



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday 23 May 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 23 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 welcome guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, student leaders from Charlton Christian College, to the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

## *Members*

### **MEMBER FOR SUMMER HILL**

### **MEMBER FOR BANKSTOWN**

### **MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Summer Hill and the member for Bankstown are celebrating birthdays. I congratulate the members.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The member for Gosford also celebrated a birthday two days ago.

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of the Premier, I inform the House of a change to the representation of Legislative Council Ministers in the Assembly:

The Attorney General representing the Minister for Finance, and Minister for Natural Resources.

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

## *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise members that media photographers have been approved to cover today's proceedings during question time, and that a further media photographer has been approved to cover an inaugural speech this evening.

## *Members*

### **PLEDGE OF LOYALTY, OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr Anthony John Roberts took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty, oath or affirmation of allegiance and signed the Roll of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** I personally welcome back the member for Lane Cove. He has signed the Roll of the House before—

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Six times.

**The SPEAKER:** It is not always about the member for Lane Cove, as it was today. I congratulate the member.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

## *Presiding Officers*

### **TEMPORARY SPEAKERS**

**The SPEAKER:** Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 19, I nominate the following member to act as Temporary Speaker whenever requested to do so by, or in the absence of, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Speaker:

Donna Frances Reeman Davis

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from Her Excellency the Governor and His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor regarding the administration of the Government.

*Members***COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER THE PLEDGE OF LOYALTY, OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**The SPEAKER:** I report that Her Excellency the Governor has issued Commissions under the Public Seal of the State authorising the Hon. Gregory Michael Piper, MP; the Hon. Sonia Kathleen Hornery, MP; and Jason Yat-Sen Li, MP, to be persons before whom any member of the Legislative Assembly may take the pledge of loyalty, or oath or affirmation of allegiance.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I recognise Erin Dib, Houda Sawan, Souhair Harris, Dina Kheir and Nadia Bouchti, who have joined us here, guests of the member for Bankstown.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** That was excellent pronunciation.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Minister and I appreciate him giving me nine out of 10 for pronunciation.

*Members***MEMBER FOR ROCKDALE**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale has proudly welcomed the arrival of his ninth grandchild, Alfie Heares, born on 16 May 2023 and—as the member for Rockdale still works in the old measurements—weighing 9½ pounds. For those modern people who have not yet done the conversion, that is fairly large. I congratulate the member for Rockdale.

*Question Time***POLICE TASER USE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. When did the Commissioner of Police inform the Minister of the incident in Cooma involving the distressing tasing of Clare Nowland? When did the Minister inform the Premier of the incident?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:23):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Firstly, I acknowledge the terrible set of circumstances that occurred on 17 May, which was the day I was told. What happened was shocking. It is the case that none of us in this place would want that to happen to anybody. I particularly send my condolences and deepest sympathies to the Nowland family. I have spoken to the Nowland family. They, of course, are in a terrible state. As a Parliament we must ensure that this critical incident investigation plays its course. I know the Leader of the Opposition would agree with that in his legal capacity. It is therefore critically important that we let the investigation play its course, see what findings come from that and make sure that we implement those findings. To answer the Leader of the Opposition's question, I let the Premier's office know the same day that I found out about this. We must all remember the family and remember that there is an investigation underway.

**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (12:25):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier outline to the House what steps the Government is taking to ease the housing crisis in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:26):** I thank the member for Strathfield for his important question, which has dominated the thoughts and ideas of our communities across New South Wales, particularly over the past 12 months. I report to the House that rents for houses have gone up 10 per cent and rents for apartments have gone up a full 24 per cent in just a 12-month period. Despite warm words from the previous Government over the past 12 years, virtually nothing was done about it—nothing at all. It had 12 years in power to make decisive change in relation to rents, density and first home buyers, and it just got worse.

I report to the House that, since Labor was elected, it has introduced legislation that will ensure that there is a portable bond scheme in this State, will end the practice of secret rent bidding, will recruit a rental

commissioner to draw up no-grounds reasons for evictions, will allow pets in rentals on reasonable grounds and will accept the essential premise that, in a big city like Sydney, we need density where there are jobs. Further, Labor will introduce the fundamentally important legislation of a big tax cut for first home buyers in New South Wales. To go through the specifics, Labor will lift the threshold for first home buyers to pay no stamp duty at all from \$650,000 to \$800,000.

To put that in perspective, 50 per cent of the properties in New South Wales are valued below \$800,000, and two-thirds of the properties in Western Sydney are \$1 million or less. Labor's fundamental principle when it comes to first home buyers is that we would much rather people pay no tax, or a reduced amount, than a land tax forever—which is exactly what we had under the previous Government. Having been in operation for five months, the verdict is now in about the previous Government's land tax stamp duty swap. A full 52 per cent of the taxation benefit went to the top 13 per cent of first home buyers—those purchasing a property for \$1.2 million or for \$1.4 million. For every dollar in tax benefit that the Government is investing in a property between \$700,000 and \$800,000, it is \$2.50 worth of benefit for someone buying a house for \$1.4 million. [*Extension of time*]

I have no problem with someone buying their first home for \$1.4 million. If they have the means to do it, that is fine. The question is whether tax benefits should go to the people who want to buy for \$800,000 or those who want to buy for \$1.3 million, \$1.4 million or \$1.5 million.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Both.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Is that right? Both? The Opposition will have two schemes—\$700 million for one and \$700 million for the other. That is \$1.4 billion over the forward estimates. Is it any wonder that those opposite left New South Wales with \$180 billion worth of debt? It is particularly shameful for the new Barilaro faction and the Leader of The Nationals because when it comes to regional New South Wales the benefits are even worse. Just 16 per cent of the people who benefited as a result of the previous Government's legislation were from regional New South Wales. Under the scheme designed by the member for Bathurst and the leader of the Barilaro faction, 84 per cent of the tax benefit went to metropolitan Sydney.

The question we have for The Nationals is will they stand up to their masters in the Liberal Party and vote down a fundamentally and inherently unfair piece of legislation, or will we have genuine housing reform in New South Wales that is targeted at people who want to get on the housing rung for the first time? The bottom line is taxation arrangements like this should go to families who would otherwise not have been able to buy a house in New South Wales, and that is what people will get under a Labor Government.

#### POLICE TASER USE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:32):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Has the Minister viewed the body-worn camera footage of the distressing tasing of Clare Nowland? What action has she taken for the Commissioner of Police and herself to view the footage?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:33):** I thank the member for Bathurst for his question. As the member for Bathurst knows, there is an inquiry underway and it is appropriate for those people who are investigating to look at all of the evidence, including the footage. The member knows very well that the suite of evidence is critical to the outcome of the inquiry. He knows that it is important that the inquiry run its proper course without any prejudice or interference. He also knows that this family deserves the best outcome and that can only be—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was not about the investigation. It was about whether the Minister has discharged her duties to view the camera footage.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I heard the question and I understand the sensitivity around it. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The member for Bathurst knows only too well, and so does the member for Wahroonga, that it is critically important that the outcome has integrity for the family because that is what they deserve. It is absolutely critical—

**Mr Paul Toole:** You're not the investigator.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I note the interjection from the former police Minister. I say to him that this is a critical incident investigation that is being conducted by the Homicide Squad.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The most senior police in this State are investigating it, and they are the people who should be looking at the suite of evidence. The correct procedures are underway and that is exactly what has happened.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Mr Speaker, I want you to know that I have never used this place to politicise an investigation, and nor would I ever do it.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. Members will come to order.

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:35):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the immediate action this Government is taking to confront the workload challenges facing teachers in New South Wales?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:36):** I thank the member for Campbelltown. I would be more than pleased to update the House on what this Government is doing immediately to address the crippling workload that members opposite left our teachers with in our public schools. Not only have we acknowledged the workload that teachers are crippled by but—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will stop assisting the Minister.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** If members opposite listened, they might learn something about treating essential workers with respect. It has only been two months, but we have taken immediate action in this regard. Let me update the House on what that has been. We have paused pilot programs and begun a line-by-line audit of the hundreds of policies that the previous Government put on our teachers. It is a novel idea to members opposite, but this Government believes that teachers should be in classrooms, teaching our children, not filling out paperwork. That is why we have immediately expanded the number of administration workers we are hiring to support our teachers in our schools and to do the work that enable teachers to teach.

In fact, this morning I was speaking to the new Labor member for Camden, who is sitting right next to the member for Campbelltown. She said to me that she did a mobile office on the weekend—I bet the people of Camden are not used to that! At the mobile office a teacher from Mount Annan High School came up to her and said, "This announcement by your Government will change my life and mean that I can stay in the profession." And we need her there. We are hiring people to fill out the paperwork for excursions, perform data entry and do all the stuff that means our teachers are working until nine or 10 o'clock at night. We need them in the classroom. This Government is taking action to support our hardworking teachers.

The background to all this is that we need to improve learning outcomes for children in our schools. The difference between us and members opposite is we know that the thing that can make the difference to learning outcomes is qualified teachers in front of our children. In order to put qualified teachers in front of our children, we need to free up their time to be able to teach. We are easing the workload of teachers who have been burnt out. *[Extension of time]*

As part of the announcement we made last week, I am pleased to inform the House of funding for 284 extra schools to either hire additional admin staff or extend the hours of existing staff from next term, term 3, to ease the workload of teachers. That is only a matter of weeks away. Our teachers in New South Wales—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** How many schools are there?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I note the interjections of those opposite. I have said before—and I will say it at every available opportunity—that Opposition members have absolutely abdicated their right to come into this place and talk about teachers in New South Wales.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Teachers were leaving in droves under the previous Coalition Government, in their thousands, because of the crippling workload that it put on teachers. In just two months, we have already taken action. Over 12 years under the previous Government, teachers' workloads exploded, yet those opposite have the hide to come into this place and heckle us when we talk about the work that we are doing for their teachers in their public schools. I hazard a guess that they are getting a lot of feedback from their teachers about how they need this. I wonder what they are saying about the previous Minister and the lack of respect from the previous Government. Opposition members who are in touch with their communities well know—I can see it on their

faces—that they are getting feedback from their schools and principals on that. I can reassure the teachers and parents of New South Wales that, finally, after more than a decade, they have a government that values their work, acts on that value and respects them—and it is not just words. We are backing it up with action, and we are only just getting started to support the teachers that we need to teach our children.

### FLOOD RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:41):** My question is directed to the Premier. In November last year the communities of Eugowra, Molong, Forbes, Parkes, Canowindra and Cudal were significantly impacted by floodwaters. Six months on, many people are still displaced, living in pods and caravans. What ongoing support will the Government provide to those impacted communities to get them back into their homes and businesses?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:42):** I thank the member for his question. He is right. The Government is, of course, aware of the devastating floods in the Cabonne shire in November 2022. I acknowledge the former Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience for setting up the NSW Reconstruction Authority. A recovery assistance point was opened on 21 November 2022 and operated in the Cabonne shire for six months. Some 700 people from the surrounding districts registered for and received access to grants. I would be interested to hear from the local member about how that was rolled out. We know that natural emergencies will continue to happen in New South Wales. We must learn from previous events to ensure that money provided by the New South Wales and the Commonwealth governments is spent efficiently and is focused on recovering those communities and getting them back on their feet.

The previous Government committed \$40 million for temporary housing programs and \$19 million for the At-Home Caravans Program. Again, it would be interesting to hear from the member for Orange and other members who have experience of that program as to whether the pod villages are a priority or, if possible, we could deploy caravans to homes to allow people back onto their properties. That is important for security, in particular, and it is important for those communities to get back on their feet. I know that the member for Lismore has a detailed understanding of flood recovery, having lived through devastating floods last year.

We will of course work with the local member to ensure that the money that has already been committed gets these communities back on their feet, and that includes working with the member for Orange on the local preschool. I know that the Minister for Education and Early Learning is focused on that. I have no doubt that the member for Orange will be applying for the \$660 million worth of emergency road repair funding that the New South Wales Government is rolling out over the next two years. It is crucial for transport links and logistics, and to lift up economies that have been devastated as a result of natural emergencies.

### RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:44):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the progress the Government is making on its commitment to improve health outcomes for rural and regional New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:44):** I thank the member for Lismore for her question. She is an incredibly hardworking advocate for her electorate. I am having one-on-one meetings with every single CEO across the local health districts. Yesterday I met with Lynne Weir, CEO of Northern NSW Local Health District, and she spoke very highly of the member for Lismore, and the Federal member in that area, for their incredible advocacy, particularly over the past few years. So I thank the member for Lismore, very much.

Last week I spent some time with the member for Barwon in his very expansive electorate. One of the communities that we visited was Walgett—an incredibly important remote community that is doing it tough at the moment. I thank the member for Barwon. Everywhere we went in his electorate, people pulled either me or him aside to express their thanks for his advocacy. He has an important role in making sure that the people of western New South Wales have a voice in this place. I thank him, very much. One of the meetings I had was with the chief executive officer of the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, Christine Corby, and her team. I then met with Suzanne Mahoney of the Walgett Multipurpose Service, which is part of the Multipurpose Service Program providing hospital and aged-care services in the bush. Those important services are doing great work in rural and regional New South Wales.

I have been saying for four years now that we need to focus beyond the Blue Mountains and make sure that our rural, remote and regional communities feel that they have a strong voice in this place, and that their health care and access to health care is as good as anyone's in metropolitan areas. Last week I was proud to unveil, along with the member for Barwon, a mobile CT imaging van that will travel the length and breadth of western New South Wales, providing important CT imaging to people who would otherwise have to travel hundreds of kilometres for what many of us in the city simply take for granted. I spoke with Tom Capell, the senior CT

radiographer on site. He said that in the first week of operation that van had saved someone's life by enabling an early diagnosis so they could then receive the treatment they needed. I made it clear to him and to Luke Sloane, the Coordinator General of Regional Health, that this is the type of thing we need in western New South Wales. We need to go beyond CT and look at other imaging to make it easy for people to access health care in and around those rural and remote communities. [*Extension of time*]

One of the other communities I popped in and had a chat to was in Dubbo, about the work that they are doing in virtual care. The Dubbo Virtual Care Hub is doing an enormous amount of work to bring the very best medical support, advice and clinicians to rural and remote communities. It is early days and there is a lot more that we can do in this space, but it is heading in the right direction. We are focused on addressing the healthcare challenges faced in rural and regional New South Wales with initiatives like vCare at Dubbo and the mobile CT scanner. Within the first week of Parliament, we also established the lower House Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health to drive implementation of the recommendations of the landmark inquiry into rural and regional health—an inquiry that the National Party and the Liberal Party tried to prevent happening.

With the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Lismore, this Government is driving those recommendations to send a clear message to public servants that regional and rural health care matters just as much as health care in metropolitan communities. We want to ensure that people from Walgett, Gilgandra, Bathurst, Orange and Moree—which I visited the other day with the member for Northern Tablelands—feel like they have a strong advocate in this place. Under a Minns Labor Government, they do. They have a team who is focused on their health care. They have a team who is focused on the health services that they need and deserve. They have a team who is prepared to listen and prepared to make improvements when it matters most. I can assure regional and rural members in this place that, no matter what political party they are from, the door is open for improvements to health services in the communities that they do so well to represent.

#### POLICE TASER USE

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:49):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. What will the Minister do to ensure the investigation into what today she called "the shocking tasering of Clare Nowland" is robust and transparent—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will be heard in silence. I ask the member to begin the question again. Members will not interrupt the question.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Again, my question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. What will the Minister do to ensure the investigation into what today she called "the shocking tasering of Clare Nowland" is robust and transparent and its report is made public within 60 days?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:50):** I thank the member for her question. I remind the House that there is a very serious investigation underway. It is an investigation, as we well know, that the New South Wales Commissioner of Police has sought to put in place and that is being run by the Homicide Squad—some of the best detectives we have in this State. I support the work that they do. I say to the people on the other side that politicising this matter will not be of any assistance. I will let the House know something very important: A council worker employed at Yallambee Lodge has received at least one death threat already. Let that be on the consciences of those opposite if they want to keep going down this path.

#### STATE FINANCES

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:52):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General, representing the Minister for Finance.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. The member for Wairoa will come to order. The member for Prospect will be heard in silence.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** Will the Attorney General please update the House on the economic and budgetary challenges facing New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will come to order. He should perhaps sit back in his seat and adopt a more relaxed attitude—he is ready to pounce. The member will calm down.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:52):** It has been a long wait. So those opposite should get a hot water bottle and some warm milk and settle in because they will be there for a very long time. They should get the slippers out and give each other neck rubs. Let me tell them, nothing helps. Nothing numbs the pain.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Humour does not make it easier for Hansard. Members will come to order and be respectful of each other. The member for Bankstown will come to order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I thank the member for Prospect for the question and congratulate him on his re-election. I look forward to working with him as my Parliamentary Secretary. The member has asked me to provide an economic and budgetary update on the challenges facing this new Government. I thank him for that. I say to the member and to the House that what we have inherited over here is a sad reality of what has been left to us. Let us have a look at some of the metrics.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Lowest per capita debt in Australia.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Why would he of all people interject? The member for Hornsby is an endearing character. The Liberals have never auctioned off a dinner with Alister, have they?

**The SPEAKER:** Let the record show that the Attorney General is referring to the member for Wahroonga.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Sorry—the member for Wahroonga. You would choke yourself on an arancini ball to get out of the rest of the meal if he was your dinner partner. He is going to get mugged by reality, so he should just settle in. I can advise that in 2011, under the last Labor Government, gross debt was \$22.5 billion. That is what we on this side bequeathed to those opposite. In 12 long years—or short years, in economic times—that has now ballooned to \$128.7 billion. Just so the member for Hornsby knows, this is not a reflection on the former Premier. I thank him for his service. There is only one set of fingerprints on it—those of the member for Hornsby. Per person, Labor's debt was \$3,153. It is now \$16,000 for every person in New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Interest payments paid by the Labor Government when we left office were \$1.9 billion a year, which is very manageable. They are now \$4.5 billion a year. Those opposite should not blame COVID-19. This is all about their economic mismanagement. It is bad enough to leave a bad result—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will come to order. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** —but trying to hide it from the people of New South Wales augments the problem. This is what they hid: the fact that they left the salaries for 1,100 nurses unfunded from 30 June. We heard all the promises about this. There are 1,100 of them unfunded. They failed to provide enough support for kids living in out-of-home care—does it get any more cruel?—leaving a funding shortfall, starting from 30 June, of \$700 million over the forward estimates.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Cyber Security NSW has been left unfunded from 30 June next year to the tune of a whopping \$70 million over the forward estimates. The best one of all, as if they wanted to augment the cruelty visited upon nurses by doing it to mums and dads and kids as well, is that the Active Kids vouchers are unfunded from 30 June by \$350 million.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I know that under the member for Hornsby we had the incredible shrinking budget papers, but those opposite cannot shrink that figure and they cannot escape from it.

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

### ONECROWN CEMETERIES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:57):** My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property. Given that the Minister did not inform Lee Shearer of her termination from the role as administrator of OneCrown Cemeteries prior to today's public announcement of her replacement, does he agree with her comment, "I really don't know that it bodes well for a government with integrity and connection to people"?

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (12:58):** I thank the member for the question. What the Government is doing today is ensuring that Sydney's cemeteries have the leadership and capability required to address the future challenges of the industry.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** For several years, those opposite could not make a decision on which way they would go. All that indecision over those three years has created a situation: We do not have cemetery space. There are two or three years left, all because they could not make a decision. Well, guess what.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about why the Minister did not inform her. It has nothing to do with cemeteries.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. I am sure the Minister will be more relevant in his response.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** My greatest concern is the lack of future burial space. While those opposite did nothing about it, we on this side have acted.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Members are far too disorderly. I cannot hear the answers given by Ministers.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Leader of the House has made a general observation. I assure members that interjections are coming from both sides of the House. The crossbench members have been excellent. I ask members to consider how this disorder is affecting the demeanour of the House. The Minister is directing his remarks through the Speaker; it is a conversation between us. Members will keep out of it and listen. The Minister has the call.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Mr Speaker, I seek additional information.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** My time is up.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour seeks additional information. Two minutes is granted if the Minister wishes to complete his answer.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have concluded my answer.

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

### SYDNEY TRAINS REVIEW

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:02):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister inform the House of the Government's response to the interim report of the Sydney Trains review, phase one?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (13:02):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport for her question and her advocacy for better public transport services in her community and across New South Wales. Any passenger in Sydney could tell you that our train network is not working the way it should. One needs only to look at the disastrous systems failures, or how patronage is down and has not recovered since COVID, to know that something is seriously wrong. Passengers have voted with their feet. They have abandoned our trains because they have been burnt too many times. People needing to get home to their families have been abandoned on train platforms without proper information about how long they might have to wait or what their other options might be to get home. So it is not surprising that people have lost faith in our train network.

On becoming Minister for Transport, it immediately became clear to me that we needed to act urgently to get to the bottom of these problems, to understand the mess that was left to us by those opposite and to understand the real state of the rail network. So we assembled the best team in the business to undertake a comprehensive review of the whole network—its infrastructure, its systems and its maintenance. Chaired by Carolyn Walsh, her expert team has embarked on that review and made its recommendations for repairing the system. Yesterday I released its interim report, the *Sydney Trains Review: Phase One*.

We knew that there were huge problems, but what the panel has uncovered is simply shocking. Central to the system failures—the delays and cancellations that passengers have suffered in recent times—has been an appalling backlog of maintenance work. The Sydney rail network is old. It is big and it is complex. All rail networks require a huge amount of maintenance to keep them functioning. Overhead electrical cables need to be inspected and sometimes replaced. Tracks need to be ground smooth due to wear and tear. Sometimes they need to be taken up and replaced. The same goes for sleepers and the ballast underneath them. Signals, switches and safety equipment that stops a train if a driver misses a stop signal are all critical. Hundreds of kilometres of railway needs to be constantly inspected, assessed, refurbished and replaced. In order to do that critical work, maintenance



teams take possession of sections of the rail network. They close down sections to do the work. The report has revealed that— [*Extension of time*]

In 2017 former Minister for Transport Andrew Constance—an affable bloke, now running for the Australian Senate, I understand—

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** He decided that he wanted more trains, more often and no matter what. To deliver those trains, he imposed a new timetable on the whole system. The problem is that former Minister Constance forgot—maybe he forgot—or failed to take account of the constant need for maintenance of our railway network. So things that should have been inspected, refurbished or replaced were not, because maintenance crews could not get enough access to the network. That is just one of the fundamental reasons that we are confronting this problem, that passengers are facing constant delays and cancellations, and that urgent action is required.

The evidence is very clear. The report tells us that the network was already stretched very thin when the pandemic hit. Then there were floods, fires, industrial action and the pandemic, which combined to further degrade our system. So former Minister Constance's brilliant scheme was effectively building a ticking time bomb that would blow up the whole system when the maintenance neglect came home to roost. The details of the report show how a series of incompetent transport Ministers drove our Sydney train network into the ground. They neglected and ignored the need for maintenance to keep our system running. We are a responsible Government. We accept all 12 recommendations of this report. We are taking immediate action to fix the challenges facing New South Wales and get our transport system back on track.

### MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (13:07):** My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property. In the last Parliament, the Labor Party supported a Legislative Council inquiry recommendation that stated:

That the NSW Government, in the termination of agency heads for which Ministers have direct managerial responsibility, adopt a practice whereby Ministers have the decency, integrity and professionalism to communicate the termination directly themselves and give also their reasons for the termination.

Given the Minister's treatment of Lee Shearer, does he lack decency, integrity and professionalism?

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the Minister, I note that the question was inordinately long. However, that was due mostly to a direct quote. For that reason, and that reason alone, I will allow the question to stand.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (13:08):** I explained myself clearly this morning on the radio in terms of an—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer the question.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have spoken to Lee Shearer, the current administrator. Let us just put this into context. Let us put it into perspective. Her contract expires in four days. I was not terminating anyone. We do not make decisions in this place the way those opposite did, where they picked their mates off the front bench and put on the highest bidder. We embrace proper process.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. The member for Hornsby will come to order.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I had a conversation with Lee Shearer this morning. I did apologise, as I should have.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I did, and that is clear. But I have been communicating with Lee Shearer throughout the process as well. So has my office. Let us get that clear. But we embrace proper process and merit-based assessment, and we have the best candidate appointed as administrator. There is nothing wrong with that. There is a lot wrong with what all those opposite have done.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Has the Minister concluded his answer?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** As the Minister has concluded his answer, there is no point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty. Will the Minister please update the House on the New South Wales Government's support of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament and the significance of the upcoming referendum?

**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) (13:11):** I acknowledge the member for Blue Mountains and her heartfelt and passionate support of First Nations issues, especially the Voice. The New South Wales Government is fully committed to the national Voice. After 65,000 years of continuous culture, it is time that Australia's First Peoples are recognised in our 122-year-old Constitution. A Voice to Parliament ensures that the real experts in Indigenous communities can give direct advice to Parliament and government about the issues that affect them. The referendum will ask a very simple question: Should we amend the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?

It is a pretty simple question and the answer is simple too: yes. This is a significant opportunity to unite the country and finally recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples in the Constitution. On this side of the House, we understand and support progress on self-determination. The New South Wales Government has made a commitment to begin the process of treaty with Indigenous communities after the Voice referendum has been conducted. The Minns Labor Government has committed \$5 million to a 12-month consultation process with First Nations communities on a treaty process for New South Wales. This consultation will provide a first step towards a truthful and honourable basis for reconciliation.

We also welcome and will honour the previous Government's support for, and commitment to, the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap. That agreement commits the parties to shared authority and decision-making in relation to Closing the Gap. Simply put, giving Aboriginal people in New South Wales a real say in matters that affect their lives leads to better outcomes. That is what the national referendum on a Voice to Parliament is all about. It recognises that the experience, knowledge and wisdom from people in community leads to better outcomes. The Voice will deliver practical change. The New South Wales Government's position is clear: We support the Voice, and we support treaty and truth-telling. Sadly, the Opposition has defaulted on its original position. [*Extension of time*]

Just days before the last election, the member for Epping, former Premier Perrottet, said:

The point of the voice is to have greater engagement on issues which affect First Nations people ... it's about having a voice at the table.

We on this side of the House agree. I acknowledge the former Premier for his public position. But, unfortunately, according to the new Leader of the Opposition, that commitment was only window-dressing ahead of an election. On 2GB recently the Leader of the Opposition said, "That was the Premier's decision, not the Cabinet's decision", and that the former Premier's position was something "he had to do ... in the lead-up to an election".

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Our position is not determined by an imminent election; it is rooted in a long commitment to reconciliation with First Nations communities. The Opposition is at risk of falling out of step with mainstream Australia. The list of organisations, businesses and individuals supporting the Voice continues to grow. I know that there are members on the other side of the Chamber who agree with this side and that the Voice is important and that people in our State should vote yes. I acknowledge that. But I want to leave members with the words of Thomas Mayo:

I want Australians to see our country in all its glory—unified with many millennia of connection to our lands. A nation without the gaps in life expectancy and incarceration rates that are the burden of our colonial past. But we are going to need a whole lot more help to realise it.

Now is the time to ask again: how can I help?

He said:

The Voice is a chance for Australia to glimpse a better future.

### CASHLESS GAMING

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:16):** Mr Speaker, I take the opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I ask the member for Wagga Wagga to begin again.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker and endorse your comments about the behaviour of the crossbench in Parliament today. We are setting a standard, frankly. My question is directed to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. During the recent election campaign the people of New South Wales clearly indicated that they want action to bring about a cashless gaming system in the State for poker machines to stop money laundering and assist problem gamblers and their families. How will the Government act to make cashless gaming a reality in New South Wales?

**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) (13:17):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question and acknowledge his commitment to this very important policy area. The Minns Labor Government is committed to gambling reform, reducing gambling harm and stopping money laundering and criminal activity associated with poker machines in New South Wales. Harmful gambling impacts not only individuals but also their loved ones and the broader community.

Addressing the harms from gambling, including from electronic gaming machines, requires an evidence-based government policy that gets the balance right. That is why the New South Wales Government has committed to a 12-month cashless gaming trial of at least 500 gaming machines. The trial will be overseen by an independent panel, which will advise on technology, infrastructure, cost, impact on industry and employment, and options to reduce gambling harm to make sure we get the solution right. We in the Labor Party support efforts to reduce harm from gambling in our communities while continuing to support jobs and employment, especially in rural and regional areas.

In addition to the cashless gaming trial, the New South Wales Government has committed to a comprehensive range of other gaming reforms, including banning clubs with pokies from making donations to political parties; reducing gaming machine numbers in New South Wales; reducing cash input limits to \$500 for all new gaming machines from 1 July 2023 while working to reduce the limits on existing older machines where possible; introducing a responsible gaming officer for venues with more than 20 machines; expanding the self-exclusion register to the whole State and exploring third-party exclusion processes; exploring the use of facial recognition technology in clubs and pubs; and establishing a \$100 million fund that will help facilitate the trial as well as fund harm minimisation programs, including providing an additional \$10 million a year into the Responsible Gambling Fund administered by the Office of Responsible Gambling.

The Government has already taken the step of removing external VIP signage by enforcing the Gaming Machines Act. Working with industry, the Government will ensure the signs begin to be phased out from September, with a hard deadline of 1 December. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga and look forward to working with him and the crossbench to implement meaningful reforms in that important public policy area.

## RURAL AND REGIONAL ROADS

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:19):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on what immediate action the Government is taking to improve road conditions in regional and rural New South Wales?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (13:20):** I thank the member for Shellharbour for her question. She has been a long-term advocate for regional roads and has had a strong, long-term commitment around the ramps on the M1 in her electorate. I am looking forward to working with the member in her new capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads. I also thank all members on both sides of the House who have spoken to me directly about regional transport and roads in their areas.

One of the first things I did when I was appointed to this position was to write to all of the councillors, local governments and regional members of Parliament and reach out that hand to say, "Let's do this together." After 12 years of neglect, our roads in the regions are in a terrible state. Yes, we have had some bad weather, but we know that it has been a problem. I particularly congratulate the member for Murray. We met last sitting week and talked about the work starting on the Cobb Highway—hopefully, in July or August this year we will have that back on track. The member for Coffs Harbour and I had a bit of a chat about things in his electorate. I am meeting with the member for Port Macquarie, I have met with the member for Blue Mountains and I have spoken to the member for The Entrance. I am meeting with the member for Orange later this week, and there is more to come. Those local members know the way to get it done: They meet with the Minister and have a chat about what is going on.

There is one difference between the approach on this side of the House and the approach we had for all those years under those opposite. We all remember the Barilaro approach—cut up the State and those who live in

a blue or yellow electorate, a Liberal or Nationals electorate, would get the money. But did the electorates of those on this side of the House get anything? No. But it is a fresh start in New South Wales. We respect every single community in this State and the decisions that they have made.

I go specifically to the money that we are putting on the table. Under the last Government, we saw the pothole fund after those awful floods—the \$50 million insult, which those opposite then upped to \$500 million. That is a pretty good amount of money, one would say, and the regional mayors were pretty excited at first because they thought, "We are getting \$280 million and those in Sydney are getting \$220 million. At last the regions win." But when one actually broke it down, the money that the councils in the regions were getting was one-fifth of the amount. [*Extension of time*]

I asked people in regional electorates, and we found that communities in regional areas who had been through those terrible floods—the member for Upper Hunter had terrible floods in his area, and the member for Orange was speaking about the floods in his area, as was the member for Dubbo—were getting one-fifth of the amount of money that was going to Sydney councils. That is so wrong, so we have more than doubled the Emergency Road Repair Fund. We have put \$390 million worth of investment into it.

I will give the House an indication of what that looks like on the ground. Electorates like Albury will get more than \$15 million out of that. Just say thanks; that is all the member for Albury needs to do. Barwon will get \$74 million, all based on the formula of kilometres funding. Electorates like Dubbo will be getting \$16 million; and Goulburn, \$13.8 million. Monaro will be getting \$6.5 million and funding for some half-finished projects that members opposite could not get around to finishing.

While I am on that, we might talk about the \$334 million that we have put into road capital projects and talk about the member for Bega. He had a fantastic 17 per cent swing in his electorate, because he is a hard worker. You lot had not completed the Princes Highway and we thought, "Well, we might do that." We looked at the Cutagee bridge, for which those opposite gave them the money and then took it away. They gave the community \$7 million and then said, "Sorry, we forgot about it." We will make sure that those programs actually get the money needed to complete them. We have not forgotten the member for Upper Hunter. The difference between our commitments and those of members opposite is that ours will actually get finished.

### *Motions*

## **INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That the business of the House be interrupted on:

- (1) Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 6.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Davidson.
- (2) Wednesday 24 May 2023 at:
  - (a) 2.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for Oxley and the member for Myall Lakes; and
  - (b) 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for Heathcote, the member for Balmain and the member for Drummoyne.
- (3) Thursday 25 May 2023 at:
  - (a) 2.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Wollondilly; and
  - (b) 4.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Vacluse.
- (4) Tuesday 30 May 2023 at 2.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for South Coast and the member for East Hills.
- (5) Wednesday 31 May 2023 at:
  - (a) 1.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Castle Hill;
  - (b) 2.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Pittwater; and
  - (c) 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for Leppington and the member for Liverpool.
- (6) Thursday 1 June 2023 at the end of the routine of business following question time to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for Ryde and the member for Holsworthy.
- (7) Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 2.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Penrith.
- (8) Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 6.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the member for Cabramatta and the member for Fairfield.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 37 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission entitled *Report on the Operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009: 2021-2022*, received on 22 May 2023. I order that the report be printed.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 138 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Five Years (2017-2022) of Independent Monitoring of NSW Police Force Critical Incident Investigations*, dated May 2023, received on 22 May 2023. I order that the report be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 38EC of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports of the Auditor-General:

- (1) Report entitled *Managing the affairs of people under financial management and/or guardianship orders*, dated 18 May 2023, received that day.
- (2) Performance Audit report entitled *Regulation and monitoring of local government*, dated 23 May 2023, received that day.

I order that the reports be printed.

**NSW STATE CORONER****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 37 of the Coroners Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report by the NSW State Coroner entitled *Deaths in Custody/Police Operations Report for the year 2022*, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 19 May 2023.

*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS****Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that Janelle Anne Saffin was elected Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following paper petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Wagga Wagga and Griffith Cancer Treatment Centres**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly eliminate patient costs for radiation treatment at Wagga Wagga and Griffith cancer treatment centres, received from **Dr Joe McGirr**.

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

I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Bills***FIRST HOME BUYER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023****First Reading**

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

## Second Reading Speech

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:30):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the First Home Buyer Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The Government was elected with a comprehensive plan to address housing affordability. A place to call home is fundamental to everyone's wellbeing and the ability to pursue their dreams. Buying a first home is a significant milestone in life, but it has become more difficult to achieve. First home buyers face higher hurdles than in previous years, meaning it now takes longer to save the money needed for a deposit for a home. First home buyers in the 1990s took around six years to save a 20 per cent deposit and one year to save stamp duty. It now takes around 10 years to save a 20 per cent deposit and two years to save for stamp duty. That is based on a New South Wales household with a median household income saving 15 per cent of its income to purchase a median-priced dwelling.

This Government went to the last election with a clear policy to end the forever tax on the family home introduced without a mandate by the Perrottet Government—a land tax that was comprehensively rejected by the people of New South Wales at the March election. Instead, the people of this State chose our plan, which targets assisting those buying a home for up to \$1 million, with increased support for those buying above \$650,000. The first home buyers that we and the people of New South Wales want to help most tend to be those on lower incomes who find it more difficult to save enough while paying someone else rent.

