backed in our local sporting groups with major upgrades to sporting facilities at Olds Park, Gannons Park, Peakhurst Park and Poulton Park whilst also ensuring that we provided the gear and equipment needed to help grassroots sports thrive. We also made it easier to get around my electorate with the widening of King Georges Road, the two brand-new commuter car parks and much more. The previous Coalition Government transformed my community, and I am proud to have played a part in fighting for the services and infrastructure we deserve.

Whilst the election result may not have been what members on this side of the House hoped for, I am pleased to say that we ran a positive and policy-focused local campaign. I thank all of the unsuccessful candidates who ran in Oatley for their professionalism and compassion during this campaign and wish them the very best for the future. Our democracy is a great thing, and we are so fortunate to live in a State and in a country that cherishes the right to vote for our elected representatives in a real contest of ideas. I am proud of my work as Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Seniors in the former Government. It was a privilege and an honour to serve as Minister, and I wish the new Ministers all the very best. Do not get too comfortable.

The people of New South Wales have spoken, and our State has a new government. I congratulate my colleagues on the other side of this House on their election win and wish them the best for the coming term. The people of New South Wales are counting on each and every one of us in this Chamber to deliver for them. Now in opposition, I am committed to holding the new Labor Government to account to ensure that it delivers the best outcomes for people right across New South Wales, but particularly in my community. I will fight to ensure that this Labor Government continues to invest in St George Hospital. I will continue to fight for upgrades to the Oatley-Como walkway and cycleway, the rebuild of Carss Park Pool, upgrades to Narwee Public School and the Peakhurst West Public School pool upgrades, along with Canterbury Hospital. I am looking forward to spending even more time in my local community, getting out and about to speak and listen to local residents, community groups and organisations. My door is always open and I am always ready and willing to assist my community in the best way I can.

I thank my campaign team—Jayden, Dylan, Liam, Will, Chanel, Bryce, Clayton, Tim and Rochelle—for all of their efforts and work throughout the campaign. I also thank all of the volunteers—and we had hundreds of them in Oatley—who helped out, and the members of the community who have supported me every step of the way. Finally, a big shout-out goes to my amazing wife, Adla, and our two young boys, nine-year-old James and three-year-old Sammy—almost four. I thank them for their unconditional love and support. This year James was a booth captain at Mortdale Primary School—we start them young. I once again thank the people of Oatley for placing their trust in me. I promise I will not let them down.

TRIBUTE TO PHIL PAPWORTH

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:07): I make a brief statement about Phil "Pappy" Papworth, who died just before Easter. Pappy was a long-time career schoolteacher who taught all over the State. He was an ugly little fella who played hooker as a rugby league and rugby union player, so members can imagine how cheeky he was. He had white hair and a long white beard by the time I met him, so he was often referred to as Papa Smurf. Pappy came into Mount View High School in Cessnock and did something really incredible: He gave the kids a confidence that they could do anything and be anything. He came up with a really simple formula that he would speak about at every assembly throughout his time at Mount View High School, and it was simply "MV=E"—"Mount View equals excellence". He would always remind the students about the excellence that would come out of our community in so many different ways, shapes, forms and platforms—whether it was the arts, sports, business, education—sharing stories about a student who had gone to the school and who was now doing A, B, and C or X, Y and Z down the track. Pappy was a real inspiration. He really went out of his way to make sure that he instilled in the young people at Mount View High School that they could do anything and be anything.

On a personal note, I want to recognise Phil Papworth for the chance and the start that he gave me. I was a casual teacher at the time, doing a fair bit of work at the high school, and Pappy did not mind the cut of my jib.

He thought a local young bloke who was at local football or soccer on the weekend, and who was in the local supermarkets bumping into mums and dads, might be a good thing for the school. Pappy gave me a crack. He put me on full-time, made me a part of the teaching staff and gave me an opportunity soon after that to be the temporary head teacher. He embraced me in terms of the executive and leadership roles all around the school.

I think that in life all of us need someone to give us a crack at different times—someone who can take a chance on a person who might be a bit rough around the edges and not quite the norm. Phil Papworth did that. Pappy was a giant of a man, despite his stature. He was much loved in our community. Unfortunately, he spent the last 25 years of his life with Parkinson's disease, which ultimately took his life. Even throughout all of that, he kept on fighting. He kept on being a volunteer at the local bowling club—he managed to keep it afloat financially because of his willingness to take on the different roles. Phil "Pappy" Papworth—Pappy—I love you, mate. Thanks for everything you did for our community and for me personally. Good on you, champ.

RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (19:10): I acknowledge the beautiful speech by the member for Cessnock. I am pleased to provide an update to the House and to my own community, which has a keen interest in this, on the inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. It is an issue that I am sure the Temporary Speaker is also interested in. Those of us from regional areas, and those of us who look after rural areas, have a very keen interest in this. The Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health, which was chaired by the Hon. Greg Donnelly, undertook a rigorous and thorough inquiry into rural and regional health in New South Wales. The committee released its final report in May 2022. I know my community—given where it extends to and from, as well as the region that I am very proud to represent—had a keen interest.

The New South Wales Government is wholly committed to implementing the recommendations of the rural health inquiry, and work is already well underway. I have said from the very beginning that I will be regularly reporting back to this House, for my own community and the communities in rural, regional and remote areas, about these particular issues. As of 31 March 2023, 16 actions have been completed and 52 actions are on track to be completed on time. The New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth Government continue to collaborate on improving health outcomes for people living in regional New South Wales.

I note there were a number of regional members in the gallery and in the Chamber today, including the member for Orange, whom I met with earlier, and a number of others, such as my good mate the member for Newcastle. This is a really important inquiry and an important topic for the Government, but I know it is also an important topic and issue for members across the political divide. I want to be completely honest about that. I have made it very clear to the department that we need to do a lot better, and I will have a laser-like focus on the delivery of rural and regional improvement in terms of health outcomes going forward.

There will be some bumpy roads ahead—I know that, we know that, the community knows that—but we have to get our focus back onto regional and rural health care. We have to make commitments in terms of services and improvements to infrastructure that address the needs of those communities. I do not want people in the towns, villages and communities across regional and rural New South Wales to think they are an afterthought. They are not. Members in this place—from both sides and from the crossbench and right across the political divide—have a significant interest in rural and regional health care. One of the things that I intend on doing is to have regular briefings with all members of this place about exactly what is happening in rural and regional health care and offer an opportunity to raise issues and concerns with officials from NSW Health.

I want to make it very clear that the needs of regional communities are important to me. An enormous amount of time and effort was invested in the inquiry, and I do not want to see it sitting and gathering dust. It is an inquiry that I know we need to work on. There will be some bumps and disagreements along the way, but I say to all members here, particularly those from rural, regional and remote communities that my door is open. I intend to be as accessible as I possibly can be. Whilst you might not always get the right answer, I will make sure that I prosecute what your community is saying to our health officials as strongly and as robustly as possible. That is what I would expect as a member of this place from a person in my position, and that is the standard I set for myself.

I said from the very beginning—and I have said to my own community, which is interested in this inquiry and its outcomes—that I want to use Parliament as an opportunity to come back and report transparently on the progress. We have made a decent start, but I am an incredibly impatient person and I certainly want to see improvements made faster for rural and regional communities. I ask all members, no matter their political party or if they sit on the crossbench, to please continue advocating for rural and regional communities. This inquiry

cannot stop. There has to be an ongoing process for improvement in health care in our towns, villages and communities right across rural and regional New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): We all wish the member for Keira the very best with that work. Straight from one of the great inaugural speeches today, I welcome the member for Clarence to make his first private member's statement.

CLARENCE RIVER PRAWN INDUSTRY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (19:16): Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. I am told you are very comfortable up there in that chair.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): It fits like a glove.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: It looks very comfortable. The Clarence River prawn industry is suffering great stress at the moment through no fault of its own. For the life of me, I cannot understand why any government would let uncooked green prawns into this country. Yet we are, and the effects are now being felt on the prawning industry and the good families that work in the prawning industry in my electorate of Clarence. In fact, the families in the industry are on the ropes. In February this year the New South Wales Government placed a biosecurity order, for very good reason, to restrict the movement of green prawns from the Clarence River. This is having a massive effect on the prawning families and the industries that support them.

The detection of white spot has come at a very critical time for the prawning industry, with the Australian prawn season in full swing. The sector was amidst one of the most profitable times of the year. Estuary school prawning season runs from October to May—it is 30 weeks of the year. The industry is in crisis and needs the full support of the New South Wales State Government and the Albanese Federal Government combined. The fishing industry on the Northern Rivers has been fighting the good fight recently. Droughts and fires have had a major negative effect on the water quality in the river systems, including the Clarence and Richmond rivers, which, in turn, has had a negative effect on the fishing industry. Continual flooding was almost the knockout punch for the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-Operative.

The co-op was not eligible for any grants or assistance throughout these very challenging times, but the industry is resilient and was bouncing back, albeit slowly, under challenging circumstances. Green prawns are one of the co-op's most significant seafood income contributors. Now more than ever, the co-op requires assistance—and urgent assistance—from this Government and the Federal Government. What can be done? As far as the New South Wales Government goes, in my opinion, the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-Operative should be given rent relief by way of a waiver on Crown leases. This has been done in the past and should be done in the future.

The prawning industry in the Clarence is now facing an extension of the biosecurity control order of up to two years. This will magnify the hardship that has already been experienced. In my opinion, the Government simply cannot walk away from this issue. Both the Federal Government and the State Government have a responsibility. I call on the Minister for Agriculture to instruct Fisheries NSW to start the review process so that the rent waiver can proceed through Crown Lands. The co-op is a major employer in the lower Clarence Valley. I hope this Government will hold talks with its Federal Government counterparts. Fishing families already under severe financial hardship now face the prospect of the biosecurity order being extended for another two years. The situation is very serious for these fishing families. I call on the Minns Government to financially support the prawn industry in the Clarence River, and the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-op, because there are lives well and truly at stake. This is a matter of urgency.

MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:20): Mr Temporary Speaker, I also congratulate you on your appointment to the Speaker's panel. Tonight I express my heartfelt thanks to the people of the electorate of Mount Druitt for putting their trust and confidence in me. I am deeply honoured and privileged to have been re-elected as their voice in this Parliament and to continue serving them as the member for Mount Druitt and as a member of the Minns Government. I would like to start by thanking each person who took the time to cast their vote in the election. Regardless of who they voted for, their participation in the democratic process is crucial to the success of our democracy and it is a testament to their dedication and commitment to the future of our great State.

I also express my appreciation to my Liberal opponent, who has conducted himself with dignity and respect. We all share a common goal of making our community a better place, and I believe we can achieve that through respectful dialogue and cooperation. I congratulate the Minns Government on the outstanding election result and extend my congratulations to the Ministers appointed in this Fifty-Eighth Parliament of New South

Wales. I thank the Premier for appointing me as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism and I commit to working tirelessly with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Hon. Yasmin Catley, to serve the people of New South Wales.

The Minns Labor Government is working tirelessly every day to improve the lives of our communities, especially those who are most vulnerable. The Minns Government has wasted no time to deliver on many election commitments to advance the lives of the people of New South Wales. I am proud to be a part of this Government and I commit to support the Minns Government in this important work. As we move forward, there is much work to be done. We face challenges as a government, including economic uncertainty and social inequality, but I am confident that together we can overcome these challenges and build a brighter future for New South Wales.

I am pleased to report that already the Minns Government has removed hidden speed cameras and commenced appointing 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff to permanent positions. We have immediately frozen the sale of all public and social housing and have introduced legislation to protect Sydney Water in the Constitution from privatisation. We have also committed to building our ferries here in New South Wales, creating thousands of local jobs. I assure my constituents that I will continue to work hard to represent their interests and values in this Parliament. I will listen to their concerns, engage with them in meaningful discussions and work tirelessly to advance the common good. Our democracy is strongest when we work together, and I look forward to collaborating with all members of our community to make our society a better, more inclusive and prosperous place. I thank them once again for their trust and confidence. It is an honour to serve them.

ORANGE ELECTORATE FLOODS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:24): Mr Temporary Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair. Congratulations on your appointment. My last speech to the Fifty-Seventh Parliament was about the devastating impacts of flooding in communities across my electorate of Orange. The magnitude of loss and damage and the ongoing effects on lives and livelihoods is such that, by reason of importance, it is the subject of my first speech in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. I bring to the attention of the House the impact of the floods on communities across the Cabonne, Forbes and Parkes local government areas. Last November heavy, unrelenting rains fell upon the townships of Eugowra, Forbes, Molong, Cudal, Parkes and the surrounding district. The floods caused immense damage to homes, property and infrastructure and, tragically, claimed the lives of two people. Both tragically perished in the unprecedented flood event that devastated the township of Eugowra on the morning of 14 November 2022. My heart goes out to their grieving families, friends and community. I extend to them my deepest and most sincere condolences.

The flood events were some of the most severe in recent history, caused by an unprecedented amount of rainfall that occurred over a short period. The impact of the floods was felt acutely by these communities. Homes were destroyed, properties were damaged and many people were forced to evacuate their homes to seek safety and refuge, with reports of residents fleeing to their rooftops and requiring rescuing by helicopters. In the face of such adversity, the people of Eugowra, Forbes, Molong, Cudal and Parkes displayed remarkable courage and resilience. The local emergency services, including the NSW State Emergency Service, were instrumental in responding to the crisis and providing support to those affected communities.

The stories relayed of Eugowra locals' selfless acts of courage in rescuing fellow community members and of their survival are truly remarkable and worthy of the greatest recognition. It is a miracle that more lives were not taken. Certainly more lives would have been lost if the flood event had struck during the hours of darkness. People from near and far, from across Australia, descended to lend a hand in the aftermath of the floods, showing true Aussie spirit. Local community members also stepped up to help their neighbours in any way they could, providing food, shelter and support to those who had lost everything. I routinely visited these communities and witnessed firsthand the incredible strength and courage displayed by the people of Eugowra, Forbes, Molong and Cudal. Despite facing such a devastating crisis, the people remained united and determined to rebuild their homes and communities.

The Perrottet Government responded to the crisis, providing financial assistance to those affected by the floods, but the disparity in financial assistance requires redress. The Government also provided support to local businesses that were impacted by the floods, helping to ensure they could continue to operate, providing income and goods and services to the local community. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that the people of Eugowra, Forbes, Molong and Cudal can recover fully from the impact of the floods. The Minns Government must work to provide additional support and resources to the affected communities, including funding for the repair and reconstruction of infrastructure and for families to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Local councils require sufficient funding for infrastructure upgrades to, as far as possible, protect people's homes and businesses. We must ensure that watercourse gauges are installed to provide a sufficient early warning network for downstream communities so as to offer the earliest opportunity for evacuation and for protection of life, livestock and property.

I pay tribute to the courage and resilience of the people of Eugowra, Forbes, Molong and Cudal in the face of the 2022 floods. Their determination and sense of community spirit is an inspiration to us all, and I am proud to represent those communities in this place. The trauma of these events remains with many of the victims, emergency services personnel and volunteers. Many victims of these floods are further victimised by unscrupulous insurance companies who are denying claims or liability, leaving their clients—families—in limbo. As a result, many flood victims are unable to rebuild their homes, businesses, lives and livelihoods because of delays and decisions by financially motivated and morally bankrupt insurers. The victims of these floods should not need to initiate legal battles when their lives have been devastated and they are suffering ongoing trauma. Perhaps there is scope for placing increased accountability to government upon insurers.

There are many other factors requiring investigation, which inevitably will be addressed in the post-event government inquiry and, of course, the coronial inquest. Together, we can ensure that our communities are better prepared for any future crises, and we can continue to build stronger, more resilient communities across the State.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (19:29): I take this opportunity to thank the people of Charlestown for again electing me to represent them in this Parliament—the oldest Parliament in Australia. It is an absolute honour to be in this place and an opportunity I am very fortunate to be entrusted with. I intend to continue in government what I started in opposition and that is to work to improve the lives of the people who elected me to serve.

The electorate of Charlestown is extremely demographically diverse, and many different issues were raised with me during the campaign. But an issue that was raised with me consistently over the past several years, and has continued to be raised with me over the past several months, is the state of our public transport. Privatisation of buses in the Charlestown electorate has resulted in the deterioration of services for the people who routinely rely on public transport for work, education and social connection. That is why I welcome the Government establishing a Bus Industry Taskforce. This was a key election commitment by NSW Labor because reliable public transport is essential; it is not a luxury. Since the privatisation of Newcastle's bus services by the former Coalition Government, I have received thousands of complaints about cut services, last-minute cancellations and poor communication of changes to the local community. With an increasing population and increasing cost-of-living pressures, it is as important now as it ever has been that people can rely on public transport.

The key word here is "rely". Many Charlestown constituents rely on public transport. It is the way they get to school, to work and to medical appointments. It is their connection to their community. To add to the experiences people have had with buses that I have already reported in this Chamber over the past several years, I wish to share some of the stories that have come to me just in the past three months. Megan contacted me on 5 May. That day, two consecutive bus services on the 13 Glendale to Newcastle route had failed to arrive, without warning or explanation. Because she had no surety that the next scheduled service would arrive, Megan had to use a rideshare service to get to work, leaving her significantly out of pocket. This was not the first time she had to do that. Megan said that at least one of her daily buses had failed to arrive "the last few times" she had attempted to catch a bus to work. That is just not good enough, particularly if we want to get people out of their cars and onto public transport.

If a bus does not come, the people who are left behind are often those without other options for transport—the most vulnerable members of our community. It includes people living with a disability, who do not always have the option to drive. Vickie works at Access Industries, which is a supportive workplace in Newcastle offering employment opportunities for people with a disability. Vickie has been catching buses to Access Industries for a long time, even prior to privatisation. But since privatisation she has had to leave work early to catch her afternoon bus home and she arrives home later than she did prior to privatisation. On 21 March this year at 6.15 a.m., while trying to get to work, a quite distressed Vicki phoned her mother. She had been at the bus stop on time to catch her 5.49 a.m. bus, but it did not arrive. The following day she had to catch a taxi for part of her journey so she would not be late to work because services had run behind schedule. The cost of that taxi was \$30. That is \$30 that Vicki did not have to spare.

Then there are students. Emily is a 13-year-old student at Merewether High School. In her first week of school this year, two of her buses were cancelled without warning on the same day. One was her bus to school and the other was one of her connecting buses home. I have heard of many other students who have had the same experience since the beginning of the school year. I am proud to be part of a government that listens. We have heard all of these concerns and we are acting. The Bus Industry Taskforce will play a key role in dealing with the consequences of bus privatisation and will drive improvements to bus services. It is clear that the existing arrangements and services need to change. The taskforce will play a central role in delivering improvements to

bus services across the State. I commend the Minister for Transport for swift and decisive action so soon after 25 March to create a pathway to solutions for the passengers on our beleaguered bus services. Well done, Minister.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:34): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations on your new position. As my ministerial colleague the member for Charlestown said, the bus services were absolutely decimated under the former Government, making it particularly hard for vulnerable people in our community to access. They are the less abled; the elderly who bought homes outside bus stops, only to find that they would be taken away; and people travelling from all over Lake Macquarie to get to Access Industries in Newcastle. In the end, people gave up their jobs because they just could not get to work without making two or three bus changes, which sometimes took them as long as it takes to drive to Sydney. Together with my colleague I look forward to the review. We really hope to see some positive suggestions and recommendations coming from it.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND MANLY ELECTORATE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:35): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations. I join your colleagues in saying well done and wish you all the best in your new position. The recent Federal budget passed this week has been a disaster for local community groups and organisations in my community. Twenty projects were submitted by the Federal member for Warringah. Most, if not all, of those funding requests were made to support important infrastructure for community groups and services situated within the electorate of Manly. According to the Federal member, the community of Warringah did not secure a cent in funding for local infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth budget. Additionally, it would appear that funding for important groups has been rejected. Those are meaningful and important projects; they are not frivolous in nature. For example, the pre-budget submission from the Federal member included additional shared paths and cycleways, costing \$7.5 million; a Manly-Warringah gymnastic centre, costing \$5 million over two years; expansion of paediatric telehealth services at Royal Far West, costing \$18 million over five years; an Ivanhoe Park grandstand upgrade, costing \$26 million; and the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter rental support, costing \$400,000.

Consultation with local community groups and councils was undertaken to determine their funding requirements and, worryingly, this pre-budget submission seemingly went nowhere. Clearly the legitimate needs of this community have been overlooked and the voice of our community was not heard when it came to Federal budget funding. Those local groups and organisations deserve an explanation as to why, following consultation, their requests via the Federal member were ignored and they have been overlooked in this Federal budget. Organisations, clubs and community members put their faith in the words and actions of their members of Parliament, which includes consulting with them to potentially secure funding. There should be a degree of transparency and feedback as to why advocacy has failed or why funding of particular projects has been deemed to be not important. We deserve to know what feedback has been provided, if any, as to why those projects have been unsuccessful. To that end, I will be writing to the Federal Treasurer, seeking further information about the failure of the Federal Government to provide funding to community groups in the Manly community.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:37): In the previous Parliament I loved to talk about the strength of the manufacturing industry in Newcastle. My side of the Chamber may have changed, but the passion for boasting about Hunter manufacturers has not. There is a lot to boast about. We have a proud manufacturing history. Thousands and thousands of people passed through BHP, producing world-class products. Carrington Slipways was responsible for the first fleet ferries and navy ships, including the HMAS *Tobruk*. Tangaras, OSCARs and Hunter Railcars came out of the UGL workshops at Broadmeadow.

In Newcastle, we are very good at building transport infrastructure, but we can do more than that. The Varley Group is very experienced in defence and emergency vehicles, Lovells produces world-leading coil springs and Brain Industries creates products that help with materials handling. I love visiting those businesses. It is so interesting to learn what they design and how they produce it. Those people are coming up with innovative and practical products, doing great things for the industries that they serve. Delving further into local manufacturing was one of the first things I chose to do in my new role as the Minister for the Hunter. To say I have been very impressed is an understatement. I have seen the electronics side of Ampcontrol, which received much acclaim for springing into action in the early days of the pandemic and producing ventilators, while MGA Thermal is doing very innovative work in thermal energy storage. InQuik Bridging Systems has developed a modular lightweight bridge that is in demand for installation up and down the east coast, and T. W. Woods Construction will manufacture and paint absolutely anything that we ask them to do.

These businesses have a huge role to play in the Hunter's economy. They employ thousands of locals, which has a massive multiplier effect on our small businesses, sporting and cultural organisations, and restaurants.

That is why it is so important for these manufacturers that the work keeps coming. The Minns Labor Government has the policies to support just that: increasing tender weightings to 30 per cent for local content; jobs creation and ethical supply chains; setting a 50 per cent minimum local content target for transport rolling stock; and giving local manufacturing the boost it needs by building the Tangara replacement fleet right here in New South Wales.

A strong manufacturing sector is great not only for the economy; it is great for our kids too. It is a pathway for the kids who want to work with their hands, who do not want the office career or to take the university path. It is a sector where more experienced workers can pivot to whatever the industry need is at the time. As long as the work is there, it is a sector that can support you for as long as you need it to. When you do not back local manufacturing, you hurt our State. We know that the former Government's obsession with offshoring has cost us dearly. It cost us over 4,000 direct and indirect jobs. It cost us \$484 million in tax revenue. It cost commuters in delays to transport improvements, and it cost the then Government in budget blowouts and repairs to dodgy products.

We know that we can produce quality in New South Wales, contrary to former Premier Berejiklian's statements. I know that we can produce in the Hunter. The Freshwater-class ferries, built by Carrington Slipways, are nearing 40 years old. The former Government moved to replace them with overseas-built junk. Steering faults, an inability to handle high seas, smashed glass windows when crossing to Manly—that is what you get when you do not build local, when you do not use local expertise. Thankfully we now have a transport Minister who sees the value in local manufacturing and is now working to bring the Freshwaters back to service. With a government that backs local, that wants to see things built right here in New South Wales again and is willing to invest to see it happen, I am so excited to see the great things that our manufacturers will be able to produce.

DUBBO ELECTORATE ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:42): Mr Temporary Speaker, it is lovely to see you in the chair. Last week I had the honour of attending the NSW Rural Fire Service's St. Florian's Day award ceremony at the RFS Training Academy in Dubbo. The St. Florian's Day awards ceremony, held annually on 4 May, is a significant occasion that coincides with the feast of St. Florian, the patron saint of firefighters, as well as International Firefighters' Day. The ceremony is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary dedication and selflessness displayed by our RFS members and brigades in protecting all of our communities.

This year we had the pleasure of recognising nearly 80 volunteers, staff members and teams for their acts of bravery and exceptional service across a wide and varied array of emergencies. From battling devastating bushfires to mitigating the destructive impact of floods and even navigating the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, these remarkable individuals have shown unwavering commitment and resilience in the face of adversity. Among the recipients of these prestigious awards, I am delighted to highlight the outstanding achievements of two brigades in the Dubbo electorate. The Mount Arthur Rural Fire Brigade received the Commissioner's Unit Citation of Service, while the Cudgegong District Brigade was honoured with the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation (Unit). These accolades serve as a testament to their unwavering commitment to our community's safety and wellbeing.

The Mount Arthur Rural Fire Brigade is recognised for its commitment to rescuing a member of the community from a hazardous situation. On 20 January 2022 Senior Deputy Captain Mandy Whale and Firefighter Brendan Hill responded to a call at a property in Montefiores. NSW Ambulance and New South Wales police were on the scene, with an elderly resident and her dog stuck in an in-ground water tank with an open roof. After speaking with the woman, quickly appraising the situation, and without a rescue unit on the scene, Mandy decided to take action and assist in the best way she could.

The woman was adamant she would not leave the water tank until the dog was rescued. Entering the freezing cold water to stabilise the woman, Mandy lifted the dog into a hammock so that it could be lifted to safety. The two RFS members were then able to assist and support the woman to the surface using a ladder. At that point the woman in question, who was not very mobile after being in the cold water for some time, was transferred to hospital, suffering hypothermia and shock. The actions of Mandy Whale and Brendan Hill were beyond what is expected of RFS volunteers and ensured a positive outcome in challenging circumstances. Well done.

The Gulgong DC, Mudgee Headquarters, and Mullamuddy fire brigades, together with Lawson Rural Fire Brigade, Operational Command Vehicle [OCV] and Group 3, are recognised for their professional and compassionate response in a confronting operation during severe flooding in the Gulgong area in October 2022. On Sunday 23 October the Gulgong DC Brigade and Cudgegong Group 3 responded to reports of a vehicle in floodwaters along Spring Creek Road, approximately six kilometres north-east of Gulgong. A single vehicle had been swept into the flooded Cooyal Creek, following more than 70 millimetres of rain in the preceding 24 hours, with one of the four occupants missing. A multi-agency search operation, including a swift water rescue team

from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and a Toll air ambulance, was launched in the area before being suspended in the early hours of the morning.

Under the command of NSW Police Rescue, the search resumed later that morning, with Mudgee Headquarters and Mullamuddy brigades, Lawson Rural Fire Brigade and the OCV, together with Group 3 participating. Working diligently, with careful attention to detail, an RFS search party located the missing person shortly before 10.00 a.m. Despite the confronting nature of the incident, the volunteer firefighters from attending brigades remained on scene to assist New South Wales police with the subsequent operation to recover the deceased. Following this response, the group continued to support the NSW SES throughout the flood emergency in the region, particularly in undertaking reconnaissance. At all times, the Cudgegong RFS members displayed a high level of professionalism and discretion under trying conditions, performing well beyond expectation in discharging their duties.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of the esteemed individuals who have been honoured with awards for their remarkable contributions and unwavering dedication. On behalf of the Dubbo electorate, as well as the whole of New South Wales and members in this place, I express my deepest gratitude for their ongoing tireless efforts and the invaluable impact they have made in safeguarding lives and communities.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I have been informed that my mum has tuned in to the live webcast. It is her birthday today. Happy birthday, Mum. I love you lots and I am sorry I cannot be with you.

BALLINA ELECTORATE AGED-CARE SERVICES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:48): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations to you on your prestigious position, which your mother would know to be a very highly coveted and honoured role. As this is my first speech since the election, I first thank my community for its faith in me and for re-electing me to represent it in this place. It is an honour and a privilege that I never take for granted. I swore an oath yesterday to the people of the Ballina electorate, but it is every day that I renew that commitment while I am in the role. To that end, I draw the attention of the House to the dire state of aged care in New South Wales and to a serious situation affecting older residents in my community as I speak. As The Greens NSW spokesperson for older people and in my role as a local member, with over 50 per cent of my constituency aged over 55 years, the true impact of the lack of support for aged care is a legacy that we hope to see radically shift under progressive governments.

We welcome the recent announcement at Federal level of an increase in the minimum wage for aged-care workers and note that this is incredibly overdue. When you think of the responsibility and gravitas of the job of caring for our loved ones in aged care, and the fact that the wage is less than you would get as a coffee barista, it beggars belief. We know that most workers in aged-care settings do their best to ensure that our elderly are cared for in the most respectful and dignified way possible. But the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety tabled in March this year in the Federal Parliament has revealed a failing system and the suffering of thousands and thousands of vulnerable Australians.

A few months ago, I was contacted by desperate residents and family members about an imminent closure of an aged-care community in my electorate—Feros Village Byron Bay. I know that some of the residents and their families are watching right now. Feros was the brainchild of George Feros, a well-known Byron personality in the '80s. He and other community members walked the streets of Byron collecting money in a tin to establish what was until recently a wonderful model of a low-care hostel for older people in the community. The community, in partnership with State and Federal governments and Byron Shire Council, raised the money to build the facilities on Crown land in Marvel Street, Byron Bay in 1990. Until February this year, over 40 residents lived there happily and believed it would be their home for the rest of their lives.

Horrendously and without sufficient warning, the residents were informed in February by management that they were being evicted from the place they call home. Despite being assured that alternative places would be found for residents, the impact of that business decision by a private organisation has had very damaging and far-reaching impacts on the residents and their families. Since the announcement, only 11 residents are left, and they are adamant that they do not want to leave their homes. I am working with the residents, their families and advocates to try to stop the eviction of these vulnerable people from their homes that are located on community land. I acknowledge that both the Minister for Lands and Property and the Minister for Seniors have been very supportive this week, and I look forward to their engagement.

With thanks to solicitor Mark Swivel, my questions for Feros management and board today are these: Why do they keep saying that residents have not been pressured and harassed when the residents say they have been? Why are they behaving like they own the land when it is Crown land? Why did they not get Crown land approval before announcing the closure? Did they know that the residents have no obligation to leave the village under

their contracts? Why are they behaving like a private company when their business model is entirely dependent on government funding? The bottom line is that aged care needs to be underwritten by governments so that this kind of thing simply cannot happen. Aged care does not lend itself to profit and business. It is an essential service because, ultimately, it is needed by literally all of us in our twilight years if we are lucky to live long lives.

I welcome the royal commissioners' recommendations. There are too many to go into, but I quote royal commissioners Tony Pagone, KC, and Lynelle Briggs, AO, who say that the fundamental systemic flaws with the way the Australian aged-care system is designed and governed is the problem. They also say, "People receiving aged care deserve better. The Australian community is entitled to expect better." I cannot agree more, and my heart and thoughts tonight are with all the current and recent Feros Village residents. We are not giving up.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE GIRL GUIDES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:53): Mr Temporary Speaker, it is always nice to share the Chamber with you as well as an electorate border. I offer my hearty congratulations on your elevation to this esteemed role. And happy birthday to Mrs Barr. Empowering women and girls has been a passion for me my entire life. As one of three daughters, I grew up not really understanding why women and girls should be treated any differently from men and boys. I have to admit that I always wanted to be a girl guide or a brownie, but that was sadly not something I was able to do. However, I have a lot of affinity with the essence of guiding, which is about passing practical and cultural knowledge and wisdom from women to girls. Building our communities and teaching girls to be the leaders of tomorrow is something that people from all cultures aspire to do for their next generations.

It has been a huge week for guiding in Maitland. I attended the East Maitland Guides Junior BP and BP award presentation last Thursday, and then on Sunday we celebrated the 100th anniversary of Maitland Guides, which is an incredible achievement. Guides are an integral part of our community. We saw them at Anzac Day services just a couple of weeks ago, representing the young girls in our community and paying respects to those who served our nation in our armed forces. There is a nice synchronicity to the fact that 100 years ago this year Mrs Holmes, the wife of Canon Holmes from St Mary's Anglican Church in Maitland, asked the mayoress, Mrs Fry, whether she would arrange a meeting to introduce the women and girls of Maitland to Girl Guides. Because that is the same Mrs Fry who laid the foundation stone of our cenotaph at Maitland Park, which was also first used on Anzac Day 100 years ago, in 1923. It was a really nice completion.

Often when we read history it occurs to me that we do not get to read a lot of herstories. So I thank district historian Sue Folpp for her diligent work in providing some information about the guides to both the Mayor of Maitland, Councillor Philip Penfold, and me last week, and for her work in documenting so diligently the history of that organisation in our local community. I am pleased that there were so many women in that room who could tell their stories about guiding. I know my idea of guiding when I was younger was that I was going to learn how to tie knots. To hear a woman say that she learnt to tie knots, and that when she joined the navy she taught the other sailors how to tie knots, was an incredible spin on what we normally assume. Then another woman talked about learning meeting procedure at guides and going into boardrooms and company meetings and being able to put it into practice. I think of my journey in politics, public life and representing my business. Probably 10 or 20 years ago, I actually had to take a meeting course because it was not something I had learned as part of my education.