The bill we introduce today will close off access to the former Government's forever land tax scheme, sneakily called the First Home Buyer Choice, where the choice was between paying stamp duty or a forever tax on a family home purchased for up to \$1.5 million. That scheme was a false choice: pay stamp duty now or pay land tax for as long as you stay in that home. It was also unfair. It gave the biggest discounts on stamp duty to first home buyers who already had enough purchasing power for properties well above the average price for houses in regional areas, and apartments and modest houses in Sydney metropolitan areas. As a result of the changes this Government is introducing, more first home buyers will not pay any stamp duty and more will get a concession. None will pay a forever tax, and the thresholds will cut off at a \$1 million purchase price so that the cost of the assistance program will benefit those who truly need help buying their first home.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill will expand support for first home buyers by increasing the thresholds that apply under the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme from 1 July 2023. The first home buyer stamp duty exemption threshold for the purchase of a dwelling will increase from \$650,000 to \$800,000. No stamp duty will be paid by first home buyers purchasing a home for up to \$800,000. Currently, a first home buyer purchasing a home for \$800,000 needs to pay stamp duty of \$31,090 or opt in to the former Government's land tax, and pay an annual bill starting at around \$1,500 and continue paying for as long as they own the property. The stamp duty concession threshold will increase from \$800,000 to \$1 million. This is a sliding concession where a first home buyer purchasing for just above \$800,000 pays a small proportion of the full stamp duty that would otherwise be payable and a first home buyer purchasing for just below \$1 million will pay most of the full stamp duty that would otherwise be payable.

This Government's support for first home buyers will come without any obligation to pay an ongoing annual land tax. The bill also will increase the residence requirement under the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme from six months to 12 months to target the benefits to owner-occupiers, not investors. The 12-month continuous occupation of the property as their principal place of residence must commence within 12 months of the first home buyer taking possession to satisfy the residence requirements. For consistency, this extended residence requirement also will apply to first home owner grants for new homes and the duty deferral for owner-occupier off-the-plan purchases.

The Government's fiscal outlays on first home buyer support are intended to increase the owner-occupied share of New South Wales dwellings, helping more young people to get into their own homes earlier in life. In practice, under the current policy, around 30 per cent of people who receive a first home buyer duty exemption or concession become landlords within 12 months of completing the residence requirement, renting their properties out. The duty concessions received by this group are helping neither home ownership nor housing affordability. The change made with the Government's new policy will help to reduce the direction of these fiscal subsidies to a group of landlords.

The bill will close off access to the so-called First Home Buyer Choice land tax scheme from 1 July 2023. The former Government commenced the scheme on 16 January 2023, shortly before the election. Dominic Perrottet's land tax on the family home was introduced without taking the new tax to an election. That scheme provides help to pay for properties worth up to \$1.5 million. This is not appropriately targeted as the Sydney median price for a home is around \$1 million. Around 50 per cent of the benefit of the stamp duty exemption has

been going to just 13 per cent of first home buyers who can afford homes worth between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

The first home buyers who have already opted into the scheme will be grandfathered. This means that they will continue paying annual land tax until they sell the property. Many first home buyers who have opted into the scheme and bought a house for \$1 million or more have avoided a large sum of stamp duty, so it is appropriate that they continue to pay what they have agreed to. But our better targeted assistance program will no longer force future first home buyers paying less than \$800 000 to do this, and it will no longer give first home buyers who can already afford \$1 million or more a publicly funded boost to their purchasing power.

The Government is working closely with relevant public and private sector system operators to ensure that there is a smooth transition on 1 July 2023. First home buyers who sign a contract to purchase a home on or after 1 July 2023 will benefit from the increased support under the First Home Buyers Assistance Program we bring to this House today. Access to the land tax scheme will not be available for those who sign a contract on or after 1 July 2023. Eighty-four per cent, or five out of every six people, buy their first home for less than \$1 million. This bill is for them. It gives them an advantage against investors and established home owners, who do have to pay stamp duty when purchasing another home.

The former Government's scheme allowed first home buyers paying above \$1 million, up to \$1.5 million, to avoid stamp duty if they opted to pay a land tax. That scheme did not help home buyers paying between \$650,000 and \$800,000 anywhere near enough, but it gave a tremendous boost to people who were spending more than \$1 million on their first home. Only 13 per cent of first home buyers currently spend more than \$1 million and up to \$1.5 million on their first home, yet 50 per cent of the total stamp duty being waived under the old Government's scheme was helping this group. Much more help was going to people buying more expensive homes than to people struggling to buy a lower cost home. The so-called choice for home buyers paying between \$650,000 and \$1 million was to pay land tax instead, but the stamp duty discount for people with less to spend was much smaller. Labor's scheme simply abolishes stamp duty for people paying up to \$800,000 for their first home, and it gives concessions up to \$1 million without asking first home buyers to sign up to a land tax instead.

Labor's scheme is better for most people, and it is also fairer for people living in all parts of New South Wales. Over the two financial years before the Liberal Party introduced its "choice" scheme, 45 per cent of people who received first home buyer assistance were from outside metropolitan Sydney. Since the Liberal scheme began in November 2022, just 16 per cent of the people who opted in to the new scheme bought a first home in regional and rural New South Wales. The National Party should be ashamed of supporting a policy that gave so much more support to first home buyers paying up to \$1.5 million and gave much less help to families trying to buy their first homes in places like the Tweed, Coffs Harbour, Orange and Bathurst, where the average home costs more than \$650,000.

Labor's plan to abolish stamp duty for all first home buyers up to \$800,000 will benefit the people who need it in Sydney and in regional New South Wales. A family in Seven Hills in Sydney's west paying \$755,000 for their first apartment will not pay any stamp duty and will be \$21,844 better off under Labor. A family paying the average price of \$799,000 for their first home in Coffs Harbour will not pay any stamp duty and will not be forced to "choose" a land tax; they will pay nothing under Labor. A family buying their first home for the average price of \$906,000 in Fairfield will pay around \$16,000, instead of the \$36,000 they would have paid under the Liberals—and, again, no land tax. A family in Dubbo buying their first home will continue to pay no stamp duty and will be \$17,000 better off than an investor trying to buy the same \$500,000 property, but they will no longer be subsidising a government program that gives a first home buyer with \$1.4 million to spend a \$61,000 discount on their stamp duty, as they were under the Liberals.

We have heard from those opposite about how popular their scheme was—but it turns out the scheme was particularly popular amongst people who could already spend a lot more, and much less popular with those struggling to pay the average price of a home. It was a generous scheme, and very well taken up by people paying more than \$1 million for their first home, but the benefit was marginal for people paying between \$700,000 and \$800,000. On current trends, by the year's end more than 5,000 people paying between \$700,000 and \$800,000, who would have paid stamp duty or a land tax under the policies of the Liberal Party, will instead pay nothing thanks to the changes that Labor introduces today.

The old policy was not about giving people a choice. It was classic Liberal Party policy to give some people with more money more choice, while working people and people in regional New South Wales got far less. The Labor Party congratulates people who have the means to buy a home for more than \$1 million to start their family journey. They deserve what they have worked for, and they have our best wishes. But the needs of a young couple struggling to buy an apartment or a modest house in places like Merrylands, Mudgee or Macksville are the concern of this Government and its program to help more people live in a home of their own.

The bill targets assistance to first home buyers in the \$650,000 to \$1 million price range who are finding it difficult to buy their first home. To afford this assistance, the Government is closing access to the former Government's land tax scheme and targeting the assistance program to those who have less than \$1 million to spend on their first home. From 1 July 2023, these significant changes will help thousands of first home buyers achieve their dream of ownership. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (HOUSING AND PRODUCTIVITY CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL 2023**

**First Reading**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:44):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contributions) Bill 2023 to the House. The Government has inherited a significant housing crisis. Sydney rental vacancy rates were 1.3 per cent in April—the lowest levels seen in more than a decade. Housing costs are a significant driver of inflation, accounting for more than a third of the total increase in the Sydney consumer price index in the 2023 March quarter. The core problem is that we are not building enough housing to keep up with demand.

In the briefs to the incoming government, we learnt that New South Wales needs to build 314,000 new dwellings—62,800 a year over five years—but is expected to complete only 180,000 dwellings. There will be a shortfall of 134,000 new dwellings. Housing approvals continue to trend down, with annual approvals declining by 18 per cent in March and the annualised trend now falling below 40,000. Adding to this pressure, population growth in New South Wales has stepped up. In the 2022 September quarter it grew at an annualised rate of 1.8 per cent a year, well above the previous 10-year average of 1.3 per cent. With the Commonwealth budget forecasting average net overseas migration of more than 300,000 a year over the next three years on average, we can expect this high growth to continue.

With population growth having stalled through the lockdowns, a rapidly ageing population, tight labour market conditions and chronic skills shortages in key areas from construction through to personal care, migration plays an important role in supporting our economy and helping to ease inflationary pressures. But this means that those immigrating will need to live somewhere. Housing also has an impact for those trying to enter the housing market who are already living and working here. We cannot continue to see young families relocate to the other States, with our population ageing more rapidly and with ongoing shortages of health workers, teachers, carers, and other essential workers. An extra half a percentage point of population growth means an additional 40,000 people in New South Wales each year, requiring around 25,000 additional dwellings every year. This would be on top of the annual target of 63,000 that we are already finding it difficult to meet.

If we are to have any chance of rising to the housing challenge, then we will have to do much better than we have done in the past. The bill will not solve all aspects of the housing crisis, but it is one of the few proposals to come before this Chamber that will genuinely address supply. It will support supply by dealing with a key bottleneck in infrastructure. This measure stems from the NSW Productivity Commission's 2020 review of the infrastructure contributions system and will replace a complex system of contribution charges with a simple and modest charge levied across a broader base. It will support the provision of the roads, railways, parks, schools, and hospitals that we need to function and often take for granted. It will create a new system for funding and planning for infrastructure, replacing the ad hoc, piecemeal, stop-start system of the past.

The burden of this significant and costly challenge falls to both State and local governments, which will need to provide the infrastructure and services to support a growing population. Housing can only be created when this infrastructure is in place. Indeed, not only is it required for the housing itself, but also it is critical to acceptance of new housing. Those already living in the community where new housing is proposed, and those who intend to live there, need to see the amenity that the infrastructure will produce in order to have confidence that it will not just provide a roof over their head but will also build communities. Signalling the charge in advance, and phasing it in, will mean that over time the cost is borne by the landowner. This is consistent with the principle that the landowner is also the beneficiary of the value uplift arising from the rezoning of land—rezoning that would not be possible without the roads, parks, schools and hospitals that communities require.



Modelling by Planning and Treasury indicates that this new system will have a negligible impact on the feasibility of development projects and represents a tiny fraction of the land value uplift arising from the right to build additional dwellings. The existing infrastructure contributions system is not fully enabling us to support the development needed for optimally liveable communities. This bill will begin the transition towards a better system of State infrastructure contributions from 1 October 2023 that will generate a consistent, reliable, dedicated and fair revenue stream so we can achieve just that.

The New South Wales Government went into the election with a commitment to review the proposed reforms to State infrastructure contributions. It has now done this and found that when fully operational the new system is expected to raise around \$700 million each year dedicated to regional infrastructure. These funds will be maintained separately to ensure that they can only be spent in the region from which they are collected and are committed to projects that genuinely support housing and growth. The funds will be jointly administered by Planning and Treasury, ensuring better alignment with the budget process and that they are made to leverage the whole infrastructure budget more closely towards the State's growth needs. I am sure all members can agree that a sizeable increase in growth infrastructure spending will go a long way to unlocking the new housing supply that we so desperately need and shaping our future communities for the better.

In recognition of the critical role that local government plays in infrastructure provision, an additional \$1 billion will be available over the next 10 years in grant funding to help councils deliver larger and better local infrastructure, such as regional parks and sporting facilities. This change has been a long time coming and is necessary if we are to tackle the immediate and long-term challenges of building more public infrastructure. Contributions provisions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 have remained largely unchanged since 1992, aside from the introduction of flat rate levies, planning agreements and the first attempt at collecting for State infrastructure through special infrastructure contributions in 2005.

Some members of the House will remember that the former Minister for Planning and Public Spaces asked the NSW Productivity Commissioner to review the contributions system in 2020. The findings made it clear that the existing system is just not working. In response, the former Government introduced a package of reforms in this place at the start of the 2020-21 State budget. But its plan lacked the detail that reform like this calls for, which is why we directed the bill to a committee in the other place to make recommendations to flesh out the specifics of how the system would work. The reforms stalled until they were revived by the former Treasurer in the *2022-23 Half-Yearly Review*. It is now this Government's responsibility to see this reform through for the benefit of the New South Wales community, as was the intention of the previous Government, but with greater fairness and more detail.

The bill is underpinned by principles in the Productivity Commissioner's recommendations for how State infrastructure should be funded by developers and where the Government should rely on other sources. Just as importantly, the package is the product of extensive consultation with key State agencies, local government and peak industry bodies. The Government will also continue to work with its stakeholders as it rolls out the subordinate instruments that set the bill's plan into motion. A commencement date of 1 October 2023 will allow time to train users on the digital system that makes it easy to calculate the contribution and apply it to development. The same digital system will also make it simpler to pay the contribution when the time comes. I thank all those who contributed along the long road that got us here. We would not have got here without the participation of all parties, and we will continue this process of consultation throughout the implementation.

I now turn to the details of the bill. The bill replaces the existing special infrastructure contributions system with a new broad-based charge called a housing and productivity contribution. One of the key criticisms of the regional infrastructure contribution proposed by the former Government is that the lack of detail left the door open for money to be spent with broad discretion and would not guarantee investment in infrastructure that growing communities need. This bill makes it clear up-front that the new scheme is about regional infrastructure that supports and promotes housing and economic activity. It is clear and simple. It also says up-front that the new scheme will not affect the local infrastructure contributions currently paid to councils. New section 7.24 instead allows the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to set a contribution by ministerial planning order, which is made publicly available on the NSW Planning Portal.

Importantly, the bill restricts the provision of infrastructure outside the region a contribution came from. That was another clear message from the community and development industry. The only exception to that is for measures to conserve or enhance the natural environment. This is because the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme might require offsets to be sourced from outside the region to facilitate development within it. There will be a separate charge for areas benefiting from strategic biodiversity approvals. Funds collected from this charge will be applied to approved conservation measures under State or Commonwealth biodiversity laws to mitigate the impacts of development on biodiversity-certified land. The bill also creates a separate transport infrastructure charge where investment in public transport projects provides additional development capacity in a defined area. This means

that those who benefit from an increased development opportunity from government investment in major public transport investments will help contribute to these projects.

As Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, I will continue to have the power to set the infrastructure charges and the areas where they apply. The contents of ministerial orders setting the contribution are set out in new section 7.26 and include things like exemptions from the charge. I turn to the contribution rates themselves. The contribution rates vary depending upon the land use and the region. In the Greater Sydney region, detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses will incur a charge of \$12,000 per dwelling or lot. All other residential accommodation, including residential flat buildings and units, will incur a charge of \$10,000 per dwelling or lot. For industrial use, the contribution is \$15 per square metre of new gross floor area for industrial development. For commercial use, the contribution is \$30 per square metre of new gross floor area. Retail use incurs a contribution of \$30 per square metre of new gross floor area.

In the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Central Coast and lower Hunter, the contribution for detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses is \$8,000 per dwelling or lot. For all other residential accommodation, including residential flat buildings and units, the contribution is \$6,000 per dwelling or lot. In the case of industrial development, the contribution is \$15 per square metre of new gross floor area. For commercial development, it is \$30 per square metre of new gross floor area. Finally, retail use is \$30 per square metre of the new gross floor area. I make it clear to the House that this bill will not be charging people to simply knock down and rebuild their existing home or build a granny flat in the back for their kids or elderly parents. In addition, a new contribution will continue to require the concurrence of the Treasurer. The management of funds will be transferred to the Treasurer, but the strategic biodiversity component will be paid into a new account administered by the Department of Planning and Environment.

I now speak in more detail about the spending arrangements for the housing and productivity contribution. This is where we heard the most concern from the community and developers about how the money will be spent and how government will arrive at those decisions. The bill contains some important improvements to ensure there is greater rigour and transparency in the funding arrangements. First, the Housing and Productivity Fund has a clear purpose: to support housing and promote economic activity. But it is not just for any regional infrastructure. The fund will target projects that meet strategic planning priorities, including local housing targets; can be delivered in a reasonable time; and are aligned to agency asset management plans to ensure delivery agencies are geared towards growth infrastructure. For money to be paid out of the fund, it must be in either a State strategic plan or the State Infrastructure Strategy prepared by Infrastructure NSW.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will also be able to make recommendations about how the money in the fund can be spent, as long as those projects assist in achieving the purpose of the fund. These enhancements to the former Government's 2021 proposal will ensure the fund is targeted at using expert advice to unlock housing and jobs, so that it is not a slush fund that could be spent how it might have been able to if it only went into consolidated revenue. Funds can also be paid out to councils to deliver much-needed infrastructure projects, and councils can make submissions to the Treasurer about eligible projects. New financial reporting requirements in the government sector finance legislation will apply to the fund. They require financial reports to be prepared and published for each account, as well as allowing audits.

The bill also contains other miscellaneous provisions needed to implement the new system. Transitional arrangements are also set out to support the orderly transition of the existing special infrastructure contributions into the new system over time. We have been operating under an outdated and inconsistent scheme for too long. If we do not provide the right environment to boost investment in our roads, trains, parks, hospitals and schools, we are failing the people of New South Wales. The bill creates that environment by taking a fair share of the value capture and putting it to use to build and create great communities with better services and infrastructure.

Our businesses want to invest, but they need better certainty. The legal framework under the bill creates that certainty and makes our contributions system more efficient, simple, transparent and consistent. It is a carefully planned product, starting with the NSW Productivity Commissioner's recommendations and consultation with stakeholders. Critically, it responds to the issues raised in committee regarding the lack of detail and the overly broad discretion on spending decisions. Our bill fills those gaps through all the right checks and balances, but most importantly it supports the delivery of new homes in healthy, liveable communities across this great State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (SYDNEY WATER AND HUNTER WATER) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 10 May 2023.**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (15:02):** The Opposition supports the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. The Opposition will move amendments to ensure a consistent approach to banning the privatisation of our State's water corporations, not just Sydney Water and Hunter Water. The bill is an improper use of the New South Wales Constitution. It is the culmination of a shameless scare campaign organised by Labor and the unions to trick voters and to win an election campaign. The Liberal-Nationals Government never had any intention of privatising Sydney Water.

During the election campaign, we could not have been any clearer. The Liberal Party and The Nationals have never had an agenda to privatise water assets. Premier Dominic Perrottet said privatising Sydney Water Corporation had "never been something that has been considered by our Government, or ever would be". The privatisation of Sydney Water had been "completely ruled out" by Premier Perrottet. Yet, what we saw from Labor was a Mediscare-style campaign, exploiting people's concerns and tricking people into thinking that their water bills would be drastically increased. The only people talking about privatising Sydney Water were members of the Labor party and their union masters. The new Premier even outrageously claimed that "Sydney Water is on the ballot paper on March 25." He went further, saying:

If the Liberals and Nationals get voted back in, Sydney Water won't survive the next four years.

Despite the new Premier pledging that there is to be no more privatisation, he is now changing his tune on the definition of privatisation to suit his political purposes, wanting to privatise public land by selling it to private developers. Today the Opposition reaffirms the importance of our State's water corporations remaining in public ownership. Given the Government is intent on this bill, amending the Constitution, the Opposition will move to have these protections extend beyond Sydney Water and Hunter Water to ensure adequate protection of water assets right across our State, not just in Sydney and the Hunter. Of the three State-owned corporations responsible for the supply and delivery of water in New South Wales, only two are included in the bill. The third, WaterNSW, has been left out.

WaterNSW is the owner and operator of dozens of water storages, including Warragamba Dam, and dozens of water channels across regional New South Wales. The Government has left it out of the bill, so the bill does nothing to prevent the privatisation of a significant asset like Warragamba Dam. If the purpose of the bill is to protect water assets from privatisation, then it falls short. It is incomplete. It is a stunt. It is rushed. It is hurried policy, simply designed to suit the Labor Government's political purposes. It is not a serious attempt at safeguarding water assets. That is why the Opposition will be proposing amendments that will properly protect from privatisation the State-owned corporations responsible for the supply and delivery of water.

It was Labor's election commitment to "safeguard the public ownership of the State's critical public assets". Full and adequate protection against privatisation of water assets does not require the protections to be inserted in the New South Wales Constitution. The New South Wales Constitution is not the Australian Constitution. It generally does not require a referendum to be changed. It does not require a double majority to be changed. It is simply an Act of Parliament. Any claim that our water assets are better protected in the Constitution Act than in any other Act of this Parliament is simply not true. To use the New South Wales Constitution as a political plaything goes to show the trickery the Premier was willing to use to dupe voters at the State election.

To conclude, I say again there has never been any intention to privatise Sydney Water. It remains our preference that, in accordance with proper constitutional principles, these protections should be contained within their own Act of Parliament. But given the Government's shameful record on this matter, including the propagation of a baseless scare campaign, we will support amending the Constitution so that the people of our great State are spared any further distress from the new Labor Government.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (15:07):** I speak in support of the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. This is an important bill that sends a very clear message that, under the Minns Labor Government, the days of privatisation of our public assets are over. The people of New South Wales sent this Parliament a very clear message at the election—one that members opposite are finding hard to deal with. They said they are sick of their assets being privatised, and they elected a Government that vowed to end the sell-offs in this State. Today I am proud to stand here and say we are delivering on our promise.

I have heard this sentiment not just in my electorate of Swansea but right around the State. During the campaign I spent time doorknocking with the new member for Leppington, Nathan Hagarty; the new member for Penrith, Karen McKeown; the new member for East Hills, Kylie Wilkinson; and the phenomenal member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin. I report to the House that the same message kept coming right back at me: This State should no longer privatise its important assets.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** There was no trickery in any of this, as the Opposition leader just stated. As a member of this place I have long opposed privatisation, whether it was the former Government selling off our electricity network, poles and wires, the Newcastle transport network—that was a real fizzer—the Port of Newcastle or Vales Point Power Station. All of those sell-offs have left our communities much, much worse off. The Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 is so important because it will enshrine the public ownership of those assets within the New South Wales Constitution—and, with an Opposition like this one, we have to make sure we keep public assets safe.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The member for Hawkesbury will cease interjecting.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Hunter Water does a fantastic job of serving our community, investing in important future infrastructure such as the Belmont desalination plant to shore up the region's water supply—not to mention the well-paying local jobs for Hunter residents. It is important to remember why this legislation is so necessary. Over the past 12 years those opposite, with their addiction to privatisation, have sold off our power stations, electricity network, toll roads, public transport networks, and the NSW Land Registry Services, which was one of the worst. They also sold off the Port of Newcastle—I am glad to see the member for Newcastle—Port Botany, Port Kembla, our TAFE campuses, and 11 sport and recreation camps. They even tried to privatise Wyong Public Hospital—we all remember the question time when the then Minister announced that during one of her answers.

There is nothing tricky about any of this. These are the facts. People are scared of what the Opposition might do, and we are making sure to enshrine public ownership in the Constitution so that it is safe from the Liberals forevermore. They masked all of these privatisations with the brand "asset recycling". We all remember that. What did these privatisations do? They left our communities worse off, despite promising that these privatisations would make people's lives better.

Let us start by looking at the sale of the State's electricity network by those opposite. The then Liberal Government promised that the sale would reduce power bills and deliver more secure power supply, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, between 2014 and 2021 privatised energy networks collected a 67 per cent increase in profits. That represents a \$100 increase in electricity bills for households across the State, all thanks to those opposite. So much for the former Treasurer's promised \$130 reduction in electricity bills. That was never going to happen. And it did not stop at selling off poles and wires. The Liberals sold off also the Vales Point and Eraring power stations.

The sale of Vales Point Power Station demonstrates how badly the community was short-changed. That power station, which is in my electorate, was sold for \$1 million in 2015. It is unfortunate that we did not pass the hat around. Can members believe this? The stamp duty waived by the Government, at \$1.6 million, was worth more than the sale. In the past four years the station has generated \$354.4 million in profit after tax for its private owner, and last year it was sold to an overseas company for \$200 million. We should not forget that in 2015 it was sold for \$1 million.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is about relevance. This bill is about water. Those opposite have not sought to put in electricity assets. It is about water.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Swansea has the call. Opposition members will take a chill pill.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** As I said, Vales Point Power Station falls within my electorate. The sale of that asset created within the community a lot of anxiety over the future of jobs at the site and power prices and power security—not to mention that that asset has continued to generate profit in this time, benefiting the private owner and not the people of New South Wales. That is why this legislation is so important. We must give people hope, promise and some assurance and integrity, which comes in spades from this Government.

My community has paid the price for the failed privatisations of the former Liberal Government. Those opposite sold off the Newcastle Transport network, despite so much vocal opposition from the community. In fact, the then transport Minister, Andrew Constance, refused to engage in consultation with the community. We all remember that he came here and told us we would get a world-class transport network. What we got was longer travel times, services outages, removed bus stops and schoolkids left on the side of the road. Those opposite have turned a blind eye to the impacts of the failed privatisation in the years since, despite Hunter MPs consistently highlighting its negative impacts on the communities we represent.

It is not isolated to the Hunter. The privatisation of public bus services across the State over the past 12 years has been an "abject failure". That is not only my view. The findings of Portfolio Committee No. 6 from its inquiry into the privatisation of bus services also absolutely support that. The Minns Labor Government is

acting swiftly to deal with the consequences of bus privatisation, establishing a bus industry taskforce. The taskforce will examine service delivery and asset management models; service planning, including equity of services across the community—imagine having equity of services across the community—infrastructure and technology to support the effective delivery of bus services; employment of drivers, mechanics and other personnel; and other steps to improve performance.

I commend the work of the Minister for Transport and say how thankful my community is. I commend particularly the Premier for his swift action in addressing the community's concerns about the failed privatisations of the former Liberal Government. This is a clear signal not only of the values of this Government but also that this Government takes on board the community's concerns and acts immediately. I cannot go past the crown jewel in the failed privatisations of those opposite: the sale of the Port of Newcastle and the commitment deed associated with that. The Port Commitment Deed takes the cake in dodgy deals struck by those opposite. [*Extension of time*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It not only placed a cap on the number of containers the Port of Newcastle could ship but also forced taxpayers to pay compensation if this cap was breached.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is about relevance. The bill is about water. She is going on and on about every topic other than water.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Minister's contribution is fairly wideranging. Opposition members should relax. They will be able to contribute to debate.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It is hard to hear, but those opposite will hear it. The deed drew criticism not only from Labor but also from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which described it as anticompetitive and illegal. The deed has acted as an effective handbrake on the Hunter economy, and we will see that for years. I note that legislation to extinguish the liability of the Port of Newcastle and allow for the development of a container terminal passed this Parliament last year. It was such an embarrassing deal for the former Government that it had to vote to support that bill.

We know that the former Government had plans to privatise Sydney Water, which would have led to higher water prices, poorer services and unstable supply—not to mention the many lost jobs. The community vocally made clear its opposition to such a move. This legislation will ensure that cannot happen and I look forward to it passing the House. I note that the Opposition leader has said the Opposition will support the bill. Thank goodness. I suspect that the only course of action for a former government, now in opposition, that was addicted to privatisation for so long is to now admit its failures and that it put communities right around New South Wales into a much worse position by privatising everything that was not nailed down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I support the bill and commend it to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:19):** On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. As shadow Minister for Water and the representative for nine local government areas in regional New South Wales, I am deeply invested in any debate about protecting water and the future of water security in our State. Over the past five years, we have been through two extremes—the worst drought in history and one of the wettest years on record, which saw many communities experience unprecedented flooding. The impact of these events, whether drought or flood, was keenly felt throughout the 153 communities that I represent, as it was across the rest of New South Wales.

The bill will amend the Constitution Act 1902 to ensure continued public ownership of the Sydney Water Corporation and the Hunter Water Corporation and their main undertakings. I will put on the record early—it falls desperately short when it comes to protecting the basic right of people, wherever they may live in our great State, to access, as the Premier said in his second reading speech, "safe, reliable, publicly owned water". It discriminates against the 1.85 million people who obtain their water from water utilities other than Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Failure to include other utilities leaves us wondering about the New South Wales Labor Government's agenda in relation to the future privatisation of WaterNSW and the 89 local water utilities across regional, rural and remote New South Wales. Water is the lifeblood of all communities, regardless of where you live. As former Nationals member for Murrumbidgee Adrian Piccoli said in this place on 10 May 2006:

Water is of critical importance in New South Wales. That has been the case particularly in the past few years as we have endured one of the worst droughts in a hundred years. Water is at the forefront of most people's minds. It has always been in the minds of people in western New South Wales; we have always appreciated the value of water because it is much too scarce a resource in that area. Even Sydney people have now become conscious of this precious resource.

Without a doubt, water security, management and infrastructure are critically important, as is our need to ensure that those responsible for the supply and delivery of water have confidence in their future. In his second reading speech, the Premier said:

The Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 amends the Constitution Act 1902 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.

There are several problems with the bill. Of the eight State owned corporations governed under the State Owned Corporations Act 1989, three are responsible for the delivery, supply and management of water and sewerage services to the people of New South Wales: Sydney Water, servicing around five million people across Greater Sydney; Hunter Water, servicing around 600,000 people across the lower Hunter; and, importantly, WaterNSW, a State owned corporation supplying water in bulk to water utilities across metropolitan and regional New South Wales. The bill deals with only two of them—Hunter Water and Sydney Water. A closer look at the purpose and operations of the omitted WaterNSW reveals that that State owned corporation supplies two-thirds of the water used in New South Wales.

WaterNSW has five functions. Two of those are to protect the Greater Sydney drinking water catchment and to supply raw water from their storages to communities, customers and the environment. To this end, WaterNSW manages a total of 42 storages, dams, weirs and reservoirs across New South Wales, which include 11 major supply dams in Greater Sydney, including Warragamba Dam. It is a point worth repeating—Sydney Water obtains its water from WaterNSW and WaterNSW has been entirely omitted from the bill, the so-called fail-safe against a future government selling off the assets owned by the people of New South Wales, as stated by the Premier in this place on 10 May 2023. It is safe to say that, by omitting WaterNSW, the bill fails to safeguard a future government from selling off the assets held by WaterNSW.

Through WaterNSW's operations, the bulk supply of raw water is not limited to the Greater Sydney region. Its reach extends far and wide across regional New South Wales. The raw water supplied is treated by Sydney Water, Hunter Water or other customers of WaterNSW—that is, councils and local water utilities. They, in turn, supply it directly into the drinking water network established throughout towns and villages across New South Wales, or it is used in its raw form for farming and irrigation purposes. Importantly, in regional New South Wales, bulk water is moved using the State's river systems and WaterNSW's network of dams and weirs, whilst in Greater Sydney, bulk water is transported using a network of river, pipes and canals. Most of the bulk water is supplied to the Prospect Water Filtration Plant operated by Sydney Water, which supplies approximately 80 per cent of Sydney's drinking water.

In short, WaterNSW should not be omitted from the bill. The Opposition will be moving amendments to ensure that it is afforded the same protections as Sydney Water and Hunter Water. In addition to WaterNSW, 89 local water utilities are responsible for delivering safe, secure, efficient, sustainable and affordable water supply and sewerage services to 1.85 million people living in regional New South Wales. They protect public health and the environment, and support economic development and liveability. Local water utilities are governed in New South Wales by the Local Government Act 1993 and Water Management Act 2000, as well as other relevant and applicable legislative and regulatory instruments. Astoundingly, they too have been left out of the bill, and the Opposition will also be moving amendments to address this glaring omission.

It is little wonder that the local water utilities I have consulted are nervous now about being omitted from the bill and are looking to this Parliament to ensure that they are protected. In 2007 the then Labor water Minister, Nathan Rees, established an inquiry to examine sustainable water supply and sewerage management in non-metropolitan New South Wales. He said in this place on 6 December 2007:

The next area of work for the Government is to drought proof drinking water supplies for the two million people that live in rural and regional New South Wales. In August this year I travelled to Inverell and delivered a speech to the Local Government and Shires Association. I put it to that association that the 107 water utilities across rural New South Wales need both assistance and a long-term plan to ensure sustainability.

Through contributions to this debate, the House will hear from members, some of them mayors involved in local government at the time, on the shock waves this inquiry sent through the local water utilities across New South Wales and the fight by local councils against the removal of water and sewerage services from their control. Retaining ownership and control of their water assets remains as important today as it did in 2007 and 2008. Importantly, the final term of reference in that 2007-08 inquiry stated:

The inquiry is to focus on the provision of urban water supply and sewerage in rural and regional NSW. Sydney Water, Hunter Water, Gosford City Council water supply authority and Wyong Shire Council water supply authority are excluded from the inquiry.

Standing here in 2023 we discover once again through this bill a willingness by a New South Wales Labor Government, to quote the Premier's second reading speech, to offer protection from privatisation through additional safeguards in the New South Wales Constitution Act for residents in "Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains and in the Illawarra and Hunter regions"—safeguards not afforded to the people of regional, rural and remote New South Wales. On 10 May Premier Minns stated in this place:

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.

Let me be clear: The Opposition will fight for the basic right of all people in New South Wales to access clean water regardless of where they and their water meter reside. [*Extension of time*]

It is the Government that must support our amendments and thereby demonstrate that it is here to govern and provide for all of us, not just Greater Sydney, the lower Hunter, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra. Much of the critical water infrastructure delivered in regional New South Wales during the Coalition's time in Government built upon the legacy of the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program introduced by former Deputy Premier and Nationals leader Ian Armstrong in 1994. That program endured for 23 years and in 2017 was expanded by the former Coalition Government to create the Safe and Secure Water Program with a \$1 billion boost under Restart NSW. The future of the program now hangs in the balance with the New South Wales Labor Government looking to divert funding under Restart to accelerate investment in renewable energy assets. In his speech delivered to the New South Wales Parliament on 9 May 2023, the Lieutenant-Governor stated:

... the Government will create a new State-owned body, the NSW Energy Security Corporation. It will be seeded with a \$1 billion investment from the existing Restart NSW Fund with the aim of accelerating investment in renewable energy assets.

What, therefore, is the future of the Safe and Secure Water Program? I call on the New South Wales Labor Government to ensure that investment in regional, rural, and remote water infrastructure is treated with the same regard as its intention to invest in renewable energy. The future of many towns and villages depends on it. In closing, the Opposition believes that water security should be enshrined in the New South Wales Constitution Act and that that should be the case regardless of where you live in the State. During the election campaign, the Premier said that he did not pretend to have any expertise about regional New South Wales. Combining the intent of the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 currently before the House and his second reading speech, that is very clear. I remind the House of a key statement in the Premier's second reading speech:

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.

If Labor is truly serious about protecting end-to-end water supply in New South Wales, it will support the Opposition's proposed amendments and not exclude one-third of our State's population simply because of the location of their water meter.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:32):** I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. During my time in this place I have spent a considerable amount of time advocating against the privatisation of our State's assets. I have done that because I have seen firsthand how privatisation has failed not just the people who live in my electorate of Newcastle or across the wider Hunter region but everyone across the State. In 2018 in the Hunter I stood with over 1,000 people who rallied to have our privatised and decimated bus system fixed, because bus stops had closed, services had been slashed and schoolkids had been left standing on the side of the road. The Deputy Speaker—who was in the chair prior to you, Mr Assistant Speaker—the member for Charlestown and the member for Swansea had similar devastating consequences in their own electorates from bus privatisation, as had Sydney members whose electorates had bus services privatised.