We see so many guides at our community events that we forget they are there every single week. It is not just the special days like Australia Day, Steamfest, Taste, New Year's Eve, Cancer Council fundraising and all the other charity work they do. In our community of Maitland, the Maitland Girl Guides have built a beautiful oasis in our city with Slow Food Hunter Valley. That is a really special place in our community. I also want people to remember that 100 years ago, when Girl Guides was established, it was a time when many young women did not go to high school. In fact, my own grandmother stopped school when she was about eight or nine because she was needed on the farm. Certainly many women did not have the education or development opportunities that are afforded to women these days.

I give special thanks to all those women who had the foresight back in the 1920s to encourage guiding to develop. It was so successful that, by the end of 1923, there were 150 guides and brownies in Maitland. Such was the thirst for knowledge in Maitland. They had five troops just in Maitland itself. A lot of the early guiders or leaders were actually teachers, doing what teachers do every day, even now—that is, enhancing the learning and development of young people above and beyond their paid work. I thank the current leaders, who are all volunteers and would welcome other women to join them in leading Maitland's future leaders, the guides.

I particularly thank Maitland Guides District Manager, Leader of Junior Guides for six- to 10-year-olds and Leader of Senior Guides, Jill Norburn, and Gillian Weatherall who helps out with Amelia Sutcliffe and Niamh McFadden. I encourage all the mother helpers to continue. I will end with a reminder of the purpose of

girl guiding in Australia. Through girl-led programs championing fun, friendship and adventure, girl guiding empowers girls and young women to find their voice, discover their potential, explore possibilities and make a genuine difference in their world. What an amazing opportunity. We want more of it.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE WOMEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:58): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations on your appointment and happy birthday to Margaret Barr, who is watching her son in the chair this evening. Continuing with all things women, I take this opportunity to acknowledge some incredible women in my electorate whom I recently had the privilege of getting to know better through the NSW Women of the Year Awards. Each year when I call for nominations I am amazed at the phenomenal community feedback that I receive. This year, 12 amazing women were nominated. Jan Sillato from MacMasters Beach was chosen as the Terrigal electorate's 2023 Woman of the Year at an afternoon tea that I held for her along with other local nominees in February. Jan was then recognised on the Local Women of the Year Honour Roll at the award winners' ceremony, which was held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney on 9 March 2023. After receiving not one but three separate nominations for this award recognising varied community contributions, it was evident that Jan was this year's Terrigal Woman of the Year. Jan was nominated by Renee Chaseling, Steve Sillato and Kylie Dickinson.

Jan has provided over 30 years of community service to our region and is well known for her encouraging and positive can-do attitude. Starting with the NSW Rural Fire Service MacMasters Beach brigade in 1994, Jan has also been a volunteer on the Kincumber High School P&C and as the student administration officer. Just recently, Jan was awarded life membership at MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club for her amazing contribution over the past 20-plus years. Jan always leads by example and continues to provide inspirational encouragement and support for students, nippers and seniors during training and competitions through the surf club. Widely admired for her community contribution, Jan is very deserving of this award.

I also acknowledge the following wonderful nominees: Jenny McCulla, president of the Davistown Progress Association, has been a strong advocate for improving local infrastructure and promoting and organising community activities and events. Jenny was nominated by Doug Ogle. Monique Roy, as an executive member of the 3 Villages Community Group, has demonstrated strong community leadership and been instrumental in helping get local projects off the ground. Monique was nominated by Taia Sansom. Carolen Barripp has been a champion for the Empire Bay Progress Association and is passionate about upgrading local roads, improving the environment and the wellbeing of the Empire Bay community. I was delighted to recently present Carolen with a New South Wales Government Community Service Award. Carolen was nominated by Warwick Homer. Louise Vangestel, president of the Terrigal Outrigger Canoe Club, has been instrumental in establishing an inclusive outrigger club, including helping Aboriginal youth in detention access a sporting option which helps them feel connected to their culture and the ocean. Louise was nominated by Suzanne Warby, Kerry Miller, Kim Collins and Maree Battye.

Jennifer Keys is a hardworking local businesswoman who produces delicious jams and chutneys. In addition, Jennifer also provides mentoring and support to parents of children newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Jennifer was nominated by Andrew Keys—and Jen's jams are some of the best on the coast. Jessica Choi is a local business owner and the Central Coast 2022 Businessperson of the Year. Despite some tough personal circumstances, Jessica has been a tower of strength to her family and staff, in addition to supporting and donating her time to local community and sporting groups. Jessica was nominated by Ashlee Marshall. Gail Eckford has been the coordinator of the Kincumber Heart Foundation walking group since her retirement. The walking group is encouraging and inclusive, and Gail goes out of her way to promote members' health and wellbeing through social connection. Gail was nominated by Maggie Vincent. Tammy Hewitt has become a local champion for helping break down stigma around mental health issues through her Kick Fear in the Butt campaign. Her passion and programs promote self-care and community spirit. Tammy was nominated by Rebecca Hyde.

In the past eight years Global Kids, a sewing group established by Denise McKnight, has made 10,000 garments and distributed them to 33 locations worldwide for children in need in developing countries. Denise works tirelessly in this endeavour and the sewing group provides great social connection. Denise was nominated by Patricia Manning. Rachel Griffiths is an inspiring young woman who, from a young age, has demonstrated a strong desire to help fight for disadvantaged people when she identifies a need. Rachel was nominated by Zofia Majak. Jo-Anne Fraser has been a long-time member of the Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club and held various volunteer roles for both the surf club and the Central Coast Basketball Rebels team, demonstrating a high community spirit. Jo-Anne was nominated by Tom Tseng.

This year's winner, Jan Sillato, joins a fantastic group of previous winners, including Yvonne Crestani, Stephanie Foster, Tanya Deger, Nada Potter, Yvette Wilson, Claire Braund, Rachel Hilditch and Professor Julie Redfern, who was awarded the NSW Woman of Excellence Award in 2022. We thank all of these incredible women for their contribution to the wider community. Many are well known, but a lot of them are quiet achievers

who tirelessly get on with making a difference. I applaud and thank every single one of them for their achievements and encourage them to continue inspiring people across the Central Coast.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I thank the Opposition Whip and member for Terrigal. What a difficult job he must have had choosing from that range of incredible women.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:04): The member for Port Macquarie, my dear friend and chair of Parliamentary Friends of CWA, will be very excited to know that I attended the 101st annual general meeting of the Country Women's Association in the winter wonderland of Bathurst on Monday morning. It was very cold. It was snowing on the way down and on the way back. But it was a really nice touch because I had spent the weekend at Tocal, in my electorate, and I got my husband to bake some scones for the CWA.

Mrs Leslie Williams: I saw that on Facebook.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes. I do not do that myself—I have done it once. It was lovely to go to the annual general meeting. It is important to remember that the motto is "courage, kindness and strength". A beautiful warming, as she called it, was given by Auntie Gloria Rogers because she said we did not have traditional dancers. She gave a beautiful welcome to all the delegates, who included Andrew Gee, the Independent member for Calare, and the CEO and founder of Sober in the Country, Shanna Whan, who was also the 2022 Australian of the Year Local Hero. I was at the Rural Women Awards back in, I think, 2016 when she was one of the finalists. She had such an inspiring and thought-provoking message about the safety of people in regional areas and giving mates space to say no to alcohol. She is not a prohibitionist or anti-alcohol, she just said that sometimes people have a problem and we need to give them space, not interrogate them at the pub. If somebody wants a drink of water or soda water, or whatever, give them that option; do not take it away. It really was an interesting speech.

Shanna also talked about her desire to really engage with the Government, and earlier today I mentioned this to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health, Ryan Park. He said he has heard of Shanna and we are going to set up a meeting with her. She had also heard back from the member for Barwon, but she talked about her frustration in previous years of trying to engage with the former Government on this important issue. She talked about the CEO of the CWA, Danica Leys, and the enormous support that she has given to Sober in the Country. It was also great to see Xavier Martin, the president of NSW Farmers, who always supports women in the bush.

They also had some amazing entertainment. The Allegri Singers and the local Scots All Saints College Pipes and Drums were a beautiful part of the program. I wish I could have stayed for the whole thing. I saw my local CWA branch members, including Barbara Heckman. It was great to see that they had made the trip. I did not see the member for Bathurst, but I understand he was a bit busy on Monday morning, so that is fair enough. It was lovely to see so many women and to be the only member of this Parliament who was able to be there. Hopefully other members will attend—it is always hard in an election year when we do not know the sitting program—such as the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Lismore, who I should also note is the Labor head of the Parliamentary Friends of CWA.

I pay special tribute to President Joy Beames for her very kind welcome to all of the women across our great State. My favourite thing ever is when you go to a CWA conference and you see all the standards that they display around the room representing their country. It is just a beautiful thing to see. It was a great event and fantastic to be there.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:08): This evening I address the Fifty-Eighth Parliament for the first time following the 25 March State election. I take this opportunity to congratulate all of the candidates who contested the seat of Port Macquarie and put themselves forward to represent our community. Not surprisingly, there was somewhat of a focus on the seat of Port Macquarie with The Nationals deciding to put forward a candidate to run against a sitting Coalition member. Every member in this House is aware of the motivation to stand a candidate against me, but that is not to say that the justification is understood, particularly in relation to the expenditure of funds that really could have been better spent in electorates that were under threat such as Monaro. As the saying goes, the people always get it right. The voters of the Port Macquarie electorate made their views very clear on this matter, with 60.7 per cent of the vote against The Nationals 39.23 per cent. I am now honoured to stand in this place today as their representative for a fourth term and now the longest serving member for Port Macquarie.

Of course, such a resounding result did not happen by chance and I certainly did not achieve it alone, so I take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of volunteers and supporters who walked alongside me during the campaign. I particularly thank the local Liberal branch members; friends and family who were out in force during early polling at the four booths at Laurieton and Port Macquarie; and of course those who, despite the wet weather, did not miss their rostered times on polling day. Two people deserve a special mention. They used their annual leave to ensure that the campaign went smoothly and to plan during the last two weeks. I am incredibly grateful to Terry and Brendan for their ongoing support. Their commitment to me personally and to the communities across our electorate is unquestionable. My heartfelt thanks go to them both.

Over the past 12 years, my electorate has received well over \$1 billion in funding for hundreds of projects: most significantly, ongoing upgrades to the Port Macquarie Base Hospital, including the new mental health unit and the new helipad currently under construction, as well as the new Camden Haven HealthOne facility; the completed duplication of the Pacific Highway through the electorate and the upgrade to the Houston Mitchell Drive intersection; more social housing; and millions of dollars for sports facility upgrades and active transport projects—to name just a few. Funding was also confirmed for a number of key projects that we are now watching materialise, including the construction of the Oxley Vale Lifelong Learning Centre, accommodating a new men's shed and an arts and crafts centre; a new ambulance station for Lake Cathie; the dementia village community centre; the redevelopment of both campuses of the Hastings Secondary College; and \$60 million supporting Port Macquarie Hastings Council with the duplication of Ocean Drive.

Without doubt, one of the most unique and popular projects is the new tourism precinct being developed known as Guulabaa, which means "place of koala" in local Gathang language. Once completed, this new place—with the land provided by the Forestry Corporation of NSW—will accommodate the first ever wild koala conservation breeding facility as well as housing tourism attractions such as WildNets, the Big Koala and the much-anticipated deck hub, which will be run by the Bunyah Local Aboriginal Land Council. The hub includes the Bunyah Cafe, an art gallery, and cultural tours and stage performances in the outdoor amphitheatre. It is fantastic to see these ambitious plans advocated for strongly by the community and by various government agencies come to fruition. But there is more work to do. That is why I am committed to working with my Labor colleagues in the Chamber as the government of the day to advocate for many more projects that I know are on the community's priority list.

To that end, my office has arranged for a series of meetings with new Ministers in the coming weeks, including with the Minister for Transport to discuss the planned upgrades to the southern breakwall in Port Macquarie; and with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism to discuss extra police officers to meet the needs of our growing population as well as the long-awaited announcement of the location of our new police station for Port Macquarie. I am also looking forward to meeting with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads—I acknowledge her presence in the Chamber this evening—to discuss easing traffic congestion on our busy Oxley Highway as well as funding for the planning and design of the grade-separated overpass at the Houston Mitchell Drive and Pacific Highway intersection. I have extended my congratulations to all the new Ministers and I have invited each and every one of them to visit the Port Macquarie electorate as we work together to achieve the best outcomes for every community and every person who lives across our beautiful region.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 20:13 until
Thursday 11 May 2023 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

According to Standing Order 108A, the following written community recognition statements were submitted.

LEANNE CLARKE, OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Leanne Clarke of Caringbah South, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day 2023 Honours List "for service to community health". Since 2001, Leanne has been the clinic director of Southside Health and Wellbeing, providing psychological support for our local community. Leanne is also a public officer on the Foundation Board and an honorary life member of the Australian Clinical Psychological Association. Leanne has served as the inaugural chair of the Allied and Community Health Council, South Eastern Sydney Medicare Local, and as a director on the Central and Eastern Sydney Allied Health Network board. Leanne is also a dedicated advocate for cancer awareness and research, volunteering as an advisor for overseas therapy options at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Clinic. Leanne's passion for mental health and her commitment to providing accessible healthcare is admirable. Leanne is an outstanding leader in our community, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved national honour.

CRONULLA GROPER'S

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the Cronulla Gropers for raising over \$22,000 for the Starlight Children's Foundation in the Super Swim Challenge. The Cronulla Gropers are a local swimming group that rallies men of the Sutherland Shire to look after their mental and physical health. Every morning, no matter the weather, around 20 to 30 men gather at Cronulla Beach to enjoy a swim, coffee, and catchup. Founded by Jason Dorahy and Lee Murphy, the Gropers offer local men a chance to start the day with a positive mindset. The funds raised by the Gropers will help the Starlight Children's Foundation continue to support sick children and young people in the healthcare system. I commend the Gropers for taking the plunge and rallying our community to raise much needed funds for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

BLAKE JOHNSTON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—Blake Johnston of Cronulla has captured the imagination of the Shire community and beyond. Blake broke the world record for the world's longest surf session, spending 40 hours in the water at North Cronulla Beach. While Blake officially broke the world record of 30 hours 11 minutes at 7am on 17 March, he continued to surf until 5pm. Blake, a Cronulla local, former professional surfer, and owner of the Cronulla Surfing Academy, surfed a total of 707 waves over two days. He has raised over \$420,000 (and counting) for youth mental health initiatives and suicide prevention at the Chumpy Pullin Foundation. With an initial goal of \$250,000, Blake now has a new target of \$700,000. Blake began the challenge as a tribute to his own father, Wayne, who lost a battle with mental health ten years ago. The funds raised from Blake's record will help the Chumpy Pullin Foundation continue its work in mental health awareness and support for young people. Blake's phenomenal feat is a reminder of how we can overcome difficult challenges when we have determination and support. I congratulate Blake on his extraordinary success.

ABBY RAYMOND

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—A talented young local equestrian has become one of only four Riders to represent Pony Club Australia at the 2023 World Clubs' Tournament in France. The three-day event in July, held in Lamotte-Beuvron, is an international competition involving 5000 horses, riding schools and riders from all over the world. It is scheduled during the French National Equestrian Championships. Abby Raymond has been a committed member of North Dorrigo Pony Club all her young life and has won scores of major trophies around NSW. Riding is in Abby's family from great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, sisters and cousins, all playing a major role within the community and being members of Dorrigo Pony Club throughout the decades. Abby's accomplishments prove the enormous impact that the North Dorrigo Pony Club has had on the lives of young equestrians from the Dorrigo and surrounding areas. Abby's participation in the championships will also include a visit to the historical French National stud farm at the Haras du Pin and the Haras de Brullemail, which is one of Europe's top show jumping farms. And an invitation to the elite French Cadre Noir Riding Academy. Congratulations to Abby and her commitment and passion for riding.

THANK YOU, COUNCILLOR MICHAEL GENCHER

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I will shortly resign as a councillor representing the good people of Pittwater Ward on Northern Beaches Council. It is fitting to pay tribute in this place to my fellow Pittwater Ward Councillor Michael Gencher, whilst I may still call him a council colleague. Since being elected to represent Pittwater Ward, in December 2021, which spans from Mona Vale in the South to Palm Beach in the North to Duffys Forest in the West, it has been a pleasure to serve alongside Councillor Gencher. Michael, you are a delight to work with. The magnanimity and grace with which you deal with all people and issues, the calm approach, and balanced views you bring to every discussion, are the hallmarks of a wonderful representative, and a unifying leader. I wish you all the best with your future endeavours. I will miss your company next to me in the Council chamber. However, I'm certain I will see just as much of you going forward - even though you will shortly not be a Council colleague, you will remain a good friend.

THANK YOU, COUNCILLOR MIRANDA KORZY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I will shortly resign as a councillor representing the good people of Pittwater Ward on Northern Beaches Council. It is only fitting to pay tribute in this place to my fellow Pittwater Ward Councillor Miranda Korzy, whilst I may still call her a council colleague. Since being elected to represent Pittwater Ward, in December 2021, which spans from Mona Vale in the South to Palm Beach in the North to Duffys Forest in the West, it has been a pleasure to serve alongside Councillor Korzy. Councillor Korzy's passion and relentless pursuit of protecting and enhancing our natural environment is inspiring. Miranda is a conviction councillor and councils across the country would be lucky to have a Miranda Korzy in their ranks. Miranda, our agreements have spanned nearly 99% of all issues and your passion and dedication to Pittwater is undoubted. It has been an honour and privilege to serve alongside you over the past 18 months on Council. Council and Pittwater

Ward is better for your service. I trust and pray that you will continue your good work and wish you all the very best on Council and beyond.

CONGRATULATIONS, PBWBA

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Congratulations to the Palm Beach Whale Beach Association (PBWBA) on another wonderful year, marked by your AGM on 9 May 2023. The PBWBA is Pittwater's oldest resident association with its antecedents forming in 1918. Pittwater is renowned for its active and considered resident associations. Over the past year, PBWBA has proactively advocated for its community regarding developments, conservation zones, the future of Barrenjoey Headland and its heritage buildings, and more. I thank the PBWBA and congratulate the elected executive: President, Dr Richard West – your dedicated leadership has held the PBWBA in good stead; Vice President, Frank Bush – your ability to distil complex issues into easy-to-understand submissions makes the PBWBA a formidable force; Vice President, Virginia Christensen – your long-term knowledge of the region and commitment to helping small businesses rounds out the skill set of the Executive well; Treasurer, Douglas Maher – often a thankless task, your commitment makes sure all runs well; and Secretary – Robert MacKinnon – your insightful works on the history of the region are a drawcard for many. Thank you also to the incoming and outgoing committee - too numerous to name in the brief time I have. Here's to a great 2023/24!

ALEXBOBBI SMITH

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Congratulations and good luck to AlexBobbi Smith who, at just 15 years of age, is representing the Philippines in cricket at the 2023 South East Asian games. Cricket is in the family, her dad and brother both play and older sister, Lauren currently plays for the Sydney Thunder and New South Wales, however, it is Alex that is representing her family and community on the international stage. Playing her junior cricket with Narara-Wyoming, Alex continues to shine having gained selection and then represented the Central Coast in NSW's Premier under 15s competition, the Margaret Peden Shield, before joining the combined Greater Hunter Coast team for the NSW Premier under 18s Brewer Shield. Now, she is in Cambodia, having made her international debut and is already guaranteed a silver medal in one of the three formats she is competing in. All the best for the rest of the tournament and well done on such a fabulous achievement.

HOLLY PARKER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—A huge congratulations to Holly Parker who represented Australia in two international archery events during the recent school holidays. Having already represented NSW as part of the state team, Holly has won countless medals, including coming first at the outdoor target and indoor target national championships. She has also been named the best all round under 16 Compound Bow Archer by the Archery Society of NSW. Across April, Holly competed in the youth-only Trans-Tasman tournament against New Zealand before moving on to the World Archery Oceania Championships. At the Championships, Holly competed 2 age groups above her own against other Oceania nations including New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea. Against tough opposition and chilly, wet conditions, Holly brought back three silver medals and three bronze medals. Holly's focus is now on the 2025 Youth World Archery Championships in Winnipeg, Canada. I wish Holly all the best with her preparation and congratulations on your outstanding achievements so far!

THE GLEN FOR WOMEN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—It is with great pleasure that I wish a happy one-year anniversary to the Glen for Women! Established only last year, the Glen is home to NSW's first First Nations community-controlled women's drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation centre. The Glen accepts clients from all over Australia and provides a 12-week program driven by women. Each day is filled with workshops, counselling, and meetings, as well as activities that integrate Indigenous culture including painting, dancing and yarnning circles. Since opening their doors one year ago, the Glen has provided a culturally safe space for First Nations Women to overcome their trauma and addictions whilst reconnecting with their culture. The Glen provides guidance, allowing women to find their identity and empowering them to make positive change with their lives, giving women a sense of purpose. The Glen for Women is a truly wonderful program and facility. To Kylie Cassidy, Chief Executive Officer, and all the amazing women at the Glen you have my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for all the wonderful work you have done and continue to do.

ART AND SOUL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise to recognise the Art & Soul – Wingham Art & Music Group who recently celebrated their 5th birthday. This fantastic group supports serving or retired military and emergency services personnel who suffer from work related issues such as stress, depression or PTSD, or just

benefit from creating. The dedication of these volunteers is truly heart warming and I thank and congratulate them for their contribution to the community.

BLACK HEAD SLSC

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise to recognise Black Head Surf Life Saving Club on their achievements at the recent NSW Surf Life Saving Championship held at Queenscliff. Led by Tilly Kippax as the reigning state under 9's board champion, the surf club had a team of 14 kids that competed at this year's age championships. Black Head placed 27th overall out of 70 clubs and the 5th best of all country clubs. Congratulations Black Head SLSF and all local SLS Clubs with crews that participated. It is great to see our local clubs excelling at these huge state events.

MICHELLE BAMFORD

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise to recognise Michelle Bamford. Michelle was recently awarded a scholarship under the Rural NSW Scholarship Program. Michelle is a valued member of our community who has made significant contributions to various initiatives and causes. Her passion for community development and advocacy is evident in the various roles she has undertaken throughout the community. Michelle is a remarkable individual with a heart for service and a drive to make a positive impact on the world around her. I congratulate Michelle on her recent achievements and thank her for dedication to the community at large through her volunteer work with local charities, schools, sporting and support groups.

BALLINA SHIRE CONCERT BAND

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the Ballina Shire Concert Band on the joyful occasion of their 140th Anniversary. The Ballina Shire Concert Band has provided a focal point of celebration for the district's residents to come together and enjoy their shared passion for music since 1883, making it possibly the oldest and longest-serving community band in Australia. The Band has made a rich contribution to the Arts over the decades with its enthusiastic and accomplished performances of a wide variety of musical forms, from hymns and marches to movie themes, contemporary songs and popular tunes. The Band also been an active supporter of the community when it comes to local events, contributing to annual occasions such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. Under the leadership of musical director Laurie Green, the Band is constantly expanding its repertoire and incorporating new arrangements, which suggests it has a long and thriving future ahead of it, and I wish them another 140 years of joyful music making.

ARDLETHAN COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I extend a huge congratulations to the organisers, volunteers and performers at this year's Ardlethan Country Music Festival which was held on April 14th, 15th and 16th. The Ardlethan Country Music Festival is a family friendly weekend of music across genres and generations. The guest in attendance were entertained by the many performances and events on offer over the course of the weekend. From a talent quest on Friday night to guest artists on Saturday with finals and an open mic night on Sunday. There was something for everyone at this year's festival. Ross Webb, Rodney Vincent, The Tin Shed Rattlers, Tom Maxwell, Drew Blundell, Owen Blundell and Rusted Track were just some of the many entertainers the crowd had the pleasure of listening to over the weekend. With 10 years under their belt next year. The committee are preparing well, and dates have already been saved. I look forward to hearing more about next year's event and have already put the dates in my diary.

FEE JENNINGS, WATTAMONDARA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to highlight Fiona 'Fee' Jennings of Wattamondara who is one of our 2023 NSW Rural Women in Leadership scholars. It is my pleasure to have had a bit to do with Fee over the years, especially through the build of Wattamondara's new community hall. As a member of the Wattamondara Recreation Land Managers, Fee was a big part of their successful application for funding which has seen the social fabric of this small community revitalised. I am so pleased for her to have earned the opportunity for professional development and mentoring through the scholarship program given her efforts as a champion of her small community, and beyond. Fee is a great example of someone who wears many hats - working in healthcare and running a stud cattle operation with her husband and daughters, all the while supporting the local community. The Rural Women in Leadership is a fantastic initiative designed to encourage and inspire women from regional NSW who already, and have the potential to, make a mark. I congratulate Fee on putting herself forward for this opportunity and encourage others thinking of doing the same to have a go.

NAIDOC SURVIVAL DAY MARCH

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—The Aboriginal community within Narrandera came together recently to celebrate many activities to mark Survival Day. Community members gathered at the Narrandera

Ambulance Station where they cleansed themselves with a smoking ceremony before embarking on a march down East Street. Neville Bamblett and Dinawans Connection provided ochre for marchers to paint themselves in honour of the day and what it represents to them as First Nations peoples. About 60 people marched then gathered at the Memorial Gardens where Rachel Williams and Ikea and Ilea Williams all performed a Welcome to Country both in language and English. Followed by Dinawans Connection's performance of three dances. With speeches and poems then shared, the floor was opened to the community for an opportunity to say some words. I am advised the event was hugely successful and I among the Aboriginal community look forward to hearing and participating in next year's event. A huge congratulations is offered to all the organisers and volunteers who helped bring this event to life, celebrating all the First Nations people within our beautiful country.

NORMA BOOTH - 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—Today, I would like to congratulate Norma Booth on her 100th birthday last week. Norma was born in 1923 on a soldier's settlement near Shepparton. During the Second World War, Norma answered the call and joined the Army. She became a cipher operator at the Land Headquarters, operating signals and deciphering coded messages. In 1944, she volunteered to go to New Guinea where she was promoted to staff sergeant and worked until the end of the war coding and decoding messages. It was in New Guinea where she met her husband, Lyall Booth, an Army Intelligence officer. They married in 1949 and moved to Beverly Hills in the 50's where she has lived ever since. Norma is an outstanding and loving mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. It was a privilege to celebrate with her and her family at Mortdale RSL last week. I wish Norma and her family good health, happiness and peace of mind for the future.

TAISHA BEAZLEY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Taisha Beazley, from Dapto, who has signed up for the Dance for Sick Kids fundraiser to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney. This initiative sees dancers sponsored for the amount of time they spend practicing every day and Taisha's goal is to dance one hour a day on average from 15 to 21 May to raise \$3,500. Ms Beazley dances roughly 10 hours a week so is very hopeful that she will easily reach this goal. The 17-year-old will be dancing individually and as part of Team Tessence. This is the second year Taisha has participated in this fundraiser, having raised \$6,000 for the Ronald McDonald House in 2022. I would like to congratulate Taisha Beazley on her outstanding achievement and community service. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I wish her the very best of luck in her future endeavours.

BAILEY KRESTEVSKI & JAYDEN BEAUMONT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Bailey Kretevski & Jayden Beaumont, representing the Warilla Barrack Point Surf Lifesaving Club, winning gold in the Under-19 Board Rescue event at Scarborough Beach. This is a great achievement with the duo only having two training sessions together before the championships late last month and they started the final in fifth spot before finding an extra gear to beat their more experienced rivals. Their coach, Kirk Allen, praised the duo having such a great performance and beating some of the larger more experienced teams with 15-year-old Jayden competing up an age group stating also that it was a big accolade for the club. I would like to congratulate Bailey Kretevski and Jayden Beaumont on their outstanding achievement and on behalf of the Shellharbour community, I wish them both the very best of luck in their future endeavours.

LEXI TALBOT, CHELSEA CRIADO AND RUBY FRANCIS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I take this opportunity today to acknowledge the great work of three young women in the Shellharbour region who are on their way to be future gymnastics superstars. Chelsea Criado aged 15, Ruby Francis aged 12 and Lexi Talbot aged 11 have been selected to represent New South Wales at the National Championships held on the Gold Coast. Lexi has already made the New South Wales level 8 team at the most recent State Championships. Both Ruby and Chelsea have qualified in the level 10 division and were also named to represent our State. The coaching staff of Carmel & Co. have also done a fantastic job in supporting these fantastic young athletes. Many hours have been spent challenging these girls to perform at their very best. They are an integral part of making sure the next generation of gymnastics grow and develop into superstars. The Shellharbour electorate is proud to recognise the great effort and hard work of Chelsea, Ruby, Lexi and Carmel & Co.

RUSSELL GRUNDY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Skate boarding is a sport that is growing in popularity and prestige, with its provisional approval by the International Olympic Committee for inclusion at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. It is also a big winner with the youths of Lake Macquarie. Congratulations to

Russell Grundy on being named the 2023 Lake Mac Sports Leader Award for his contributions to the local skateboarding community. It was my pleasure to present the award to Russell, who was recognised for his outstanding contribution to sporting life in Lake Macquarie at the Lake Mac Awards on 11 March 2023. A two-time Australian skateboarding champion, Russell has turned his expertise on the board to design and towards encouraging engagement in the sport. In Lake Macquarie, Russell has designed and helped to activate local skate parks and inspired a love of the sport in more young people. In 2022, Russell held 14 youth events at local skateparks during his busy schedule, which includes judging competitions around the country and the globe. Russell was recently an Oceania judge at the 2024 Olympics pathway held by World Skate in Rome, and Lake Macquarie is very fortunate to have his expertise available.

JOHN FRANKS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—John Franks of Warners Bay is justifiably proud to see his beautiful story called 'The Melting Pot' featured in the latest edition of Seniors' Stories. The entry was John's first in the Seniors' Stories competition and he was inspired to enter by the topic, Celebrating Diversity. It is a theme John feels strongly about, and which arises again and again in his own writing. The piece he contributed arose out of a meeting of Lake Macquarie Library Memoir Writers Group, which John regularly attends at Speers Point library. John is a committed writer, a member of the Lake Macquarie branch of the NSW Fellowship of Australian writers, and is working on a novel. John has told me that this long-form work is also infused with the theme of diversity. One hundred seniors across NSW put pen to paper and were published in the latest edition of Seniors' Stories, sharing their personal stories of diversity. Congratulations to John and to all the other authors who have been published in this edition of Seniors' Stories, and I wish him all the best with his novel. It is so fantastic to see the creativity of older people being celebrated and shared.

ANZAC DAY SERVICE IN BANKSTOWN

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—This year I had the pleasure and honour to attend the ANZAC Day Memorial Service held at the Bankstown Cenotaph War Memorial outside Bankstown Court House. I want to take this opportunity to thank Bankstown RSL President, Mr Corcoran, for inviting me to attend this memorial service. It was heart-warming to meet with local ex-servicemen and women, as well as many members of the public who have a personal connection to those who experienced the horrors and sacrifices of war. I would like to, especially, mention the honour of meeting with 100-year-old World War 2 veteran, Leonard Sicard, who was deployed as a tail gunner RAF Halifax Bomber during the war. We must never forget Leonard's sacrifice, and many others like him, and remember those who lost their lives so we can live in harmony and peace in the best country, Australia. Anzac Day is a very important time to honour the brave men and women who sacrificed and served our nation so that we can be free. We will continue forevermore, to preserve the memories of our fallen heroes. I am very proud to be an Australian.

GREENACRE SPLASH PARK

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Not long after entering Parliament, I began advocating for improvements to our communities' local parks and amenities where families can gather and enjoy their weekends. As one of the biggest parks in Greenacre, Roberts Park is a location that has so much potential. I acknowledge the work of council in resurfacing the skate park, improving the change rooms and soccer field with the addition of a walking track and improved parking. On Saturday 14 January, I joined Canterbury-Bankstown Mayor Khal Asfour and Cllr. Bilal El-Hayek to open the new Greenacre Splash Park. It is a fantastic all-ability addition to our local community, and it is the first in Greenacre. Joint funding from Council and State Government ensured the new additions could happen for our community and I am so happy we have been able to secure this together. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces, kids big and small, enjoying the new equipment and entertainment. I encourage everyone across the community to visit the Greenacre Splash Park, enjoy the new facilities and whip up a BBQ with their family. Next summer, I'll make sure to bring my boardshorts.

ST CHARBEL'S GOOD FRIDAY MASS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I am pleased to mention how proud I am to have been invited to the annual St Charbel Good Friday Holy Mass on Friday 7 April in my electorate of Bankstown. The spiritual gathering, in which thousands of parishioners took part in the Stations of the Cross procession, started in Roberts Park, Greenacre, and ended at St Charbel's Church in Punchbowl. The Mass consisted of a series of prayers, readings, and hymns that reflect on the meaning and significance of the day. The Good Friday Mass commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, led by the His Excellency, Maronite Bishop Antoine Charbel

Tarabay, the Bishop of Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania, and Rev Father Superior Assaad Lahhoud. The Mass was attended by thousands of members of the public and Members of Parliament. The main highlight of this service is the re-enactment of Jesus' Way of the Cross which is performed by church members. Thousands of parishioners participated walked, prayed, and reflected on the Stations of the Cross. I thank St Charbel Monastery in Sydney for their ongoing support and for inviting me to join in their annual Good Friday Mass.

TERRIGAL COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Recently I had the pleasure of attending a meeting at the Terrigal CWA Evening Branch. Many of the wonderful ladies had attended the Sydney Royal Easter Show where they volunteered their time baking 4,000 scones everyday. I learnt that this busy group help the community by raising funds, making items for distribution, running workshops and advocacy. Each year they run Bunnings stalls and raffles which enables them to be able to donate over \$25,000 to local and Statewide charities. They produce knitted blankets, baby clothes, beanies and trauma teddies and conduct working B's to help groups like the local Scouts by making neckerchiefs and reusable sanitary wear for Islander women. The Branch also support six local schools with \$500 donations to enable disadvantaged students to attend extracurricular activities like camps, and one school unit with a 'Paws Therapy' course. They have also assisted local women's shelters with goods and cash donations. I would like to commend their efforts and thank them on behalf of the community, keep up the good work ladies.