In 2015, from the other side of this Chamber, I argued against the sell-off of this State's poles and wires, foreshadowing at the time that the price for consumers would skyrocket. We now know that the electricity companies that benefited from that sale have reaped super profits, some 67 per cent above what would be considered "normal". And, of course, we cannot forget about the \$1.75 billion flog-off of the Port of Newcastle and the secret clause to hold back the Hunter, an issue that I raised hundreds of times in this place and that was unpicked with much help from the member for Lake Macquarie.

The amendment to the Constitution Act to protect Hunter Water and Sydney Water from sale is not about politics; it is critical to ensure that the people who are serviced by these corporations are not sold out again by a government that is supposed to act in their best interests. A Labor Government will not sell Hunter Water or Sydney Water, but we cannot trust those opposite, should they ever return to government. I am not saying that to play politics. The documents are there, showing that the former Liberal Premier lied about his plans to retain

Sydney Water. He said that privatising Sydney Water had "never been considered by our Government or ever would be". That was a lie. We know it because scoping studies and tax advice were sought to give water services the Ausgrid style of privatisation. There is even a Sydney Water board discussion paper that uses the Liberals' favourite lingo switcheroo, "asset recycling". The former Premier lied.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. The member for Newcastle has alleged that another member lied. It is a highly contentious proposition. Under Standing Order 73, if the member for Newcastle wants to make those sorts of outrageous allegations, he should move a substantive motion instead of doing it in this coward's corner way during debate.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I invite the member for Newcastle to withdraw the imputation or choose an alternative term to the word "lies".

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP:** An alternative term? To what? To "That was a lie" and "The former Premier lied"? What should we say instead then: that the former Premier didn't lie, that he told "mistruths" perhaps? The former Premier lied? No, the former Premier told "mistruths". And do you know who else lied or perhaps told "mistruths"? Another former Liberal Premier, when she told the people of New South Wales in 2019 that the Government would not privatise any more assets. She said:

We've said no ... and if we were, we would have told you upfront.

That was a lie. The former Government was eyeing off the other half of Ausgrid, the other half of WestConnex, and the Forestry Corporation. That was a lie. I do not hear anyone from the other side of the House taking a point of order now that we have the evidence. That is why protecting Hunter Water and Sydney Water is not about playing politics. That is why it is critical that we ensure that those opposite cannot form government and put those assets straight on the chopping block, which they did to just about every other public asset in this State. Hunter Water is exactly that. It has been a provider of something critical to life to the people of the Hunter for over 130 years now, servicing almost 600,000 homes and businesses across the lower Hunter.

These 600,000 homes and businesses cannot risk having their essential service flogged off to the highest bidder. They cannot have their critical water supply beholden to private interests and owners who are more interested in returning profits to their shareholders than providing a quality service to their customers. We know that those on the other side cannot be trusted, which is why the Labor Government is acting to make sure that our water assets stay exactly where they belong—in public hands.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:39):** I contribute to the debate on the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023, which should be amended. The Opposition will be putting forward amendments as to exactly what it should include. As Leader of The Nationals and as the member for Dubbo, I have seen firsthand exactly how important ensuring safe and secure water is for our regional communities right across the State, particularly given the extremes we are dealing with—drought and recent floods and bushfires—and yet every contribution from the Government benches so far has completely missed the point. I do not quite understand how it has been missed, but those opposite are ignoring what we are here to discuss. That is that it is not just Sydney Water and Hunter Water; it is also WaterNSW for another two-thirds of water users—almost two million customers—who are being forgotten about. We are not saying, "Do not provide it for Sydney and Hunter"; we are saying we need to amend the bill to include WaterNSW, because regional New South Wales is really crucial in this.

As the member for Cootamundra indicated, the Government's bill as it currently stands unfortunately only confirms what members on this side already thought, which is that Labor either does not know or does not care that people live in places other than Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. New South Wales is more than that, and those opposite know that. We have to do better than that, which is what we are here to say. Apparently Government members are yet to receive a briefing on the fact that local government and water utilities have a role to play as well, helping WaterNSW manage the dams and also managing that water supply for town customers. Two-thirds of the water in this State is delivered by WaterNSW, including Warragamba Dam, the Sydney focus. All the large dams across the State are run by WaterNSW. I honestly do not think it is a big ask to support the rest of the State, not just Sydney and the Hunter.

For regional communities, water security is about more than just the water utility provider. It is the dams, the pipelines, the treatment plants and the other systems that absolutely guarantee the reliable supply of clean and safe water—something the Premier has already said is a high priority and an absolute necessity. We agree that keeping our State's water infrastructure in public hands is a necessity, but it is not just for Sydney and Hunter but right across the State, including regional areas. As it stands, the bill proposed by the Government unfortunately does not address the needs of our regional communities.



The amendments being put forward by the Opposition will ensure that both WaterNSW, as the managers of our State's dam infrastructure, and also local government water utilities are afforded exactly the same protections as Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Everyone, irrespective of their geographical location or their financial status, deserves fair and equal access to clean and safe water. Public ownership ensures that quality and that equity. We have heard those words from the Premier's mouth, so why not do it properly? Water assets are public; they deserve to be kept in public hands to serve everyone in our communities. We cannot afford a situation where services literally become focused solely on profitable areas while some in our communities are left without. Public water utilities and asset managers are directly accountable to the communities that they serve. That is incredibly important in regional New South Wales, as we manage water resources to ensure equitable access between town water, agriculture, irrigation and the environment. All of that needs to be managed.

For me locally, WaterNSW's management of Burrendong Dam in my electorate is the perfect example of why we need to enshrine WaterNSW in the bill. In my part of the world, WaterNSW manages Burrendong Dam to ensure town water supply, and that is particularly important during drought. In 2019 Burrendong Dam got down to just over 1 per cent, and the amount of effort that had to be put into making sure that there would be supply there if it got below 1 per cent was incredible. But then there is irrigation and agricultural activity and allowing that to continue to prosper—that is the food and the fibre that we all rely on, which needs to be farmed somewhere. Then there is flood mitigation in a changing climate and changing weather patterns. We have seen floods everywhere, including in my part of the world. Burrendong Dam has incredible flood mitigation capacity, managed incredibly well by WaterNSW in the past two years. Then there are all the environmental water flows that happen along the Macquarie River.

WaterNSW is absolutely vital to the bill, which is why we are putting forward the amendments to safeguard the vital water resources of regional New South Wales and meet the obligations of town water supply, irrigators, the environment and flood mitigation. It is a fairly simple scenario, and it is imperative that we maintain all of our water assets and infrastructure in public hands, not just those that provide for Sydney and for Newcastle. That will ensure that the collective wellbeing, sustainability and long-term prosperity of our regions and communities are maintained. If Labor is truly serious about enshrining water security in our Constitution, I urge those on the Government benches to support our proposed amendments. Those sensible amendments are not designed to cause issue; they are designed to do the right thing. Otherwise we end up with a standard for the cities of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong and nothing for regional areas, which is not acceptable.

I have just become aware that The Greens are not proposing to support the Opposition's amendments. I wonder why a member for a regional area would not support them, and I look forward to hearing from the member for Ballina. We need the bill to have more than just a city-centric focus; we need all of our regional cities—like Ballina, Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga—to be included in the bill to guarantee that we have a future for water supply in our regions, not just in our cities. I urge The Greens to take the sensible course—not just to back in Labor because that is what they said they would do, but to take the amendments for what they are, right here and right now, to help regional New South Wales.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:46):** I congratulate the member for Strathfield on his election to the position of Assistant Speaker. I am proud to speak in favour of the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. The Government was elected with a mandate to protect Sydney Water and to halt the privatisation agenda pursued by those opposite for the past decade. I listened to the contribution from the Leader of The Nationals. If he really cares about regional water supply, what happened to Goulburn a few years ago? My colleague the Minister for Water had to go up to Walgett to help the community with their water supply. There were issues in Goulburn a number of years ago, and members opposite did not really do much.

At the election in 2019 those opposite said they would not privatise any assets, and what did they do after the election? They privatised public assets. The people of New South Wales have made their decision based on a very important policy that the Premier put forward two months ago, which was to protect Sydney Water and Hunter Water and to ensure that they are enshrined in the Constitution. We do not trust those opposite with public assets because, over 12 years of them being in government, they privatised \$93 billion worth of assets. If we still had those assets today, think about the income that would be generated to pay for teachers, support staff, special disability teachers and administrative support staff.

Those opposite left us a big fat mess. The Deputy Premier has to salvage the situation with respect to teachers and merged classes. There are merged classes every single day because the former Government did not plan. It had one company running Sydney roads. What happened to competition? Those opposite do not believe in competition. They love their monopolies, which is exactly what we saw when they were in government. They made some very big mistakes.

I will absolutely acknowledge when the former Government made good decisions on matters that are important to the people of New South Wales. But, with respect to privatisation, the former Government made some very big mistakes regarding not only housing, roads and electricity but also land titles. The former Government privatised the land titles office, which was a very big mistake. It generated a great deal of income for the State that could have been used to employ teachers, nurses, cleaners and paramedics. This Government has been left with a big fat mess to clean up, which is why this bill is so very important.

I acknowledge the people who work for State owned corporations. They are the essential workers of New South Wales. They do not receive a lot of attention, but I acknowledge that when my electorate office receives notice of issues and contacts Sydney Water, the staff are very responsive. I acknowledge the workers at Sydney Water, who do an important job. They provide a service to our community in a very respectful and professional manner. They are fantastic tradies. I also acknowledge the Australian Services Union—which runs a very good campaign and does great work representing the workers—and its secretary, Angus McFarland. As I said earlier, I am very fortunate to have part of Cooks River in my electorate. The Assistant Speaker and I are trying to resolve issues regarding the Cooks River with Sydney Water and other agencies. It is a bit of a no-man's-land. But I thank the good people of Sydney Water for their respectful attitude and for listening to those issues.

Over the past decade, instead of concentrating on obtaining value for taxpayer funds through better workforce bargaining, the former Government took the lazy path of either freezing pay rates or privatisation. When it comes to assets such as Sydney Water and Hunter Water, the Labor Government does not trust the Coalition, which is why this legislation was introduced. Before the election I met union delegates who represent Sydney Water workers. I was very proud to attend an event in Western Sydney that was addressed by the Premier. It was fantastic to see hardworking employees discussing issues they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis and to hear them putting forward their case for why it is important that Sydney Water and Hunter Water remain in public hands. I am very proud that one of the first bills introduced by this Labor Government will ensure that those assets are protected and enshrined in the Constitution.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:53):** I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. The New South Wales Constitution is the foundational document for the government for the whole of our State. Mr Assistant Speaker, as you would be aware, part 1 of the Constitution deals with preliminary matters; part 2 sets up the powers of the Legislature; part 2A sets out the rules around the appointment and role of the Governor; part 3 deals with the rules relating to the establishment and operation of this Chamber and the Legislative Council; part 4 deals with the Executive, which means the Ministers in the Government led by the Governor; part 4A deals with Parliamentary Secretaries; part 5 deals with the consolidated fund, including all public moneys; part 6 deals with public servants and departments; part 7 deals with transparency to do with Acts of Parliament; part 8 deals with local government; and part 9 deals with the judiciary. That is the totality of the New South Wales Constitution as it currently stands.

This bill seeks to introduce new part 10 of the New South Wales Constitution. As important as water assets are to our community, the subject matter of this legislation could and should have been inserted in an ordinary Act of Parliament. The Premier acknowledged as much in his second reading speech, because it is quite clear that our Constitution does not deal with the kinds of matters contained in the bill. It is also important to note that the New South Wales Constitution can be changed by an ordinary Act of Parliament passing both Houses. Australia's Federal Constitution, under section 128, can be changed only by a referendum of all the people who are entitled to vote for the members of the House of Representatives approving that constitutional change. That is unlike the New South Wales Constitution, which can be changed by any Act of Parliament. There are many examples of the types of matters in the bill that are not in the New South Wales Constitution. For example, section 99A (1) of the Transport Administration Act 1988 precludes the closing of a railway line without an Act of Parliament. Closure of a railway line is defined in section 99A (2) as the sale, or otherwise disposal, of railway tracks, which is a very similar provision to part 10 that is sought to be inserted in the Constitution.

This bill seeks to introduce into the New South Wales Constitution material that is nothing like the kinds of matters that are dealt with by the Constitution, which deals broadly with the architecture of our system of government in New South Wales. Its inclusion in the Constitution is nothing short of a political stunt. The Leader of the Opposition addressed the dishonest political scare campaign around water privatisation that was part of the recent election campaign. The Coalition never had any plans to privatise our water assets. In his second reading speech the Premier engaged in some great rhetoric, but it is a shame that his actions in the drafting of this bill do not match his words. In his second reading speech, the Premier said:

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 have dealt with whether, as a matter of law, this bill should be making amendments to the Constitution; but if we can believe the Premier that he feels passionately about this matter, then why has he left so many of the critical

water assets of our State outside the bill and outside what he has said are constitutional protections in the bill? The Opposition will move amendments to ensure that new part 10 of the Constitution, which at the moment is limited in its geography and scope to covering only present assets, covers all the State's current and future water assets. We hope that regional members of the Labor Party and on the crossbench will support the Coalition amendments.

The very limited scope of this legislation makes reasonable minds wonder whether there is a secret agenda by the Labor Government—as there was in 2007—to privatise water assets like the Warragamba Dam, which is not covered by this legislation. Warragamba Dam is owned not by Sydney Water or Hunter Water but in fact by a different corporation, WaterNSW. Under Labor's bill, the dam will not be protected from privatisation. That makes one wonder whether there is a secret agenda to privatise many water assets in our State like Warragamba Dam that lie outside the scope of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, which is the very limited scope of the legislation. The reason I say that reasonable minds would wonder or would ask that question is that it is inconceivable with the almost unlimited resources the Government has at its disposal, with over 430,000 public servants, that nobody would have drawn to its attention the incredibly limited scope of the bill and that only very limited water assets are being protected from privatisation by the bill.

On its website, WaterNSW, which is not covered by the bill, says it supplies two-thirds of the water used in New South Wales—that is two-thirds not covered by the bill. How can that be, when the Premier, by amending the Constitution, is amending a document that is supposed to protect and apply to the whole of the State, not just a few little parts of it? Literally, the water supplied to millions of people in New South Wales is not protected by the bill, even though the Premier used that rhetoric, as I have quoted, in his second reading speech. In regional areas, the storage or supply of water, the provision of sewerage services, the provision of stormwater drainage systems and the disposal of wastewater are often supplied by WaterNSW, water supply authorities under the Water Management Act, or local councils or county councils. The entities and the water assets that they hold, which have been excluded from this bill, are extensive.

I place on the *Hansard* record the long list of the bodies and their water assets that are left out of Labor's bill so that we can see the limited effect of this piece of so-called protection. These are the bodies that are left out of the bill: Central Tablelands County Council, Goldenfields Water County Council, Riverina Water County Council and Rous County Council. All of the following local government authorities have water assets that are left out of the bill: Albury City Council, Armidale Regional Council—I see the member for Northern Tablelands in the Chamber—and Ballina Shire Council. I also see the member for Ballina in the Chamber—there is no protection for those water assets in Ballina.

Balranald Shire Council, Bathurst Regional Council, Bega Valley Shire Council, Bellingen Shire Council—none of these are protected. The list continues: Berrigan Shire Council, Bland Shire Council, Blayney Shire Council, Bogan Shire Council, Bourke Shire Council, Brewarrina Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Cabonne Council, Carrathool Shire Council, Central Coast Council, Central Darling Shire Council, Clarence Valley Council, Cobar Shire Council, Coffs Harbour Shire Council, Coolamon Shire Council, Coonamble Shire Council, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cowra Shire Council, Dubbo Regional Council, Edward River Council and Eurobodalla Shire Council.

The list continues: Federation Council, Forbes Shire Council, Gilgandra Shire Council, Glen Innes Severn Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Greater Hume Shire Council, Griffith City Council, Gunnedah Shire Council, Gwydir Shire Council, Hay Shire Council, Hilltops Council, Inverell Shire Council, Junee Shire Council, Kempsey Shire Council, Kyogle Council, Lachlan Shire Council, Leeton Shire Council, Lismore City Council, City of Lithgow Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Lockhart Shire Council, Mid-Coast Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, Moree Plains Shire Council, Murray River Council, Murrumbidgee Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council.

The list continues: Nambucca Valley Council, Narrabri Shire Council, Narrandera Shire Council, Narromine Shire Council, Oberon Council, Orange City Council, Parkes Shire Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Richmond Valley Council, Shoalhaven City Council, Singleton Council, Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Snowy Valleys Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Temora Shire Council, Tenterfield Shire Council, Tweed Shire Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Uralla Shire Council, Wagga Wagga City Council, Walcha Council and Walgett Shire Council. [*Extension of time*]

The list continues: Warren Shire Council, Warrumbungle Shire Council, Weddin Shire Council, Wentworth Shire Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council—the member for Goulburn is here—and Yass Valley Council. Leaving all the water assets held by all of those entities out of any protection from privatisation for the people who rely upon them is nothing short of a disgrace. It is an absolute disgrace. Some regional people have said to me in the past that "NSW" does not stand for New South Wales; it stands for Newcastle, Sydney and

Wollongong. The omissions from this bill make me sympathetic to their point of view, because most of the elected representatives of the Labor Party come from Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. One can only assume the bill has been drafted with them in mind. But it is only half done, if that was the concern, because Warragamba Dam is obviously critical to Sydney's water supply, and it is not included within the protections of the bill.

New South Wales is large and many of its water assets are located outside of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The bill should include protection from privatisation for all the current and future water assets in the whole State. If the Premier's words meant anything, then the protection should apply to all of them. Part of the Labor scare campaign during the election concerned a possible private operator managing a piece of water infrastructure. Again, there was no substance to that campaign, and the Coalition never had any plans to do it—but that possibility is not covered by the bill either. The very matter that Labor members said was proof perfect of some agenda by the Coalition is not even covered by the legislation.

The bill only deals with the sale of assets currently held by Sydney Water and Hunter Water. There is nothing about the outsourcing of those operations, nothing about future assets and nothing about any water corporation engaging with the private sector to own or operate critical water infrastructure in the future. Before this bill, I cannot recall the Premier, in his eight years in this Parliament, actually moving a piece of legislation. If the bill is anything to go by, that is completely understandable, because this is a poor piece of legislation from an inexperienced Premier who is not across the detail of what he is doing. Today the Minister for Lands and Property sacked somebody on radio without even telling them directly—that was Lee Shearer. We have seen sloppy legislation like this, which is not consistent in its—

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Point of order: My point of relates to Standing Order 129, concerning relevance. This has nothing to do with the bill.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Wahrenoonga will return to the substance of the bill.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Government members have subjected the House to poor speeches that do not even deal with water, but air every other piece of their grievance about privatisation. Before the election we said the Labor Party was all about politics and no policy, and this bill is a good example of that. The Coalition will move amendments to the bill that will not limit any of its reach, but will substantially expand the reach of the legislation, protecting water assets and the operation of water services across the State against future privatisation. It is important to the people of the Wahrenoonga electorate that Labor does not say it is protecting Sydney Water assets when assets like Warragamba Dam are not included in the bill. The Coalition will remedy this through amendments. I ask members to support our amendments.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:07):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. I recognise Cate Faehrmann, the holder of this portfolio for The Greens, who is in the other place. The Greens will support the bill. We think it is well overdue in terms of ensuring the continued public ownership of the Sydney Water Corporation and the Hunter Water Corporation and their main undertakings. I first give a massive shout-out to Rous County Council in my electorate, which provides the bulk water supply for most of the Ballina electorate. I also acknowledge Byron Shire Council, which manages the Mullumbimby town water through Wilsons Creek and the Lavertys Gap Weir. Wardell receives its water through Ballina Shire Council from Marom Creek. I give a big shout-out to all those councillors and to all the workers, particularly after the floods.

I spoke to many of the workers at Rous County Council and learnt that we were very close to a pretty dire situation in terms of potable water as a result of the floods because of so much toxic overflow into our beautiful and normally pristine waterways. I am no stranger. Our councils have been read out by the Liberals. If we are serious about privatising water assets, I am persuaded that we need to include WaterNSW. However, having spoken to the portfolio holder, Labor has been forthcoming and open in briefing not just the crossbench but also the Liberal Party and The Nationals. We have had this briefing paper for a week, so I find it peculiar that we only got the amendments a couple of hours before the debate began. There simply has been no time to engage with them properly.

**Mr Tim James:** What is so complex about it?

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** Not that I am taking questions from the Chamber, but members of this Chamber do not just make things up on the fly. These are real laws that have real implications for members of our community. Why are the Liberals and The Nationals so lazy? They could have spoken to Labor members and the crossbench during the past week. Of the 12 members on the crossbench, eight are regional MPs like me, and we would have loved to have sat down and talked about anything related to regional New South Wales. I do not trust anyone who presents something an hour or two before a debate begins. I simply do not. I am not an expert in

water and I am not pretending to be. I would love to see any of the smart alects sitting behind me delve into the dozens of councils that were mentioned.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Willoughby will come to order.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** Last time I checked, councils selling off assets is a big deal. If all of those councils decided to suddenly sell their water assets, we would have bigger problems on our hands. The Greens support the bill. I note the contributions by the Australian Services Union. The union reached out to us and others to say how important these assets are. The combined assets of Sydney Water and Hunter Water are worth many billions of dollars. We know who has had a penchant for selling off private assets in this State. I cannot recall how many times I have made comments to the community in my electorate about the selling off of rail assets and the privatising of public assets. There is no moral high ground for me on that issue.

We know that selling the utility would impose a significant fiscal cost on the State through lost dividend and tax revenues. We have seen that through the privatisation of electricity. Members of my community constantly remind me that costs have skyrocketed, and they link that to them footing the bill for the enormous increases in management, administration and marketing from the privatisation of electricity. As the Greens NSW education spokesperson, I do not want to get started on the privatisation of vocational education. The marketisation and private delivery of public-funded vocational education and training has degraded Australia's vocational education system and TAFE system from being one of the world's most successful into a confusing morass of private profits and rorts. I thank the Australian Services Union for drawing this issue to my attention because it reminds us that there was nothing that the former Government saw that could not be privatised.

The Greens support the bill. We are being lectured to by those who have made it their motto and anthem to recycle and sell off public assets. I do not feel any qualms about restating that on the record. If the Liberals and The Nationals—especially the city Liberals—are serious that they care about regional New South Wales, then I encourage them to talk to the eight regional members of Parliament on the crossbench and to bring us with them. We are certainly open to improving outcomes for communities in the regions. I also encourage them to talk to The Greens in the upper House about their amendments, because placing them on someone's desk a couple of hours before an important debate about critical assets is lazy and disrespectful.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:15):** It is a pleasure to be on this side of the House speaking about the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023—a piece of legislation that is breaking the disease and stopping the addiction of privatisation in New South Wales. I find it incredible that Opposition members have had their Damascus moment all of a sudden. It is like Saint Paul on the way to Damascus. We have heard from the member for Wahroonga. They are now all against privatisation. After 12 years of neoliberal, conservative policies to privatise many billions of dollars of assets in New South Wales, members opposite are suddenly all against privatisation. They are spreading anti-privatisation messages throughout the land. They are true disciples of anti-privatisation. I love it; it is heartwarming.

I support the bill, which will amend the Constitution Act 1902 to prevent the privatisation of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, which are both statutory State owned corporations. Sydney Water and Hunter Water collectively supply essential water services to almost six million people across the Sydney, Blue Mountains, Illawarra and Hunter regions. The bill delivers a key election promise made to our community in the 2023 State election—to stop privatisation and to protect and safeguard our public assets. Unfortunately, the former Liberal-Nationals Government sold off State owned assets for 12 years, including our electricity networks, public utilities, land, ports and roads. That led to our community paying unprecedentedly high prices to use those services. Those services used to be owned by the public.

The Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 will ensure the continued public ownership of Sydney Water and Hunter Water and their main undertakings. The bill amends the Constitution Act 1902 to insert part 10, which includes a provision that states that Sydney Water and Hunter Water cannot be sold or disposed of, unless authorised by an Act of Parliament, and prohibits the sale or disposal of the main undertakings of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, including the main undertakings of any of its subsidiaries, unless authorised by an Act of Parliament. It clearly defines those main undertakings as including business activity that is vital to enable Sydney Water and Hunter Water to carry out any of the following activities: the storage or supply of water, the provision of sewerage services, the provision of stormwater drainage systems, and the disposal of wastewater.

The bill will also protect from sale or disposal any asset of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, or any of their subsidiaries, that is necessary to enable the water corporation to carry out its principal functions. It clarifies that any of the amendments stipulated in part 10 of the Act will not prevent a sale or disposal that is in the ordinary course of the business of a water corporation and will not prevent a sale or disposal that will result in the main undertakings of the water corporations remaining in public ownership. Currently, section 20Y of the State Owned

Corporations Act 1989 allows the sale or disposal of the main undertakings of Sydney Water and Hunter Water with prior written approval from its voting shareholders. The current voting shareholders are the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance. That made it too simple for the previous Liberal-Nationals Government to sell off public assets. It is a practice that has left millions of people paying thousands of their hard-earned dollars to private companies.

It is not fair that members of our community must bear the cost of the selfish actions of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. Both home owners and renters are already facing rising costs of living and a housing affordability crisis. The amendments proposed in the bill will ensure that future governments will not be able to sell these publicly owned assets unless authorised by an Act of Parliament. It will be a thorough process that will include comprehensive research and debate to ensure that any future decisions made by a New South Wales government are in the best interests of our community, rather than in the simple best interests of wealthy shareholders.

Sydney Water and Hunter Water are both essential State owned assets that are important for the health and wellbeing of our communities as well as for water systems across New South Wales. Our residents, families and communities deserve safe, clean and affordable drinking water, whether at home, at the community park or at a local shopping centre. Sydney Water and Hunter Water are also essential to our State for economic reasons. Over the past five years, and after paying operational and interest costs, Sydney Water paid an annual dividend averaging \$870 million per year. That income allows the New South Wales Government to reinvest money into important public services to improve the lives of people in our community, such as health care and education. The total assets of Sydney Water also amount to almost \$24 billion, with a public equity capacity of some \$8 billion and an annual revenue of some \$2.8 billion. Privatising these vital utilities would force significant fiscal losses through lost dividends and tax revenues, and those are losses that will be unfairly imposed on members of our community.

In 1989 the conservative Thatcher Government privatised nine water systems in the United Kingdom. Since those water systems were sold, the private companies have paid nearly £20 million, or around A\$37 million, in dividends to their owners, committed several health violations and degraded working conditions and safety standards for their employees—all while inflating the compensation for their CEOs, who have salaries over £2 million, or around A\$3.7 million. The impact of privatisation will be felt most by young families and working-class and middle-income men and women in our community. It is them who will have to bear the cost of higher water usage and service bills. It is estimated that if our water corporations are privatised, annual water bills will rise by at least 39 per cent to 59 per cent. That is simply unacceptable.

Privatisation of public assets does not work, and this issue has been affecting our communities for far too long. The Liberal-Nationals Government sold off essential infrastructure systems and public services to private companies under the misled assumption that it was more efficient and better for economic growth. It may seem like an attractive solution to fix the economic deficit caused by 12 years of Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales, but short-term financial gain does not mitigate the long-term impacts of privatisation. State owned assets serve a public purpose: They provide electricity and water to homes, and help motorists travel on more accessible roads. When these assets are sold to private companies, the primary goal of those companies is not to serve our community but to maximise profits.

The decision to privatise public assets significantly impacts the delivery of accessible services to individuals with low incomes, rural and regional communities, and communities who face low socio-economic disadvantage. Every day, I hear stories from residents and families in the Prospect electorate and across Western Sydney who are struggling to pay their electricity bills, struggling to pay for toll roads and struggling to pay for a safe and secure place to live. Those are all direct consequences of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government's actions to sell State owned assets. *[Extension of time]*

In 2013 the Liberal Premier Barry O'Farrell sold Port Kembla and Port Botany, and less than a year later, in 2014, Mike Baird sold the Port of Newcastle. The decisions to privatise those ports were heavily criticised by Rod Sims, the former chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, who stated that the Liberal-Nationals Government's decision to privatise ports with anti-competitive agreements significantly damaged economic efficiency in New South Wales and across the country. In 2021 the Liberal-Nationals Government finalised its sale of WestConnex. Sydney is now the most tolled city in the country and, anecdotally, the world. Nearly 100 per cent of our tolled roads are privately owned. Now households in Western Sydney disproportionately bear the heavy burden of paying for tolls. They are paying thousands of dollars every year simply to travel to work or to visit their friends and families.

Since 2012 eight of our State owned electricity assets have been sold. Now our community is facing rising costs for electricity, with the average household in Sydney paying more than \$1,253 every year—and that is only set to get worse. The Australian Energy Regulator has warned that residents across New South Wales should prepare for electricity price increases of between 21 per cent and 22 per cent in the upcoming financial year. Our

community should not have to decide between paying for simple services such as electricity, roads and water over other bare necessities such as food, child care, health care, mortgage repayments or rent. Unfortunately, that is the reality that many families are facing, particularly in Western Sydney.

Protecting Sydney Water and Hunter Water will ensure that our community has access to clean drinking water and key water infrastructure, and that all profits are directed back to the New South Wales Government to reinvest in the best interests of our residents and our families. Water and wastewater services are critical for the health and security of our community, and water is one of the most essential elements of public infrastructure in our society. Water services are a natural monopoly that is capital intensive, and it is vital that we protect this valuable resource.

The amendments proposed in the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 will ensure that privatisation of water assets cannot be achieved simply by having a government's own two shareholding Ministers give prior written approval, which is what has previously occurred. The bill will ensure that any disposal of Sydney Water or Hunter Water and its main undertakings can only occur with the support of the majority of elected members in the lower House and the upper House of the New South Wales Parliament, and only once extensive and full scrutiny has been applied. This will also occur with full transparency and after consultation with our communities across New South Wales. A Minns Labor Government is committed to protecting our community, particularly in Western Sydney, from rising cost-of-living pressures, ensuring that they can focus on their quality of life and on what matters most to them. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:28):** The Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 sets out to amend the Constitution Act 1902 with a stated purpose of ensuring "the continued public ownership" of the Sydney Water Corporation and the Hunter Water Corporation. What captured my attention were the words of the Premier as he concluded his second reading speech when he said, "The bottom line is that Government members believe safe, reliable, publicly owned water is a constitutional right." I am pleased because those are noble words. And I am pleased because just this week I have written a letter of support for the communities of Howlong and Mulwala as they seek urgently required upgrades to their water facilities. They will be pleased that the Government sees it as a constitutional right to support them in that.

I also think of the Balldale community, who are challenged by water quality issues with their bore water supply. They too will welcome the words of the Premier that their right to safe and reliable water is a constitutional right. I acted as chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development in the previous Government. When we held the inquiry into the impacts of the drought, and the drought response, we spoke to so many communities across western New South Wales who spoke of the impact of water quality on their life during that drought. They too will applaud that, from here on in, safe, reliable, publicly owned water is a constitutional right.

Yet, as a regional member, it astounds me that the Government can state that but leave out regional New South Wales. We can only lament that this is the earliest indication of a government that cannot see past Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The Government knows that the Coalition never sought to privatise Sydney Water and Hunter Water, and it was clearly stated by the former Premier, Dominic Perrottet. This is simply the fulfilment of the Labor scare campaign and, as a result of wonky thinking, a bill has been drawn and presented under the impressive banner of "constitution amendment". But it is not, really, is it? It is a label chosen to give credibility to an election stunt. So what do we get out of this bill?

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

I will take that interjection. After part 9 of the Constitution Act 1902, the bill seeks to insert new part 10 entitled "Public ownership of Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation". New section 57 boasts "Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation to remain in public ownership". Does it achieve that? Let us see. When the Coalition was in charge, both Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation were clearly and legally in public ownership. Any imminent threat can only come from the current Government. New section 57 tries to anchor the broad concept in a number of generalisations. It reads:

- (1) The following must not be sold or otherwise disposed of unless authorised by an Act of Parliament—
  - (a) a water corporation,
  - (b) a main undertaking of a water corporation.
- (2) Nothing in this section prevents a sale or disposal that—
  - (a) is in the ordinary course of the business of a water corporation, and
  - (b) results in the main undertakings of the water corporation remaining in public ownership.

This means that the Government can still sell or dispose of a water corporation or split off its component parts if it can use a majority in Parliament for ordinary legislation. As the member for Wahrenoona rightly pointed out, this is not like the Commonwealth Constitution where it is ordained by referendum. This is simply through an Act of Parliament. As I said, that means the Government can still sell or dispose of a water corporation, which does not sit well with the Premier's bogey of what we would term "a backdoor privatisation". The back door remains open if Labor wants to use it. Not a word of the Government's bill is devoted to the Premier's notion that he is protecting a constitutional right to water. Once again, as a regional member of Parliament, I have to point out the unbalanced and inequitable priorities of this Government and its obsession with devoting its time and the resources of the State to pleasing its most ardent supporters.

Where is the same concern for the water needs and water security for regional residents and businesses? There are 89 local water utilities across regional, rural and remote New South Wales. What is the Government planning for those while making Sydney and the Hunter sacrosanct? We have to look back to WaterNSW, the source of supply to Sydney Water. WaterNSW does not play a role in the bill, yet it is a critical piece of the picture. WaterNSW's jurisdiction flows over into regional New South Wales, through the rivers and waterways, weirs and dams, across the State. It is a strange omission. I recently had the opportunity to tour the Hume Dam and, indeed, to actually walk through the walls—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

A good photo, thank you. The dam plays not only a water storage role but also a role in hydrogeneration. The Hume Dam holds back water reserves which, at their greatest extent, cover 202 square kilometres with a catchment of 15,500 square kilometres—six times the Sydney Harbour. That dam, that weir, is central to my community, providing not just water security but a recreational centre, a component of regional tourism, and a valuable firefighting resource and irrigation source. This water supports communities, farmers and businesses in three States and is a key part of regulating the Murray River system and its water flows. Our communities need to see that the Government is representing them and is providing for their water security so that they can continue, as they have for generations, to work on the land to provide food for the nation.

The Opposition agrees that Sydney Water and Hunter Water should be publicly owned, but we believe the Government's focus is too small when it comes to water. If we lift our eyes to this State, to the bigger picture, we will begin to understand that water security is an issue for all of us, wherever we live, and should be enshrined in the New South Wales Constitution Act. I support the bill, but I support the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Cootamundra. The bottom line is that we should all believe safe, reliable, publicly owned water is a constitutional right. The test for the Government is whether it will support that only for Sydney Water and Hunter Water or join us and take a stand for all people of New South Wales. I support the bill with the foreshadowed amendments.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:37):** I have been observing debate on the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023, and it is hard to fathom. Members opposite have seen the light after 12 years. We had a Liberal government that privatised everything for 12 years. Now, in opposition, its members are coming into the Parliament and saying, "No, we didn't mean that for 12 years. What we meant to do was this." I have sat on that side of the House. It is a terrible place to be. I hope that those opposite have a long and illustrious career over there. Perhaps they should reflect on their time in government and think, "Would it look a little strange if I went into the House and tried to expand a bill against privatisation when I've spent five years supporting privatisation?" My 12-year-old son sometimes finds it difficult to understand that actions have consequences. This Government is cleaning up after 12 years of an ideological government that was focused on privatising everything that it could.