TERRIGAL SLSC ANNUAL OCEAN SWIM AND DAFFODIL DIP

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Terrigal SLSC Annual Ocean Swim and Daffodil Dip I would like to congratulate Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club on a very successful annual Ocean Swim event with the addition of the inaugural Daffodil Dip, which took place on Easter Saturday. The Terrigal Ocean Swim has been run for over 20 years and includes three swims the 1km, 2km and 3km which were all at capacity with record number of swimmers. The Daffodil Dip was a world first, a 400m swim which saw \$15,000 raised for Cancer Council NSW- Central Coast. Participants wore bright yellow vintage flower caps to represent daffodils which is a symbol of hope for cancer patients and their families. Thank you to the club sponsors, volunteers and members and also the Lions Club for a wonderful community event.

CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT SHINE AT ACADEMY GAMES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—120 athletes, coaches, and managers from the Central Coast Academy of Sport (CCAS) represented the Coast in Wagga Wagga in April, at the 2023 Your Local Club Academy Games. Over 1 300 athletes and their families travelled from 11 Regional Academies throughout NSW to compete in the tournament. CCAS had major success over the weekend, with all competitors showing a high level of talent and skill against some of the state's finest young athletes. The girls basketball team finished in 6th place with an intense final game that went into extra time against North Coast and the boys showed exceptional skill and perseverance throughout the 3 days of competition resulting in a Bronze medal for the team. Georgie Clune represented CCAS in golf who faced fierce competition over the weekend. The girls hockey squad placed 5th overall and the boys placed 2nd after a very close 2-1 final lose against Hunter. n netball both division 1 and 2 played hard and strong throughout the entirety of the competition with many notable wins. The CCAS Triathlon team also had a great weekend of racing up against state athletes from Triathlon NSW.

KIAMA-JAMBEROO RSL SUB BRANCH PRE ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch for hosting a wonderful Pre ANZAC Day Service in Jamberoo on Saturday 22nd April 2023. I was extremely honoured and proud to attend and to lay a wreath. I acknowledge and thank the President of the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub-Branch Mr Gary McKay for inviting me along. The Guest Speaker and former Army aviator was Mr Lynnton Tonta. Our local community deeply appreciates the work of all our RSL Sub Branches and their volunteers. These volunteers work so incredibly hard to host ANZAC Day Services. Many locals have memories, stories and family connections to those who serve or have served. I remembered the service of my grandfather who lost his arm during battle on the western front in France. He returned home only to later die from his injuries due to a blood clot. My father was just two years old. Legacy played a big part in the lives of my grandmother, my father and his two brothers. I acknowledge the wonderful work which Legacy do across our region and State.

SHOALHAVEN HEADS RSL SUB BRANCH ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Shoalhaven Heads RSL Sub Branch for hosting a ANZAC Day Commemorative Service in the Memorial Park at Shoalhaven Heads Road on Tuesday 25th April 2023. I acknowledge the Shoalhaven Heads RSL Sub Branch President Paul Bounds, Secretary Allan Davies and Treasurer Brian Curran for inviting me and allowing me to

lay a wreath on behalf of our community. The Guest Speaker was Major Tim Colebatch from HMAS Albatross. Our local community deeply appreciates the work of all our RSL Sub Branches and their volunteers. These volunteers work so incredibly hard to host ANZAC Day Services. Many locals have memories, stories and family connections to those who serve or have served. I remembered the service of my grandfather who lost his arm during battle on the western front in France. He returned home only to later die from his injuries due to a blood clot. My father was just two years old. Legacy played a big part in the lives of my grandmother, my father and his two brothers. I acknowledge the wonderful work Legacy do.

MISS ELLA HEWITT, MISS MAIYA HEWITT, AND MISS DELTA AMIDZOVSKI YOUNG SPORTING STARS FROM ALBION PARK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Miss Ella Hewitt, Miss Maiya Hewitt and Miss Delta Amidzovski who are all rising sporting stars from Albion Park. Ella, Maiya and Delta are all being recognised with State Representative Awards for their recent sporting achievements. Miss Ella Hewitt for being part of the NSW Junior Track and Field Team at the 2022 Australian Junior Track and Field Championships in the Triple Jump Under 16 Girls. Miss Maiya Hewitt for being part of the NSW Junior Track and Field Team at the 2023 Australian Junior Track and Field Championships in the 200 metre hurdles, 200 metre sprint, long jump and triple jump Under 15 Girls. Miss Delta Amidzovski for being part of the Australian Track and Field Championships and the Australian All Schools Championships competing in the 100 metre hurdles and long jump in both sets of competitions. Our Illawarra and South Coast region has a rich sporting pedigree and is home to some of the best young sporting athletes in the country and I'm proud of the efforts of every single one.

RAINBOW FAMILIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—On Sunday 7 May, Rainbow Families NSW hosted its annual Family Pride Day at Marrickville Town Hall, marking the local celebration of International Family Equality Day, a world-wide celebration of LGBTIQ+ parenting. We know families come in all shapes and sizes. Events like Family Pride are an important way to celebrate diversity, increase visibility for diverse families, and to provide safe and affirming connection for rainbow parents and their children. The day featured community stalls from Twenty10, Sydney Local Health District, Wear It Purple, ACON., NSW Police, Gamble Aware, Reverse Garbage and the Gender Centre, amongst others. Kids were entertained with drag storytime by Joyce Maynge, performances by Busy Izzy, and there was even a full-size wax figure of Dua Lipa on hand. Participants were also able to enjoy a delicious cake stall and book swap and buy. Rainbow Families is the peak organisation supporting LGBTQ+ parents and their children. The organisation works to reduce discrimination and disadvantage faced by the children of LGBTQ+ parents so they can thrive and shine and is a support network for parents and carers, as well as future parents and carers. I congratulate the Rainbow Families team on a wonderful event.

CO.AS.IT ITALIAN NATIONAL BALL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—On 2 June, Italian Australians will observe Festa della Repubblica - the Italian National Day. This year marks the 77th anniversary commemorating the formation of the Italian Republic. The Inner West is home to a vibrant and buzzing Italian community who will join in celebration of this special day once again this June. As the leading Italian community organisation in New South Wales, Co.As.It has made an especially positive and important impact on the Inner West. Since 1968, Co.As.It has provided language and support services to the Italian-Australian community. To this day, they continue to meet community needs in new and dynamic ways. This year, Co.As.It will be hosting the Italian National Ball in recognition of Festa della Repubblica. All proceeds from this charity gala will go towards establishing and funding a helpline that offers mental health support for Italian speakers. I thank Co.As.It for the incredible work that they do and extend my best wishes to all Italian-Australians as they celebrate Festa della Repubblica in June.

HABERFIELD GIRL GUIDES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I warmly congratulate the Haberfield Girl Guides on its 90th anniversary. The Haberfield Guide District reached its 90th year back in June 2021, however, due to the COVID pandemic, celebrations were put on hold. Thankfully, in March this year, present and past Guides were able to gather with family and friends to take a sentimental look back at the founding of the Haberfield Guide District. It was in 1931 that the St David's Committee granted Miss Gladys Dunlop permission to form a company of Girl Guides connected with St David's Church. Since then, the group has continued to empower and inspire the girls and young women of Haberfield to discover their own potential as our future leaders. The celebration also included a range of activities and outdoor fun hosted by their brilliant Guide Leaders. I thank all the Haberfield Girl Guides who stand up as skilled and kind role models in our community, and especially thank

and acknowledge the work of Isabella Ramirra. I look forward to seeing you continue to change our world, one Girl Guide at a time.

PARKES MARIST JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I wish to recognise the Parkes Marist Junior Rugby League Club. The Parkes Marist Junior Rugby League Club held a Sportsman's Fundraising Dinner in conjunction with Royce Simmons' Big Walk for Dementia. The club starting the planning in January, with plenty of hard work and organisation going into the event. I commend all the attendees, businesses that donated items and the organisers on their successful evening event. The club's president reported that the event was at capacity with over 210 people attending. The event highlight was having Royce and fellow former footy legends sharing their entertaining stories with the crowd. The event raised over \$18,000. A portion of the funding will go to Royce's cause and the remaining funds will be retained by the club. Royce noted that the event was one of the most successful that he attended along his fundraising and awareness walk. I congratulate all involved, and I commend The Parkes Marist Junior Rugby League Club on their initiative and success with their fundraising event. Well done.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE - 412A ORANGE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise members of Platoon "A" 412 Orange, Fire and Rescue NSW. On 3rd May 2023, Leading Firefighter David Beattie, Senior Firefighter Timothy Collins, Senior Firefighter James Patrech and Senior Firefighter Robert Buesnel were awarded the Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service at the St Florian's Day Honours and Awards ceremony in Sydney. These firefighters were recognised for their heroic actions at a violent siege, involving and resultant property fire, at Orange on 11th September 2016. Their actions at a fast moving and dangerous incident ensured the safety of two children, an adult and responding police. The volatile situation escalated shortly after arrival of both police and firefighters, with a fire igniting within the dwelling, injuring a person and spreading within the house. These firefighters swiftly responded, entering the dwelling and simultaneously secured an aggressive dog, extinguishing the fire and securing the children's safety by removing them from harm of fire and smoke. I commend the actions of these brave firefighters, protecting the safety of police present, the child victims and the life of the adult involved, and congratulate them on receiving this award.

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP'S COMMUNITY HEROES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I wish to recognise Orange Parkinson's Support Group's chosen Community Heroes, Melanie Moses, Bloom's Pharmacist; Rennie Johns, receptionist at Orange's Giyalang Ganya Centre; and Julie Doulis, carer for a Parkinson's support group member. Each April during Parkinson's Awareness month, community support groups are invited to nominate their local heroes for the Community Hero Program. The Orange Parkinson's Support Group announced their three chosen heroes, all deserving recipients who, through exceptional work in their own fields, help make the lives of those living with Parkinson's in Orange a little easier. Parkinson's is a progressive, degenerative condition of the central nervous system. Its causes are unknown, diagnosis can be difficult, and a cure has yet to be found. A person affected with Parkinson's can live with the condition for decades, during this time their health will decline to a point of incapacity. With Parkinson's being more prevalent than prostate and breast cancer in Australians over the age of 50, community support, awareness and accessible information is vital in supporting those with the condition. I congratulate Melanie, Rennie and Julie, and I commend their hard work and recognition by the Orange Parkinson's Support Group.

TRIBUTE TO ALF WHIDDETT

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—I would like to thank and pay tribute to Alf Whiddett who passed away on 15 March 2023. Alf was a stalwart of the Labor Party - someone who never afraid to put his position, advocate for his views and take on those who he felt did not share his commitment and passion for advancing the cause of working men and women. Described as "A fiery old bugger with a heart of gold" he dedicated untold time, energy and effort to advance the cause of Labor representatives and help them to be elected at local, state and federal levels. He was also well known for keeping those he helped elect to public office accountable. I have greatly appreciated Alf's support, advice and encouragement over the years. He would have been thrilled that a Labor Government was elected in NSW to join others across the country. You only need check the Hansard of this place to understand the contribution that Alf made to the party and the broader labour movement. I know that he will be sadly missed by John and Lorraine, Brian, Gail and Bill Baxter, Alison and Doug Collins and his much loved grandchildren.

WOLLONGONG ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—I would like to acknowledge and thank the organisers of the range of commemoration ceremonies in Wollongong to mark ANZAC Day. It was pleasing to see Vietnam veterans leading the Wollongong ANZAC Day parade marking the

50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The significance of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam conflict was also marked on the Sunday before ANZAC Day with the Vietnam Veterans commemoration and with a special ceremony on ANZAC Day that is hosted each year by the Wollongong Vietnamese community to thank Australian service men and women for their support. More recently ANZAC Day commemorations in Wollongong have been added to with a ceremony recognising servicemen and women of Maltese ancestry hosted by the George Cross Falcons Club in Cringila at their officially recognised memorial to Maltese who have served in the Australian armed forces since World War 1. It was also good to see the restored Wollongong cenotaph central to the Wollongong dawn service and the end of the march and congratulate the team overseen by Wollongong RSL Sub-Branch who have undertaken the restoration project in this, the centenary year, of the cenotaph. Lest we forget.

CATHERINE VAARA - 20 YEARS LIFELINE MID COAST

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I congratulate Catherine Vaara, CEO of Lifeline Mid Coast for recently celebrating 20 years of service in the crisis support sector. Catherine first commenced her journey with Lifeline in the call centre, offering counselling support and guidance to those in distress. During these years Catherine would recall the feeling of reducing the overwhelming trauma and turmoil a client was facing as a 'sigh of relief' and satisfaction that "the burden was lightened a bit". Since taking on the role as CEO, Catherine and her Board of Directors work on a shared vision of creating an encompassing service focused on suicide prevention and postvention which meets best or emerging practice. This is achieved through the amazing volunteers and staff who contribute to the national crisis line, answering more than 26,000 callers a year. Other services Catherine oversees include Support After Suicide for those impacted by suicide, Eclipse which helps survivors of suicide, training opportunities in crisis support for community and frontline workers, counselling, domestic violence, mental health and a line of Lifeline stores, supporting those in need with affordable household items and clothing. Congratulations Catherine on this extraordinary milestone.

ROSS NANCARROW - EVERY DAUGHTER MATTERS (EDM)

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise today to acknowledge an extraordinary human being who is literally transforming the lives of thousands of young Nepali women through the Charity "Every Daughter Matters" (EDM) aiming to dismantle the child sex, organ and forced labour trafficking trade in Nepal. Ross Nancarrow is the Executive Director of EDM, a non-for-profit organisation that works in Nepal, intercepting or rescuing Nepali women and girls, some as young as thirteen from traffickers into India. Ross has devoted almost 40 years of his life to protecting the most vulnerable through a partnership with Aashish Social Service Nepal (ASSN). Through the establishment of seven Border Surveillance Booths, two Safe Houses and Emergency Shelters, the two teams in 2022 rescued 1621 individuals, reunited 355 young women with their families and reported 288 cases to the local authorities. Ross's motivation stems from seeing the devastating impacts of human trafficking on communities where an estimated 20,000 women and girls are sold each year. Today, EDM is intercepting approximately 200 girls and women per month. I call on the community to support "Every Daughters Matters" to end trafficking in Nepal and thank Ross for his incredible efforts.

HARRINGTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I acknowledge an exciting and new initiative underway at the Harrington Men's Shed in my electorate which received the support of the Government and the former Minister for Seniors Mark Coure. The first Community Garden is taking shape and producing thanks to the creative efforts of the members of the Harrington Men's Shed. The Community Garden will offer the freshest of fruit and vegetables every Saturday from 8 am till midday, encouraging locals and visitors to focus on eating well and living a healthier lifestyle. Championing the project is President Greg Newell who is committed to introducing nutritional diets for the members through the paddock to plate initiative. To ensure the projects success, Greg has enlisted Johnson's Farmgate/Hunter Valley Providores owners Karl and Cathie Johnson to source and supply seasonal vegetables with Hunter Valley cheeses and gourmet goodies to compliment what is locally grown in Harrington. I thank the NSW Government and the Hon Mark Coure for providing a grant of \$12,590 to go towards the cost of materials and equipment to construct a Community Garden. More importantly, the project will add to improving mental health and wellness for men – the focus of men's sheds nationally.

ST IVES LIONS CLUB ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—At 10:30am on ANZAC Day, the Lions Club of St Ives held a Commemoration Service at St Ives Memorial Park. St Ives Lions Club has held this commemoration service for several years – a fitting tradition. At this years' service, it was good to hear from Chaplain Tim St Quintin, who currently serves as the Senior Chaplain in the Army's 2nd Health Brigade. St Ives Lions also raises funds for SoldierOn, a not-for-profit organisation which provides important support services to assist current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in civilian life. I appreciated the opportunity for local

children in attendance to lay a flower at the memorial. It was a lovely touch, as it is so important that all generations have a connection to the ANZAC spirit. I thank the St Ives Lions Club Executive, and the leadership of President Geoff Gibbons. To all members of the community who attended, thank you for your ongoing commitment to our local community, and ensuring that the memory of the ANZAC lives on.

TURRAMURRA MEMORIAL PARK ANZAC DAY CEREMONY

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On ANZAC Day Tuesday 25 April, Turramurra Memorial Park's World War I memorial attracted local people of all ages for their annual ANZAC commemoration. Run jointly by the Sydney North Region Scouts and the NSW and ACT branch of Girl Guides Australia, the event was flawless in its organisation due to the tremendous efforts of volunteers from each organisation. The commemoration paid tribute and recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service to the ANZAC spirit. I thank Pastor Richard Reid for his inspiring ANZAC address. The commemoration incorporated the Kokoda Memorial Service, with Judy Matuschka giving a detailed account of the Kokoda Track Campaign in WWII. It allowed me to reflect on trekking the Kokoda Trail on ANZAC Day in 2017. I would like to acknowledge organiser Allen Hyde, Master of Ceremonies Jeremy Barnes, piper Jim Braid, bugler Matt Neal, and the Rotary Club of Turramurra for hosting such a moving ANZAC day ceremony and for providing morning tea after the commemoration. It is thanks to the efforts of volunteers and community groups in organising services like this that we can ensure the ANZAC memory lives on.

ST JOHN'S ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 30 April, St John the Evangelist at Gordon with Ku-ring-gai Council hosted an ANZAC Commemorative Service in honour of all those who were fallen, injured, and served while defending Australia and our allies. The service was held on behalf of the 1/18 Battalion and the 2/18 Battalion Associations of the Ku-ring-gai Regiment. In addition to the parishioners of St John's, it was pleasing to see representatives from several community groups at the service lay a wreath. This included primary and high schools, Ku-ring-gai SES, Ku-ring-gai Councillors Barbara Ward and Simon Lennon, and Member for Bradfield Hon. Paul Fletcher MP. Wreaths were laid under two replica crosses, the Pozieres Cross and the Mersing Cross. These are housed in the Chapel of this Garrison Church. After the service, it was wonderful to spend time with the community in the church hall. Coming together socially after a commemoration service allows for friendship, fellowship and our community to flourish. I thank the Rector of St John's Gordon, Reverend Robert Happer, and all those involved for their efforts in putting the service together to ensure the memory of ANZAC lives on.

RHONDA SCRUTON, OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter)—Congratulations to Rhonda Scruton who has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to surf lifesaving in the Australia Day Honours. Rhonda's involvement stretches back to the 1980s, notably spending almost 25 years as the CEO of Hunter Surf Life Saving making her Australia's first female lifesaving CEO and where she was a driving force behind securing the branch headquarters in Tighes Hill.

While Rhonda's name is synonymous with surf lifesaving, she has also served on the boards of the Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation and Hunter Lifeline, been a member of Newcastle council's Coastal Revitalisation Committee and given her time as secretary of West Wallsend Swimming Club. Her efforts have also seen her inducted in the Newcastle Business and Hunter Business Women's halls of fame. Congratulations on this wonderful recognition!

PROFESSOR BRIAN KELLY, AM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter)—Congratulations to Professor Brian Kelly, who was named a Member for the Order of Australia for significant service to medical education, and to professional organisations in the Australia Day Honours. Professor Kelly's appointment as Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research at the University of Newcastle cements a distinguished career in mental and public health which has spanned New South Wales, Queensland, and Canada. Numerous board and committee appointments speak to Professor Kelly's high-standing amongst his peers, solidified by awards including the prestigious Bernard Fox Award. There is no doubt that Professor Kelly's dedication is changing lives for the better, and his inclusion on the Australia Day Honours list is well-deserved. Congratulations!

TANYA WILKS, OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter)—Congratulations to Tanya Wilks who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia

for service to broadcast media, and to the community in the Australia Day Honours. As a radio host for over three decades Tanya is one of Newcastle's most well-known and well-loved voices, showing herself to not just be a voice of the city but a voice for the city. Multiple nominations in the Australian Commercial Radio Awards, including a win in 2019, are testament to Tanya's talent however her influence is far greater than the airwaves. As a supporter of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, Soul Café, Rise for Alex, the Mark Hughes Foundation, and the Give Me 5 for Kids campaign, Tanya has made a wonderful contribution to our community. Of particular note is her work as the Founding Secretary of the Victims of Crime Assistance League which still provides an extremely valuable service across the region. Congratulations, Tanya, on this extremely deserved recognition!

SGT STEVE BLOOMFIELD

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I wish to congratulate Sergeant Steve Bloomfield of the Riverina Police District who has retired from the New South Wales police force after a thirty four year career. Sergeant Bloomfield has served the community with distinction, honour and respect and leaves behind him a legacy of law enforcement and community engagement. He was born in Sydney but in time made the Riverina his home and told the Region Riverina that his job had been 'great fun' and he would do it again without a second thought. Sergeant Bloomfield's daughter Hannah now also serves as a Senior Constable and he said that 'If you're in a career where your kids want to emulate you, that's got to be a positive thing'. As Sergeant Bloomfield left his station for the last time he was given a guard of honour by his fellow officers, surrounded by friends, family and community and was driven around the block in a vintage V8 Holden Commodore police car. Sergeant Bloomfield has said that he will continue to work, not in law enforcement, but in road transport through truck driving. I wish him all the best for the future and thank him for his service.

NSW WOMAN OF THE YEAR FINALIST ARABELLA GIBSON

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to acknowledge North Shore local Arabella Gibson who was one of the NSW Women of the Year finalists earlier this year. Arabella is the current CEO of Gidget Foundation which is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care. Since joining Gidget, Arabella has expanded its Gidget House program, offering face-to-face psychology support to cover fourteen sites across three states. Under her leadership Gidget has introduced three new programs providing direct support; Start Talking, Gidget Village, and Gidget Virtual Village, offering a range of support programs for parents experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety. Alongside an amazing six years with the Gidget Foundation, Arabella participated in the advisory group to devise the Australian Government's Women's Health Strategy for 2020 to 2030 in Canberra and contributed to the COVID-19 National Mental Health Strategy for Children, Young People and Parents. I congratulate Arabella on her contributions not only to my local community, but to parents across New South Wales and Australia.

NEUTRAL BAY COMMUNITY CENTRE TURNS 50

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to congratulate the Neutral Bay Community Centre on turning fifty. The community centre plays a vital role by providing a welcoming and enjoyable space for people of all ages to connect, participate in social activities and learn new experiences. An afternoon tea was held to celebrate, and a room naming ceremony in acknowledgement of four of its founding members was conducted. The downstairs room is now named after Barbara Anderson, who was President from 2002 to 2012. The upstairs rooms have been named in honour of Christine McCormick, who was a former volunteer tutor, and Pauline Constantine, who was President from 2012 to 2019. A plaque has been erected in the main room to honour the late Phyllis Stodick, who served as founding Treasurer. A monthly newsletter keeps everyone updated on upcoming activities, and the centre is often buzzing with members dropping in to play Bridge or cards, attend one of the many fitness classes, or simply to catch up for a coffee and a chat with friends. Thank you to Gill Melling, Centre Co-ordinator and the board for providing a relaxing and welcoming space for locals to connect.

A SHOUT-OUT TO THE LOWER NORTH SHORE LOCAL LADIES CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise and congratulate Amy Coleman, the Lower North Shore Ladies Club founder. Amy established the Lower North Shore Ladies Club in early 2021 in response to an appetite amongst local women to reconnect, celebrate and enrich their lives. The club now boasts 2000 members and holds regular events to bring members together for social connection and to provide information and support to women on various topics. I recently joined them for a round table forum on the importance of women's financial independence. We know that women aged 55 and over from all walks of life are Australia's fastest-growing cohort of homeless people. Women often leave the financial decisions in the hands of others, and the discussion centred around the importance of women having a sound financial plan to protect themselves against unexpected circumstances and understanding how to invest wisely. I want to thank Amy for

hosting such a valuable discussion and Isha Miglani and Cassandra Gordon for their input. Thank you to all the ladies present for their openness and honesty in sharing their experiences.

COMMEMORATIVE PRE-ANZAC DAY ICE HOCKEY MATCH

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—A fortnight ago, Australians gathered to commemorate one of our most solemn and unifying national occasions – ANZAC Day. A day earlier, Ryde hosted a pre-Anzac Day commemorative ice hockey match between the Australian Defence Force and NSW Police. It was one of the first of its kind and was played on our iconic Macquarie Ice Rink. Some in this Parliament would be aware of the Ryde community's successful campaign in recent years to save Macquarie Ice Rink from demolition. It was therefore a tremendous honour to officially 'drop the puck' on our now secure Rink, as our Defence and Police personnel faced off in what would ultimately be a triumph for the ADF. I congratulate Constable Regan Sice for coordinating the match and acknowledge the presence of the many NSWPF and ADF officers and families in attendance. I particularly want to thank the Rink owner Dr Frank Gregg, Ice-Skating Director, Monica MacDonald and the staff at Macquarie Ice Rink for continuing to put the community at the centre of everything they do. Their success in uniting our community both through Anzac and sport has meant this will now be an annual event.

HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY - MCDONALDS WEST RYDE BP

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—On 16 May 2023, McDonalds West Ryde BP celebrates its 25th birthday! Opened on 16 May 1998 by the late Peter Graham OAM, then Mayor of the City of Ryde, McDonalds West Ryde BP has since become a local establishment for our local Ryde community. Whether it is the regular drive-through on the way to work of a morning, or as was the case for me, a regular after-school hangout for local Ermington and Melrose Park Public School students, the staff at McDonalds West Ryde BP have done a wonderful job serving our local community over the past quarter of a century. Many local students start their working lives at McDonalds, where they learn important customer service skills, and create community connections that often endure. As a community, we celebrate local business success, and acknowledge that these achievements are only possible because of the tireless work of so many hard-working staff members and loyal local customers. Thank you to them for making this establishment a beloved part of our local community fabric. Happy 25th birthday - here's to another quarter of a century!

ERNA SEASON LAUNCH

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Congratulations to the Eastwood Ryde Netball Association for launching another successful playing season. This is an exciting time for players, coaches, and families as they come together to compete, learn, and grow through the sport of netball. Netball is one of the most popular sports in Ryde, promoting important values of teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. It also provides opportunities for players to develop their skills and build lifelong friendships. ERNA has a proud history in Ryde, and I commend the association for their ongoing commitment to promoting health, wellbeing, and social connection through sport. I particularly acknowledge the work of the 2023 Committee of Karen Waud, Allyson Hill, Breanna Rosman, Katrina Doring, Pia Fenson, Greg Collins, Trevor Carlyle-Hoggan, Debbie Frankenberg, Julia Huxley, Anne Doring, and Jacquelyn Osborne, Sue Woodhouse, Lila Larsen, Sutha Sivagurunathan, Sue Martin, Deb Hanson, Kathy Piestrzynski, Despina Hasapis, Joan Ryan, Vicki Masulans, Bronwyn Ryan, Breanna Rosman, Anita Keelan, Erin Taggart, Joanne Gocher, James Mulcare, Beth Goddard, Sara Gaudry, Melinda Musto, Melissa Fratzia, Rachael Fratzia, Maddison Clancy, Claire Sellar and Tahlia Foye. As we embark on another exciting season of netball, I wish all the players and teams the very best of luck.

NEWCASTLE NAVARATRI EVENT 2022

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Maitland's multicultural pride and generous spirit was on display during Navaratri late last year. The Indian Association of Newcastle held a colour filled charity event at the Maitland Federation Basketball stadium raising funds for New Gokula Farm, Ronald McDonald House and Stop Acid Attacks. Navaratri is an annual Hindu nine-day festival dedicated to the worship of the Hindu deity Durga. Goddess Durga symbolizes positive feminine energy that is used against the negative forces of evil and wickedness. She protects her devotees from evil powers and safeguards them. The event celebrations included Garba and Dandia songs, dancing, live music, a DJ and magnificent traditional dress full of colour and joy. In Newcastle it is celebrated with a lot of fervour with the true spirit of festival, bringing the community together for a good cause with over \$17,000 raised at the event. Congratulations to volunteer Neeti Pandya, the committee and all the event volunteers for their efforts since 1998. They have raised over \$50,000 for so many worthy charitable causes.

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—It was a pleasure to attend the Official Blessing and Opening of the Dominic Building at St Bede's Catholic College on

Tuesday 23rd August 2022. It was wonderful to see the community of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese come together to celebrate the expansion of the College's facilities, and pay homage to the Late Bishop Fr Bill Wright who was such an advocate for the development of Catholic schools in our area. St Bede's Catholic College is a year 7 to 12 co-educational school located in the growing suburb of Chisholm. The school has been designed and built to accommodate the growing population of Catholic students in and around Maitland and will be able to accommodate 1,100 students when it is at its full completion. The school is designed around flexible learning spaces where students can work creatively and collaboratively to solve complex issues. Offering a diverse and comprehensive education experience for students, I understand the school plans to complete the current design and construction are due later this year. I wish the students, staff and families at St Bede's every success in their new facilities, and I hope to see students achieving great things in the future.

LYN DARK MAITLAND LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Lyn Dark has made a very significant contribution she has made to our community since she moved to Maitland over 45 years ago. Lyn has been an active and hardworking volunteer through her numerous activities with local schools, St John's Ambulance Australia, NSW Cancer Council, Maitland Hospital, Neighbourhood Watch, and Rutherford Lioness Club over many decades. Most recently, Lyn was instrumental in getting the West Maitland Centennial Lions Club up and running. Lyn continues to make a tremendous contribution to the Maitland Community through various fundraising activities, ensuring those who are doing it tough can access supports such as Dignity Packs and Back to School packs when they need it most. Lyn has an unflagging passion to make our region a better place and is relentless in helping others. In the face of significant personal challenges, including her husband Graham suffering from cancer for some 30 years, Lyn has continued to ensure that both she and Graham can play a vital role in so many community groups. I am so inspired by Lyn's enormous contribution and was delighted to award her as Maitland's Local Woman of the Year 2023 on 8 March.

ANZAC DAY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)—Annually, Australians pause on ANZAC Day to remember all those who served this country, those who died for it, and those who returned home a shadow of their former selves. We remember those who left Australia for some far-off country seen only on maps, with little knowledge of the vast geopolitical machinations at play, simply because they knew it was the right thing to do by their country. Their patriotism and sense of duty saw the World defeat Naziism and the war-mongering and unchecked aggression of the Pacific; it saw Australia slow the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia and continues to keep terrorism at bay in the Middle East. This year, as always, it was my pleasure to attend solemn and dignified services at the Castle Hill RSL, Kenthurst Park, Annangrove Park and, on the Wednesday, Kellyville Public School. My thanks goes out to the David O'Neil, Paul Rapp, Joe Laviano and Jenny Walker, respectively, for their organisation of the services, and my thanks especially goes out to those Australian's we were there to remember.

OPEN HOUSE CHURCH, NORTH KELLYVILLE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)—I recently had the opportunity to attend the wonderful Open Day at the new Open House Church in North Kellyville. Whilst the Church officially opened in 2020, the Covid Pandemic delayed this special occasion, and so it was a pleasure to finally attend the official opening. It was a fantastic service and day, with many families being involved, and a good spread of ages amongst the attendees. Despite only being a few years old, the Church has already had a major impact on the lives of many local residents and is already doing great work in the community. I'd especially like to thank Steve Deuble, the Lead Pastor at the Church for his work in both running the church, and for organising events for the day. He is a true local, and his father, Jeff, was formally the Pastor at the Rivergum Community Church in Rouse Hill. I would further like to recognise all the Elders of the Church who I had the pleasure of meeting and would thank them for their continued dedication to the Church. I wish the Church all the best for the future and hope they continue their great work.

BULLI RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—The men and women who make up our emergency services are renown for their bravery. However, on some occasions, they really do go above and beyond the call of duty. On Easter Monday, 2022, the crew from Bulli Rural Fire Brigade did exactly that. On that the crew had been fundraising at a local Bunnings store when a crew member fell ill and suffered a cardiac arrest. As a result Deputy Captains Nathan Sparks, Anita Joinking and Frank Haggerty, along with firefighter Tadeusz Bak, sprung into action and administered first aid. The team retrieved a publicly accessible defibrillator, set up a treatment area away from the general public and began to revive the ill crew member who had ceased breathing and had no noticeable pulse. The members, along with a nurse who had passed by the scene, provided first aid until NSW ambulance workers arrived. The actions of all involved ultimately saved the crew members life. On behalf of our

community and the crew member, thank you Nathan, Anita, Frank and Tadeusz for your bravery and composure. Your actions will never be forgotten.

ST JOHN BOSCO COLLEGE ENGADINE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—Schools are much more than places where students spend Monday to Friday learning maths, English, science, music and arts. They are thriving communities made up of students, teachers, staff, parents, volunteers and alumni. They are places where like-minded people band together for a common cause. This was certainly evident on Saturday, May 6, 2023, when members of the St John Bosco College Engadine community descended on Don Lucas Reserve at Wanda Beach for the 2023 Relay for Life fundraiser. The event, organised by the Cancer Council, is an annual event held throughout many communities - including in Sutherland. The aim is simple – raise vital funds for the Cancer Council so it can continue its important work. At this year's event the St John Bosco College Engadine team raised more than \$29,900.

It is an astonishing effort from all involved at the school to raise such an enormous amount of funds. It is also a great example of the way schools contribute to their local communities. Congratulations again to everyone involved in St John Bosco College Engadine's 2023 Relay for Life efforts. Your contributions are certainly appreciated by many.