**Ms Anna Watson:** "Asset recycling".

**Mr RYAN PARK:** They used the term "asset recycling"—an incredible term that I will get to in a minute—but they were hell-bent on privatising everything. Members opposite say, "No, we weren't doing that. What we were doing was this." It is funny because I was here in 2011, as was the member for Shellharbour. There were not many of us on that side. We were very small in number. I watched members opposite in government for 12 years and, it is funny, I do not remember them introducing a bill to stop the privatisation of water in rural and regional areas. I may have missed the occasional bill. I know that when I was on that side of the House we spent a lot of time on the library bill. The Government had no business for about 12 days and we all talked about the books we read. I am pretty sure that I did not see or participate in a debate about protecting the water utilities in regional or rural areas, but here we are. As proud customers of Sydney Water, the members of my fantastic electorate of Keira and I—and in my capacity as the Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast—all of us down there, including the member for Shellharbour, the member for Wollongong and the member for Heathcote, rely on Sydney Water to supply us with potable drinking water. It is absolutely critical.



We are honouring the commitment that was put in place during the election campaign, and we do so very simply because we have seen the effects of 12 years of privatisation. Our community has paid the price for it. Essential assets were sold, often at low prices, with the public paying an ever-increasing amount simply to use the same core services it used to own. Some members opposite may forget, but the only good thing I remember from being in opposition—there are no good things, but this one is slightly good—was a bill to privatise five hospitals. It is good that the member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber because one of them was Shellharbour Hospital. Wyong hospital was another one. Members opposite must remember what they said. They were not happy with privatising one, two, three or four hospitals. They said, "We're going to privatise five hospitals." I remember it. The member for Shellharbour, the member for Wyong, other members and I fought hard to stop it.

Today we are putting in place a mechanism so that no matter when they come back to this side of the House—hopefully, never in my time—they will not get an opportunity to drive their ideology of privatisation, particularly privatising one of the most important utilities the community has, which is safe, reliable and affordable drinking water. That is a basic need at the core of a community. Any of us who have travelled around the globe can say that that is not the case in every country. The member for Prospect made very clear what occurred in the United Kingdom. Members who read—that is us on this side of the Chamber—are very much aware of it. The heart of this bill is making sure that the community is protected and that this basic utility that all of us in our communities rely on is supplied.

Members opposite talk about other regional water supplies. Having been the chief of staff to a water Minister in the past, I know them well. It is interesting that members opposite were not thinking about privatising those, but we have evidence that shows they were looking at privatising Sydney Water. That is clear. I am glad the member for Goulburn is in the Chamber because she was asked whether she supports privatisation. It is interesting. I looked at the Chamber video. When you are a St George Illawarra fan, you spend a lot of time looking at what could have been and trying to work out whether there was a way it could have gone our way. I was watching the video objectively and I thought, "Could she have really meant 'no' there?" It is pretty hard to make "yes" into "no". That is a hard one, even for her.

I am very proud that a Minns Labor Government has introduced this legislation to be debated in Parliament. I am very proud to be part of a Government who is saying clearly to the community that this utility is too precious to privatise. I am very proud that we are honouring an election commitment. And I am very proud of the men and women on this side of the House, many of whom for 12 years fought long and hard under difficult circumstances to press our case that privatisation is not the golden key that members opposite said it was. I will never be lectured to by anyone on that side of the House about privatisation. A leopard does not change its spots. We have members opposite on record, when debating previous legislation, every step of the way not only supporting but also advocating for further privatisation. Under a Minns Labor Government, members on this side of the House are proud to finally stand up for communities across New South Wales to say that privatisation must stop, and it stops now.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:46):** What a diatribe that was. What a load of rubbish. After the 25 March election we are clearly seeing that Labor does not care about regional New South Wales. The Labor Party is quite happy to ring fence Sydney Water and Hunter Water from privatisation while letting the regions flounder. Go your own way and see what happens. What about WaterNSW? It does a fantastic job of providing a lot of regional New South Wales with water utilities and supplying councils with valuable water. Councils and their local water utilities are responsible for delivering safe, secure and affordable water and sewerage services to more than 1.8 million people in regional New South Wales. Labor seems to have forgotten about that while talking about Sydney Water and Hunter Water. We support jobs and industry, which help make our regional towns and cities attractive places to live. Addressing those challenges is critical to ensuring that the sector moves toward a future where local water utilities can sustainably manage risks and have the confidence they will be protected. That will not happen under Labor.

I will talk about the programs that I believe will be at risk if Labor continues down the path of locking out regional New South Wales and throwing it to the wolves, saying, "We don't care about regional New South Wales. It can make its own way." I believe councils have embraced the Town Water Risk Reduction Program and would not want to see it wiped out as a result of another entity coming in and taking over. This program is a central element of a two-year program partnership with the Department of Planning and Environment, which recognises and encourages the wealth of expertise with councils and their local water utilities. Today we have heard speakers talk about making sure we have the resources in WaterNSW and in our water utilities to manage that growth, infrastructure and technology. We want to ensure that the Town Water Risk Reduction Program provides the opportunities for stakeholders to design and refine better solutions in collaboration with local councils. Every local water utility faces unique challenges and risks. If we are thrown to the wolves, the risk we face goes into the red zone.

I know, as the previous water Minister, the amount of work that has gone into regional New South Wales. WaterNSW and the Department of Planning and Environment have engaged with hundreds of organisations in their collaboration and co-design process so far, including 77 councils, and local water utilities. They have held hundreds of workshops, and all that is now at risk because Labor does not care about regional New South Wales. I fear that the Town Water Risk Reduction Program will be thrown out, just like Labor is throwing out regional New South Wales. There is another program that we have heard about. I have real concerns about the \$1 billion Safe and Secure Water Program that is being delivered for infrastructure projects to improve at-risk water and sewerage services. Since 2017, the Coalition—

**Mr David Mehan:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 76. The member for Tamworth has gone right away from what the bill is about. The bill is about changes to the Constitution. It is not about a whole bunch of other programs out there.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The debate has been wideranging, and I have extended indulgence to all members. The member for Tamworth has the call.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Outrageous! Yet again those opposite want to gag debate on regional New South Wales. It is outrageous. Under the Safe and Secure Water Program, 23 infrastructure projects worth \$424 million across 15 local water utilities, and a further 114 projects worth \$242 million across 66 water utilities, are being delivered in regional New South Wales. In addition, 92 projects estimated at \$232 million across 53 local water utilities are currently under negotiation with councils and those that are involved in the delivery of water. The Safe and Secure Water Program has already helped the delivery of projects at Bourke, Nambucca, Cobar, Nyngan and Condobolin. It supported Orange City Council in its work on a stormwater harvesting project and a new pipeline in Orange to link Spring Creek Dam to the water treatment plant. It provided \$10 million for the Brogo-Bermagui water treatment plant. All of that funding came out of the billion-dollar Safe and Secure Water Program that could be at risk because Labor do not care about regional New South Wales; they are about Hunter Water and Sydney Water.

Drinking water is one step closer for Bombala and Delegate residents, with the preferred concepts for two new water treatment plants secured. Those projects are all part of the programs that could be at risk. It really frightens me the way that, just months after the 25 March 2023 election, after we heard about it and thought about it, we now know that it is true: Labor do not care about regional New South Wales. If they did, they would ensure that WaterNSW remains in public hands. But, oh, no. That brick wall is still there. For them, it is all about Sydney, the Hunter and looking after their mates down at the Illawarra. Everyone deserves the right to have safe, reliable, secure water. It is a basic human right of the people of regional New South Wales. They deserve that right equally to those in Sydney. I urge Labor and The Greens—we heard the member for Ballina. She is a local member and she works in her electorate. I have met with Rous County Council on countless occasions. I do not think she has asked them whether they would like to be thrown to the wolves.

**Ms Anna Watson:** I bet she has.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I bet she hasn't. We have an answer for her coming up. I urge Labor to accept our amendment and protect our people in regional New South Wales.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:52):** From what I have heard so far, one thing is for sure: Those opposite are going to have a long and happy life over on that side of the Chamber—which is exactly where they all belong. I could not be happier about that. I speak in favour of the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. It is a fabulous bill. New South Wales Labor promised to stop the rampant privatisation of our public assets by the previous Government. In fact, we were elected on an anti-privatisation mandate. I know that the people in the electorate of Shellharbour were sick to death that every time they opened a newspaper or saw the news, something else was being privatised. We had attempts at privatisation, as the member for Keira said, on five of our public hospitals. We had to fight very hard against that in the Illawarra. The member for Kiama was in full support of the privatisation of a public hospital at the time. A private jail right in the middle of West Dapto was another bit of privatisation.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: My point of order relates to reflections on members. If the member wants me to interrupt her every time she takes a point of order in relation to me or makes a comment, I am happy to continue to take points of order. But attacks on members must be done by way of substantive motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Shellharbour will be aware of what the member for Kiama has said.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The bill will ensure that any future Liberal or Nationals Treasurer or Minister for Finance—if those opposite are ever re-elected—will not be able to simply sign off on this bill again. That gives us, on this side of the House, great comfort. I hope, as I said before, that that re-election will not be any time soon,

if ever, as it will take us a while to clean up the mess they have left us from 12 years of looking after their mates instead of the people of New South Wales. We need this change in legislation because the Liberals and Nationals love selling off our assets; it lets them fund their blatant pork-barrelling for their electorates and in those they hope to win. We have all seen that over the past 12 years. We all know about the pork-barrelling. It is out there for everybody to see and that is exactly what has happened. You only have to look around the electorates to see exactly what has happened.

Over the past 12 years the Liberals and Nationals have sold everything that was not nailed down, except for Sydney Water and Hunter Water. The only reason they were not sold was because they simply ran out of time. The then Premier Dominic Perrottet would not rule it out. New South Wales has seen the negative impacts over the decade of privatisation, including the sale of our electricity infrastructure, our ports, our toll roads and many more assets. Once you sell off these assets, you can never get them back. These important assets were sold at a low price, and the public is continuing to pay to use the same services that government once owned. Those opposite could not care less about the long-term benefits of keeping Sydney Water and Hunter Water in public ownership, such as reasonable pricing and water security. You do not have to be Einstein to work out that once something is sold three things are assured: loss of services—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! Members will conduct private conversations outside the Chamber.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** Quite simply, only the Liberals and Nationals would be reckless enough to trust the private sector to own our water corporations—only that lot opposite. The people of New South Wales were very wise to elect a Minns Labor Government because if those opposite were still in power they would be well and truly on their way to selling off our critical water assets. I have absolutely no doubt about that. During the election campaign I was constantly told by people from right across my electorate that they had had enough of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government selling their assets.

Those people know that once a government-owned asset is sold, as I said before, they will never, ever get it back. They know that promises made regarding so-called benefits of asset recycling, as the member for Keira raised in his speech, never eventuated during the 12 long years of sell-offs of the previous Government. All we heard for 12 years was how wonderful asset recycling was, yet we never saw a single benefit from any of those privatisations in any electorate across New South Wales, except for the pork-barrelling that was done by the Liberals and Nationals. The record of the previous Government, when it comes to selling off our assets, is shameful. I fully support the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:58):** I congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your re-elevation to the position of Deputy Speaker, and I am very pleased to see you in the chair. I start by indicating my support for the Government's proposed legislation with respect to the assets of Sydney Water and Hunter Water, the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition—whilst it is an unusual thing to put into a constitution legal framework, it is a position that the Government took to the last election. I do not see, as a member of the crossbench, a need to frustrate that particular suggestion, and I think it is worthy of support.

I also indicate that I support the amendments proposed by the Opposition in relation to regional water assets. I was a Shoalhaven City councillor from 2004 to 2012—as those who have been members of the House for a while would know. Shoalhaven Water is an asset that runs incredibly effectively and efficiently. In fact, it is the envy of other council water authorities across the State in relation to quality, efficiency and service. For those reasons I think it is appropriate that we not only extend this franchise to the two water assets identified by the Government but also provide that surety to water assets in regional New South Wales. I was on council when the former Labor Government sought to bundle up water assets. There was a proposal before Cabinet to sell those water assets.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Public Interest Debate*

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE**

**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) (17:00):** I move:

That this House supports the Federal Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

I stand in this place today as the Aboriginal affairs Minister and, importantly, the very first New South Wales treaty Minister. I stand on the shoulders of giants. My Labor predecessor was the Hon. Linda Burney, MP, who is the current Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, and former member for Canterbury and former New South Wales shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and was the first Aboriginal member of New South Wales Parliament as well as the first Aboriginal Minister in New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of Linda and many others over the years for truth-telling, reconciliation and partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Today I call members' attention to a significant historic opportunity occurring later this year for the Australian people: a Federal referendum that will ask us to enshrine a First Nations Voice to Federal Parliament in our Constitution. This opportunity has been the result of decades of work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culminating in the historic Uluru Statement from the Heart in May 2017. That statement was a generous gift to the Australian people—a gift for all of us to walk hand in hand as equals and embrace our shared history, however dark it may be, as a truly reconciled people. The Uluru statement asked:

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

The referendum is a significant opportunity to unite the country and finally recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples in the Constitution. The statement asked for "Voice, treaty, truth", and only through having a Voice to Parliament will the other components of treaty and truth-telling be possible. The wording that we have put to the Australian people is simple but powerful. It asks to include in the Constitution:

1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;
2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.

The Labor Party supports the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. In New South Wales we have already made a commitment to begin the process of treaty with Indigenous communities after the Voice referendum has been conducted. Labor has committed \$5 million to a 12-month consultation process with First Nations communities on a treaty process for New South Wales. We also welcome and will honour the previous Government's support for, and commitment to, the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services, better outcomes are possible for all. However, that is only possible if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are acknowledged in the founding document of our nation and if structures are put in place that are protected by the Constitution to ensure First Nations people have a say in the matters that affect them. In order for governments across Australia to support self-determination not just in theory but in actual practice, and in order to support the processes of treaty-making and truth-telling that are needed if we are to become a truly reconciled nation, we need a Voice to Parliament. As the New South Wales Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, I support the Voice to Parliament campaign and I personally will be voting yes later this year to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution. I implore all members of this place, including the Opposition and crossbench, to support this historic opportunity.

I note that many members on the other side of the Chamber do support a Voice at the Federal level through the referendum. I acknowledge those members. The motion is in no way a reflection on them, but it is a great opportunity to get unanimous support in this place. That sends an important message to our State on how the Parliament of New South Wales feels about this issue and it gives people direction and support for a yes vote. Today in question time I highlighted the fact that former Premier Dominic Perrottet made a very public statement in support of the Voice, locking the then New South Wales Government into a position of supporting the yes vote. It was unfortunate that in a radio interview the new Opposition leader seemed to water down that support, so today is a great opportunity for every member in this place to vote in support of this motion in a bipartisan way and show great leadership on the issue.

I know that members on this side of the House—and, I am sure, members on the other side of the House and on the crossbench—are meeting with their communities and having discussions about the Voice. They are seeking to answer the important questions that community members are asking. Unfortunately, some of the information that needs to be given out is necessary to counter some of the negative arguments that the Federal Opposition is engaging with. It is great that in New South Wales, as far as I am aware, no State members of Parliament have given support to some of those divisive comments saying that, if the Voice goes ahead, it will create a racist nation and division and those sorts of things. This whole process was designed to bring people

together. Aboriginal people reached out and said that we need to walk together in partnership. I implore everyone to support the motion.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:07):** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is the first time that I have had the opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation to Deputy Speaker. I also take this opportunity to thank the Minister for bringing this issue to the public interest debate, and I congratulate him on his elevation to Minister. Obviously when I was the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, he was the shadow Minister; now we have reversed roles. But I think we can say fairly that we had a great working relationship, and I am really excited and feel privileged to be able to continue that relationship in the months ahead. Of course, we were often at events, listening together, which I will talk about further in a minute.

As we head into National Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day, I know that we will be together to meet with people that I consider my friends now, the Kinchela boys, who have an amazing story to tell. That will be a great way to end this week. As has been pointed out, late this year Australians will have their say on a referendum about whether or not we change the Constitution to recognise First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. The plan is that the Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body and that it would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As has been outlined by the Minister, on referendum day voters will be asked to vote yes or no on a single question. Subject to the Parliament's approval, the question on the ballot paper will be:

A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Do you approve this proposed alteration?

It calls for a simple yes or no answer. By definition, a referendum is a vote in which all the people in a country, in this case Australia, are asked to give their opinion about or decide on an important political or social question. As indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, it is appropriate that individual members make their own decisions as citizens of Australia regarding the Voice to Parliament. I am confident it will come as no surprise to anyone in this House that I am a strong supporter of the Voice to Parliament, because I believe that the Voice will be incredibly empowering not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but for all of us as Australians. It will encourage inclusivity and respectfulness and will be so important on our path to reconciliation.

However, I acknowledge that not all Australians will agree with me and with a lot of other people in this House. Not everyone who resides in the State of New South Wales will agree and mark yes on the ballot. In fact, not everyone in my electorate will have the same view. I recognise and acknowledge that, but I am very clear in my own mind about my view. I look forward to talking to as many people as I can across my electorate to encourage them to think carefully about and understand the significance of this question for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

All members in this place can agree that in order to see real change in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—our First Nations people—we must listen to them. That is the first thing we did when we came into government in 2011, and I acknowledge the first Coalition Minister, Victor Dominello. He immediately set up a ministerial taskforce and he listened, which led to the development of a plan with which the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty is familiar. That plan is OCHRE, which stands for Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment. It is an incredibly important document, but the most important thing about it was that it was developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Over 2,700 people contributed to the taskforce's work in developing the OCHRE plan. Of course, we also responded to *Unfinished Business*, a very important committee report from the Parliament in relation to the reparations scheme. Once again, I thank the Minister for bringing this public interest debate to the House. I am pleased to make a contribution.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:12):** It is fantastic to follow both the Minister and shadow Minister on this important topic today. I make a contribution on a matter of critical importance to New South Wales and Australia, the Voice to Parliament. The Voice to Parliament referendum, which we need to spend some time explaining amongst our communities, will be held later this year. It will be a vote for a change in our Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia and to provide a structural mechanism through which they can have a voice, quite literally, and be heard by the Australian Government and people.

I personally support the Voice to Parliament, and I support a change to our nation's Constitution. It is important to note for the record that for far too long Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been excluded from decisions that directly affect them, their families, their communities and their futures. The Voice to Parliament is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in those decisions. As part of my contribution, I will provide a couple of quotes for the record. Marcia Langton said:

The politicians who know and understand the Indigenous residents of their electorates know that the voice makes sense and that it is the singular fix to decades of appalling Indigenous policy and appalling government inaction that has, by and large, worsened the outcomes for our people.

Professor Marcia Langton is one of the most experienced members of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament working group, and I find her voice central to my understanding. Following the Uluru convention in 2017, Thomas Mayor carried the sacred canvas of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and embarked on an 18-month journey around the country to build support for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice and a Makarrata Commission for truth telling and treaties. Thomas Mayor said:

I transferred that advocacy for my own people and it helped me to see this great deficiency in our advocacy was that we have been purposely divided and lacking a structure from which to practice unity ... My inspiration in supporting the Uluru Statement and referendum, is the knowledge of the history of First Nations struggle and the history of representative bodies that have been silenced, and statements and petitions that have been ignored. If you understand structure and unity, you see the importance for us to seek a constitutionally enshrined voice.

Thomas Mayor is the author of *Finding the Heart of the Nation: The Journey of the Uluru Statement towards Voice, Treaty and Truth*. I encourage everyone to read that and to encourage others to do so as well. I honour and pay my respects to those two incredible humans, Marcia Langton and Thomas Mayor, whose voices have already made changes for a better Australia.

The NSW Labor Government is in full support of a Voice in our nation's Constitution. We now need political leaders and representatives from all sides of politics to come together with their communities and support the Voice. Only through the Voice to Parliament and the implementation of the Uluru Statement in full can we have a fairer, more just future for all Australians. I thank my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty for bringing this important public interest debate to the House. It is a respectful debate and it is important to have this conversation. I am sure many members, like me, still have a number of people in our communities who do not quite understand all of those points of concern and confusion. Respectfully sharing those voices amongst us will work towards the change we need. I commend the motion.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:17):** In making a contribution to this debate, I also offer my congratulations to the Minister, who is a good man and will do a good job. This Anzac Day I shared a different kind of story from my community, the story of World War I veteran Private Albert Knight. Private Knight was an Aboriginal man and in 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for great gallantry and devotion to duty in an attack on the village of Bony in France. During a visit last year to Toorale, 160 kilometres south-west of Bourke, I learnt about Private Albert Knight. A Barkandji man, he was born in 1894 on the station in Toorale National Park. Whilst fighting for Australia, he was not recognised as a citizen. Despite being denied the most basic rights, like many other Aboriginal men, Albert and his two brothers enlisted to defend our country. Only during his time of service did Albert find himself free from the discrimination of his everyday civilian life; only while he had the uniform on did he receive equal pay.

Aboriginal people have served in every conflict and commitment involving Australian defence contingents since Federation, including both world wars and the intervals of peace since the Second World War. Over that time, Aboriginal veterans have won numerous decorations for gallantry in the field, not least being four Distinguished Conduct Medals and 26 Military Medals. If that does not earn one a spot in our Constitution, then I do not know what does. I have had the privilege to have worked with Aboriginal people in remote communities right throughout New South Wales. Critics of the Voice say it is ineffective because it is symbolic; yet it became clear to me during my time as Minister that symbolism does create important practical change. Symbolism creates franchise and franchise builds participation and self-determination.

Let me give an example: Deep in the far north-west of New South Wales is a historic place called Billagoe, or Mount Drysdale. The site is a multilayered cultural landscape with shared Aboriginal, mining, pastoral and Chinese history. After a 20-year campaign by the local community, I listed it on the New South Wales State Heritage Register and declared it an Aboriginal Place in February 2022. In fact, it was my first listing as New South Wales heritage Minister. It was at this place, 34 kilometres north of Cobar, on the historic Kidman Way, that Ngayampaa Elder Aunty Elaine explained that the recognition created by the listing was an important step in reconciliation. It repaired the disconnect her mob had felt from their land for over a century and was important recognition that built confidence and capacity for her people to deal with more practical challenges.

The heritage listing strengthened the rights of her people to manage the site and allowed the repatriation of Aboriginal objects and remains. Declaring an Aboriginal Place listing, like constitutional recognition of First Nations people, is symbolic and does not bring an immediate resolution to issues confronting Aboriginal people; but that is no good reason to not do it, either. As environment Minister, I set out a proposal to develop a new model for Aboriginal joint management of the entire national parks estate. During the process of consultation it was clear that, like in most areas of society, rarely is there a homogenous view. Different Aboriginal communities have different perspectives of what works best in their local community and so divergent views on

the Voice should not be used as a disqualifier for it to proceed. One message I took loud and clear from every Aboriginal community I met with was the value of recognition and listening—to inform practical policy development—and this is what the Voice is about.

The next chapter of Australia should be written with courage, optimism and respect. It can be written with the same courage possessed by Private Albert Knight on the Somme battlefield in May 1918. In having a respectful debate about the Voice, we must not lose sight of our shared goal of doing better by Aboriginal Australians. There can be no doubt that every Australian will make history with their vote at this referendum. How they do that is up to them. But it is one thing to recognise 65,000 years of Aboriginal connection to this vast land; it is another thing to create a Voice that will help Aboriginal people thrive. It is time to do both.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:22):** The Voice referendum will ask a very simple question: Should we amend the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia and establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament? I support the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty.

**Mr David Mehan:** Hear, hear!

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** Hear, hear! I congratulate the Minister and everybody in the Parliament. It is really heartening to know that every member so far in the Parliament has spoken in support of the Voice. The Voice to Parliament is about making real and practical change and creating a direct line of advocacy and advisory communication between government and Indigenous Australians that recognises that real changes come only when real community voices are heard. This is about putting Aboriginal people, their wisdom and their knowledge at the table. It is about giving a Voice to Parliament to the oldest living culture in the world and ensuring that all of us continue to walk side by side. This is what Aboriginal people have asked for and later this year this is what we will have the opportunity to do.

I am proud to live in a nation with over 65,000 years of rich Indigenous culture, history, spirits and ancestors, with an incredible deep connection to country that a lot of us will never, ever begin to understand. At the same time, I am ashamed to live in a nation where the gap between outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in diverse areas such as education, life expectancy and employment continues to grow. If we continue along the same policy pathway we have always taken, we will continue to fail Indigenous Australians. The answers lie with Indigenous people and within Indigenous communities, and they need to be at the table when we make decisions about our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

Effective change comes when we allow our community voices to be heard. It is time that our Constitution and policymaking reflect this process. This is the opportunity to unite and share a process that is designed to bring us together and to really put us side by side at the table. I feel so privileged to be a member of the New South Wales Government because our position is very clear: We support the Voice, we support treaty, and we support truth-telling. Dominic Perrottet supported the Voice and, looking at the other side of the Parliament, I am confident we have a lot of supporters in this House. As the member for Blue Mountains said, we have a responsibility to talk and try our best to educate our communities about the Voice and what it is about. We have a lot of messages coming out of the Federal Parliament saying no, but we as a community have the opportunity to really change our State and change our nation.

As Dr Gordon Reid, who is a Wiradjuri man, a GP and the member for Robertson, said, "If you are happy with the life expectancy of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, vote no; if you are happy with educational outcomes, vote no; if you are happy with the number of Aboriginal kids in out-of-home care, vote no; if you are happy with Aboriginal health outcomes, vote no; if you are happy with the over-representation of Aboriginal people in our prisons system, vote no; if you are happy with employment outcomes, vote no." But I sincerely ask all members of the Opposition who are teetering on the edge to be brave and true to themselves, and vote yes for a better future for all of us.

Recently I had the privilege of being part of a Voice to Parliament information session in my community. It was absolutely wonderful to have Dr Gordon Reid and a young Wiradjuri man, Jacob Smeaton, talk to the community. Over 100 people turned up who wanted to find out about the Voice. Most people in the room left with a pretty positive understanding and lots of good information. I acknowledge the presence in the House of the member for Wagga Wagga, Dr Joe McGirr, and the member for The Entrance. While we have been hit hard by the impact of colonisation, we have a strong and growing Aboriginal community and we have the Brain Alliance, consisting of seven Aboriginal organisations across our community who work with and for Aboriginal people. It is so important to make sure that they are absolutely part of our community in every single decision-making process that affects Aboriginal people. I acknowledge Bara Barang; the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council; Gudjagang Ngara; Mingaletta; NAISDA; The Glen, which is now for men and women; and the Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services.

I also make the point that this is for our Aboriginal friends. The member for Manly spoke about stories out in the west, but I have deep friendships with Aboriginal people who want a better outcome for themselves, their families and their community. We have a commitment to make change. After 122 years of our Constitution we have the opportunity to recognise the First Nation people. Let's go for it!

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:27):** I support this important public interest debate and thank the Minister for bringing it to this House and congratulate him on his appointment to his important role at this important time. Australia is fortunate to have one of the oldest living civilisations in the world, one that is rich in culture, with over 250 languages, unique traditions, magnificent art and an inspiring spiritual connection to country and nature. The Sydney electorate is within the Eora nation of the Gadigal people. We have strong communities of Aboriginal people throughout, but especially in Woolloomooloo and Pyrmont. As Australia matures and embraces its Aboriginal culture, closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage caused by over two centuries of dispossession and racism must be a priority.

Health, mental health, education, justice, out-of-home care, housing and employment outcomes still fall short of a truly equal society. We urgently need culturally sensitive policies and strong investment. But we will only move forward if we work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations. A shift to a more collaborative approach with self-determination at the forefront is vital to progress and is what Aboriginal people have said will eliminate disadvantage, through the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The May 2017 First Nations National Constitutional Convention established the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The statement affirms sovereignty and the longstanding connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with land and sea, while calling for a representative Voice to Parliament, a treaty—or Makarrata—through a Makarrata commission and recognition of Indigenous people in our Constitution.

I welcome the Federal Government's process of initiating a referendum for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. A constitutionally entrenched Indigenous voice will firmly redress the history of poor or non-existent consultation and dialogue with First Nations communities. All levels of government can take action. It is so important that this Parliament is sending this message so early on in this term. I also acknowledge the work of the Federal member for Wentworth, Allegra Spender, on her campaign "Wentworth for the Voice". The City of Sydney, under the leadership of Lord Mayor Clover Moore, will also show its support through a yes campaign, as it did during the marriage equality plebiscite.

I am confident that Australia will vote yes, but supportive community campaigns and a strong result will make it even more uniting. As someone who has led a campaign on a national vote, I know it can be difficult and challenging. But, ultimately, it can and will unite us and reaffirm our national values of respect, fairness and equality, which was what happened when the final legislation for marriage equality went through. Of course, the frustrating thing is that we did not need a public vote to achieve marriage equality, yet the former Federal Coalition imposed one on us. For many LGBTIQ+ people, that makes the Federal Coalition's opposition to the referendum required to achieve constitutional recognition for a Voice to Parliament even more frustrating.

The Voice to Parliament is a vital step towards reconciliation. I have no doubt that the vote will be the most consequential vote I will make in my lifetime. Of course, more action is needed towards reconciliation. I also welcome the Minns Government's commitment to consulting on a treaty process, which is also long overdue. I commend the motion to the House.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:31):** I contribute to the public interest debate brought to the House by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty. I recognise and thank the Minister for bringing this discussion to the House today. It is a matter that is facing people across our country and is very important for us to consider in our daily lives, including in this place. I thank, recognise and congratulate him on that point. I also recognise that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty and the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs have fought to ensure representation, justice and access for Indigenous peoples across our State as we move even further towards reconciliation. I am confident that they will work together, as I know the current Minister did while he was in opposition, to ensure that we seek outcomes for these communities.

Members in this place know that we have made significant strides toward reconciliation. In my six years in this place, a range of different steps have been taken. That does not mean that we should stop that journey. There is a lot more work to be done. But, when it comes to the Voice and to this discussion about ensuring that Indigenous peoples have a Voice in our Federal Parliament—and obviously there will be discussions, for instance, about how that is enacted within State jurisdictions as well—it is incredibly important for us to ensure that we are driven by the views and representation of Indigenous peoples, first and foremost.

I live, work and spend my days walking on Cammeraygal country. Cammeraygal country is probably best known for its most iconic daughter, Barangaroo. When one thinks about Cammeraygal country, across the harbour in North Sydney and through to Mosman, it is an incredibly iconic place. Now it is built up. It is one of the densest



places in Australia for built environment. But when one thinks back to the natural environment over the 65,000-plus years that preceded colonial settlement in Australia, one can just imagine what that would have looked like: the harbour foreshore, the bushland, the native environment, the types of flora and fauna that existed. I think about the care, respect and appreciation that the Cammeraygal people provided to the land that I now get to call home and raise my children on. I thank them for that custodianship of country—of the land, the water, the sea and the sky. We now draw so much value every single day as we walk on that country.

But we cannot just recognise that contribution of custodianship. Very few people of Cammeraygal descent remain alive because of how incredibly effective the eradication of Indigenous people has been during colonisation. We cannot walk away from that. Many languages, tribes and bloodlines have been lost. We cannot change that history, but we can change the future. As the member for Manly said, we can change it through both symbolic statements and practical policies.

Symbolic statements do matter. The Uluru Statement from the Heart and the culmination of work done has led to significant support, particularly within my own community of North Shore, for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The Uluru Statement from the Heart, as members know, was created after the referendum council led a series of regional dialogues with First Nations people from all corners of the country to ensure local voices were heard. It ended with a convention that endorsed the work of the dialogues and issued the Uluru Statement from the Heart to the Australian people. The first question is whether we want to listen to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and take it on board. The second question is whether we want to say yes to a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. I quote from the Uluru Statement from the Heart because it is most powerful to use their words and not mine. They say:

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness*.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take *a rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

I do not know who could say no to such a powerful statement for self-determination and for the future of Indigenous children to walk alongside all other children in our country.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:37):** By leave: I make a brief contribution in support of the motion. I congratulate the Minister on bringing the motion and on his appointment. I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the lands on which I live, the Wiradjuri people. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge that I am not speaking for them. I am making a brief contribution to this debate, but I am not in any way wishing to subvert their right to make their own contribution about their own affairs.

The situation of First Nations people in this country is absolutely unique. They were the custodians of the land when Europeans arrived—the oldest continuous culture on this planet, for at least 65,000 years. Since colonisation, of course, they have been grievously afflicted. Despite all best efforts, our attempts to rectify that situation have, to this day, been inadequate. The member for Gosford outlined many of the areas of inadequacy in her speech, but the fact that 43 per cent of children in out-of-home care are still from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds is an instance where we have done nothing, in a sense, to manage the Stolen Generation and improve that situation. That is the situation; that is the context. The question, then, is what would a Voice to Parliament do to help that situation? I believe it is an important step and I support the motion.

While speaking in support, I address three objections to the Voice. People say to me, "Well, it is just symbolic." They say, "It won't make a difference." They ask, "Why do we need to put it in the Constitution?" I will address those three objections and turn them around in a positive way. First of all, Indigenous people were the custodians of the land when we arrived. We have previously believed that they should have constitutional recognition. I think this is the way to do it—to enshrine a Voice in the Constitution. It is not just symbolic; it will be practical.

The second point is that people say to me, "Why? It will just be a symbol. This will just be symbolic." To that, I say that symbols are important. There would not be a religious community in this country that does not have symbols that are fundamental to it. The welcome to country has been an important part of our civic life for the past 20 years, and I believe it has changed our attitudes. There would not be a football code in this country that does not compete for a premiership trophy. They do not win that trophy so that they have something to drink out of; they win it because it is a symbol. Symbols are important. They change our lives. Let us not ever debase the value of symbols. The Voice is a powerful symbol, but it is also practical.

Why do I say that? I have worked in the bureaucracy for many years, and I am now part of the democratic process that tries to keep bureaucracy accountable. The bureaucracy of government is well-meaning and often

very effective, but it does not operate at its best unless it has democratic oversight. That is a simple fact. For all the well-meaning nature of bureaucrats, at the end of the day it is this institution and the institutions of democracy that keep bureaucracy accountable. Sadly, some of the lack of outcomes we have had in attempting to address the issues of our First Nations people come from the fact that they do not have democratic input into the bureaucracy that is attempting to solve their issues. I believe that a Voice to Parliament will provide that democratic accountability; after all, it is why we are here. One of the great things about our society is that we hold bureaucracy to account. Our First Nations people do not have that authority and power yet, and a Voice to Parliament will provide that to them. It will enable our bureaucracy to be its best self in addressing the issues of First Nations people.

I note that this Friday 26 May is National Sorry Day, and I am truly honoured to be able to say a few words at the Wagga Wagga National Sorry Day event at the Sorry Day Rock on Wiradjuri land. The Stolen Generation is one of the terrible examples of what happens when government does not listen and when bureaucracy imposes its own will and agenda on First Nations people. I support the motion because I support the importance of symbols and the importance of bureaucracy and democratic accountability. The Voice will go a long way to addressing the issues of First Nations people.

**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) (17:41):** In reply: I thank my friend the member for Port Macquarie. I am excited to have her as the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and look forward to working with her. The member for Port Macquarie made some significant reforms in her time as Minister, and she can be very proud of that work. If I can be half as good as her, I will be happy. I also acknowledge the member for Blue Mountains, who I know is very passionate about Aboriginal issues, as well as the member for Gosford. The member for Manly, who I do not think is still in the Chamber, gave a great speech. I thank him for that. I also acknowledge his recognition of veterans, which is one of my other portfolios, and acknowledge that this Friday is the Indigenous soldier commemoration at Hyde Park, which is an important event.

The member for Sydney, as always, is a uniting figure. This place is a lot better for his presence, given some of the major reform that has been achieved through his ability to bring people together, even on difficult issues. The member for North Shore passionately talked about her area and gave proper recognition that we all quite often walk through our own country and do not necessarily realise what has happened before. I thank her for raising that. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga, who is a great person to have in this place. Some big conversations with members of the crossbench are coming up on a range of issues, and I know that we can work in a positive capacity. For the benefit of the House, I seek leave to table a letter from the Attorney-General of Australia, Mark Dreyfus. It is his submission to the inquiry into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum, which is submission 64. It gives the legal opinion about how it is constitutionally okay to vote yes. He makes some interesting comments in the document quoting the Solicitor-General.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** I finish by saying that this is a better place when we have respectful debates about important issues that affect our communities. Everyone has agreed with each other today, which is not always the case in this place, but we are all better when we are united on these issues.

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

**Division called for.**

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Rockdale, being the person who called the division, to move to the other side of the Chamber. As the member who called the division for the noes, he cannot then vote with the ayes. It is an unfortunate situation. Under Standing Order 175, the member for Rockdale is not permitted to vote with the ayes. The standing orders require that two tellers for the ayes and two tellers for the noes be appointed. Because there are not two tellers for the noes, the division will not proceed.

**Division called off.**

**Motion agreed to.**

*Committees***MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE****Membership**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council advising of the following nominations for membership of the Modern Slavery Committee:

Government: Dr Sarah Kaine  
Mr Greg Donnelly  
Opposition: Mrs Aileen MacDonald  
Crossbench: Mr Robert Borsak

*Bills***REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 11 May 2023.**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:52):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I note from the outset that the legislation was formulated by the former Liberal-Nationals Government and was previously announced as a part of the *2022-23 Half-Yearly Review*. As such, I take this opportunity to recognise the work of the then Minister for Finance and now shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC, and his team, in preparing these changes for the Parliament's consideration. It should come as no surprise that the Opposition will be supporting the bill.

I turn to the amendments proposed by the bill. Firstly, the bill seeks to remove a concession in the amount of duty payable by a public landholder—that is, the bill seeks to amend the Duties Act 1997 to abolish the existing concession that provides that the duty payable on the 90 per cent acquisition of a "public landholder" is 10 per cent of the duty which would otherwise be chargeable. As it currently stands on a landholder duty of \$100,000, the duty payable on the 90 per cent acquisition of a public landholder is just \$10,000. The change will remove the concessional rate and with it remove the incentive to hold land in a public landholder by removing the concessional rate so that the same duty is payable by a public landholder as it would be if the land was acquired directly.

Imposing the same duty regardless of how land is acquired is equitable. The 10 per cent concessional rate was set by Labor in 2009. The legislation to abolish this concession was prepared by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government in late 2022 but was not progressed due to other priorities such as First Home Buyer Choice, which has benefited many more home owners. That was opposed by Labor, which—as we heard in this place earlier—plans to abolish choice and reimpose up-front duty of as much as \$60,000 to \$70,000 on first home buyers, impacting especially those in western Sydney. I note that removal of the existing concession will bring New South Wales into line with Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Secondly, I turn to the other change enabled by the bill that will remove some of the stress faced by families as our communities emerge from the dark shadow cast by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant construction labour and supply chain shortages. The bill makes a fairly simple and commonsense change to the Land Tax Management Act 1956 to allow the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue to increase the principal place of residence period by a further two years. As it stands, unoccupied land may be claimed as a principal place of residence and is therefore exempt from land tax. This exemption applies for up to four land tax years under certain circumstances, so long as the land is unoccupied because building works or renovations are being undertaken and the owner intends to use the land as a principal place of residence. If at the end of this four-year tax period the landowner fails to occupy the land as their principal place of residence, the exemption is revoked and the land is reassessed for land tax for the whole period.

As I touched on earlier, the past four years have been quite an extraordinary time. Landowners had to deal with supply chain shortages and the uncertainty of the pandemic. Construction timelines were blown out, putting landowners' land tax exemptions at risk. This change is ultimately about fairness and providing enough latitude to accommodate exceptional circumstances. The bill would have the effect of allowing the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue to increase the exemption period by up to two years where the four-year tax period would end on or after 31 December 2019. This means that landowners can be provided six years to complete building and renovation works and move into their principal place of residence if the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue is satisfied that delays in building work were caused principally as a result of exceptional circumstances outside the owner's control.

As I have mentioned, the Opposition was instrumental in drafting the changes before the House today. The Opposition supports the changes made by the bill to both the Duties Act 1997 and the Land Tax Management Act 1956. The Opposition supports the bill.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (17:57):** I thank the Opposition for its support of the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As previous speakers have said, the bill originated under the former Government. It contains measures that were announced in the *2022-23 Half-Yearly Review* released by the former Government on 7 February 2023. The objects of the bill are to remove a concession in the amount of duty payable by a public landholder and to provide for an extension of time during which unoccupied land may be treated as a person's principal place of residence.

A public landholder is a publicly listed or widely held unit trust scheme or a publicly listed company—listed on a recognised stock exchange—which holds land in New South Wales with an unencumbered land value of at least \$2 million. Applying full duty rates to the acquisitions of public landholders is estimated to increase State revenues by \$198 million over the three years to 2025-26. The 10 per cent concessional rate for acquisitions of public landholders has existed since landholder provisions were introduced into the Duties Act 1997. The acquisition of a 90 per cent interest in a public landholder currently attracts a concessional duty. The bill seeks to remove some of these concessions. Indeed, the former Treasurer at the time described it in *The Sydney Morning Herald* as "closing a loophole" in the legislation. He said that there was no policy rationale for this group to be treated differently. In introducing this legislation, the Government obviously agrees with that.

It is vitally important that we look at our revenue sources, given that we are faced with such a significant challenge in the State budget. We heard a bit about that challenge today in question time. It highlights that we must be thorough in going through the sources of revenue and expenditure available to New South Wales to ensure that we can attempt to overcome the significant debt and deficit that this State currently faces. As we heard today in question time, in 2011 debt was \$22.5 billion—that is \$3,153 per person—and interest was \$1.9 billion a year. This year the debt will be \$128.7 billion—that is \$15,779 per person—and interest will be \$4.5 billion a year, at \$546 per person. By 2026 that debt will grow to \$187.5 billion—\$22,384 per person—with an interest bill of \$7 billion a year. It is a phenomenal budget gap.

This measure is welcomed and though it was flagged by the former Government, Parliament was in the lead-up to an election, so it could not introduce it. This Government is supporting it. It is a small measure for the damage the previous Government did to our budget. The former Government spent most of its 12 years in office selling off the State's income-producing assets—things that produced a positive benefit for revenue—in exchange for a one-off payment. It is a bit like selling your family home and blowing the money on a Maserati or something, and then renting for the rest of your life. It is something we see all too often.

The former Government left a range of things in the budget for the subsequent Government that could only be classified as mines. Though they talked a lot about a range of expenditure programs in public, they were not funded beyond this financial year or were due to finish. Today in question time we heard about the 1,100 nurses who are unfunded from 30 June 2024 next year. That is a \$380 million hole in the forward estimates. We have a \$7 million hole in the forward estimates for out-of-home care. Cyber Security NSW is underfunded from next year. Destination NSW is very important for the Monaro electorate, where tourism and the Snowy Mountains, in particular, are an important part of our economy. But it has had \$100 million per year cut from its budget. Funding for Tourism Snowy Mountains ends on 30 June and there is a completely unfunded promise that was made during the election campaign.

The former Government left a range of booby traps for the Government that was elected this year, which is quite cynical in a lot of ways. Members of the public need to be aware that the former Government portrayed its forward estimates as being better than they were, and it created a black hole. Electors get sick of new governments talking about black holes but, unfortunately, that is what the former Government did. So while we welcome the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill, which is designed to take away a loophole in the tax system and restore some revenue to the State, we know that overall we have been left with a budget that has a number of booby traps that were designed by the former Government so it could tell the public that its forward estimates were in a better position than they really were. So a whole range of important spending measures have to be funded by the present Government. We have to find the funding to do some things otherwise those services will decline. It is pretty immoral in a lot of ways.

With this legislation we are, in part, starting to repair the budget. We want to put a budget and services in place in New South Wales that do the things the Premier talked about during the election campaign and that many of us in our local electorates are talking about. We are focusing on the people who make our services tick; they provide important services in our hospitals and our schools for the people of New South Wales. One thing that frustrates all members on both sides of the House is that the public often does not see the connection between taxation revenue raised and the services that are provided. We must raise enough revenue to provide services to

the people of New South Wales, otherwise we end up with significant deficits or reductions in the level of service that the people of this State deserve. It is important for us to be constantly looking at whether our sources of revenue are adequate, fair and equitable, or whether holes in them enable people to escape paying their fair share of revenue.

They are big challenges for any government, no matter what side of the political spectrum it comes from. However, overcoming those challenges is not helped by dishonest budgeting that leaves black holes as a result of not including in forward estimates the spending on programs that members of the public were led to believe would continue. We have heard a lot from Opposition members about Active Kids vouchers. That is a case in point. Opposition members have been talking to people in their electorates, singing the praises of that program, but have actually left it unfunded. That is what people get deeply cynical about. I hope that over the course of this Government's time in office we will see that it is repairing some of that budget black hole but in a way that puts human beings at the forefront, making sure that we are looking after the people in our society who need assistance.

In some cases that means targeting assistance at those who are most in need and removing the loopholes relating to those who can afford to pay but who might have had concessions in the past. This is one of those areas. I recognise the points made by Opposition members in their comments on stamp duty and on delays in construction. I would like to come to that. [*Extension of time*]

Opposition members were talking about clause 4 of the bill, which amends the Land Tax Management Act 1956:

- (a) to permit the Chief Commissioner to extend a period from 4 tax years to up to 6 tax years during which unoccupied land may be treated as the principal place of residence by the owner of the land. The Chief Commissioner may extend the period if satisfied—
  - (i) the owner cannot use and occupy the land because of a delay in the completion of building or other work, and
  - (ii) the delay is due primarily to exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the owner, and
  - (iii) the delay could not reasonably have been avoided by the owner, and
- (b) to enable the power to extend the period to be used in relation to periods ending before the commencement of the proposed Act but on or after 31 December 2019.

As the Opposition rightly pointed out, during the COVID-19 pandemic we saw supply chain difficulties which caused some massive issues in the delivery of construction projects. A lot of supply chain issues drove inflation in the economy and in construction, with inflation in civil construction rising at a rampant rate. It created significant delays in the construction of homes for individuals. I am sure members in this place are also hearing from people in their local communities about significantly lengthy delays in approvals from local authorities, which is again being driven in part by some of the factors in the broader economy. They include workforce shortages and the inability of councils to get enough professionals to deal with a lot of the planning challenges they have. A whole series of things have contributed to this problem. It is good that this Act is recognising that and enabling some concession to apply to people who need it.

In her speech the Opposition spokesperson also talked about stamp duty changes. That was leading with her chin. We have seen the Government introducing legislation today to grant stamp duty concessions for first home buyers on properties of up to \$800,000 and reducing it on properties up to \$1 million. As a regional member, it has stunned me to see the statistics that the Premier talked about today. The vast bulk of the previous Government's program went to people who are buying houses in Sydney—84 per cent. Regional first home buyers have completely missed out on any benefit from the previous Government's measures. During question time, we heard the Opposition shouting out, "Let's have them both!", when we talked about the—

**Mr Paul Scully:** One point four billion.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It would cost the budget \$1.4 billion to have them both. It is a classic from an opposition. As members know, I have only been in this Chamber in government. Some people would say that is lucky. I remember that last time I was in this Chamber members of the Opposition were essentially "members for the Magic Pudding". They were able to talk at all times about how much more money the Government should spend. At the same time they would talk about lowering taxes. And they never managed to make the two things meet. Perhaps that is why we are going into such a massive debt. Apparently in government they still thought it was a magic pudding, particularly if one lived in an electorate that The Nationals wanted to pork-barrel. That sort of thing has to change.

We need to target assistance at the people who need it the most. The Government has introduced into this Chamber changes to stamp duty that will do exactly that. They will help the people who need it. They will help them equitably. And they will help them in regional and rural communities, as well as in the city. That is very good news for the electorate that I represent, Monaro. And it is very good news for the people who are desperately

trying to build houses in new areas like Googong, or who have moved to country communities where they can get a cheaper level of housing to try to get into home ownership in an affordable way. I think that is commendable from the Government, and I have no doubt I will have more to say on that bill as well, when we come to it. I commend the bill to the House and look forward to being here for the next four years and seeing a sensible government engaging in budget repair, but in a way that is compassionate and fair for the rest of the community.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:11):** I contribute to debate on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. I note that the bill does two things. They are two things that were canvassed in the half-yearly budget review, prepared by the Treasury for the former Government. The former Government foreshadowed that it would enact these things, and I note that the Opposition supports the changes today. The two things are a change to the Duties Act 1997 to remove a concession that enabled a public landholder to pay only 10 per cent of the duty payable by a private landholder for a relevant acquisition in a landholding. A public landholder, being a publicly listed landholder, a publicly listed company or a unit trust that was publicly tradeable, with a landholding of at least \$2 million, is treated differently to an equivalent private landholder in making a land acquisition. The removal of that 10 per cent concession will, it is estimated, improve the budget bottom line by \$66 million in 2023-24 and by \$198 million over the three years to 2025-26. That is a good thing. It begs the question why it took 12 years to discover it but let us not dwell on that. The House is supporting a budget measure that will not only improve the duties system to make it fairer but also improve the budget bottom line. That is to be commended.

The second change is a concession. It is a change to the Land Tax Management Act 1956 to permit the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue to extend a period from four years' tax up to six years' tax during which unoccupied land may be treated as the principal place of residence by the owner of the land. The commissioner does not have that discretion at the moment. It extends the discretion if the commissioner is satisfied that the owner cannot currently use the land, the delay is due primarily to exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the owner and the delay could not reasonably be avoided by the owner. That is a useful discretion for the commissioner to have, to help people out who have not, for a whole bunch of reasons, been able to finish their residence on their primary place of residence. It is a cost to the budget of \$1.8 million in 2023-24 and \$2.8 million over the three years to 2025-26—a net improvement to the budget overall. It is a good bill to start off the first couple of weeks in this House. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:15):** In reply: Temporary Speaker, this is the first time I have had you in the chair since you have been elevated to that position. Congratulations on your appointment to the Speaker's panel. You are always a fair adjudicator, and I am sure that will continue. I welcome those members in the gallery who have shown such strong interest in the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and who rushed in from Macquarie Street to catch the end of this important debate. On a more serious note, I appreciate that members in the gallery are here for the first speech of the member for Davidson and I am sure they will be looking forward to that. As we have heard from the member for Miranda, the member for Monaro and the member for The Entrance, this bill is about embarking on the process of budget repair. This Government understands that there is a need to improve our fiscal sustainability, while at the same time providing fairness and accommodating exceptional circumstances.

It is important for this bill to pass. I welcome the fact that Opposition members have indicated their support, given the bill's genesis in their own ranks prior to the last election. But the bottom line is that we have had to take this action because of what we have been left. Granted, this measure does set about some partial budget repair. It is expected to generate about a \$195 million improvement in the budget over the three years to 2025-26. It does that by two measures. First, it amends the Land Tax Management Act 1956 to enable the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue to provide for the extension of up to two years of the time during which unoccupied land may be treated as an owner's principal place of residence and, as such, not be liable for land tax if building and renovation work is delayed by genuinely exceptional circumstances. Over the past couple of years we have seen how quickly genuinely exceptional circumstances can come into play in the construction industry. Currently, the Land Management Act 1956 allows property owners four years to complete those works. The change will allow the Chief Commissioner to grant additional time to complete building works as an acknowledgement that unforeseen challenges may be faced by home owners looking to build or renovate their homes as we have seen recently.

The second important measure in this bill is the amendment to section 156 of the Duties Act 1997 to remove the 90 per cent concession on the amount of duty payable on the acquisition of a public landholder. Effectively, under current policy, when a person buys a house, they can pay duty of up to 5.5 per cent. If they buy an unlisted company that owns a house, they pay a duty rate of up to 5.5 per cent. But when a person buys a listed company that owns a house, they pay a maximum duty rate of 0.55 per cent. We can see the problem. This means that after removing the concession, a public company will pay the same general duty rate as a private company, if they were to acquire the same landholding. Landholder duty becomes payable by an individual or business when they acquire 90 per cent or more of the issued equity of a publicly listed company that owns land in New South Wales. The

duty applies to a publicly listed and widely held unit trust scheme or a publicly listed company that holds land in New South Wales with an unencumbered value of at least \$2 million.

I will leave my remarks there. I understand that the Leader of the House has some matters he needs to attend to before the inaugural speech of the member for Davidson. I welcome the fact that the Opposition has indicated its support for these measures, and I look forward to not only their smooth passage through this place but also their similarly smooth passage through the other place, in the interests of genuine fiscal responsibility, genuine budget repair and cleaning up the budget black hole that we have inherited from the previous Government.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (RENTAL FAIRNESS) BILL 2023

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 10 May 2023.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:20):** With agreement between the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading and the shadow Minister, and at the suggestion and request of the member for Sydney and member for Newtown, I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after the word "That" and inserting instead:

- (1) The bill be referred forthwith to a select committee for consideration and report, for the purpose of inquiring into:
  - (a) whether clause 22B of the bill will provide sufficient transparency for applicants to enable them to make informed decisions if bids higher than the advertised rental price are received during the application process to secure a residential tenancy;
  - (b) the impact of clause 22B on improving disclosure and transparency requirements compared with the current rental application process;
  - (c) how clause 22B might be expected to influence applicants' transactional behaviour; and
  - (d) whether there are any additional measures to improve transparency for applicants during the rental application process or better protect applicants without formalising an auction process for rental properties.
- (2) The committee consist of the following members: Mr Clayton Barr, Mrs Sally Quinnett, Mr Jason Li, Mr Tim James, Mr Alex Greenwich, Ms Jenny Leong, Ms Liza Butler and Mr Rory Amon.
- (3) Mr Clayton Barr shall be the chair of the committee and Mrs Sally Quinnett shall be the deputy chair of the committee.
- (4) The committee have leave to sit during the sitting or any adjournment of the House.
- (5) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (6) The committee shall report to the House by 12 June 2023.
- (7) The committee shall be able to table a report out of session with the Clerk.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:22):** The Opposition will support this referral motion. I note that, in the words of the Leader of the House, this is a great example of minority government. When members on this side of the House flex their muscle, the Government has to respond. The Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023 is also a good example of what we have already seen today with the Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023, which is that poor pieces of legislation are being drafted and that it is necessary for them to be amended or—as in the case of this legislation—referred to a select committee to try to fix them.

The Opposition knows that renters are doing it tough in New South Wales. It is important to get the legislation right. The Government did not draft the bill properly or well or comprehensively, so it needs to be referred to a committee to be improved because the issue is too important to be left to the sort of incompetence in parliamentary drafting that we have already seen from the Government. Ministers are floundering around and sacking people on radio, as we heard this morning. The Government is incredibly inexperienced and producing poor work, so it is necessary in this case for the bill—which is poorly drafted in some respects—to be referred to a committee to be improved. We support the motion.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:24):** I acknowledge the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, the Leader of the House and the Government for referring the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023 to a short, sharp inquiry to allow us to have a collaborative and constructive debate to ensure that we are delivering legislation in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. I thank them for not taking on board the kind of arrogance that we saw from the previous Government, and which was just demonstrated by the member for Wahroonga in his comments about the bill, and for instead recognising that laws can be made better by listening to a diversity of views across the Chamber. I absolutely believe we will be able to do that in delivering these much-needed reforms and changes that are desperately required to address the rental crisis in New South Wales.

I particularly acknowledge the Minister, the Leader of the House and the new Minns Labor Government for showing a willingness to work collaboratively and to listen. That is what our communities want and expect, and it will ensure that we pass laws through this Chamber and deliver in the best interests of our communities and the people we are elected to serve. I thank them and put on record The Greens' recognition of and support for their willingness to work collaboratively to do that. I look forward to serving as a member of the committee.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:26):** I join the member for Newtown in thanking the Government for establishing this select committee and referring the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023 to it. The recommendation by me, the member for Newtown and others came about because the sector wants to explore part of the legislation a little further. I think it is a sign of good, consultative government to look into bills in detail, and I thank the Government and the Minister for their willingness to do so. I look forward to being a part of the committee process.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:26):** I will not take the bait from the Manager of Opposition Business. He should restrict his leadership campaign to the party room and not use this House to make gratuitous comments. First, I say to the Manager of Opposition Business that I expect the same level of cooperation from him as I gave when he was Leader of the House. Secondly, I assure the Opposition that this House will be used not as a rubber stamp but as the people's House to ensure that legislation is, as best as possible, correct before it leaves the House. The Manager of Opposition Business well knows that, and he well knows that an agreement has been entered into between the Government and the Opposition. Quite frankly, his gratuitous remarks demean the well-respected silk that he is. He has a leadership role in this Chamber and should conduct himself better. I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that:

- (1) The question on the amendment to the motion that this bill be read a second time be put forthwith.
- (2) The resumption of the debate on the second reading of the bill be restored to the *Business Paper* on the tabling of the report of the select committee.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the motion to suspend standing and sessional orders be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the amendment of the Leader of the House be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I welcome to the gallery the many visitors who have come to see what I am sure is about to be an excellent inaugural speech by the member for Davidson. As part of tonight's package, they have also managed to see exciting debate on the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. They have also had the opportunity to witness the Parliament send the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023 bill to a committee for further consideration. It is quite a day for democracy that I bet they did not think they were going to witness when they left home today.

*Members*

#### INAUGURAL SPEECHES

**The SPEAKER:** I will make a few acknowledgments before we proceed. First and foremost I welcome the wife of the member for Davidson, Gessika, and his parents, Fiona and Malcolm Cross. Who would miss their son's inaugural speech? It is wonderful. I also welcome the former Australian Ambassador to the United States



and Federal Minister, the Hon. Arthur Sinodinos, AO; the former High Commissioner to New Zealand and former member of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Patricia Forsythe, AM; former Liberal leader Kerry Chikarovski, AM; and former member for Davidson Andrew Humpherson.

I welcome former members of Parliament the Hon. Bruce Baird, AM, the Hon. Andrew Constance, former member for Coogee Bruce Notley-Smith, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, Fiona Scott and the Hon. Michael Yabsley. Also in the gallery are Trent Zimmerman and ABC elections analyst Antony Green, AO. Antony, you have to declare an interest if you are there. Finally, I welcome Liberal Party State Director Chris Stone and President of the Davidson Liberal Party Alan Lipman. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly on the auspicious occasion of the inaugural speech of the member for Davidson.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:32):** It was the morning after the election. I took a sharpie, turned over an election corflute and wrote in large letters, "Thank you, Davidson." I then headed down to the St Ives Village Green. Within moments of setting up, a person came by. They stopped, looked at my sign, scratched their head and said, "Sorry, I think you're a day late. The election was yesterday." Soon after, another person came by. They did not stop or miss a beat. They said, "Thanks but I did not vote for you." Thankfully, Antony Green tells me that 28,865 people did vote for me. I am humbled, thankful and grateful for their support. To all the people of Davidson, my message is that, regardless of who you voted for, I will work hard for you and I will advocate passionately for you.

I acknowledge the Gadigal people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet; and the Garigal and Dharug people, the traditional owners of the land in Davidson. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Mr Speaker, I acknowledge you. We have something in common: Your predecessor as Speaker is also my predecessor as the member for Davidson. He was an honourable servant of this Parliament and the people of Davidson. I thank Jonathan O'Dea for his public service. Since its beginning in 1971, Davidson has also been represented by Liberals Dick Healey, Terry Metherell and Andrew Humpherson. I acknowledge their public service.

I stand here before all of you today with one clear purpose: public service. I bring to the New South Wales Parliament a guiding set of values—values passed on to me from my family, and values shared by institutions, individuals and communities that I greatly respect and admire. My first set of values comes from my family, the foundation of my life. They passed on to me the values of love, integrity, aspiration and living a meaningful life through public service. The family unit is the foundation of our communities. It starts with individuals choosing to come together to love, care for and support each other.

Growing up, my mum, Fiona, was my rock at home. She raised me and my younger sister, Heather. She worked in the school libraries of the New South Wales and Catholic education systems. I inherited from Mum my love of travel and venturing outside my comfort zone. My dad, Malcolm, affectionately known as Percy, is a retired civil engineer with the New South Wales Government. He planned our motorways and highways, including the M2 and M7. Upon receiving his NSW Service Medallion after 40 years, Dad's work colleagues described him as "highly regarded for his energy and a man with undoubted integrity and capacity to manage considerable workloads". As I too have a passion for roads and transport, I hope to carry on my father's ethos and, like him, be remembered as someone who helped to build infrastructure. As a side note, I thank Transport for NSW for posting Dad, with my then-pregnant mum, to Tamworth, where I was officially born. To be born in country New South Wales allows me to officially wear the uniform: the R. M. Williams boots and the Akubra hat.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** And the chequered shirt.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** I acknowledge the interjection. My parents understood the importance of public service from their parents. My Scottish-Australian grandfather, Athol, enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy in World War II. After just one day he was discharged due to being partly deaf. But, determined to serve, he enlisted in the United States Merchant Marine and served in the Pacific. Post-war, he returned to my English Australian grandmother, Sheila, who raised the family in his absence. They later settled in Frenchs Forest. My other grandparents, Dorothy and Duncan, were the descendants of English free settlers and were too young to serve in the war. They worked hard on the home front as farmers in Wingham, and post-war they worked in factories in Penrith.

Dorothy, known as Nell, sparked my interest in public service. My first political memory came in 1991, aged seven, when I asked her, "Nanna, who do you vote for?" Without a moment of hesitation she said, "The Liberal Party". With a love of politics, history and public policy from a young age, I soon worked out why my family were Liberals. They were the forgotten people in Australia—the term coined by Robert Gordon Menzies some 81 years and one day ago today. My grandparents, the forgotten people, were not poor, but they were not wealthy. They embodied the selfless individualism that Menzies often spoke about. They worked hard and were aspirational in every sense of the word.

Six years ago, on my very first day of postgraduate study in Boston, I met an amazing woman. I felt an instant connection with her warm and beautiful smile. Her name is Gessika, and her story is one of inspiration. At the age of 17 she left Haiti for the United States, adapting to a new culture and language. Commencing community college, she transferred and graduated from Cornell University, worked on Wall Street and then later graduated from Harvard. She now works at that great Australian success story, and unicorn, Canva. The first person in my family to enjoy political success was Gessika, who was elected student body president at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. I was proud to work on her campaign. I would not be here without the support, partnership and commitment of Gessika. She is my rock, bringing out the best in me with her unwavering belief. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your love and sacrifices.

In marrying Gessika, I joined a large and charismatic Haitian American family. They are watching live from Port-au-Prince, New York City and New Jersey. I thank them for embracing me to be a part of their family. As the Haitian proverb says, "Tout moun se moun"—everyone deserves to be treated like a human being. I am very proud to be a part of a multicultural family. Australia is a richer society for embracing multiculturalism. People should not be judged on the colour of their skin, the place of their birth or the accent of their voice. In Davidson, four in 10 people are born overseas and three in 10 people speak more than one language. Our diversity is our strength. To our local Jewish and Armenian communities, whose families suffered through the holocaust and genocide, and to our local Australian Chinese, Korean, Indian, British and South African communities, and to all our faith and cultural communities, I am proud to represent you.

My second set of values comes from institutions, individuals and communities that I greatly respect and admire. These are the values of faith, compassion, liberalism, community mindedness and friendship. My formal education started at St Patrick's Catholic School in Asquith. Our school motto was "Faith". When meeting people, we were taught to add "and may God bless you" at the end of every greeting. Both acts profoundly impacted the way I look at and feel about people. From a young age, I embraced the power of prayer. I pray that I will always see the best in people because every individual deserves respect and dignity.

My journey continued to St Leo's Catholic College in Wahroonga, instilling in me compassion. Long before it was generally acknowledged, we, as a community, gave an apology to the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We raised awareness of World AIDS Day and we helped destigmatise the plight of homelessness. I thank my teacher and mentor, Ralph Kershler. He helped teach me the importance of compassion. My first ever job, when I was 16 years old, was working in a small business that sold teak furniture from Indonesia. Along with my good friend Brendon McKeon, I was responsible for assembling, sanding and oiling outdoor furniture. I can never look at a piece of outdoor furniture the same way again. We needed to deliver exceptional customer service, value for money and a high-quality product—all the while helping to turn a profit. This experience taught me that business and not government is the creator of jobs and economic prosperity.

Prior to my election, over the past eight years my small business experience greatly assisted me working in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors at the Property Council of Australia, KPMG Australia and The George Institute for Global Health. Life-changing moments can come at you when you least expect them. It was in early 2008 that I had just graduated from the University of Sydney, and I was looking for my first full-time job. I was lost about what to do next. I was on the train, crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge, when my phone rang. I answered and heard, "Matt, it's Barry. I have a job in my Opposition leader's office for only a few weeks. Are you interested?" He concluded with a very stern, "Matt, we are focused on the work, not factional games."

What was meant to be a few weeks turned into a seven-year public policy apprenticeship with Premiers Barry O'Farrell and Mike Baird. I am proud to have made a small contribution to a large movement that made New South Wales number one again. Barry taught me the importance of discipline and focus. Mike taught me the importance of conviction. They equally sparked in me a passion for classical liberalism and conservatism. The Liberal Party is home to both of these timeless traditions. It is a stronger party for being a broad movement encompassing the entire centre right of New South Wales politics. I believe in freedom of the individual; leaner, effective and efficient government; and embracing free markets and enterprise. I believe in democracy, the rule of law and property rights. Premiers Nick Greiner and John Fahey said it best—that as Liberals we should be "warm, dry and green" with "hard heads and soft hearts".

Today I am a member of Parliament due to the Liberal Party selecting me to be its candidate in Davidson. The Liberal Party is built on volunteers. Year in and year out the volunteers renew their memberships, organise events and hand out on election day. They stick with the Liberal Party through good times and bad. You—the membership—are the heart and soul of Menzies' Liberal Party. In Davidson our local campaign was led by president Alan Lipman, who helped energise over 300 volunteers. Thank you to Alan and Lyndy. Together, we continued a 52-year tradition of always sending a Liberal from Davidson to the New South Wales Parliament. I am the next generation of Liberal. I have learned and been mentored in a tradition of public service and community mindedness by those who have come before me. To Bruce Baird, Gladys Berejiklian, Mark Coure,

Paul Fletcher, Judy Hopwood, Robyn Kerr, Julian Leeser, Paul Ritchie and Philip Ruddock, I now stand on your shoulders. Thank you.

In the last short while I have been reflecting on a piece of advice from my former colleague and member of this place Peta Seaton. She said, "There will come a time that you fall in love with your electorate." It is very true. In Davidson we love our historic homes, our coffee shops, our world-class schools, our bike trails, our Roseville Bridge and our North Shore rail line. But wait, there's more. We love our tree canopy and national parks—Garigal, Ku-ring-gai Chase and Lane Cove—that encompass over 100 Aboriginal sites, cascade rock pools and a sphinx carved from local sandstone to commemorate our fallen from World War I. Lest we forget.

The people of Davidson have big hearts, too. Davidson has the second highest rate of volunteering in New South Wales, with one in five people giving their time to a cause greater than themselves. We should be proud of our community. Public service should and must always be about people and community. It is about knowing people and becoming friends. To each of my friends that are here today, I like to think that Gessika and I are a part of your life, because we consider you a part of ours. Friends, thank you for joining me on this political journey.

My values lead me to two public policy areas to which I wish to make a long-term contribution. These public policy areas can be described as wicked problems due to their complexity and ever-changing nature. As my former university professor Ron Heifetz would argue, they require the exercise of adaptive leadership. Leadership is about solving problems.

The first public policy I wish to pursue is that of preventative health. The 2021 Intergenerational Report examines Australia's economy and budget over the next 40 years. It identifies that health spending will more than double in real per-person terms and increase from 19 per cent of today's total government spending to 26 per cent in 2061. Today, in New South Wales, 24 per cent of the recurrent budget is spent on health. The increase in health spending can be attributed to preventable chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health and dementia.

Just over 11 years ago I neglected my health, both physically and mentally. I was working in this building in a high-paced role involving long hours, tight deadlines and a limited work and life balance. I found excuses to skip physical activity and a balanced diet. I consumed large amounts of sugar, salt and processed foods, such as cans of soft drink and fast food, and drank too much alcohol. According to my body mass index, I was considered obese. I was deeply unhappy.

This changed one Sunday morning when I walked past the Sydney Marathon finishing line outside the Sydney Opera House. It was inspirational to see individuals fulfill their goals. It was at that moment I made the choice and the promise to myself to get fit and run a marathon. Over that next year I changed my diet and joined a boot camp, where I got yelled at quite a lot. The following year, I ran and completed the Sydney Marathon. I thank my friend from the other place, Chris Rath, who has joined me almost every week for eight years running across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and back.

Being physically fit helps us be mentally fit. We need to end the stigma associated with mental health. We need to prevent suicide. Every day, on average, 8.6 Australians suicide. Some 75 per cent are male. They are our husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. They are our friends. I am proud to play a small part raising funds and awareness for Lifeline by running marathons in New York City and Sydney. Everyone who donated had their name on my running shirt, and we ran those races together. We raised over \$115,000 to help save lives. You are all still running with me, as those shirts are now displayed in my office.

Given the increase in chronic conditions that will add pressure to the Health budget in the coming years, I will champion public policy to make preventative health an even greater priority. Firstly, we need to directly invest in preventative health. A minimum of 5 per cent of the New South Wales Health budget should always be dedicated exclusively to preventative health. Secondly, we need greater transparency around nutrition. Currently, on packaged goods it is mandatory to label ingredients and nutritional information. This can be complicated and complex to read at the best of times. What should be mandatory is the health star rating label. This label rates the overall nutrition from 0.5 stars to 5 stars. It is simple and easy to understand: the more stars, the healthier the food. Finally, preventative health measures need to start with children. In 2018, 25 per cent of children were in an unhealthy weight range. It is essential we encourage both nutrition and physical activity from a young age. I am proud the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government established Active Kids vouchers. Premiers Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet knew their importance, as does our new Liberal leader, Mark Speakman.

The second public policy I wish to pursue is that of home ownership. In the words of Darryl Kerrigan, "It's not a house, it's a home." It was Menzies who spoke in his "Forgotten People" addresses about "homes material, homes human and homes spiritual". He stated:

The home is the foundation of sanity and sobriety ... its health determines the health of society as a whole.