HUNTER UNITED DIVING ACADEMY - AGE NATIONALS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Congratulations to Hunter United Diving Academy on a very successful showing at the 2023 Australian Age Nationals. The club was well represented with star divers from various age groups. A number of Hunter Diving athletes won medals in their categories and did the club and our community proud. These include Josh Lee, Charlotte Moore, Dane Virtue, Benji Movigliatti, Annabelle Movigliatti, Luke Leadbetter, Aiden Cousins, Patrick Lewsham and Layney Wilkins. The club also won the Diving Australia Club Achievement Award which is testament to everyone involved in the club but most especially to President and coach Eric Brooker and diving coach Charlotte Moore. Congratulations also have to be extended to coaches Nadia, Ty, Jim and Jie for their coaching efforts at the club. Eric and Charlotte are true champions of the sport in our region and have been instrumental in the growth of diving as a sport in the Newcastle and Hunter. Well done to Hunter United Diving Academy and all its athletes, parents and staff on this fantastic achievement.

SHANE FORSYTH - PORT MACQUARIE IRONMAN FUNDRAISING

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—On Sunday, 7th of May 2023 Shane Forsyth completed the full Port Macquarie Ironman competition to raise awareness and money for Craniofacial Australia (CFA). Shane endured 18 long months of training to ensure his goal to become an Iron Man paid off and was successful. Shane wanted to fundraise for CFA to 'pay it forward' after the exceptional support he and his partner, Ash, received from CFA when their son, Vincent, was diagnosed with Sagittal Craniosynostosis at five weeks old. CFA sent care packages, funded research studies, and assisted financially with costs associated with surgeries. Shane has successfully raised over \$6,500 for CFA and continues to fundraise for this remarkable cause. The determination demonstrated by Shane to raise funds for CFA is to be applauded. I wish to congratulate and thank Shane on the determination he has shown in both fundraising and completing the Port Macquarie Full Ironman. Well done, Shane.

WALLSEND WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The 2023 Wallsend Local Woman of the Year is Angela Jordan, Secretary of Wallsend South Football Club. Angela was nominated for her amazing work in keeping her club going and indeed, expanding the club throughout a very hectic and difficult few years. The COVID-19 Pandemic brought a range of new difficulties to community sport and football clubs while terrible weather and ground washouts contributed to the torrid times Wallsend South FC suffered through. Thankfully, the club has an amazing leader through all that in Angela, who managed to keep the club going with fundraising efforts, finding appropriate alternative venues and grounds for training and games, and keeping the morale of the club going. Angela is widely respected in the Wallsend football community and I was thrilled to attend the NSW Local Woman of the Year ceremony with her and present her with the Wallsend Local Woman of the Year award. Congratulations to Angela on adding the Wallsend Local Woman of the Year to your long list of achievements. I can think of no one more deserving of this award for 2023.

COBAR VINNIES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—A team of dedicated volunteers at Vinnies in Cobar have recently been recognised for achieving outstanding sales from January to March Quarter, winning them the Vinnies sales award.

Cobar has not fully recovered from Covid, but they have had a steady increase of sales at the local Vinnies. All proceeds from sales of donated items stay in the local community and provide a substantial source of funding needed to run local programs and services to assist people who are experiencing financial difficulties. Without the help of the volunteers, Vinnies would not be able to assist the community to make a difference. I congratulate the volunteers of Vinnies Cobar on receiving this award and thank them for their valuable commitment to the community.

SOPHIE JOHNSON AND CHARLI SELFE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Sophie Johnson and Charli Selfe represented Nyngan at the Indigenous netball tournament in the school holidays. Both girls play netball for the Nyngan Tigers during the winter season and went on to compete in the under 14s division, playing games every day for 5 days against teams from every state. On conclusion of the tournament, 12-year-old Sophie was selected in the Australian Indigenous under 13 squad and will go on to compete at another carnival on the Gold Coast in September. I congratulate both Sophie and Charli for representing your community and local sports club at Netball tournament and wish them the best of luck with their upcoming season of Netball.

GOULBURN STS PETER AND PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the significant restoration work undertaken at Goulburn's Sts Peter and Paul's Cathedral. The restorative work undertaken at Sts Peter and Paul's Cathedral has involved more than a hundred and fifty people, being the largest restorative work ever undertaken on the Cathedral. Excitedly, the Cathedral has now been shortlisted for the 29th annual National Trust Heritage Awards in two categories Conservation (built heritage) and Conservation (interiors and objects). The awards are held annually and recognise and commend conservation of Aboriginal, built, natural or cultural heritage. I sincerely congratulate those involved who oversaw and undertook the restorative work on the Cathedral, including Project Strategies and International Conservation Services who restored the fourteen Stations of the Cross. The Cathedral is a significant landmark in Goulburn and the community gains much joy and pride from this significant and inspiring structure. The awards will be held on the 12th May 2023 and I wish Project Strategies and International Conservation Services every success and congratulate all involved in this extensive restoration.

CHARLOTTE WITHERS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Charlotte Withers of Moss Vale. Charlotte recently competed in the 2023 Coles Australian Little Athletics Championships held between the 22 - 23 April 2023 in Melbourne. Charlotte competed in the Under 14 Javelin, throwing a personal best of 39.26m, placing third and taking home the bronze medal. Charlotte is now ranked as third in Australia. I take this time to recognise Charlotte's natural talent, the many hours of training and commitment it takes to reach this level. I congratulate Charlotte for this amazing achievement and wish her all the very best for the future.

GUNNING FISH RIVER RFB

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Gunning Fish River Rural Fire Brigade (RFB). Gunning Fish River Rural Fire Brigade, like many other Rural Fire Brigades work tirelessly throughout the year, not only to protect the community but also on a range of fund raising activities. Gunning Fish River RFB held their Trivia Night and Auction event, which saw inextinguishable support and attendance from the local community. Gunning Fish River RFB are always grateful for this support and recognised the Council for use of the Hall, their very entertaining Master of Ceremony, Jen Medway, and a very resolute and passionate auctioneer Scott Armour. The event was very successful seeing over \$10,000.00 raised. The night is not only to be celebrated in monetary terms, but the tremendous participation of community members who on all accounts had an enjoyable and fun-filled evening. I commend and congratulate the Gunning Fish River RFB on their tireless and enduring work to defend their community, during events that dare to threaten the community wellbeing and safety. I also recognise events such as the Trivia night play an important role in bringing the community together under much more pleasant circumstances which undoubtedly enrich the community wellbeing.

ELLA-ROSE CARSON - 2023 WORLD ARCHERY OCEANIA CHAMPION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Ella-Rose Carson who recently competed in the 2023 World Archery Oceania Championships at Ashton Oval in Adelaide. In March this year, Ella-Rose claimed a gold medal at the National Field Championships in Geelong, which earned her selection in the Australian team to compete in Oceania Championships. I congratulate Ella-Rose on successfully competing in three events, winning gold medals in two of the events and a silver medal in the third event after tying during a match play. I commend Ella-Rose's achievements and wish her all the best as she goes on to represent Australia at the Youth World Championships in Ireland in July.

LIBBY PITMAN - FINALIST HESTA AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY AWARDS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Libby Pitman who has been named as a finalist in the HESTA Australian Nursing and Midwifery Awards for her many years of advocacy for rural women and health services in the New England. I congratulate Libby on the work she has done in the Maternity Unity at the Inverell District Hospital to improve health outcomes for rural women, babies, and families and her efforts in establishing the first rural midwifery practice program in the region. I commend Libby's her achievements and thank her for her commitment to the training of midwives and retaining those staff members to help ensure women can give birth as close to home as possible.

TRISH WRIGHT - UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Trish Wright who has been awarded a University of New England Distinguished Service Medal for her 45 years of service at the Armidale campus where she has helped generations of students achieve their study ambitions. I congratulate Trish on being recognised for her invaluable work with students and receiving the University's highest gong for non-academic staff, an award equivalent to that of an honorary doctorate. I commend Trish on her progress through the corporate ranks as a course manager until she settled in her niche area at the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, leading to an award that recognises her distinguished service, attention to detail, and especially her care and compassion towards students and fellow colleagues.

CHATSWOOD JUNIOR RUGBY CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I acknowledge the contribution Chatswood Junior Rugby Club makes to our local community. Formed in 1947, it is one of the oldest junior rugby union clubs in Sydney and is affiliated with the senior Gordon Highlanders Rugby Club of the Shute Shield. Affectionally known as the "Stags", the club is based at Beauchamp Park, Chatswood and runs a representative programme for players from under 11s and up. With the Rugby Union season well underway, the Stags are raising money with a community raffle, the proceeds of which will enable their under 13s to tour New Zealand later in the year. Thank you to Francoise Ballard who I met with to assist in supporting this great cause and all the volunteers, coaches, players and parents who make this the great club it is today. Sporting and recreational opportunities for our youth are so important so I would encourage everyone in the community to get behind the Stags. I wish the Chatswood Junior Rugby Club every success for their New Zealand tour and 2023 season.

YOM HASHOAH HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—On Sunday 16 April, I joined leaders of Sydney's Jewish Community to mark the annual Yom Hashoah Holocaust Memorial Day. Hosted by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies at the Sir John Clancy Auditorium at the University of New South Wales, this was one of the most exceptional events I have attended in public life. I'm proud that the Willoughby electorate is home to a large Jewish community and hosts the North Shore Temple Emanuel. One thousand members of the Australian Jewish community attended and six holocaust survivors and their families lit candles in mourning for the six million lives taken and in reflection of the heroism of a people who have prevailed. Eighty years ago, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising saw incredible acts of bravery and courage. Thomas Keneally AO, the author of Schindler's Ark, which inspired the film Schindler's List, was an outstanding keynote speaker. The heroics of Oskar Schindler were remarkable and there were family members present who owe their existence to him. It was a distinct privilege to be present at this memorial event.

DR MELINA GEORGIOUSAKIS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Coinciding with International Women's Day, the Local Women of the Year Award recognises local women in Willoughby who have made outstanding contributions to the community. This year's Willoughby Woman of the Year recipient, Dr Melina Georgousakis, is the founder of Franklin Women and a champion of women in health. A local of the suburb of Willoughby, Melina has been recognised for her tireless work for women pursuing careers in the health and medical profession. Melina founded Franklin Women in 2014 in response to her own challenging experiences as a woman establishing herself in the medical profession. Today the organisation supports women through networking events where women can share their experiences, a scholarship program, professional development and training as well as mentoring opportunities. It also aims to raise the profiles of notable female scientists to highlight the contribution and role of women in the profession. I once again congratulate Melina and convey the gratitude of our community to you and all women who contribute so much in and for Willoughby and NSW.

75 ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Jewish community of my electorate and our state, who recently marked Yom Ha'atzmaut. I had the pleasure of joining members of our Jewish community and many of my parliamentary colleagues for an event celebrating the 75th anniversary of Israel's independence, hosted by the Jewish Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation of Australia, the Zionist Council of NSW and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry on Tuesday the 3rd of May 2023. Australia and Israel have a strong history of bilateral relations and friendship and I pay tribute to the role the JBD has played in fostering goodwill and strong relationships across our broader community. As the Member for Vaucluse, which has the State's highest Jewish population, I am committed to supporting that important work.

JAMES (JIMMY) BANCKS PLAQUE

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I recently joined members of the Vaucluse community, including Woollahra Cr. Richard Shields, to celebrate the life and legacy of cartoonist James (Jimmy) Bancks who created the longest-running comic strip in Australia, and beloved character 'Ginger Meggs'. At a ceremony hosted at Woollahra Library, we unveiled a plaque in Jimmy's honour with family and friends present. The plaque has been placed outside his former home of 'Winslow' in Point Piper, where he lived and worked until he died in 1952. This was the 41st plaque placed as part of the Woollahra Council historical plaque scheme, which celebrates eminent individuals and events in our community, and helps build the continuing link between local history and community.

BONDI ICEBERGS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—On Sunday the 7th of May, I joined members of Australia's most iconic club, Bondi Icebergs, for their winter season launch. The Bondi Icebergs Club has been a central fixture of the Bondi community since the Club's opening in 1929. A well-loved tradition is the Icebergs Winter Season launch when all of the Club's members stand beside the pool and jump in holding an ice cube. I acknowledge Lynne Fitzsimmons, President of the Icebergs Club, Vice President Nicki Vinnicombe, Swim Captain Shayne Keys, Directors Bernadette Harkin, Michael Karp, Lindsay Dawson, Tom Denigan, Brett Jowett and all members of the Bondi Icebergs Club.

STOCKY GALAXIAS REVIVAL

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The Stocky Galaxias is an inland galaxias fish hailing from the headwaters of Tantangara Creek, upstream of the Tantangara Reservoir in the Kosciuszko National Park. These fish were nearly wiped out by the environmental impacts caused by the Black Summer fires and excessive rainfall leading to flooding. They have also been preyed upon by introduced species of trout. In a world first, teams from Charles Sturt University and the NSW Department of Primary Industries have so successfully revived this once almost-extinct species that it is now being released back into the world. I would like to thank and acknowledge the project leads involved with the revival of the Stocky Galaxias. From Charles Sturt University they are Professor Lee Baumgartner, Dr Amina Price, Dr Katie Doyle and as technical support Mr Zac Rolfe, Mr Jarrod McPherson and Dr An Vi Vu. Also involved with this project is Mr Luke Pearce from the NSW Department of Primary Industries. This is a great example of the government working with the university sector to restore our environment through the use of scientific knowledge.

BATHURST'S WILLIAM DEELEY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—William Deeley has a passion for Bathurst and family history. In 1984, William (Bill) assisted with the formation of the Bathurst Family History Group which now has over 300 financial members, served on the committee for many years and is a Life Member. Bill was an active member of Bathurst Lions Club and Deniliquin Lions Club serving in many offices and as Deputy District Governor. Bill has served on the Committee of the Bathurst District Historical Society where he is also a Life Member. Bill has served on Whiddon Homes Local Management Board for 11 years and assists the elderly with minor maintenance and gardening. Bill regularly volunteers being the honorary photographer for the Seymour Centre and has been a member of the Bathurst Camera Club for 12 years. He has been a member of the Bathurst Plains Probus Club for over 25 years, including President, Public Officer, historian and photographer. Bill has also been a Member of the Bathurst U3a for over 25 years and received an award for 40 years' service to Freemasonry. Bill has been a Justice of the Peace for over 50 years.

BATHURST'S DAVID CONYERS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—When the flooding disaster struck in Eugowra in 2022, David Conyers selflessly donated his time and experience to help those in need representing the Bathurst electorate. David, with the help of Rotary Club of Bathurst Daybreak, installed new donated air conditioning units to uninsured residents.

He has spent months on the ground in Eugowra, working 14 hours a day, organising suppliers to donate, arranging staff and students of TAFE to assist. Using old copper from Eugowra's flood damaged air conditioning units, David was able to sell the copper and send the money to an orphanage in Uganda and the Kafunjo Community Project and Green School. David has also been recognised for his dedication and contributions to rugby union in Bathurst receiving life membership to multiple Bathurst clubs and was awarded Central West Rugby Coach of the Year 2019. His coaching career extends over 34 years across 6 continents, winning premierships with three Bathurst clubs and international titles in both American and Europe. David played 553 club and representative matches and was one of the founding members of Bathurst Secret Squirrels Rugby Club in 1990. David was also a referee for 15 years.

BATHURST'S TANYA-LEE HOLMES

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Tanya-Lee is an inspirational advocate for people with disabilities through her business Imperfectly Perfect Sugar Cookies. Whilst having a disability herself from a spinal cord injury in 2016, this has not stopped her from turning a hobby into a successful business supporting others in our community. Tanya-Lee is an affiliate of the Bathurst RSL Subbranch providing cookies for fundraisers and events, care packages to veterans and provides health and wellbeing support to veterans in the community. She is a strong advocate for mental health and suicide prevention and supports the Defence Dogs Program. Through her business, she fundraises for gifts for the Christmas Miracle Appeal and provides cookie boxes throughout the year as random acts of kindness to kids with disabilities and chronic illnesses. In 2022, Tanya-Lee won Central West Business of the Year at the Central West Mummy awards and won the Courage Award at the 2022 National Shine Awards for her work within the disability sector and veteran community. Tanya-Lee also won a silver award in the 2022 Ausmumpreneur Awards for Disabled Business Excellence.

ST MARYS RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAWN SERVICE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—Every year on ANZAC Day, people across our country come together for Dawn Services to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in serving our country in various conflicts throughout history. The St Marys RSL Sub Branch hosted another beautiful service this year that saw over 4,500 members of the local community attend to pay their respects, with a special focus on the fiftieth anniversary of the final withdrawal of Australian combat forces from South Vietnam. It was heartening to see so many local school leaders laying wreaths and paying their respects at the service and make special mention of schools from my electorate represented: Oxley Park Public School, Claremont Meadows Public School, Bennett Road Public School, Penrith Christian School, St Marys Senior High School, Wollemi College, and Colyton High School. Thank you to the RSL Sub-Branch Committee led by President, Cyril Law and Secretary, Tony Fryer for all the work in organising and running this years' service and your ongoing commitment to educating the next generation about our nations history.