This was true 81 years ago and it is true today. Menzies' postwar prime ministership over 16 years saw New South Wales home ownership increase from 48 per cent to a historic high of 70 per cent. Today a challenge exists due to affordability. In 1981 it took five times the average annual salary to buy a Sydney median house. In 2021 it was 14 times that. Think about that. This has the potential to get even higher. Like so many in generation Y and generation Z—singles, couples and families—Gessika and I aspire to own our own home. We are also renters. We rent a newly built apartment within walking distance of a railway station. Renting is a result of our life challenges and life choices. But so many do not have choices—only challenges.

Gessika and I, who are ready to start a family, know the foundation of a family's security comes from home ownership. As renters, we experience what so many in the city are currently facing—spiralling rents increasing 24 per cent for units in the past year alone. This creates uncertainty about our lease as we juggle to save for a home deposit. For the Liberal Party to continue to be the party of home ownership, we must also be the party of renters. Renters are today's forgotten people. In the coming years, I will champion public policy to increase home ownership.

Firstly, we need to encourage long-term rental agreements. Renters need even greater certainty about how much they need to save for a deposit. To do this, landlords who offer long-term leases of three years or more should receive a reduced land tax bill. This expands the current New South Wales build-to-rent scheme. Secondly, we need the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to investigate the impact of taxes and charges on housing mobility, which is an economic barrier to downsizing. In 2017 it was calculated that to downsize from a Sydney median house would cost over \$74,000. More than half of that was paid in stamp duty. We need to remove this barrier to boost existing supply. Finally, I support first home buyers being able to access their own savings that sit in their superannuation account. If a union-led industry super fund—or any super fund—can invest its members' funds into property investment, so should their members. I call for the Commonwealth's First Home Super Saver Scheme to be overhauled and expanded. The best foundation for a secure retirement is to own your own home.

As I conclude, I want to bring together the values I have shared today as the way forward to win the hearts, minds and trust of the people of New South Wales to form good government. We must never forget that we, the Liberal Party, are the party of the forgotten people. Our liberal and conservative values make us the party of the individual. We are the party of business, but we are the party of the worker. We are the party of the built environment, but we are the party of the natural environment. We are the party of metropolitan communities, and we are the party of regional communities. To be successful, we need to exercise the politics and leadership of inclusion. To the voter who told me they did not vote for me the day after the election—and to all voters—I state that I will work hard and stay true to my values. But I will empower you to make informed choices. The Liberal Party and I are inclusive of you and your situation in life. I make that promise to you. Now it is time that we get to work. I thank the House.

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

**The SPEAKER:** As the gallery clears, I note that that is the best inaugural speech we have heard all day. I thank the member for Davidson and congratulate him. Matt, I have not had the opportunity to leave the chair to congratulate you personally, but that was a fine inaugural speech and certainly sets a high bar not only for further inaugural speeches but also for people with aspirations to make real change. Thank you for that.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **AMALI DIMOND**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:01):** I take this opportunity to congratulate Amali Dimond of Shellharbour on her success in the 2023 season of *Australian Idol*. Amali, a year 11 student at Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts, kicked off the *Australian Idol* season as the first to audition for the judges, singing *Make You Feel My Love* and gaining praise from all four judges. Amali progressed through the group round and made it to the top 24. As she progressed through the competition, she owned the stage, got the audience worked up and displayed seasoned performer qualities. Throughout the 2023 series Amali received exceptional feedback from the judges, with Kyle Sandilands commenting that she had the attention of the team looking after Scottish sensation Calvin Harris. Amali made it through to the top six performers on the show, which is an incredible achievement. I congratulate her on her outstanding performance. On behalf of the Shellharbour community and the broader Illawarra, I wish Amali the very best of luck for her future endeavours.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:02):** I congratulate the Manly Warringah District Cricket Club on being named club champions for 2023. Not only are they club champions but the men's seconds and fourths also

won their grand finals. That is fantastic news. It represents back-to-back grand final victories for the fourths team, and it is the second time in three years that the seconds have won. Special congratulations go to team captains Andrew Jamieson and Andrew Rochford. I also recognise the fantastic play of Josh Seward, who was awarded man of the match for his seconds grand final match. The whole Manly community should be very proud of that fantastic result, and I hope the dynasty in Manly can continue well into next season.

#### ROSE OF TRALEE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (19:03):** I recognise and acknowledge the sixtieth anniversary of the Rose of Tralee, an iconic celebration of Irish culture and heritage that has captured the hearts of millions of people around the world. For six decades the Sydney Rose of Tralee festival has brought together communities, families and friends to celebrate the achievements, talents and unique qualities of young Irish women from across the globe. It is a showcase of Irish traditions and customs, highlighting the diversity and richness of Irish culture. The Rose of Tralee festival has become an important cultural event not just in Ireland but across the globe as well. It is an opportunity to promote Irish culture and heritage, to celebrate our shared history and traditions and to recognise the contribution of the Irish community to the fabric of our society. A huge shout-out and thanks go to the man who has been at the helm of the Sydney Rose for almost 30 years, Tom O'Keefe. A huge congratulations to this year's Rose, Aoife Butler, a mental health nurse; as well as last year's Rose, Maud, who did us very proud.

#### BELLINGER RIVER SNAPPING TURTLE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (19:04):** Inspired by World Turtle Day on 23 May, Bellinger Riverwatch offers a unique series of events to connect with the Bellinger River and its ecosystem. The Bellinger River is home to the critically endangered Bellinger River snapping turtle, which is endemic to a 60- to 70-kilometre stretch of the Bellinger River and a small area of the Kalang River. Volunteers will attend workshops to build their knowledge and plant trees to maintain riverbank sites. The workshops are the perfect opportunity for anyone who wants to learn weed-identification or weed-removal techniques.

They will be run by three very knowledgeable facilitators: Chris Ormond from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment and its Saving our Species Program, Justine Elder from Bellinger Shire Council and Andrew Yager from Bellinger Landcare. In addition, this Friday is the Bellinger Riverwatch macroinvertebrate monitoring program, the largest macroinvertebrate monitoring program in Australia. Participants will come together to test water bugs at six sites across the catchment. I thank all those involved and encourage others to become involved in the activities. After all, science is not just for scientists; it is for everyone who wants to make a positive impact.

#### QUEANBEYAN RODEO

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (19:05):** Last week I had the pleasure of attending the presentation evening for the Queanbeyan Rodeo. The rodeo is a massive community fundraising event that this year drew a crowd that almost did not fit into Queanbeyan Showground. The hugely successful event meant the rodeo was able to give out more than \$52,000 in sponsorship to community organisations in the Queanbeyan region. I acknowledge chair Mark Mills and his amazing committee, including Norman and Christine McMahon from the event's biggest sponsor, Patches Asphalt; Kerry Cox; George Harriden; Sabina Pantos; Christine Corkhill; Christine McPherson; Susan Gray; Gary Gray; Jamie McPherson; Xani Archibald; Sophie Desira; Craig Cartwright; and Kathleen Mills. The massive event has been running for 21 years and would not happen without the incredible dedication of the organising team. Its website states:

The aim of the Queanbeyan Rodeo is not only to run one of the best Rodeos in the region, but to offer the people of Queanbeyan and the surrounding region a fun filled day of thrills and spills while raising money to donate to worthy local charities.

They certainly deliver in spades. Congratulations.

#### LIBERTY DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SPECIALIST SERVICES

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:06):** I am extremely pleased to advise this House that the winner of the 2023 Port Macquarie Business of the Year award is Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services—a fitting tribute to an organisation that is so close to my heart. Liberty is an ambassador and service provider for women and children escaping domestic and family violence and homelessness. Last year alone Liberty supported more than 1,500 women and children and educated over 1,700 people about family violence.

Liberty CEO Kelly Lamb accepted the prestigious accolade, which acknowledges the immeasurable difference the organisation makes to the lives of families in crisis. Since 1980 Liberty has provided services to help women and children manage the trauma of abusive relationships. Today the organisation has expanded to include crisis accommodation, transitional housing, the Liberty Links mobile outreach service, and a wide range

of programs and workplace training designed to empower women and support them through the healing process. I congratulate Kelly and her amazing team on that outstanding accomplishment and the well-deserved recognition for their life-changing work in our community.

#### **LIVERPOOL CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:07):** On Saturday 29 April I had the pleasure of attending the 2023 official season opener for the Liverpool City Netball Association [LCNA]. The enthusiasm for the new season was evident at Woodward Park from the opening whistle, despite the rain. While play was unfortunately called off later in the day due to extreme weather, the enthusiasm of the players, coaches and staff was telling. I personally thank president Rebecca Wakefield, secretary Melissa King and treasurer Anna Milanovic for their hospitality on the day. Of course, the season is not possible without the sponsors, volunteers and many clubs that make the competition what it is. The LCNA includes 13 clubs, including several in my electorate of Leppington, and 1,470 registered members. I thank them for having me and wish all the teams good luck for the season ahead.

#### **RADIO SKID ROW**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:08):** On behalf of the Newtown electorate I recognise Radio Skid Row, which has been a bastion of community radio and a bona fide inner west legend for 40 years. Since welfare workers came together to first get Radio Skid Row onto the airwaves in September 1983, the station has been a voice for some of the most marginalised and staunch community members in our area and beyond. From First Nations activists and migrant workers, to environmentalists, to organisers at the forefront of movements for LGBTQIA+ rights, women's liberation and housing justice, Radio Skid Row has always been a home for diverse and radical voices. While remaining true to its activist roots, more recently Radio Skid Row has expanded to deliver accredited training courses and workshops in radio broadcasting alongside its substantial programs. As we enter Radio Skid Row's fortieth year, on behalf of the Newtown electorate and all of those who listen to Radio Skid Row, I offer a massive congratulations on 40 years. I look forward to looking back with them at the past four decades as they celebrate this significant occasion.

#### **FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYEES UNION**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:09):** Many times I have stood in this place and praised our firefighters in my community of the Blue Mountains and beyond. I feel that there are never enough words to describe these courageous men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us. The Blue Mountains is one of the most bushfire-prone areas in the world. For those of us who live there, we know and accept the risk; but I think we can do that because we are aware that we have an incredibly skilled and dedicated team of emergency services personnel in our midst. It is important for us to remember, though, that we need to protect our protectors and show support in whatever way we can.

Today I honour the advocacy work of our mighty Fire Brigade Employees Union, which works tirelessly for Fire and Rescue NSW, and highlight the industrial issues we need to focus on in terms of safer workplaces and adequate resources that are needed to protect them and our communities. To each of you who shows such endurance in the face of adversity, I express my profound gratitude and I stand with you.

#### **NORTH BONDI RSL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:10):** The North Bondi RSL is an iconic club, loved by both locals and visitors. It is always packed with families, especially after kids' sport on a Saturday. I was delighted to attend the club's annual general meeting on Sunday 21 May. I congratulate the club on the significant increase in membership and its strong financial performance. I note that 92 per cent of the club's revenue now comes from food and beverages, after a considered reduction over several years of the number of poker machines on the premises. The success of its business model has meant the club has been able to make recent donations of \$5,000 each for Bondi Public School and Bondi Beach Public School, and \$10,000 each for Wairoa School and for WAYS Youth & Family. I acknowledge the club CEO, Jason Linke; the chair, Martyn Bell; the board and staff of The Rathouse and the North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch. I thank them all for the great work they do, and continue to do, for our community.

#### **CENTRAL COAST KIDS DAY OUT**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:11):** I congratulate everyone involved in the organisation of the Narara Valley High School's annual Central Coast Kids Day Out event, which is always a huge success for everyone involved and for the school. The kids day out has been bringing smiles to many young families' faces since its inception in 1999 and I cannot wait to see it continue to flourish year after year. The effort and care put into providing a safe and enjoyable space that encourages inclusiveness and curiosity is something every one of us should be in absolute awe of. Many songs were sung, many faces were happily painted and I am sure that the

only time the kids were not smiling was when they had to leave. Young people are the future educators, politicians and tradies of this world, and events like kids day out ensure that they are brighter than ever, ready to take the mantle from us. I know this is a hugely important event. I thank Nada Potter for her leadership in this space. These days, parents need to be taught to parent. It is a beautiful event. I encourage everyone to go along next year.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALLAN GORDON

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:12):** Today I recognise the late Allan Gordon and acknowledge his tragic passing on 6 March this year. Allan served as the CEO of the Hastings Co-operative for 10 years, growing the co-op from 13 to 20 different businesses. Allan ensured that the co-op was all about giving back to the community, which is reflected in the co-op's countless sponsorship, partnership and community support programs. I acknowledge that Allan was honoured at the NSW/ACT IGA Awards on 14 March. The Hastings Co-op won two major awards at this event: the Large Meat Department of the Year Award and the coveted Community Service Award. Allan leaves a lasting legacy as a respected businessman, a much-admired community leader and as the champion of the Hastings Co-op family. Allan created a culture of belonging, where the purpose of the Hastings Co-op focused on community benefit—from rewarding customers who are part of the co-op family and giving back to local groups and charities, to being one of the largest employers of youth and showcasing local producers in their stores. I posthumously congratulate Allan Gordon on his career and his significant contribution to the community. I send my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Kathy, and their family.

#### VOLUNTEER WEEK

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:13):** I acknowledge that this year Volunteer Week was held from 15 to 21 May and the theme was "Change Makers". I acknowledge all the volunteers in my electorate of Campbelltown and right across our region, such as members of Meals on Wheels, Rotary, the local SES, the RFS, and everyone else who gives so much to all our communities. Quite simply, the theme is "Change Makers" but, in reality, without them we would be lost. When we consider everything that they give, it is so much—particularly when we reflect on the pandemic and everything that we have been through in our community, not only in Campbelltown but also across the west and south-west of Sydney. Their generosity is clearly on display. I thank each and every one of them—the P&Cs, the mums and dads, the sporting groups and everyone who brings together a community and gives their time for their community. On behalf of this Parliament, I say thank you.

#### JOAN PALMER

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:14):** I congratulate centenarian Joan Palmer, who was a recent nominee in the Local Woman of the Year Awards in the Maitland area. Joan moved to Maitland in 1946 as a young schoolteacher, giving 40 years of service to students of the Hunter in both teaching and principal roles throughout the region, including as principal of Vacy, Morpeth, Mayfield West and Scone public schools. She was an active member of Legacy from 1949 and is a Legacy widow. Joan was also a foundation member of the Maitland Repertory Theatre. I am also told that she served in the Australian Women's Land Army. In 1947 Joan joined Maitland Golf Club and that is where she found her home. She was elected as a life member in 1999 after serving on the committee for 18 years—four years as president, nine years as vice-president and as the secretary and handicap manager. In 2013, Joan was appointed joint patron of Easts—a position she holds to the present day. Joan ceased golf a few years ago due to deteriorating eyesight but she is always keen to participate, and nothing gets past her. I spoke with Joan at the awards. It is always lovely to catch up with her. She is a beautiful and inspiring lady.

#### SARAH WILLIAMS

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:15):** Congratulations to Newcastle's Local Woman of the Year—a warrior for the prevention of sexual assault and domestic violence—Sarah Williams. A survivor herself, Ms Williams founded the advocacy organisation, What Were You Wearing? In 2021 the organisation hosted the first staging of a powerful exhibition of the outfits that survivors were wearing when they were assaulted. Since then, the organisation has gone from strength to strength. Among many initiatives, Ms Williams has organised rallies attended by thousands of people, campaigned for anti-drink-spiking measures, organised safe spaces at major events and provided in-person support to people in the immediate aftermath of their assault. She also facilitates the provision of resources and workshops to help survivors to heal. Ms Williams' drive and compassion are an inspiration, and she is exceptionally deserving of this recognition.

#### NATIONAL WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:16):** On Friday 19 May schoolchildren all around my electorate laced up their sneakers, joined hand in hand and participated in the fantastic National Walk Safely to School Day. Primary schools encouraged their students to walk a designated route to school with parents and carers to learn

the skills of walking safely around our region. Not only did they practise lifesaving pedestrian skills, but also children were engaged in a practical lesson about healthy habits. The Central Coast Local Health District praised the mental and physical health benefits of travelling outside and using our local infrastructure. Community initiatives like this keep our next generation aware and connected to their local area. This day promoted the use of both children and carers to reduce traffic congestion and promote public transport and pathway use. A simple change of routine on one day increases awareness of better habits and connection to our wonderful environment.

#### **KIM FINDLAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:17):** I acknowledge the work of Kim Findlay, President of the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club, and her team for all their work in organising their Women in Surf event—a celebration of women in surf lifesaving. I had the great pleasure to attend and hear from the guest speakers, former ironwoman Bonnie Hancock, and Umina Surf Life Saving Club role model Kerry Armstrong. Bonnie, who paddled her surf ski 12,700 kilometres around the mainland of Australia, had the audience in tears with her recap of her experience. Listening to these two ladies tell their stories was truly amazing and inspiring. It was wonderful to see them give up their time for their peers in the hope they can encourage more women to excel in their sport. It was also great to see so many other local surf clubs from the Central Coast come along and support this special evening. The event was an incredibly successful night and I hope it becomes an annual event that grows each and every year. I again acknowledge the great work done by President Kim Findlay of the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club for the Women in Surf event, which was absolutely stellar.

#### **RIDE4ROTARY**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:18):** I congratulate everyone who was involved in last weekend's Ride4Rotary event to raise funds for Southern Youth and Family Services. Southern Youth and Family Services is a great Illawarra organisation that supports youth who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. On the weekend I joined the Federal member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes; the Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Gordon Bradbery; and other notables such as Graham Lancaster and the ambassador for the ride, Maje Saba, along with sponsors and volunteers. Some 120 riders took part in the event at Unanderra Velodrome, raising about \$45,000 for Southern Youth and Family Services. I particularly recognise Stephen Knightley, who is the literal driving force behind this event. He has been organising it for seven years, exceeding his fundraising goals on a regular basis. Again, I thank all the sponsors. I give a special shout-out to Zeppelin Ryan, who, at four years old, raised nearly \$1,500.

#### **ROB MOOREHEAD**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:20):** I acknowledge one of the strongest advocates for mental health and wellness in the community of Port Macquarie, Rob Moorehead, who recently announced his retirement from Endeavour Mental Health Recovery Clubhouse. Rob Moorehead was a former clubhouse director and has literally been the driving force behind the delivery of services for Endeavour. Described by his peers as a mentor and a workhorse for men's and women's mental health, Rob's commitment to crisis support and wellness has been phenomenal and life-changing for so many of the clients who used Endeavour as a lifeline. People who met Rob would often comment on his genuine, caring nature and willingness to help others regardless of their background or circumstance. He would often go above and beyond to support those in distress and was known for working after hours and on weekends to improve outcomes. Rob's main ambition was to see Endeavour Clubhouse succeed, and he would often meet with me to seek advice and provide updates on the organisation and its future plans. He is a role model in our community. I thank Rob for his eight years of service with Endeavour Clubhouse and wish him well for the future.

#### **MOUNTAINS YOUTH SERVICES TEAM**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:21):** I take the opportunity to acknowledge the fantastic Mountains Youth Services team in my electorate, also known as MYST, and congratulate them on a fantastic family fun day this past weekend. They gathered together community organisations, a whole heap of bands and at-risk youth for a bit of fun. I particularly acknowledge Paige Thurlow-Want, the manager, and I congratulate the whole team on running a number of fantastic programs, particularly around school-based resilience and personal development and programs to support the LGBTQIA+ community. MYST also runs a breakfast club with great results. After offering more than 40,000 meals over the past year, schools have reported lower truancies on days when breakfast club happens. With programs like that, MYST is doing a fantastic job.

#### **BERIS MELDRUM**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:22):** Some 69 new names, including my constituent Beris Meldrum, have been added to the 2021-22 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, which pays public tribute to the girls and women across regional, rural and remote New South Wales who have given their time and energy to



helping others in their community. Coordinated by the New South Wales Rural Women's Network, the 2021-22 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll recognises volunteering contributions made in those years. I congratulate Beris on joining more than 1,000 women from across rural and regional New South Wales who have been enshrined on the honour roll since 2010, each of them nominated by a member of their local community. Beris has been volunteering at the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club for more than 30 years. Day after day, week after week, and year after year, Beris is down at the surf club volunteering her time as a trainer, official, first aider and almost every other role one can think of. Women like Beris play an important role in community development and making rural New South Wales a great place to live. It is so important that we honour their contributions to ensure that voluntary work is valued and respected.

#### **GWYNNETH PATRICIA GREENAWAY AND FREDERICK ARTHUR LEROY "ROY" DAVIES**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:23):** On this day in 1953, Gwynneth Patricia Greenaway and Frederick Arthur Leroy "Roy" Davies were married at the little St Wilfrid's church in Arley in the United Kingdom. I was excited to visit them along with their daughter, Lynne, in Thornton on Saturday as they celebrated 70 years of marriage. I was so inspired. I particularly give them a little shout-out today because it is the anniversary. Most of us are happy to make it to 70 years of life, but 70 years of joyful partnership is incredible. Before I was in Parliament, I was a tour operator, and I remember spending time with them on tour. They were always so charming and so lovely together. They are a real inspiration to everyone in our community.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I wish them a happy anniversary.

#### **CAMPBELLTOWN MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:24):** I take this opportunity to once again thank Campbelltown Meals on Wheels for welcoming me to their site at Ruse, where they are happily working with the Men's Shed and Humanity Matters. Meals on Wheels is a magnificent organisation that delivers so many good programs. It delivers food and goods to those in need every night and every day. Quite simply, we would be lost without such organisations. I am kicking along the theme from last week, which was National Volunteer Week. As you know in your own electorate, Mr Temporary Speaker, without them, we would be lost. Quite frankly, so many people would go without, without them. I again thank them, especially Meals on Wheels and Humanity Matters. I thank the House.

#### **MADELINE HELE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:25):** I recognise Madeline Hele, who represented the Port Macquarie electorate in the 2023 YMCA Youth Parliament. I was recently joined by the Lewis Land Group to co-sponsor Madeline to attend the Youth Parliament in Sydney. Madeline wrote to me of the experience, saying that the YMCA Youth Parliament was an amazing youth advocacy program that she was lucky to attend. Through the program she was able to act as a voice for young people in regional areas in discussions on a variety of political issues and topics. Madeline worked on the education committee within the Youth Parliament and was elected as its "Minister", allowing her to guide a mock legislative bill that is to be presented in an upcoming sitting week in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. The YMCA Youth Parliament was a wonderful opportunity to unite Madeline with other like-minded young people, educating her on democratic functions and furthering her interest in and the possibility of pursuing a future career in politics. I congratulate Madeline on attending the YMCA Youth Parliament, and I thank the Lewis Land Group for its financial assistance.

#### **BENCHWORKS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:26):** Empowered women empower women. It is such a powerful statement that I will repeat it: Empowered women empower women. A beautiful soul from my electorate, Jenn Rochford, founder of Benchworks and a survivor of domestic violence, is making waves across the Central Coast with her affordable do-it-yourself workshops for women. Jenn started this endeavour from her own heart, originally aiming at providing a safe place for women who have experienced domestic violence to learn essential DIY skills so that they can look after their own homes without having to invite in men. However, due to popular demand, she is now opening up her doors to all women. I am so proud to see someone who has taken her own life experience and is now sharing her insights and empowering other women to feel empowered. That is what community is all about. I thank Jenn for offering these fun and affordable workshops to women in our community so they can feel independent and, most of all, empowered.

#### **CLEAN4SHORE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:27):** I acknowledge the work of an outstanding group in my electorate called Clean4Shore. Clean4Shore is about educating whilst doing the "Clean Up and Clear Out" of

pollution from Central Coast foreshores and mangroves. Graham Johnston, known to everyone as Jono, leads this organisation by teaching kids and adults to keep our waterways and foreshores clean. Jono and his team have created a winning formula for retaining taught knowledge in the community by enabling participants to receive practical hands-on experience, taking volunteer groups on excursions to remove tons of garbage via the Clean4Shore green barge. These excursions target specific problem areas for the region and provide much sought-after relief for our marine environment to thrive again. I acknowledge the former Deputy Premier, the member for Bathurst, who is in the Chamber tonight, for contributing \$20,000 of discretionary funding to help Clean4Shore continue its outstanding work. In February, students from Terrigal High School ventured out with Clean4Shore to remove litter from within the Fagans Bay mangroves. After a full day they returned with an abandoned kayak, a washed-up tinnie and 320 kilograms of rubbish. Keep up the great work, Jono.

#### **JULES MITRY**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:28):** I congratulate Jules Mitry, the owner of the Balinese Spice Magic restaurant in Wollongong, who is the 2023 Wollongong Local Woman of the Year. Jules combines food, cultural traditions and her love of community to give back by using the restaurant for fundraising for local groups. She hosts Mesangkepan dinners on a regular basis, which stems from her Balinese heritage—she moved to the Illawarra when she was 17. Mesangkepan literally translates to "get-together". For those dinners she donates all of the food and labour, and 100 per cent of the takings go to the nominated charity. Jules displays the great qualities of an Illawarra resident through her respect for cultural traditions from her migrant heritage, combined with a desire to help people who are doing it tough. We are lucky to see this sort of behaviour in Wollongong and to have Jules in our community. She is a most fitting and worthy recipient of the 2023 Wollongong Local Woman of the Year award.

#### **ZAC BRITTON**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:29):** I acknowledge Zac Britton, an Ambarvale High School student who is also one of Campbelltown's two YMCA Youth Parliament representatives. She is an amazing young lady, who I had the privilege of meeting the other day. She spoke about her views and strong commitment to social justice and ensuring equality, which is so important in our community. I know that she will provide a youth voice for that in this place. When we look at young people throughout our community, we see that many of them feel lost. But young people in Campbelltown and right across New South Wales are in safe hands while Zac Britton is in this House. I am proud to support her and the other youth member for Campbelltown through YMCA. I thank YMCA for providing our young people with the opportunity.

#### **MADDISON SIMS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:30):** I congratulate Maddison Sims from the Starfish Store in the Shellharbour City Centre. Maddison lives with an intellectual disability and recently commenced employment with the Starfish Store, a business that provides an extensive range of educational, sensory, and specialised resources and products to promote learning and skill building. Maddison works 16 hours a week in a variety of roles, such as packaging online orders, helping instore customers, creating weekly social media updates and offering advice on managing an NDIS plan. Maddison has worked hard to achieve a certificate II in retail and recently was awarded the best employee award at the Illawarra Women in Business Awards. I congratulate both Maddison and store founder and owner Kirstie Wishart on inspiring us all with their wonderful work.

#### **TERRY MULDOON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:31):** Today I recognise a local leader of education and innovation, Principal Terry Muldoon from St Columba Anglican School, Port Macquarie, who has announced his retirement from teaching after serving over 15 years at the helm. Described as the driving force behind an influx of student enrolments and infrastructure upgrades, Terry is credited with establishing a first-class learning environment since his appointment as principal in January 2008. Thanks to a vision and commitment by Terry to deliver revolutionary educational services, facilities like the Iona Centre, the Trade Training Centre and the Sustainability and Environment Centre have literally transformed student learning in Port Macquarie and have benefitted well over 1,100 pupils and 150 staff at St Columba. Since 2002 St Columba has partnered with several key leaders in education and business. Relationships with Charles Sturt University, the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and the University of Melbourne have been vital in broadening course options and teacher training. Prior to his appointment as principal, Terry was head of secondary school and assistant principal of Bishop Druitt College, Coffs Harbour. I congratulate Principal Muldoon on his retirement. I wish him and his wife, Susanna, well in their future endeavours.

*Private Members' Statements***CAMPBELLTOWN ROTARY YOUTH EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:32):** I thank club president Mr David Symonds and the entire team at Campbelltown Rotary Club, particularly Ms Kerrie Heath, for once again organising the Campbelltown Rotary Youth Excellence Awards, which every year acknowledge excellence throughout our entire community and the contribution of young people throughout our entire society. The awards are not narrowed down just to the winners. With the indulgence of the House, I will go through each and every one of them. Last week was Volunteer Week, so it is an appropriate time to reflect on how much our young people volunteer and give to our community. Yes, there is youth excellence and they do very well. We acknowledge that and know they will continue to do well. But they only do well when we in this place and other people support them. I know that all of my colleagues will do so, regardless of which side of the House they sit on. I hear that throughout this House.

In the Young Achievers Academics category the winner was Jordi Nguyen of Ruse Public School and the runner-up was Ekaterina Nenasheva of Bradbury Public School. The Young Achiever for Performing Arts was Scarlett Wagner of Ruse Public School and the runner-up was Bianca Quach of Campbelltown East Public School. Sienna-Estelle Burraston of Bradbury Public School was the winner of the Young Achiever Sport award and the runner-up was Zoe Hawkes of St Helens Park Public School—just around the corner from where I live. Our community likes to champion the Community Service and Leadership award. There are many contenders because there are many people who deserve it, but the winner was Phillipa Hewitt and the runner-up was Scarlett Wagner, both of Ruse Public School. That is a fantastic school run by a principal who is a good mate of mine. He would not like me to name him, but he is doing a great job and I thank him for that.

The winner of the Academic category was Roxanne Price of Broughton Anglican College—no surprise there. Of course, the runner-up was Aaron King of Macquarie Fields High School, in the electorate of my good friend the member for Macquarie Fields. The Sport category winner was Dominic Baker and runner-up was Vivianne Matushevsky. In Creative Arts the winner was Liam McGill and the runner-up was Sarah Hazleton. In Performing Arts the winner was Eli Uluibau and the runner-up was Sarah Eskelinen. It is no surprise that they are both from Campbelltown Performing Arts High School. Many people have come from there: Kate Ritchie and Lisa Wilkinson are both great Campbelltown notables. These girls add themselves to that list.

Denzel Smith of Leumeah High School is the winner in the Innovation & Technology category, and the runner-up was Emmett Johnson from Broughton Anglican College. The Dynamic Achiever Award winner was Aminata Diagne from Sarah Redfern High School—again in the electorate of my good friend the member for Macquarie Fields. The runner-up was Joshua Marsh from Thomas Reddall High School. They are two amazing young people who I had the privilege to meet and get to know, along with many others. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields, who I believe has had a lot to do with those achieving students through Sarah Redfern High School as well. Roxanne Price of Broughton Anglican College, our Campbelltown Youth Ambassador 2023, is nothing short of an outstanding ambassador and role model for young people in Campbelltown and indeed in the south-west. I ask the House to join me in congratulating all students and thanking Campbelltown Rotary Club for the Youth Excellence Award program this year.

**KENDALL MONUMENT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:37):** I acknowledge an extraordinary milestone celebrated by the people of Kendall and its neighbouring towns during this year's Anzac Day commemorations. One hundred years ago, the first Anzac Day service was officially held at the unveiling of the new Kendall Monument to honour the 90 local servicemen who served in the Great War and to pay respect to the 12 soldiers from Camden Haven who died for country and freedom. I was honoured to be invited by the Kendall RSL Sub-Branch and join with Port Macquarie Hastings Deputy Mayor Rachel Sheppard and the member for Lyne, David Gillespie, to commemorate the thousands of Australians who have served and died since the First World War.

The morning's proceedings featured a dawn service with special guest Petty Officer Aaron Gill reading the Prayer for the King, with a march of the Light Horse Brigade, service men and women, ex-servicemen, community leaders and schoolchildren officially opening the service. The master of ceremonies and president of the Kendall RSL Sub-Branch, Lance Gainy, proudly officiated the 2023 Anzac commemoration service to mark the legacy of Anzac Day services from 25 April 1923 until today, acknowledging the Camden Haven Patriotic Association [CHPA] which controversially championed the beautiful, Italian-made monument depicting a World War I armed soldier, now erected a centenary ago.

Turning back the clock, the CHPA consisted of 90 soldiers from Camden Haven who served in World War I with a shared idea to establish either a monument or memorial hall to honour the 12 young men who lost their lives in battle and to pay respect to their families left behind in the tragedies of war. In 1919, one year after the Great War, a public meeting was held and the CHPA was officially formed. A decision was made and agreed upon, after debate, that a monument be constructed in the heart of Kendall and services held thereafter on Anzac Day. The unveiling ceremony, which coincided with Anzac Day 1923, was officially carried out by Canon Ritchie, who was quoted as saying, "It was an honour to the people who had responded towards the cost of its erection. They all ought to be proud of the Anzacs, as they were the men who had brought Australia into prominence as a nation. There are no better soldiers in the world than the Australians."

Others involved in the ceremony back then included Mr W. G. Thompson, Mr Dobson, Miss G. Jackman, E. Chapman, Lily Dunlop, E. Edwards, Mr A. G. Smith and Mr J. Britt. The names inscribed on the Kendall monument honour the fallen and the 46 returned servicemen. The inscription on the monument reads:

Erected by the residents of Kendall and District in grateful remembrance of their brave men who went to fight for God, King and Country in the Great War 1914-1919.

The Anzac story and commemorations this year recognised service and sacrifice but also the value of freedom, which is often taken for granted by a generation that has never experienced the atrocities and deep sorrows of war. It is a message of the physical and mental scars and disabilities that are the consequence of war for all who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping missions. We honour them and are eternally grateful. I thank all of the officials and representatives for the beautiful commemorative service conducted in Kendall this year. I acknowledge President Lance Gainey, a Vietnam veteran on the 32 Small Ship Squadron, who has now led Anzac Day services in Kendall for 27 years. I also recognise Vice President Nicholas Graham and Secretary/Treasurer Glen Webster from the Kendall RSL Sub-Branch.

I acknowledge the officials: Captain Graeme Cooper from the Anglican Church; Glen Webster, Geoff Martin and Paul Maynard from the Kendall RSL Sub-Branch; Susan Crowle from the Kendall Community Preschool; Captain Liam Bailey and Vice-Captain James Lavender from Camden Haven High School; Lieutenant Aidan Stelling; bugler Derek Moule; Kevin O'Donoghue; and the catafalque party from the 41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment. The sound of bugler Derek Moule echoed a once faithful tune played by the inaugural bugler and resident, Mr Hiram Duck, who sounded the last post a century ago to commemorate the opening of Kendall War Memorial. Lest we forget.

#### **AUSTRALIAN DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE RECOVERY AND HEALING CONFERENCE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:41):** I congratulate and thank the organisers of the inaugural Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery and Healing Conference, which was held in the Illawarra on 4 May and 5 May this year. I particularly acknowledge the amazing work of Sally Stevenson. The conference was organised by the Illawarra Women's Health Centre and featured keynote addresses by trauma expert and former Harvard Medical School instructor Dr Janina Fisher and the Illawarra's own Dr Karen Williams. The aim of the conference was to bring together for the first time victim-survivors, professionals, academics and decision-makers from across Australia to outline best practice and policy. Tragically, we need events such as this because one in four Australian women has experienced violence by an intimate partner and one in five will experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.

Last year there were over 33,000 reports of domestic violence-related incidents recorded by the NSW Police Force, and domestic violence rates across New South Wales have increased at a rate of 3 per cent annually over the past five years. Unfortunately, the level of services available to help women and children recover from family and domestic violence has been inadequate and contains substantial gaps. The overall goal of the conference was to highlight the importance of investing in domestic, family and sexual violence recovery and supporting both healing and prevention. The conference also brought together organisations and individuals from across Australia that can collectively drive change in the way we perceive and respond to violence.

Kym Valentine, who has spent three years on the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council, did an amazing job emceeing the event. Ms Valentine was appointed to the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council three years ago, which was set up in the wake of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. The council's first chair, Rosie Batty, also addressed delegates on the first night of the conference. Sally Stevenson, from the Illawarra Women's Health Centre—a founding member of the Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery Alliance—said that she was especially pleased to see a focus on recovery and healing during the conference. It was a real game changer. The Illawarra Women's Health Centre is the lead organisation in the development of the Women's Trauma Recovery Centre. It is a groundbreaking service that will provide specialised, multidisciplinary care for women who have experienced violence.