NBWS GALA DINNER

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I rise today to congratulate the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter in my electorate on hosting their upcoming annual Gala Dinner. As Patron of the NBWS these past 5 years since my election as the Member for Manly, I have become aware of the faithful serving of the shelter manager, staff and Board to those women who find themselves, through no fault of their own, without a roof over their head and often no job or family to support them. These women arrive at the Shelter often with only the clothes on their back, in the middle of the night and are welcomed with open arms, unconditionally and without prejudice. At the NBWS, women are able to rebuild their lives, claim back their dignity which is a right of all of us in our society. I thank my community who I know will be supporting wholeheartedly the Gala Dinner and thank them for their continued support of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter.

PINK HOPE HIGH TEA

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I rise today to highlight the outstanding work of Pink Hope, the only charity dedicated solely to supporting Australians with hereditary cancers. This powerful grassroots charity was founded by Krystal Barter of Clontarf in my electorate of Manly over 13 years ago. Since then, the Pink Hope team has walked alongside thousands of Australians, empowering them to take charge of their health by assessing, understanding, and reducing their risk of breast, ovarian and prostate cancer. Each year, the organisation holds an annual High Tea to honour the vast community of survivors, previvors and their families facing the reality of lives with hereditary cancer. This year, the Pink Hope High Tea will be held at the Manly Golf Club, Balgowlah, on 21st May. Funds raised, along with tax-deductible donations, will especially assist those recently diagnosed with a genetic cancer link, through the provision of immediate counselling and other support. I congratulate Pink Hope on their work and wish them well in their ongoing support of those facing hereditary cancer.

CWA MANLY 100 YEARS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I rise today to congratulate the Manly Branch of the Country Women's Association on 100 years of service to the Manly community as well as congratulations to the Country Women's Association as a whole, celebrating 101 years of service to communities across Australia. I have said previously in this House that the work of the CWA, both locally and more broadly, is to be admired. I would like to remind the House that the Manly Branch of the CWA was established in 1923 to support country women and their families living in Manly far away from home. I am proud as the local member to attend a number of their community events where today they raise funds to assist those in need. To mark the 100th Anniversary of the CWA in Manly, the Branch is organising a lunch to celebrate, and an 'Edible Exhibition' showcasing a unique range of homemade cakes for the community to purchase. Thank you CWA Manly for your commitment to those less fortunate for 100 years.

NORTHERN RIVERS BUSINESS HUB

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I applaud the efforts of the work of the Northern Rivers Business Hub run by Business NSW Regional Manager Jane Laverty backed up by her fabulous team. Since the mega floods that we call an inland tsunami hit our community on the 28th of February 2022, Jane swung into action, to assist and advocate for business. The Hub is a shopfront based at the Southern Cross University and provides hands on services daily and have been and are strong advocates for business and the region. I thank them for hosting a variety of ministers both state and federal in business roundtables and for their sustained and strong advocacy for our region. In their words. "The Northern Rivers Business Hub was established as a critical response to support businesses impacted by the 2022 weather event. A summary of some of the services they provide. Connect with Business Advisors and Government services; A Hub Coordinator to assist with business questions and guide to services; Facilitation of introductions to Business Advisors: Strengthening Business Advisors and Business Connect Advisors; and Facilitation of introductions to Government agencies and services; Rural Financial Counselling Services and Service NSW. Contactable (02) 5631 8509 email northernrivers@businessnsw.com.

NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY GATEWAY COMMUNITY HUB

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I thank the Northern Rivers Community Gateway Community Hub for their commitment to stay in the Lismore CBD precinct area. I was honoured to declare open their rebuilt premises on the 28th of April 2023. Through the CEO Jenni Beeton-Mortimer and the Board Chair Robyn Smith I was able to thank all workers including volunteers and board members for their service. Uncle Glen Rhodes officiated at the Welcome to Country and Uncle Gilbert Laurie the Smoking Ceremony. The Community Gateway premises were destroyed on the 28th of February 2022, and they based themselves elsewhere whilst they rebuilt. Their service to community though never missed a beat, with their disaster management plan in place and activated over the past year and a bit they hit the ground running immediately post the 28th of February. The incidents of service went from 3,000 p.a. to over 9, 500 p.a. The levels of service have increased exponentially during this time and do not look like easing anytime soon. The cost-of-living pressures, exacerbated by what is called Australia's most costly disaster is a double whammy for our community. Government has yet to come to grips with this impact.

NSW SES WYONG UNIT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—It was a good opportunity to catch up with NSW SES Wyong Unit and to be updated on post flood organisation and preparation for future events with current weather patterns causing concern. During community meetings the Community Action Teams are being established across different areas to improve communication, provide training and enable better responses. The Wyong Unit holds an information evening to show the community how to fill and lay sandbags to minimise floodwater entering your house or divert floodwater across properties. It was also a great opportunity to catch up with volunteers to acknowledge their amazing efforts and hear stories of rescues. Thank you to Wyong Commander Matt Le Clerq for keeping the community up to date in preparation for future floods.

MAREA PAEA

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—I would like to acknowledge the successful athlete Marea Paea from Wyong District Netball Association for making the NSW U17's Squad Camp. Marea joined the Lake Munmorah Netball Club from the age of 7 years up until this year where she had a chance to play with friends at the Bateau Bay Netball Club. Marea has been a

Wyong District Netball Association representative in the following years U12's, U13's, U14's, U15's and U17's competing in the Netball New South Wales State Titles. Marea competed in the Central Coast Academy of Sport, was selected in the CIS High School team, selected in the Hunter Regional State Cup team where they went through undefeated and Central Coast Heart Premier League team U23's. She has also competed in the 2022 U17's train on squad for Netball New South Wales and Wyong District Netball Association Division 1 Grand Final this season. Congratulations to Marea in exceeding your goals and representing the Wyong community. I wish you all the best in your sporting endeavours.

NATIONAL SURFING RESERVE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—After tremendous hard work from local community members, Norah Head was 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. National surfing reserves embrace all peoples 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. But the remarkable surf break along this section of the coast is truly iconic. Congratulations to Debbie McGuigan and Jill Secomb together with their committee for their incredible hard work on the project. I am honoured to support such an amazing project.

PETER GISSING

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I am pleased to report that the Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society has been continuously operating for 60 years since 1962. The society celebrated its annual Christmas Party at the Okami Japanese restaurant on the 20th of November 2022 and also attended the now redeveloped Museum of the Riverina later in that month. I thank the President and Treasurer Geoff Burch, Vice President Geoff Haddon, Secretary Margaret Hill and all committee members for the work they voluntarily contribute towards the preservation, custodianship and promotion of local history in Wagga Wagga. I would also like to acknowledge the extraordinary work that Peter Gissing has contributed towards the society and for Wagga Wagga. Peter served on numerous committees of the society and focused his efforts on the promotion of the society on social media, traditional media and as many other outlets as possible. Peter first served the committee as President from 2013 and then in a number of other roles until 2019. President Burch and the committee saw fit to award Mr Gissing a lifetime membership to the society and I extend my congratulations to him and my thanks to the society for their work.

SYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Sylvania Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2023, namely Harrison Drew, Sebastian Severino, Zoe Ormonde and Jack Drinkwater. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Mat Egan, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Sylvania Public school's motto of 'discover and endeavour'.

GYMEA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of GyMEA North Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2023, namely School Captains, Ella Gardiner and Koby Atkins and Vice Captains, Keelie Massone and Lachlan Hennessy. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Kirsty Sharman, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify GyMEA North Public School's motto of 'service and loyalty'.

BONNET BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Bonnet Bay Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2023, namely School Captains, Zoe Johnston and Rhys Craig and Vice Captains, Harry Hill and Chloe Dotta. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Karen Deacon, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Bonnet Bay Public School's motto of 'learn to grow, grow to learn'.

TRADIES INSIGHT 5 YEARS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I want to congratulate Tradies Insight, an incredible mental health initiative that recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Over the past five years, Tradies Insight has provided invaluable support to tradies who are going through tough times. The bloke who's been at the forefront of that is Bruno Efoti. Bruno's been amazing in his efforts to reach out to men in our community who may be struggling with mental health, financial issues, or other challenges. He has a unique approach, and often connects through food...organising barbeques, Hangi's and other events to create a space where people can come together, share a meal, and open up about their struggles. It's incredible to see the impact Tradies Insight has had on the lives of so many! By providing a safe and supportive environment, Bruno's been able to connect men with the resources and assistance they need to get through tough times. And that's something we can all be proud of. I still remember the first discussions as this vision started to become a reality, and I'm looking forward to continuing to support Bruno, his wife Jo, and his team in making a positive difference for our community.

KEILEY NOBLE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I want to congratulate Narromine's Keiley Noble, who was named the 2023 RM Williams Royal Agriculture Society's (RAS) Rural Achiever. The RM Williams RAS Rural Achiever Award is a state-wide leadership program run by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW to recognise future young leaders (20 to 29 years of age) who are working hard to make a significant contribution to their community and to rural Australia. Keiley's journey towards this remarkable achievement has been paved with hard work and perseverance. Growing up in the Central West and attending school in Dubbo until Year 9, Keiley completed her senior years at Yanco Agricultural High School, before studying a double degree in Agriculture and Business at the University of New England. As well as being a mother of one, a marriage celebrant, and running a contracting and hay sales business with her husband Ross, Keiley also works as a Policy Officer at the Department of Regional NSW. As the winner of the Rural Achiever Award, she will head to the National Rural Ambassador Competition in Melbourne in 2024. Congratulations on this amazing achievement Keiley, and all the best for the future!

MICHAEL EGAN BOOK FAIR

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—It gives me great pleasure to speak about the highly successful Michael Egan Memorial Book Fair, held at Dubbo Showground on April 29 and 30, organised by the Dubbo West Rotary Club. This event is not just about books, it's also about bringing the community together for a good cause. With an impressive collection of over 30,000 books, visitors had the chance to indulge in their literary passions whatever they are. There were rare and collectible editions, along with a vast range of fiction, self-help, gardening, sport, romance, and loads of children's books, which actually proved to be the most popular and ALL went! The proceeds (around \$18,000) are being donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which provides a range of medical services to regional and remote communities. It was a massive effort to get all the books together and ensure everything ran smoothly – so well done to coordinator Colin Shanks, along with the entire Rotary team and all the volunteers for such a big effort. The crowds were amazing, particularly on the rainy Saturday, when hundreds of people turned up to help make the event such a success. A job well done!

ST GEORGE BRASS BAND - 2023 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I acknowledge and congratulate the St George Brass Band for their fantastic achievements at the 2023 Australian National Band Championships, held in Newcastle across the Easter Weekend. Competing against 68 community bands from across Australia, the stakes were certainly high. However, the St George Brass Band rose to the challenge, winning three competitions over the entire weekend. This is a fabulous achievement by any means. Their Junior Band played incredibly well from all accounts and left with a second-place trophy, only just being beaten by the Hyde Street Youth Band from Melbourne. I would like

to personally congratulate Harry Kane, Leo Huang, and Stella Shin, who all won awards in their respective solo events. The talent on offer in the St George Brass Band is second to none, and they should be immensely proud of their efforts. I would also like to congratulate the President of the St George Brass Band, Mark Croucher on this fantastic achievement, as well as all band members. I wish the St George Brass Band all the best in their upcoming performances and look forward to watching them thrive over the next few years.

NICK DOGIAS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I rise today to acknowledge a local legend, Nick Dogias, who recently received a new Australian Flag to fly proudly in his front yard. Nick has been flying the Australian flag at his house for several years now, serving as a reminder to him of how lucky we all are to live in this beautiful country. When his daughter Anna called up my office to let me know that the flag was looking a little worse for wear, it was my great pleasure to present him with a brand new one, which he was very excited to receive. As a Greek migrant, Nick is so thankful for all the amazing opportunities he has had whilst living, working, and raising a family with his wife, Magda, right here in the Oatley Electorate. We are truly blessed to live right here in New South Wales. I'd like to again thank Nick for being an absolute local champion and wish him all the best moving forward. Keep flying your flag high Nick!

CO.AS.IT SENIORS CONCERT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—In March I attended the NSW Seniors Festival Italian Concert as part of NSW Seniors Week which was organised by Co.As.It. The concert featured well known Italian musicians such as Cosima DeVito, Grace Rizzo, Claudio Sandrelli and the Frank Debellis Band. In addition to the event at Five Dock, the Co.As.It also held a concert at Mount Pritchard in the same week, giving local seniors and elderly Italians the opportunity to enjoy a fun day out and to socialise and make friends. I would like to acknowledge Co.As.It General Manager, Mr Thomas Camporeale and his team of hardworking staff including Maria, Anita, Luana, Christina and Helen. I would also like to acknowledge the President of Co.As.It, Mr Lorenzo Fazzini and the Board Directors. The Board and staff of Co.As.It are to be congratulated for their commitment to preserving and promoting Italian culture and for the services that the organisation provides, particularly in aged care.

ANZAC SERVICE AT THE KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—On Saturday 22 April I attended the ANZAC service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord West. There were over 500 people in attendance at the service, including numerous dignitaries, the NSW Minister for Veterans, representation from several RSL Sub-branches, and veterans. Kokoda veteran Reg Chard was present and laid a wreath. The keynote address for the service was given by Lieutenant Colonel Garth Callender who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I would like to acknowledge the talented choir from Strathfield North Public School who were exceptional and sang beautifully. I would also like to acknowledge the 1st Yaralla Sea Scout Group at Rhodes. With their Cub leader Lorraine, the local cubs laid a wreath during the service. It is great to see local children involved in our ANZAC Day services to educate future generations about the solemn sacrifice of our servicemen and women and so that future generations understand the value and need for peace. I would like to recognise Chair of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Ms Jennifer Collins, Secretary Ms Alice Kang and the Board for coordinating this commemoration.

HARRY'S SHED

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—Last month I visited Harry's Shed at Concord to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Community Shed. Harry's Shed opened in 2013 at the Concord Community Centre and in that time, has been growing from strength to strength. The Shed has hand tools, power tools, wood-turning lathes, welding gear, nuts and bolts, wood, recycled and repurposed timbers and other various building materials. No job is too big or too hard for the team and there is a friendly community spirit and camaraderie that is evident among members. It is a great place to work on a personal project, for members to socialise, make new friends and to do so in a welcoming environment. The group makes wooden toys from recycled materials which are then donated at Christmastime to those in need. Members often collaborate with Council, community groups and schools on projects that benefit the community and donate various items and furniture. Harry's Shed is an excellent facility and I want to congratulate each member for their contribution in making it a special place during its 10 years.

NATIONAL ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION EVENING

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Armenian National Committee of Australia, who recently hosted the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Evening, memorializing the 108th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I, alongside many of my Parliamentary Colleagues, gathered to honour the memories of the 1.5 million Armenians and over 1 million Assyrians and Greeks who were murdered during

the horrific events of the Armenian Genocide. Whilst this is a confronting and uncomfortable truth, it is so important that we continue to highlight the terrible consequences of unchecked tyranny and authoritarianism. To every man, woman and child who was impacted by this horrific act, my heart goes out to you. The Armenian Community has made significant contributions not only throughout the State, but in the Oatley Electorate as well. I would like to thank the Armenian National Committee of Australia for hosting this event and continuing to make New South Wales a safer and more inclusive place for Armenians. The Armenian Community will always have a safe and welcoming home in New South Wales.

ROTARY CLUB OF HOLROYD - 65TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Holroyd on their 65th Anniversary. It was wonderful to celebrate with members and supporters of the Club at their birthday party on Wednesday, 26th April. The Rotary Club of Holroyd is an active club that continually promotes the ethos of the Rotary Foundation – supporting educational, humanitarian, cultural programs and projects. The Rotary Club of Holroyd enthusiastically coordinates numerous successful initiatives and events to promote understanding and peace, through the improvement of health outcomes, educational opportunities, and alleviating poverty in our community. These initiatives include donating and serving food, organising fundraisers for local community groups, working with local schools and their students, and organising the annual NSW State Crime Command Excellence in Policing Awards. The Rotarians are diligently involved in the Club's projects and have fostered a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community of volunteers who are passionate about bettering the lives of others. Thank you to The Rotary of Holroyd's Club President, Julie Apps, Club Executives, and Club Directors, for their hard work and dedication towards ensuring the success and longevity of the Club. I wish the members of the Club all the best with their future initiatives.

NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OF THE 108TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Monday 24th April, I was honoured to attend the National Commemoration of the 108th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, hosted by The Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee. It was sobering to join members and supporters of our Australian-Armenian and worldwide Armenian community to remember and pay homage to over 1.5million Armenian children, women, and men whose lives were devastatingly taken by the Ottoman Empire. On the night, there were strong messages from State and Federal Members of Parliament, advocating for recognition of the Armenian Genocide within State and Federal Parliamentary jurisdictions around the world. It is more important than ever to stand in solidarity with our Australian-Armenian community. 108 years later, the risk of genocide continues against the Indigenous Armenians of Artsakh by Azerbaijan and Turkey. I am proud to support our Armenian community in their efforts towards a united and independent Armenia. Congratulations to The Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee for organising a thoughtful commemoration, and thank you to Mr Michael Kolokossian, Executive Director, and staff at The Armenian National Committee of Australia, for your ongoing efforts to advocate for the rights of a free Armenia.