Earlier this year I was able to secure a \$2 million commitment from the Minns Labor Government to establish the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre within the Shellharbour electorate. The centre will provide specialised, dedicated and individualised wraparound support to women recovering and healing from the trauma of domestic and family violence and abuse. The centre will serve as an interim site to deliver this much-needed service until a fit-for-purpose centre of excellence can be designed with input from women with lived experience. I have no doubt that the centre, which is to be located in Shellharbour City Centre, will save lives. It is not only women who will benefit from this centre. Trauma from domestic and family violence impacts every member of a survivor's family, especially their children, as well as the broader community.

The centre will help to break the pattern of abuse and minimise intergenerational issues related to domestic and family violence. The centre will also assist in bringing down the wall of shame that many victims experience. Family and domestic violence is a public health emergency, and we need to treat it as such. Gendered violence will not be resolved until we better understand how systems, services and communities need to support those healing and recovering from abuse. I will continue to be a fearless advocate for all victims of domestic and family violence. As long as I am a member of this Parliament, all victims of family and domestic violence will have a loud and clear voice in this House.

### **BOYS TO THE BUSH**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:45):** Tonight I speak about an important organisation within my local community that also supports many communities across regional and rural New South Wales. Boys to the Bush is a not-for-profit organisation that provides early intervention for disengaged young men across the Central West and beyond. Boys to the Bush offers a range of programs aimed at supporting boys to become better men in the future. The programs run by Boys to the Bush are turning around the lives of young boys who have been doing it tough. As a recipient of the previous New South Wales Government's Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative, Boys to the Bush has been able to expand its services. A recent grant of \$34,000 has funded the Bathurst wellbeing support program run by Boys to the Bush. The program has engaged 50 children who have lost the motivation for learning due to the combined COVID and flood disruptions.

Weekly day-long, out-of-school sessions are being held involving visits to local businesses, farms and community amenities such as men's sheds and the Country Women's Association. Participating students range from years 5 to 6 in primary schools and years 7 to 10 in secondary schools, and they typically meet the following criteria: poor school attendance; poor behaviour; lack of engagement and social skills; and acute or chronic complex psychosocial issues outside of the school environment. Projects like the Boys to the Bush program are great examples of how we can help young people recover, build resilience and improve wellbeing by providing them with the tools and resources they need to become the best versions of themselves.

It is heartwarming to see the community support that is being thrown behind Boys to the Bush in our region. This support was on show in Bathurst recently when a gala ball fundraiser at the Panthers club was a sellout. The event was an opportunity to bring Boys to the Bush staff, sponsors, volunteers and supporters together to highlight the job it does and raise funds at the same time. Tens of thousands of dollars was raised on the night for the organisation to continue its great work in helping kids achieve their goals and change their lives for the better. The Boys to the Bush movement started out with a teacher from Albury who wanted to help young boys living in disadvantaged circumstances. It has now grown into an organisation giving its participants a chance at life they otherwise may not have been afforded. The Boys to the Bush ethos is best summed up by the organisation's aim, which is "to provide an environment free from the distractions in their lives, allowing boys the opportunity to be surrounded by positive influences and giving them opportunities to succeed—encouraging mateship, resilience and a sense of belonging".

Founder Adam DeMamiel worked as a teacher in the special needs and behavioural management sectors before realising the widespread need for help. He was running camps and boys' programs at his school and having good success. He then thought it could be replicated as a way of helping other needy kids, so he and his mates began running camps to try to help whoever they could. But they never thought it would grow to what Boys to the Bush has become. Boys to the Bush has a real presence in Bathurst, with around 15 staff members as part of the local Bathurst team after only a few years. Camps are regularly held in Bathurst and are mainly based out of Ben Chifley Dam. They are going from strength to strength. That is an impressive effort considering the organisation never intended to create something that would touch the lives of thousands of kids each year and have almost 100 employees across six locations, all within just five years of starting up. I commend the work that Boys to the Bush is doing. I thank people like Kurt Hancock in my local area, all of the volunteers and all of the staff. I look forward to continuing to support them for what is indeed a success story in the making.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:49):** I am sure every electorate has organisations and groups that work tirelessly to serve their community in some way. Perhaps I am biased, but I think the Blue Mountains is exceptional in that regard. Through the generosity of the New South Wales Government, some such organisations and groups in my community will receive a funding boost to provide them with much-needed support. To continue to operate they must source funding year after year and if it is not found they face closure. If that were to happen the loss would be deeply felt within my community. I am proud to represent a community so rich in creativity and diversity. Today I dedicate my private member's statement to five organisations that typify the spirit of the Blue Mountains community.

Farm It Forward is a social enterprise that connects landowners with local young people who feel passionately about growing food. The concept is quite simple. A landowner donates a plot of land and the Farm It Forward team plants and cultivates crops on that land. In return, the landowner receives their weekly needs in organic vegetables for free and Farm It Forward takes the rest to sell at markets and to local food co-operatives and cafes. It is a wonderful, mutually beneficial exchange. Even better, the young urban farmers who engage with this project gain so much.

The Farm It Forward program facilitates something quite special. It provides an opportunity for real connection not only with the earth and the food we eat but also amongst participants, landowners and the community more broadly. The personal benefits of the program are profound. It addresses social isolation, building support networks for dealing with loneliness and anxiety. It motivates, inspires and provides a solid platform for cross-generational connections across the community, all the while teaching us how crucial food security and sustainable farming practices are. I am moved beyond measure by the vision and work of Manu Prigioni and the entire team at Farm It Forward.

The Mountain of Youth filmmaking and film production mentorship program offers similar benefits for youth in my Blue Mountains electorate by guiding them through an immersive storytelling process. I first met the project director, Kalani Gacon, in 2022 when I attended one of the Mountain of Youth workshops. I was impressed to see Kalani in action, connecting and inspiring local youth with the shared goal of making a movie. Some of the kids in this program were doing it tough, socially and emotionally. The awkwardness of their teenage years, the social isolation that came from the COVID-19 lockdowns, and their own challenging personal journeys had all combined to create a sense of disconnect for some of these young people at a crucial stage in their social development. Kalani's workshops and the filmmaking process provided a real beacon of hope at that time.

Mountain of Youth reminded me of what a powerful tool storytelling is. The end result of the program was an evocative film called *Soles*. It premiered in Katoomba to a sold-out cinema and a roar from the crowd as Kalani, producer Riley Saxton and the filmmakers took to the stage at the end of the screening. The heart and soul infused into the production was evident. I am thrilled that Mountain of Youth is planning to inspire another group of young people in 2023.

The Blue Mountains is unique in many ways, not least of all due to its eclectic collection of towns and villages scattered along a ridge line atop World Heritage listed gorges and valleys. We are a tight-knit community made up of individual sub-communities, who are all very proud to be a part of this remarkable region. We are blessed with incredible community spirit and are fortunate to be home to organisations that play vital roles in supporting and unifying us. The following three organisations are major contributors to the forging of that community spirit.

The Bungarabee Centre is a hub in Hazelbrook that is instrumental to the provision of community-centred services in our local area, including Connect Child and Family Services, and Mountains Outreach Community Services. The Bungarabee Centre also offers long day care, support for families with children with a disability, a peer support program for young parents, and a playgroup for First Nations families hosted by the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre. Resident organisations in the Bungarabee Centre run a range of projects centred around early literacy, social inclusion and sustainable living. The Bungarabee Centre is truly at the heart of community care in our area.

Junction 142, based in Katoomba, works to support what can often be an invisible cohort of people in need—those experiencing homelessness or living rough in cars or boarding houses, families experiencing domestic violence and, sadly and increasingly, older folk who are struggling to make ends meet. Junction 142 works with those individuals and families to assist in the provision of basic human needs. This dedicated organisation strives to assist people to live with dignity, providing social interaction in a safe and warm environment. Gateway Family Services, based in Blaxland, is another organisation doing similar work to support families and enrich and strengthen relationships. Each of those organisations is incredibly deserving of the Government's support.

### WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:54):** I thank the people of the Wagga Wagga electorate for re-electing me to serve in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament of New South Wales. I am humbled by this honour. During the election I campaigned on a number of issues that I will pursue with the Government and through the Parliament—issues that speak to the gaps in opportunities and outcomes between metropolitan and regional New South Wales. Work on those issues will help bridge the rural-metropolitan divide.

In rural New South Wales we have poorer health outcomes. Someone who lives rurally can have a life expectancy that is five to eight years less than someone living in Sydney. Health services that are available on the same day in the city may not be available in the same week or month in the bush. People suffer and lives can be lost unnecessarily. I would like to see a standalone rural health department, outside of the bureaucracy of the city, located in the regions and in touch with the community. The best health results are clearly achieved when they are community informed and implemented. Although the Government does not agree with a standalone rural health department just yet, I am pleased it has established a Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health to examine the implementation of the upper House's inquiry recommendations. I am honoured to be chairing the committee and I believe it will assist in bridging the health divide between rural and city people.

In the regions we have a crisis in housing, especially social and affordable housing, and rising levels of homelessness. Rents are up and supply is down; it is an untenable situation. Local councils must be supported to approve housing developments in a timely fashion. In our area, the Tolland Estate renewal project is a light on the hill and must continue, but we must do more in the area of social and affordable housing. Our roads have been severely impacted by extreme weather events. Although work is continuing on improving them, funding for rural roads must be increased. Too many lives are lost on rural roads and the quality of the roads is a contributing factor.

The duplication of the Gobbagombalin Bridge is, quite rightly, a priority for Wagga Wagga. The majority of the community do not support the current proposals for changes to the intersections at either end of the bridge. I have asked the Government to fund a full feasibility and costing study to examine the Gobbagombalin Bridge duplication project and to have the study completed in the next two years. In the meantime, the Marshalls Creek Bridge upgrade should take priority. I am pleased that the Minister, with whom I have had good discussions on this issue, is in the Chamber.

We are bearing the burden of the change to renewable energy, with solar factories on prime agricultural land and thousands of kilometres of transmission lines across our regions. The colossal overhead towers of the proposed HumeLink project increase fire risk, trample over prime farmland, scar the environment and ruin visual amenity. I support Snowy 2.0 and we need to connect it to the grid, but the transmission lines should be undergrounded. That infrastructure will last for the next 80 to 100 years, so we should have a public inquiry and get the facts on the table for the best solution.

Cashless gaming was identified as a key issue in the most recent State election. It is an issue that I and my Independent colleagues took the lead on. The data shows that problem gamblers are those who can least afford it. That means severe immediate financial hardship for families, poorer educational outcomes for children and increasing probability of domestic violence by gambling addicts towards their partners, not to mention the issue of criminal money laundering. Gladly, the conversation has changed; people want to see cashless gaming happen. At the same time, clubs and pubs, which are often the centre of regional communities, must be supported during the transition so that their doors stay open and jobs are retained. The Government's early moves in this area are very encouraging.

The custodianship and preservation of our environment, especially the Kosciuszko National Park, is a collective responsibility and a duty for all Australians. It is a duty we must not fail in. The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 has failed to deliver a sustainable population of feral horses. We must seriously consider repealing it. The bill and associated plan of management were meant to preserve a population of approximately 3,000 horses; there are now close to 20,000. We must reduce the feral horse population with an approach based on evidence and science. Finally, as an Independent member of the crossbench, I look forward to further strengthening the integrity and transparency of government, to working collaboratively with the newly elected Government and to engaging with all sides of this Chamber to deliver positive outcomes for my electorate of Wagga Wagga and the State of New South Wales.

### HOMELESSNESS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:59):** In February there were at least 391 people who were homeless in Maitland. There were also about 4,100 people who were couch-surfing and over 5,000 people in supported homelessness accommodation. That is a staggering increase in numbers. Then earlier this year the former Government released its figures for the priority housing

list. To put this in perspective, in February 2021, when the former Government released those figures, there were 30 applications on that priority homelessness list. Those were people subjected to domestic violence or with mental illness, drug addiction, disabilities, severe complex comorbidities and health problems. There were 30 applications for people and their families. Two years later, just before the election, we finally got the figure out of the former Government. It had risen to 101 applications on the list, just in Maitland. In two short years it had more than tripled.

I have seen the evidence of this in my electorate office. When I first got elected, eight years ago, probably about 45 per cent of my case load of constituents was people at risk of homelessness or having problems with social housing. It was a lot. Now around 80 per cent of people are coming with complaints around housing. When I first started, the vast majority of those people who were coming to me with issues of housing were from groups that are seen as more vulnerable in our community because they might have been discriminated against, had mental health or drug and alcohol issues, or experienced domestic violence.

There was always a reason. It was not a good reason, and it did not mean they deserved to be homeless, but you could see that there had been a pathway to where they had got to. However, in the past 12 to 18 months, people have been coming in to my electorate office—people with two kids, a dog and two incomes, who have worked all their lives and been stable tenants for 10 years—who are facing homelessness or are actually homeless. Some have their boys in a tent out the back of a relative's house and the girls on a couch in someone else's house. It is splitting up families.

That is why I was so pleased to see such a large contingent of people from all over the homelessness and broader community sector come together this past week to hold the inaugural Maitland Homelessness Summit. I pay tribute to all the organisations that contributed to this. I made a small contribution myself, but Hume Community Housing Association, Carrie's Place Domestic Violence and Homelessness Services, the Samaritans, Homelessness NSW, First National Real Estate Maitland, TAFE New South Wales and Maitland City Council came together to look at how we can address this problem in our community.

I pay special tribute to the people who work in that sector. Maslow's hierarchy of needs says that shelter is the number one need that humans have. For the workers in this sector to get up every single day with an impossible wicked problem they cannot fix for people in my office or in the broader community is just too much. I am seeing that in the fact that they are so stressed out. I have seen it in my electorate staff. People are faced with this wall they cannot get through. I give special thanks to Ali Haggarty from First National, who is a real estate agent. I remember going to her a couple of years ago and saying, "I've had someone come to my office. They've applied for 120 houses, and they still can't get a rental." She said, "That's the new normal, Jenny. That's, unfortunately, the problem we have in our community." And it is just getting worse. She is trying to get people into houses, but the current rental vacancy rate in Maitland is 0.1 or 0.2 per cent. This should not be our new normal. It is not acceptable.

I am so pleased to be part of a government that is doing something about this. One of the first pieces of legislation that came into this House was around better rental laws. That is something the Government has been working on. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces—I know he is working on that, as is the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Homelessness, Rose Jackson, in the other place. And of course the Premier has a strong personal commitment. It is really sad that last week the Minister in the other place had to announce the sudden freeze in the selling-off of government housing. Why should we on this side have had to announce that? It is a great announcement. The problem is that we should not have had to make it. The people on the other side of this Chamber sold off \$3.5 billion worth of public housing over the past 12 years, and the figures we have show that there are 300 fewer properties in New South Wales than there were 12 years ago. It is a disgrace and a shame.

### CASINO COURTHOUSE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (20:04):** I remind the House that my electorate is still recovering from the floods of 2022. The effects of that natural disaster are still being felt in the electorate today. Local governments are always at the front of any community-led recovery; it is what they do. It is true that they are most certainly the form of government closest to the people. I acknowledge the work of one of those councils in my electorate, Richmond Valley Council, led by Mayor Robert Mustow, his fellow councillors and the general manager, Vaughan Macdonald. At its ordinary council meeting the council resolved, via mayoral minute, a motion regarding the continued operation of the Casino courthouse, which was severely damaged during that natural disaster. In fact, the courthouse has not opened since the natural disaster. Among many other things in the mayoral minute was a request that I bring this to the attention of the House and the Government, urgently seeking that the Casino courthouse be reopened, and seek any assistance to expedite the repair works that are needed to ensure the reopening of the Casino courthouse as soon as possible, given the impacts on the local community and the economy.



The court has been closed for some time, as I said, and now Local Court matters are being heard at Kyogle and Lismore local courts. The closure of the Casino Local Court is having a negative impact in many ways, as the council reported. The low socio-economic and high Indigenous communities, some of whom have very limited transport, are struggling to attend because public transport is almost non-existent. It is impacting family members who are needed at the court as support people. I believe that the operational impact on our local police force is now immense because local police officers need to travel to and from Lismore or Kyogle for appearances and court hearings. This is having a resource impact not only with the local police force but also on local solicitors who must travel to and from the hearings. Economic impacts on Casino are being felt because of the lack of court days, which would normally bring to the community a high number of professional people to the community, where they would quite often stay for the night.

So it concerns me, and it concerns the council, that the court remains closed. It is a real concern for the Casino community. It would be a great shot of confidence for the community if the court were reopened as soon as possible. It is a part of the healing and recovery process that is so important for my community. I urge the Government to do everything in its power to have the Casino courthouse fully operational again as soon as possible. I fully support the Richmond Valley Council and the community in their efforts to have the Casino courthouse operational. I thank them for the work they have been doing in the flood recovery in their local area.

#### TAFE NSW

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (20:08):** I have spoken about TAFE a few times in this House. I have spoken about its importance. I have spoken about the hardworking staff. I have spoken about the cuts. I have spoken about the campus sales. TAFE is something that I feel very strongly about. It is because I love education. I am a product of Moruya Public School and Moruya High School. My mum was a primary school teacher for 30 years, including one year as my teacher—and a very strict teacher she was. My dad taught high school for over 30 years. My grandmother was also a primary school teacher. It is because of these people that education runs through my veins. They instilled in me a love of learning and the opportunity that it provides. I suspect it was fate that I married a high school teacher, who had also taught at TAFE. It is almost a full-circle moment to have been given the responsibility of being the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Hear, hear!

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** I thank the member. One of my first campus visits took me back to one of the campuses where my advocacy began—Newcastle. A few weeks ago I joined the Federal Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon. Brendan O'Connor, and the Federal member for Newcastle, Sharon Claydon, at the campus in Tighes Hill, where we met people who had taken advantage of the Commonwealth's fee-free TAFE offer. What a joy it was to see my constituents embracing the opportunity before them and thriving because we have a Commonwealth Government that helps people get into the training that they want to do. It was a far cry from other times I had been there, standing out the front with staff, students and supporters from across the union movement after another loss of funding, another course cut or another round of staff stackings. I have stood outside Hamilton TAFE with the now education Minister and Deputy Premier, speaking out against cuts. I advocated for staff and students at the Hunter Street campus when their creative arts hub was shrunk.

The state of TAFE was dire. When I became the shadow Minister, I heard the same stories time and again—in Ballina, Taree, Richmond, Bomaderry, Bega, Nowra, Goulburn, Dapto, Scone, Padstow and Ryde. I visited them all. In so many places, TAFE was the heart of the community. Anyone could go to TAFE if they wanted to train for a career, upskill or just take a course for fun. It did not matter if you were the school dux or you did not graduate. It did not matter if you had a disability, if English was not your first language, if you had experienced trauma or if you were still trying to find your way in life. TAFE was for everyone.

I had been the member for Newcastle for mere days when people started reaching out to me with local TAFE issues. As I started hearing those stories, and as we obtained data in opposition, the picture of the state of TAFE started to become clearer. It was going backwards. Enrolments were down by one-third and completions were down by two-thirds. Staffing was almost halved and course offerings were slashed. As a result, morale was plummeting. It is no wonder we are in a skills crisis.

I followed my early love for education, and that public education flows through my veins. But love is not enough to turn this ship around. It will take hard work, commitment and a long-term vision. Most of all, it will take the TAFE community to back us in. I want to work with them to effect change, and piece by piece we will rebuild TAFE. Already we are lifting the cap on needs-based loading so that students experiencing disadvantage will be able to receive more support. The process is underway to appoint a teacher to the TAFE Commission Advisory Board, because teachers are on the front line and offer valuable insight.

We are getting ready to review the entire vocational education system so that we are properly informed on the wholesale issues. There is a lot of work to do to get there, but I am so excited for the day when I walk into the Hunter Street, Hamilton and Newcastle campuses in my electorate and see them brimming with students and staff again.

**PETER PEARCE, OAM**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:13):** Last week marked National Volunteer Week. I acknowledge Peter Pearce, a constituent in my electorate, who is an outstanding volunteer and humanitarian. Peter has dedicated much of his life to helping communities in need, both locally and internationally, through his work primarily with Rotary and ShelterBox, an international disaster relief charity organisation that delivers emergency shelter, warmth and dignity to people made homeless by disasters worldwide. Peter's longstanding volunteering contribution has spanned many projects over many countries. In fact, I do not think I can fully cover everything Peter has achieved in such a limited time. Helping others seems to weave its way throughout Peter's life. In 2000 Peter walked 450 kilometres from Sydney to Gilgandra raising \$20,000 for young people through WestCare. In recognition of this achievement, Peter was given the honour of carrying the Olympic torch during the torch relay for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Among his many projects is Peter's work to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer survivors. Most significantly, Peter planned and undertook a breast cancer fundraising walk in the United Kingdom and Scotland, which he completed on his own. The walk totalled over 1,700 kilometres, took three months to complete and raised in excess of \$20,000 for breast cancer research. It is not surprising that Peter has been recognised with many awards for his contributions. In 2007 Peter was awarded Rotary International's highest global honour, the Service Above Self Award for services to worldwide communities.

As a Rotarian Peter has also been involved with ShelterBox, which provides a great opportunity for Rotarians to get involved with international service, whether as an ambassador or a response team member. As part of the communities they serve, Rotary clubs help ShelterBox identify and prioritise immediate relief needs in disaster-affected areas, and assist with the deployment of shelter kits, education materials and life-saving supplies. Rotary members also fund aid boxes, become trained relief volunteers, assist with shipping customs clearance and connect with governments and other organisations in impacted areas to facilitate the delivery of boxes and aid. Each ShelterBox container typically provides a tent designed to withstand extreme weather conditions, along with regionally appropriate supplies such as a water purification kit, blankets, tools, solar lights and other necessities to help a family survive for six months or more after a disaster.

During his involvement with ShelterBox from 2007, Peter was deployed to locations around the world as a ShelterBox response team member, delivering aid to disaster-affected communities. He has also served as the ShelterBox Australian board director. His dedication to ShelterBox can be seen in his work to deliver over 400 shelter boxes to the flood-ravaged southern areas of Madagascar, and he has worked closely with the Madagascan Rotarians ever since. In 2012 he ran the London Marathon with a specially adapted shelter box strapped to his back to raise funds and awareness. He completed the marathon in six hours and 39 minutes. As a longstanding member of the Rotary Club of Gosford North, Peter was named 2014 Citizen of the Year and was recognised by Rotary International as a Paul Harris Fellow. Rotary was founded by Paul Harris and that fellowship is awarded to Rotarians and others who have shown that they are prepared to go the extra mile to support people in need.

In 2016 Peter received an Order of Australia in recognition of his service to the international community through humanitarian programs. After 20 deployments as a ShelterBox response team member, delivering aid to disaster-affected communities around the world, Peter has more recently focused his energy on raising awareness about ShelterBox in the community. Over the past year, he helped raise over \$14,000 from Rotary clubs around the Central Coast for disaster relief. He was also instrumental in arranging shopping centre appeals for both the war in Ukraine and earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, raising considerable funds and promoting ShelterBox to thousands of people. It is very fitting that Peter Pearce received one of the top volunteering awards during National Volunteer Week celebrations when he took out the 2023 ShelterBox Volunteer Excellence Award. The annual ShelterBox Volunteer Awards event during National Volunteer Week is highly anticipated and celebrates the outstanding contributions of volunteers across Australia.

ShelterBox Australia CEO Mike Greenslade has commended Peter for his significant contribution to ShelterBox in helping to shelter people in need in countries like Ukraine, Turkey, Syria and Ethiopia. Organisations such as ShelterBox rely heavily on their volunteer workforce to drive deployments overseas, and Peter's capacity to promote these important causes is unrivalled. ShelterBox has more than 100 volunteers across Australia. Peter continues to be an integral member who motivates others to support ShelterBox and shows how their donation can positively impact families in desperate need of shelter.

The Central Coast has some of the highest rates of volunteering in the nation. With their incredible generosity and selfless service, volunteers such as Peter support so many in our community, through activities and causes, out of kindness and a sense of community. On behalf of the people of the Central Coast, I thank Peter for his years of dedication to helping others and congratulate him. He is a true inspiration to people right across the Central Coast, and his volunteering spirit is absolutely indicative of the people of the Central Coast.

### BARWON ELECTORATE

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:18):** I am deeply honoured and truly grateful that the people of Barwon chose me to represent them for a second term, and by such a strong margin. My primary vote was 44.7 per cent and my two-candidate preferred vote was 65.99 per cent. That is a significant vote of confidence and trust by any standard. Far from being wiped out electorally because I was no longer connected to a party, I found that my support on the ground increased. People from a broad mix of backgrounds, industries and professions supported me in so many ways. It was a huge team effort. I thank the teams in my electorate offices for their hard work over four years. They have taken calls, emails, texts and correspondence from the public, following up in every possible instance to make sure that constituents got a solution to their problems, concerns, needs or inquiries. I went into Parliament well informed about what is happening in the lives of my constituents, largely thanks to the efforts of my electorate staff.

I also thank the people who gave their time and offered their support during the campaign—people who put up election material on trees, on fences, in the windows of their businesses or outside their homes. It is an amazing level of endorsement. When a person puts a corflute sign in their yard, on their fence or on their home, they are telling others that they are invested in a candidate. I thank those people who took time out of their busy lives to hand out how-to-vote cards at pre-poll or at booths on the day of the election.

I will read the names of some of the people who helped put me back in Parliament. It is not an exhaustive list—at some booths people just turned up to help—so I beg forgiveness in advance from anyone I may have left out: Anne Boehm; Anne Woods; Anthony Barraclough; Arthur Baker and his wife Patricia; Barbara Browning; Belle Pederson; Bill and Chris Elliot; Billie-Jo O'Brien; Brad Loiterton; Cara Stoltenberg; Cath Denyer; Cheryl Yow; Cindy, Craig and Jack Burke; Coleen Edgar; Col Dorman; Danny Toohy; Dave Gallagher; Dave Smith; Dave and Naomi McCutcheon; Denise Murray; Diana Ferry; Ed Fessey; Elaine Gillet; Ellen Day; Fleur Thompson; Gabe Rushton-Butler—that is my son; Gary Trindall; Gordon Innes; Gordon McMaster; Grace McMaster; Greg Lamont; and Honor Taylor and family, who travelled from White Cliffs to Wilcannia.

I also acknowledge Jane Friend, Jenny Stenhouse, Jill Weaving, Jo Miller, John Bateman, John Clements, John Erskine, John Melville, John Tough, Julua Hamel, Justine Bucknell, Karen Nash, Kate Schwager, Kathy Parnaby, Kathy Reindflesh, Kylie Ann Mckenzie and daughter Anicia, Kym Hardy, Mal Unicom, Maree O'Brien, Mary and Leah Egan, Megan Loiterton, Miranda Fry, Narelle Kerr-McDonald, Nat Prisk, Nieves Rivera, Pete Rothwell, Peter Brookhouse, Peter Knight, Peter Nash, Prue Cullen, Rachel Hammond, Bec Trindall, Rickie Cooper, Robert Browning, Robyn McMaster, Rohan Boehm, Ron Campey, Scott and Elysia Hammond, Sonya Marshall, Steve Bradshaw, Steve Coe, Steve Farr, Steve Stoltenberg, Stuart Murray, Syd Christoph, Thomas Seward, Tina Lawrence, Todd Reid, Toni Melville, Trevor Rice, Troy Lennon and Wayne Lawrence.

Those people spent hours of their own time making sure that my corflutes, flyers and stickers were out there and that my name was prominent in the minds of voters. They all showed their support and their belief. They have helped give me the opportunity to continue the work of my first term. While we achieved much in that term, there is still a lot we need to do. Among the policy priorities for this term will be to institute service delivery targets and metrics by which the performance of government departments in Barwon can be measured to identify resourcing problems, poor service delivery and programs that are simply not working as they should.

One area sorely in need of metrics is health. Over a decade of neglect has left the regional health system in such a deficient state that life expectancy in far western New South Wales has gone backwards. Metrics on things such as waiting times for surgery, access to emergency departments and seeing a GP would again help pinpoint the areas of weakness, choke points, lack of resources, poor application of resources or the waste of resources. The regional health inquiry provided a road map for starting to fix the problems with medical services in the bush.

The recently established Legislative Assembly regional health committee needs to expedite the implementation of those recommendations. I will work closely with the chair, Dr Joe McGirr, in this regard. I will also be working on other issues such as housing, roads, education—things that matter to the electorate and that will make Barwon more liveable—and issues that my constituents gave me a mandate to address. It was said in 2019 that the people of Barwon had registered a protest vote off the back of the drought when they elected me. It appears that after fires, floods, a rodent plague and a one-in-100-year pandemic, that protest continues.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:23):** I also commend the member for Barwon for his re-election. He has obviously done a mighty job for the people of Barwon. I also acknowledge Josh Roberts-Garnsey, who is a young teacher in the community. He really made a mighty effort. He realised the enormity of the member's job and doorknocked quite a few homes across the Barwon electorate. I congratulate the member for Barwon and thank everybody who puts in the effort to represent regional New South Wales.

### QUEANBEYAN HOSPITAL

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (20:23):** I raise a very pleasant item tonight. I received an email recently from Alexia and Shane Ivimey from Queanbeyan, who wanted to express their appreciation for the efforts made when they had their baby at Queanbeyan Hospital. They emailed me not only to talk about the outstanding care they received but also to highlight the need for continued investment in our hospitals to make sure that other people receive the care that they did. Their email to me stated:

On 10th April 2023, our son Wallace entered this world at Queanbeyan Hospital. The joy and excitement of becoming parents were accompanied by a certain level of anxiety, which was quickly alleviated by the outstanding care provided by the doctors and midwives at the hospital. Their dedication, compassion, and expertise were truly remarkable.

They went on to say:

From the moment we arrived at the hospital, we were greeted with warmth and reassurance. The staff members, both doctors and midwives, were attentive and considerate, ensuring that we were well-informed and comfortable throughout the entire birth experience. They patiently stepped us through each step, providing guidance and support during labour, explaining the process of a C-section, and offering assistance with breastfeeding.

The commitment of the medical professionals extended beyond the confines of the hospital walls. The on-phone support we received during the labour was invaluable. The midwives and doctors were readily available to answer our questions, calm our concerns, and provide guidance during those intense hours leading up to the delivery. Their presence and expertise were comforting, reassuring us that we were in capable hands.

They highlighted in their email the "outstanding care" they received and "the need for continued investment in regional infrastructure, particularly in the field of health care". They specifically mentioned Dr Amy Daly, their GP, and their midwife at Queanbeyan Hospital, Alexandra Reynolds, who they said "deserves special recognition for her unwavering dedication and advocacy during the delivery". They said, "Alexandra went above and beyond to ensure that our voices were heard, our concerns addressed, and our birth plan respected", along with a number of other comments.

I think all members would agree it is a wonderful thing when people email us to congratulate other people who work so hard in the community. I have heard that view about the work that the Queanbeyan maternity unit does many times. I acknowledge that we do have personal friends who work there, but I have also heard a number of glowing references over the years, including the fact that one of the midwives, Jenny Flaherty, was nominated for NSW Health Midwife of the Year in 2022. The success of the maternity unit at Queanbeyan Hospital is reflected by the fact that, with 598 births, 2022 was its busiest year since the hospital opened when I was previously the member for Monaro. Queanbeyan maternity service has a well-established antenatal and postnatal midwifery continuity of care service, the first in our region of New South Wales, in partnership with GP obstetricians.

It is dedicated to providing the best possible care and outcomes for women in our community and it is involved in things like the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance, which aims to reduce the incidence of preterm and early-term births across the country and improve outcomes for babies and families; and a quality improvement project on reducing the incidence of severe perineal trauma. It has a smoking cessation project in conjunction with the preterm birth alliance, aiming to reduce the number of women smoking in pregnancy, and it has also recommenced antenatal classes in June 2023 post-COVID.

In patient surveys for the unit, 92 per cent rated its care as very good, 90 per cent felt involved in their care, 88 per cent felt listened to, and 85 per cent felt informed about their care. Those really are sensational outcomes for the maternity unit at the Queanbeyan Hospital. I know that, like Alexia and Shane, who sent me that email, many other people report similar great results. I wanted to highlight the comments that Alexia and Shane made and congratulate them on their journey and the birth of their child. But most importantly I congratulate and thank all the people who work in the maternity unit at Queanbeyan Hospital.

### WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE SPORTS FACILITIES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:28):** The Willoughby community I represent has a long and proud tradition of sport and recreation. Sport is so integral to people's everyday lives in Willoughby. It is not only an outlet for personal exercise, fitness and wellbeing but also an opportunity to connect with others and build friendships with like-minded people. In particular, team sports afford people the opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of teammates and meet new people beyond their usual family and friendship circles. As well as developing new physical skills, there is a lot to be said for the role sport plays in building the personal character

of individuals, especially of children and youth. Sports teach the importance of teamwork, healthy competition, responsibility, leadership and, above all, the quality of good sportsmanship.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Even women's parliamentary netball.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** Indeed. Our young learn not only how to win but also how to lose and how to do so with grace and good cheer. They learn how to play fairly with not only their teammates but also their opponents. In short, the cricket pitch, the football field and the netball court are among life's great training grounds for character and resilience. In an age when people crave community and belonging, organised sport provides a tangible sense of community. The local sporting club is a place for children and youth to play together and for the adults to enjoy a chat and a catch-up on the sidelines. Comprised largely of dedicated volunteers—including busy parents who give up their precious free time to coach, referee or supervise—sporting clubs are communities in themselves, where networks and friendships are forged over shared activities and interests.

The successful Active Kids and First Lap voucher programs have made it easier for families across Willoughby and New South Wales to participate in local sport, boosting health and wellbeing whilst easing the financial cost to parents of doing so. I hear every day from local parents and sporting organisations how beneficial the programs have been and of the need for them to continue. Over 80 per cent of the eligible population in Willoughby have participated in the Active Kids program. That incredible figure is testament to the demand out there from families for a helping hand to get our kids active.

For Willoughby's sporting clubs to thrive and flourish, they also need the best possible facilities—for athletes and players to compete in venues that are safe, up to date and fit for purpose. Like many other parts of Sydney, Willoughby has experienced considerable population growth, which has naturally put pressure on existing sporting infrastructure to cater to the increased demand. As such, sporting spaces in Willoughby such as ovals, fields, courts, swimming pools and other amenities are at a premium, restricting some clubs from regular access and usage. To satisfy the needs of a growing population, I am a strong advocate for the construction of new sporting facilities and for the upgrade and expansion of existing ones. Going forward, population growth and open space constraints will prompt communities such as Willoughby to think innovatively about new facilities, including building above train lines and freeways as well as creating sporting facilities on roofs.

In the meantime, however, the previous Government committed to a number of important projects for local sport. Those good projects benefit the community's health and wellbeing, and the current Government should deliver them. They include funding for Naremburn Park and North Sydney Oval to upgrade the change rooms to be female friendly and a \$5 million grant to build an indoor sports facility at Gore Hill. Funding for new female-friendly change rooms and six new indoor courts would help ease the pressure for netball, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball and wheelchair sports. That was made possible because of the Liberal-Nationals Government's vision to invest in grassroots community sport. The terrific project offers great promise for the sporting clubs and community of Willoughby and beyond. It is essential that the upgrade be carried out, and I call upon the new Government to commit to delivering the project.

An iconic piece of the lower North Shore's sporting make-up and heritage is the beautiful North Sydney Oval, home of the mighty North Sydney Bears. In February the Perrottet Government committed \$11 million to revamp the ground with improvements to playing surfaces, spectator seating and kiosks, as well as upgrades to public toilet amenities and media facilities. I call upon the Government to likewise follow through with that much-needed funding. I especially want to ensure that the Willoughby community has facilities that cater well, strongly and adequately to women's sport—in netball, basketball, athletics, tennis, hockey, cricket, soccer, touch football, rugby and more. Our women and girls deserve equal facilities with equal opportunity to participate. My vision is for Willoughby to thrive, with optimal sporting opportunities for all—women, men, girls and boys. I will continue to work hard to ensure this Government delivers for the Willoughby community and helps to make that vision a reality.

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:33):** Politicians are elected to create laws and we should never break the law, but I believe that is what the Federal Government plans to do. Let me explain. I have spoken countless times about the Federal Government's plan to buy back 450 gigalitres of water in the Murray-Darling Basin, diverting that precious resource away from farmers and communities like those in my electorate of Murray. Four hundred and fifty gigalitres is the equivalent of every drop of water in Sydney Harbour—imagine telling Sydney that it had to give up its harbour.

The Federal buybacks will be unlawful because, under the Water Act 2007, buybacks are not allowed to occur if they adversely impact on the socio-economic needs of communities. These buybacks will do just that. How do we know? It is because we have already seen how devastating buybacks have been in the past. The

southern basin has already contributed 83 per cent of the water for buybacks under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Over a five-year period, 38 per cent of the available water in Wakool was purchased through buybacks. So what happened? There was a 71.8 per cent decrease in employment in irrigated production, while the manufacturing workforce nearly halved. That is exactly the kind of devastation I am talking about. If we allow the Federal Government to buy back a further Sydney Harbour's worth of water, we will see more of that devastation and it will be unlawful.

That is why I am committing to work with the Government in this term of Parliament to achieve a moratorium on the latest planned Federal buybacks. If the Federal Government is worried about water for the Lower Lakes in South Australia, it needs to consider better options. It should look at water waste in transfers, for example. It should look at run-off and the state of some of the riverbanks. It should meter and monitor all water, including environmental water and water diverted for floodplain harvesting. It should consider desalination in South Australia to provide water for the Lower Lakes. That would be a hell of a lot smarter and cheaper than buying water from primary producers further up the river.

The New South Wales Government should support a moratorium for a lot of reasons. For a start, a moratorium is good for the New South Wales economy as farms will become even more productive. A moratorium will also help rural towns and cities to survive and eventually thrive, economically and socially. A moratorium will also help drive down the skyrocketing cost of living that we are all experiencing right across New South Wales, in the cities and in the regions. More water will lead to cheaper food. A moratorium will also help Australia achieve and maintain food security. Let us not forget that food security is an important part of national security, so a moratorium is good for national security as well.

As a regional Independent, I have a good insight into the way rural voters see this new minority Labor Government. When I talk to the people of Murray, they tell me they are hopeful but wary. They worry that this Government will say a lot and do nothing. But I have faith that this can be a government of action that will stand up for what is right, including what is right for the people of rural New South Wales, and right now the people of the New South Wales regions need an immediate moratorium on buybacks of water from New South Wales farms. I call on the Government to start working today with me and the other crossbenchers to place an immediate moratorium on water buybacks in New South Wales. The moratorium will protect the people of rural New South Wales as well as every single person who lives in this State.

### **SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:37):** Tonight I talk about housing in New South Wales and in my electorate. The new Labor Government is taking action and has ordered a pause on the sale of all public and social housing in New South Wales. It is so important to ensure those kinds of mass sales never happen again and that our social housing system is properly funded and prioritised in this State. That is the work Government members are doing to ensure we are delivering what we said we would. Privatisation of public housing clearly has not worked, and we are taking decisive and bold action to build a social housing system that we can be proud of. Alongside that, we are unifying Housing NSW, the maintenance of our public housing and the Aboriginal Housing Office to try to get better outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

In the past 12 years of the Liberal Government, the Central Coast has seen the sale of \$47,436,965 worth of public housing assets, which hurts our community. I do not know whether the member for Terrigal feels it so much in his electorate, but practically every single day I have someone in my electorate office who is homeless or under the threat of homelessness talking about their concerns. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government sold almost \$3.6 billion worth of housing assets in New South Wales and delivered 300 fewer homes than it sold. If statewide the crisis is anything like it is in my electorate, the previous Government took fantastic four-bedroom, three-bedroom and two-bedroom houses and replaced them with tiny little boxes without air conditioning and flat to the sun, without shade and with people packed in. Those dwellings have nowhere near the dignity of standalone homes. During the term of the previous Government, exactly 7,628 homes and assets were sold. To date, of the 4,858 homes sold, only about 4,500 homes have been built. The New South Wales Labor Government will release the full list of sell-offs undertaken by the previous Government to demonstrate the breadth and scale of privatisation under the Liberals and Nationals.

On the Central Coast, in Gosford alone public housing properties are down by 113, which is a huge loss to our community. In Wyong, 59 properties were sold; in The Entrance, 168 properties were sold; in Swansea, 65 properties were sold; and in Terrigal, 51 properties were sold, which makes a total of 456 fewer public housing properties than we had at the beginning of this term. That really, really hurts. It hurts in my electorate of Gosford, it hurts in the electorates of Wyong and The Entrance, I am sure it hurts in the electorate of Terrigal, and I know that it also hurts in the electorate of Swansea. Despite that, I thank people who work in the housing sector. It is a really tough job. I would love them to be able to do a better job. I would love it if we did not have people who live in danger every single day and who come into our electorate offices saying that they are living in fear. I know

of one poor gentleman and his beautiful dog who are in my electorate office every single day—and they have been doing that for about a year. That gentleman is in tears or in various levels of upset because he lives in fear of their lives in their public housing property.

Tonight I thank the Minister for Housing for her amazing work to date. Tonight, during the break in the upper House, she was out with the people who are sleeping rough in the streets. As the Minister for Housing, and the Minister for Homelessness, she clearly indicates that she cares for those who are doing it tough. There are 52,000 people on the public housing list in New South Wales, and that number is growing. This Labor Government has inherited a broken system. As I said earlier, Central Coast members have distressed people in their electorate offices every single day. The public housing system is overburdened and overstrained. While our communities were crying out, the former Liberal Government was selling off \$40 million worth of public housing assets on the Central Coast.

We need a social and affordable housing system that we can be proud of, not something that we are absolutely embarrassed by. I really enjoy working with the incredible people who work in the public housing sector across the Central Coast. I commend the work of Coast Shelter, which works every day with forefront homeless people and Pacific Link Housing, which is a fabulous community housing provider. I commend the work of Action on Housing for Older Women, led by Deb Tipper and Annette Evans, who have another forum coming up soon. I commend also the work of community women's shelters that are now looking after 14 women who are escaping domestic violence. To be honest, I have dreams of doing a much better job in the Gosford electorate, a much better job in housing on the Central Coast, and a much better job in housing across New South Wales as part of the Labor Government.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:43 until  
Wednesday 24 May 2023 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING DENNIS COKER'S LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise the contribution to my community by Dennis Coker. Dennis was recently admitted as a Life Member at Athletics NSW Awards in April. Dennis joined Hills District Athletics in 1987 and has been a volunteer since that time. Dennis was described at the Athletics NSW Awards Ceremony held in April this year as "One of the most humble technical officials in NSW". Over the past decades he has been a Referee, Field Judge, Call Room Chief/Manager and Post Event Manger. Apart from community service in the area of athletics, Dennis has served our community for over 46 years with NSW Rural Fire Service. Dennis is the current Deputy Captain with the Round Corner Branch of the Rural Fire Service. I visited the Round Corner Branch on 13 May 2023 and conveyed thanks on behalf of the community to Dennis for his long service to our society. It is fitting given the remarkable and extensive contribution by Dennis to the betterment of our community that due and appropriate recognition of Dennis's long service to our community is recorded.

#### **CARINGBAH PUBLIC SCHOOL BAY BREEZE INITIATIVE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I commend Caringbah Public School on its promotion of intergenerational community building. The Bay Breeze Initiative joins students from Caringbah Public School with residents of Anglicare Bay Breeze through both a pen pal program and school visits. Early research indicates that intergenerational programs that connect the young and old can lead to better physical health and cognition among older Australians and better interpersonal skills among children. Principal Susan Oliveri says that the initiative "stemmed from a desire...to re-engage with our community after the long period of COVID-19 restrictions". Year 4 and 5 students began visiting Bay Breeze in December 2022, greeting the residents with Christmas performances and celebration ahead of the festive period. The initiative has been welcomed by both residents and students who have enjoyed sharing positive experiences together.

#### **MUMS OF THE SHIRE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I commend Mia Johnson and Alhana Friend for their supportive social network, Mums of the Shire. Mums of the Shire is an online community that brings over 4000 local mums together to share advice and improve access to local businesses and products. Mums of the Shire is a trusted place for local mums to connect, access information, and be a part of an inclusive community. This year, Mums of the Shire partnered with The Family Co to provide more support to vulnerable women in the community. Mia and Alhana reached out to The Family Co to learn how they could use their services to provide support and advice for mothers in domestic violence situations. Mia and Alhana say that Mums of the Shire is "proud to partner with The

Family Co to help combat this issue and provide support and resources to those who need it most". I thank both Mia and Alhana for their efforts to raise awareness and provide support to those affected by domestic violence.

#### VALE REG CHIRGWIN OAM

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I pay tribute to Reg Chirgwin OAM who passed away in March aged 87. Reg was a generous and much-loved member of the Sutherland Shire community. Reg was an active member of Caringbah Rotary and was involved in a number of significant community projects over the last 50 years. In 2021, Reg and his wife, Shirley, were recognised at Sutherland Hospital's volunteer awards for their combined 95 years of volunteer service at Garden Kiosk. Reg began volunteering at the kiosk over 40 years ago, later helping with accounting and banking. The kiosk is volunteer run, with all proceeds going towards new medical equipment for the hospital. As of 2021, the kiosk had raised \$3.4 million for the hospital. Reg was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his volunteer work and said that he enjoyed being with "wonderful people" who "work[ed] together as a team". Reg's presence within the community will be dearly missed. I extend my sympathy to his wife Shirley and extended family.

#### SPORT SUCCESS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I'd like to congratulate two local young soccer players, Kash Taylor and Wolfe Hudson, who are the latest recipients of Coleman Smith Youth Sports Advancement Foundation award. Announced at the Stuarts Point Workers Recreation and Bowls Club, they both received \$500 towards their progression in the sport. The Foundation is a subcommittee of the Stuarts Point and District Community Organisation [SPaDCO], which provides funds to help kids who are excelling in their chosen sport with one-off payments. The Foundation was set up in recognition of two local community icons, the late Greg Coleman and Adrienne Smith. Greg was a sportsperson and coach, while Adrienne set up sporting organisations and ran events. Donations from individuals and organisations like SPaDCO, the Yarrahapinni Festival, and recently the Stuarts Point Friendly Grocer Charity Day, has made the foundation possible. Applications are biannual and are assessed by members of the Foundation's Board, with Adrienne's daughter Nicky, the Chairperson. Since forming, the Foundation has awarded funds to a great bunch of local kids including Jessica Donovan (Gymnastics), Quinn Cooper (Cricket), Wolfe Hudson (Football), Angus McFarlane (AFL) and Zaylia Page (Cricket). My congratulations and best wishes to all these young sports people.

#### RDA

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I'd like to welcome and congratulate the new appointment of Dr Madeleine Lawler to the position of CEO and Director of Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast [RDAMNC]. Dr Lawler was most recently Director of Community and Economic Development for a Queensland council, and previous to this, worked for Coffs Harbour City Council in Community Planning and Engagement. Madeleine had a career in mental health, youth work, and education, as well as a management consulting career working across diverse areas such as infrastructure, software development, health, housing, not-for-profits, and Local Government. I note Kieren Dell, Chair of RDAMNC, said Dr Madeleine Lawler stood out in a quality field of candidates due to her diversity of experience across both government and commercial roles and her deep background in, and commitment to, community and economic development. I am look forward to meeting Dr Lawler and assisting her in some of the challenges facing the region. I'd also like to note and thank outgoing RDAMNC CEO Kerry Grace, who has served as CEO and Director for the past six years. Ms Grace served our region tirelessly through several natural disasters, including the pandemic, and always with generosity and kindness.

#### VIEW CLUB

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—It's with very great sadness I have been advised that after 38 years, Bellinger Valley VIEW Club finally closed its doors on April 17, 2023, after the members had their final luncheon. For more than three decades all the members enjoyed monthly meetings to raise money for The Smith Family, enjoying one another's company and going on social outings together. Unfortunately, in the last few years, like many volunteer organisations, they have been unable to attract new members or to form a full Committee to continue. Over the years the Club have greatly enjoyed serving the local community with street stalls, providing book donations to local schools, giving individual help to local students, wrapping Christmas gifts to raise money for The Smith Family and, through The Smith Family's Learning for Life program sponsoring many disadvantaged Students. Their work is immeasurable, and it grieves me they will not be able to continue all the good work they have done throughout the community. Thank you to all members who supported the VIEW Club so well and so loyally over the years. Thank you too to VIEW Clubs Australia and VIEW Clubs in our local area who continue their work.



**MATT DELL**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Matt Dell from Ulladulla. Matt volunteers in a variety of organisations and was instrumental in bringing together all volunteer groups of the Southern Shoalhaven by forming Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven. The Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven makes it easier for connecting volunteers to groups for easier communication and to minimise competition – groups/events are more successful and sustainable through collaboration. The website provides volunteer groups with an online training library, webinars, live workshops and an event and activity calendar. Community Connect holds bi-monthly meetings to bring all volunteer groups together and is of such value to small not-for-profit organisations and the whole community.

**FRANCES BRAY**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise one of the most tireless campaigners in protecting the local environment of Lake Wollomboolla and surrounds. As the President of the Lake Wollomboolla Protection Association, Frances Bray's love, passion and knowledge of the birdlife that make the lake their home is unparalleled. Frances has shown great leadership in campaigns for over 30 years, working to protect the environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Lake Wollomboolla and its catchment, and advocated for the conservation of its rich bird life and recognition of its biodiversity. Lake Wollomboolla is located just north of Jervis Bay in our beautiful South Coast Electorate.

**SHOALHAVEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise one of the organisations in my electorate which provides fantastic opportunities for volunteers in the local community and has done for over 40 years. Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services provides volunteering opportunities in social support, administration, gardening and maintenance to name a few. Over the years, there have been many examples where volunteering with the centre has involved learning and mastering new skills, building confidence, making friends and finding paid employment. I thank the team led by Maxine Edwards for their commitment to locals helping locals and providing such an important resource for the communities of Nowra and East Nowra.

**MONA VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate the Mona Vale Public School community for their collective efforts in seeing their vision for State of the Art and modern educational facilities becoming a reality. I pay tribute to the School staff who have not only juggled the challenges of teaching and leading a school community including during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, but have simultaneously steered a complex build to completion. Principal Shannan Judge, past Principal Greg Jones, thank you. Thank you also to the P&C and all parents for their efforts. I was particularly delighted to recently meet Louise Conn and thank her for her efforts in relation to ensuring the new facilities were inclusive and accessible which, indeed, they are! I am pleased that these words of thanks will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country, as a small recognition of the wonderful work by so many. Thank you all!

**YOUTH UP FRONT**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate the wonderful team of Youth Up Front [YUF], based out of "Granmas Refuge" in Ingleside. The limited time I have cannot do justice to sum up the work of YUF; however, in short, this is an organisation which helps students transition from School to adulthood and work, recognising that traditional pathways of School to University might not be the best approach for every young person. YUF has been helping our young people for some 30 years! At a time when there are severe shortages in all vocations and skilled work, the efforts of YUF are vital. This is an area where increased funding is critical, and I will advocate for organisations like YUF and the young people they benefit. Thank you to Sam King for your work and dedication, and the remainder of the Board over the past year - Lynne Mabb, Jack McCann, Sylvia Borg, Samuel Chu, and Matt Tanks. I am pleased that these words of thanks will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country, as a small recognition of the wonderful work by so many. Thank you all!

**MANLY WARRINGAH PITTWATER CARE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the volunteers of MWP Care. Over the past 12 months, the hundred or so volunteers have provided 7,000 services to the elderly, from assistance with shopping trips, medical appointments, and more. The work of these volunteers is a prime reason why the Northern Beaches and Pittwater is such a wonderful place to live. They exemplify values of generosity, service over self, and providing compassion and community to those who might otherwise go without. MWP was founded over 55 years ago by a few locals who wanted to help their community. Since that time, MWP has delivered likely 250,000 services – what an awesome achievement and testament to the saying that from little things big things

grow. Thank you to Matt Adderton for your leadership of MWP, the board, and your amazing staff. I am pleased that these words of thanks will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country, as a small recognition of the wonderful work by so many. Thank you all!

#### **RYDE SALVOS RED SHIELD APPEAL**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I rise to extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Narelle Barker, Amanda and Greg Whitaker, and Artin and Nora Etmekdjian for their exceptional dedication and tireless efforts in organising the 2023 Red Shield Appeal. Each year, they make a significant difference in our community, providing vital support for those less fortunate among us. From the trivia night which alone raised over \$11,000, the golf day, and outstanding coverage at collection points and doorknocks right across Ryde, they raised substantial funds and demonstrated once again the unity, camaraderie and shared commitment of Ryde towards our most needy. The tireless efforts and selfless dedication of individuals like Narelle, Amanda, Greg, Artin and Nora symbolises the spirit of service and community that we all aspire to. They have shown us that through dedication and giving, we can create a profound impact on the lives of others. These actions reflect the Spirit of Ryde and is a testament to Ryde's strength, compassion, and unity. I am so proud to be a part of Ryde and am even prouder to call it home. To all who donated, thank you. Here's to an even more successful 2024 Appeal.

#### **RYDE HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I recently had the opportunity to join the committed Ryde Hospital volunteers for morning tea and to celebrate National Volunteer Appreciation Day. These individuals, Anne Maher, Sasila Suppiah, Diedre Macedo, Raymond Drewett, Salvatore Belcastro, Christopher Bou Farhat, Riva Shirol, Faye Heriot, Kym Lamb, Helen Rutherford, Llewellyn Farrell, and Michael Appleton, have selflessly dedicated their time and skills to support our community in times of need. Their impact reverberates throughout the hospital, creating a positive ripple effect that touches the lives of many. They provide an extra pair of hands, a friendly face, and a supportive presence that uplift the spirits of everyone they encounter. They foster an atmosphere of warmth, empathy, and care that not only enhances the healing process but also promotes a sense of unity and shared purpose within the hospital community. Their unwavering commitment and contribution have made a significant difference in the lives of countless patients, their families, and staff at Ryde Hospital. It is with great pleasure and profound gratitude that I acknowledge and commend the exceptional efforts of the volunteers at Ryde Hospital. As the Hospital is rebuilt, may we also build on the wonderful volunteer spirit that permeates its wards.

#### **CITIZENSHIP CONGRATULATIONS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—The great tapestry of Ryde is now brighter, bolder and stronger for the contributions of our newest citizens who officially became Australians on the 4/05/2023. To the following, I thank you for choosing Ryde: Khushboo Punjabi; Jingdong Qiu; Van Quach; Avinash Radhakrishnan; Akhtar Rafiei; Saranga Ratnayake; Irush Ratnayake; Thavish Ratnayake; Hansen Ryser; Raunaq Sachdev; Ayeza Sajjad; Caroline Sakulanda Goulding; Saurabh Samuel; Maria Sara; Kemely Scura; Handoko Setyawan; Jamie Setyawan; Zeeshan Shafiq; Seyedehshafagh Sharifianbarforoush; Jeannette Sierra; Jonnel Sisneros; Shuren Sun; Ahsanullah Syed; Sk Tamim; Smith Thapa; Michael Thapa Masrangi; Mobin Thomas; Miroslava Thomas; Sai Thota; Anastasiia Tukova; Amy Turnah; Jiey Wang; Yifei Wang; Jun Wang; Ayesha Arachchige; Chun Wong; Tong Wu; Xiuqiong Xie; Suryabhan Yadav; Annan Yadav; and Arihant Yadav. Congratulations and best wishes!

#### **GEORGIE THOMAS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I congratulate Georgie Thomas on her achievements in the field of surfing and surf lifesaving. Georgie moved to Shellharbour in 2016 and immediately fell in love with the sport of surfing. In 2023 Georgie gained her bronze medallion and Inflatable Rescue Boat crew Certificate, becoming a patrolling member of the Shellharbour Surf Life Saving Club. Georgie also joined Southbridge Boardriders in 2018. Southbridge has given Georgie the opportunity to improve her surfing and compete against some of the region's top female surfers. Georgie was also chosen by the Southbridge Committee to complete her training as a surf coach, giving back to the Shellharbour community and spreading her love of surfing and the ocean to others. I thank Georgie and the Southbridge Boardriders for inspiring the next generation of surfers and surf lifesavers in the Illawarra.

#### **MAEGHAN MCCAULEY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I congratulate Maeghan McCauley, an exceptional athlete from the Shellharbour Electorate and a talented player in both League Tag and Rugby League. Currently, Maeghan plays for the Warilla Gorillas in both Ladies League Tag and Open Women's Rugby League. As a remarkable sports woman, Maeghan has been given the chance to trial for the Great Britain Exiles Team in the 2023 Oztg World Cup, which will be held in Ireland from July 31 to August 6. Maeghan has also participated in the Women

in League Round celebrations organized by Group 7. She played for the Warilla Lake South Gorillas against the Como Jannali Crocodiles. I applaud Maeghan for her remarkable achievements in sports and her opportunity to trial for the Great Britain Exiles Team. I am confident that she will continue to excel in her sporting career, and I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours, on and off the sporting field.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR SHAG-HARDERS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I take this opportunity to congratulate the Shellharbour Shag-Harders for their magnificent float in the 2023 Sydney Mardi Gras parade. The Mardi Gras parade, which made a return to Oxford Street after a three-year hiatus, had thousands of people lining the Streets of Sydney celebrating its return. This was the 12th Parade for the Shellharbour Shag-Harders and they created a sparkly Moulin Rouge inspired float. Their float was a calling to all soul sisters to gather, to support one another and promote body positivity and individuality. Their dancers wore red and black lingerie to inspire sisters to embrace their natural bodies. The Shellharbour Shag-Harders are proud to provide a space for LGBTQIA+ people around the Illawarra to come together, support one another and dance united down Oxford Street. This year they were joined by Illawarra's much loved drag queens Ellawarra and Ruby Jubilee who looked absolutely fabulous on the float. I would like to thank the Shellharbour Shag-Harders on their wonderful work representing Shellharbour and the Illawarra in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade.

#### **CIRCULAR PLASTICS ILLAWARRA**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—There are so many wonderful groups located throughout the entire Heathcote electorate. Whether they be in the north of the electorate near Kirrawee, in the middle of the electorate in Helensburgh, or the southern end in northern suburbs of the Illawarra, there is no shortage of local organisations doing great things in the local community. One of those organisations is Circular Plastics Illawarra. Formed late last year, the group's aim is to create a circular plastics economy throughout the Illawarra region. I had the pleasure of meeting with some of the members recently in my electoral office to discuss some of the great work that Circular Plastics Illawarra do. There is no doubt plastics pollution is a major for all communities – particularly coastal communities like those in the Illawarra. Circular Plastics consist of 15 leaders in the environmental and research field including representatives from the University of Wollongong, Wollongong Council and Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation. Thank you to those members who took the time to talk to me about their vision. And thank you to every member of Circular Plastics Illawarra for your dedication, hard work and passion.

#### **DEAN DUDLEY**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Bulli Surf Life Saving Club's Dean Dudley on being elected to the board of Surf Life Saving NSW. It's an incredible honour for Dean who also served on the board from 2012-2017. His election to the board once more speaks volumes of his contribution to the surf life saving community in general. In the 2021/22 season, the average number of hours for every patrolling member at Bulli Surf Life Saving Club was about 44. Dean recorded the third highest number of patrol hours that season with 85.

Only Markus Meier-Lindner and Jamie Thorpe recorded more, with 95.25 and 99.75 hours, respectively. During the same season Dean was among a host of dozens of members who received a Bulli SLSC Lifesaving Citation after responding to an overturned boat at Peggy's Reef, Wanjiora Point. Following the 2021/22 season, Dean moved on from his position of Deputy Director at Bulli SLSC. Bulli's loss though ultimately proved to be Surf Life Saving NSW's gain. Congratulations again Dean on a well-deserved appointment.

#### **DR MARION MAGEE - DENILIKUIN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—I would like to express my sincerest thanks to Dr Marion Magee who has dedicated the last three decades of her life providing health care to the people of Deniliquin. Instrumental in organising a COVID clinic, chairing the local health advisory group, servicing a Koori maternity clinic on Saturdays and supporting the indigenous community, Dr Magee has always put others before herself. Advocating tirelessly to attract medical staff to the town she has even purchased three homes so that visiting medical staff have a place to stay when working in the town. Dr Magee's determination to plead for better health services has earned the respect of both state and federal politicians, along with her local community. At a time when she could be taking easy, Dr Magee focuses on making sure there are enough doctors to service the Deniliquin community. Her contribution is unparalleled, along with her determination, and I thank Dr Magee for everything she has done for Deniliquin.

**ANTONIO LIPAROTA - EUSTON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Mr Antonio Liparota of Balranald. Antonio was nominated for a Special Achievement in the Australia Day Awards with Balranald Shire Council because of his dedication in volunteering his time and services. This included his own employees to assist the local SES and fire brigade during the worst flood levels experienced since 1956. Antonio is a credit to his local community – he is prepared to do the jobs will not, for example focusing on helping the elderly and youth in Euston community. For many years Antonio has officiated junior sports such as football and basketball with a conscious effort to help people not as physically able as himself. He is a role model for others to aspire to, particularly the younger generation. Today I recognise and congratulate Antonio for his commitment to the Balranald and Euston communities.

**TERRY JONES - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I'd like to recognise Mr. Terry Jones for his contribution to rural journalism for an amazing 56 years. Terry's experience runs deep – he has worked for 12 NSW rural and regional newspapers. Starting as a paper and copy boy, he rose to the job editor of two NSW regional and country newspapers. As editor of The Area News in Griffith, Terry covered in detail the demise in 1977 of anti drugs campaigner Donald Mackay. Radio, television and print journalists visiting Griffith made Terry's office their first stop and he was also happy to help with photographs and story details. Journalist and author Bob Bottom, the Government Crime Advisor to Premier Neville Wran, took daily and weekly briefings from Terry following the murder of Mackay. Terry broke other national exclusives including institutional abuse in Bathurst and NSW police corruption (involving Operation Ironside). He also received the NSW Police plaque for his contribution to the arrest of serial murderer Michael Laurance. Dedicated, relentless and passionate about his community, Terry's career is deservedly worthy of recognition.

**PAMELA CLAPSHAW**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to acknowledge Kogarah resident, Ms Pamela Clapshaw, for her commitment and continuous volunteer work to the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre. Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre has been serving the needs of the local community for over 55 years. The organisation provides essential services and welfare programs such as aged care, family support and after-school care. The community centre has been a beacon of friendship and belonging for the people of St George. Ms Clapshaw has been associated with the centre for well over 20 years providing essential support in governance as Chair of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and supporting the continuation of the organisation's infrastructure. Her commitment, knowledge and capability in community lead organisations has ensured the growth of the centre over the past 50 years. Ms Clapshaw has worked as a Speech Pathologist in community health and private practice. She has also been involved in Pastoral Care at St George Hospital and is also a Disaster Chaplain. I want to thank Ms Clapshaw for her continuous dedication and commitment to helping those in need.

**SANDRA LEE GROVE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Kogarah Resident and St John Ambulance volunteer, Sandra Lee Grove, who was recently awarded The Order of St John. Mrs Grove was honoured at Government House in Sydney at the St John Ambulance Australian Investiture Ceremony on 3 May. Mrs Grove was awarded the medal in recognition for going above and beyond in the devotion of her time, effort, and expertise to helping others. Membership within The Order of St John is an honour sanctioned by the Governor-General on behalf of The Order's Sovereign Head, His Majesty King Charles III. Since her promotion to officer in 2007, Mrs Grove has contributed 1,730 hours of public first aid service to the community and more than 6,000 hours of training, administrative duties, and investigative work. Mrs Grove is renowned for her leadership skills, her empathetic and respectful nature and the establishment of a thriving cadet division.

**MR FRANK & MRS ALISON BRIGGS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr Frank and Mrs Alison Briggs for their outstanding commitment to the community. Both Frank & Alison are devoted parishioners of the Hurstville Salvation Army and are actively involved with assisting members of the Georges Rivers Community who are in need. Frank and Alison gather emergency food items, hampers, and toiletry kits for the homeless. During the Christmas period, they are instrumental in organising the food hampers, and assisting with sorting the toys ready for parents to select for their children. Frank and Alison also head up the distribution of Christmas Food Hampers during the weeks prior to Christmas. The Major of the Hurstville Salvation Arms, Sherrie Nicol acknowledges the wonderful work the Brigg's do saying, "they do all this willingly, energetically and with a smile, because they represent Jesus and want to bring relief and joy into other people's lives". I want

to thank Frank and Alison for their continuous dedication and commitment to supporting the people of the St George community.

### **EMBRACE FESTIVAL, TEMORA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Described as vibrant, colourful, and fun-filled, the inaugural Embrace Festival has been hailed as a huge success. The aim of this year's festival was to promote cross cultural awareness and understanding by allowing multicultural communities to come together to share their traditions through interactive experiences and workshops. Visitors engaged in a smoking ceremony, learned Korean calligraphy, and played traditional Indian music. This year's festival attracted over 400 people from Temora, Junee, Cootamundra and as far afield as Sydney. Locals and visitors joined in the celebrations which embraced and highlighted the community's growing diversity. Performances from the Chinese Prosperous Lions Dance Association, Yuluug Cultural Programs, Coota Bollywood All Stars, a trio from Melbourne Tabla School, and Dizzy Dilemma were among some of the many talented performers the crowd had the pleasure of enjoying. The Embrace Festival is just one of a suite of events and activities the committee is undertaking, through council, to highlight and celebrate the diverse community of the Temora Shire and pave the way for the future. My congratulations to all the organisers on a successful event.

### **50 YEARS OF NARRANDERA ROD RUN**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I extend a huge congratulations to the organisers, Steven and Kathleen Allrick and their team of helpers for this year's 50th Narrandera Rod Run, which was held over the Easter long weekend. Having started in 1973 with only 185 entrants the event has grown and come a long way since this time. This year's event saw 320 pre-entrants registered coming from all over the country. Visiting Narrandera on the Friday before the event, I saw firsthand the incredible cars that were to be on display over the course of the weekend. The town was buzzing with local businesses excited by the prospect of the many tourists visiting town. The volunteers, sponsors and council are to be commended and thanked for the tireless efforts and support they have given to the show over the past 50 years. This event is just one of many in Narrandera boosting tourism and the local economy.

### **COWRA MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I wish to congratulate Cowra Musical and Dramatic Society who this year are celebrating their 60th anniversary. Formed in 1963, Cowra M&D Society is a mainstay of the Cowra events calendar having staged over 150 productions since formation. This includes plays, concerts, musicals, and variety shows which have been held at almost every performance venue in Cowra Shire. It is just as impressive to learn that over this time, about 2,000 local people have been involved in their productions – from leading ladies through to makeup and lighting, costuming, and directing. There are all manner of ways in which locals have made a contribution to the success of the Society over six decades. According to President Lawrance Ryan, they are planning three major events this year including a cocktail party at Cowra Japanese Garden, a 60th anniversary concert show, to be staged at the Cowra Civic Centre and a three-performance season of the British TV comedy Keeping Up Appearances at Billimari Hall. As they celebrate 60 years, I recognise the efforts of members and supporters in ensuring performing arts continues to thrive and delight audiences now and well into the future.

### **INVICTUS GAMES REPRESENTATIVES**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate two Central Coast locals Craig Ball and Karl Woodward who have been selected to represent Australia in September at the 2023 Invictus Games in Düsseldorf. It is so great to hear that our very own Coasties will be participating in the Invictus Games in Germany. The Invictus Games provides a platform to inspire recovery, rehabilitation and recognition for our wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women and it is fantastic that we have two of our own in Team Australia. Craig Ball is founder of the Central Coast Men's Walk and Talk mental health awareness group, as well as a mental health and empowerment mentor and will be competing in archery, indoor rowing and sitting volleyball. Karl Woodward is a Terrigal local who joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 2007 and was deployed across the Middle East as well as South Sudan to support the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. He will be competing in indoor rowing, swimming and wheelchair rugby.

### **MR SHERWIN HENSBY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Today I would like to acknowledge and congratulate my constituent, Mr Sherwin Hensby of Yattalunga on his lifetime membership award from Marine Rescue NSW. Sherwin was recognised for his service recently by his Unit Commander, Ian Morrow and Deputy Unit Commander, Andrew McKellar. Before joining the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 2003, which later became Marine Rescue in 2010, Sherwin had volunteered for numerous organisations over the years, including the NSW Ambulance Service, the Rural Fire Service and Lifeline. Sherwin's fundraising efforts have been invaluable for Marine Rescue Central

Coast. He was instrumental in establishing the Twilight Races Barbecue at the Gosford sailing Club, co-ordinating the annual Putt Putt Regatta and Ettalong Festival. Mister Speaker, I wish to again congratulate and thank Sherwin on his length of service and volunteer contribution to Marine Rescue Central Coast.

### **ST FLORIAN DAY AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—St Florian's Day, also known as International Firefighters Day, celebrates all the dedicated firefighters who go above and beyond to protect our community. This year, 80 volunteers, staff and teams were honoured for their bravery and service. Phil Blackmore from the Central Coast was awarded the highest NSW RFS commendation, the Commissioner's Award for Valour for his commitment to human life and bravery in dangerous conditions following an acetylene cylinder explosion in Gwandalan on Father's Day 2020. Also recognised with a Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service were the responding crews from Gwandalan and Lake Munmorah, being Zac Williams, David Broad, Chris McInerney, Bill Gregoric, Robert Potter, Brendan Blackmore, Darren Schembri, Jim Holmes, Aaron Raggio, Ben Sorensen, Joel Fitzgibbon and June Ann Schembri from Gwandalan, as well as Zac Taylor, Belinda Gee, Geoff Alderdice and Madelyn Schmidt from Lake Munmorah. Leigh Pilkington (Group 8), Mitchell Gibbs (Berkeley Vale), Matthew Clark (Martinsville) and Dane Pickering (Wyee Point) were also recognised with a Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service as part of the Aviation Rescue Crew. Recognising their efforts in collectively performing more than 250 rescue missions in challenging conditions during flood events in 2022/2023. Congratulations to all recipients.

### **2023 PROSPECT LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR – AMY NGUYEN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to the 2023 Prospect Local Woman of the Year - Amy Nguyen. Amy is the Director/Co-Founder of the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation and a very deserving recipient of this award. Zen Tea Lounge Foundation is a not-for-profit grassroots charity located in Western Sydney which aims to support and empower women affected by domestic violence, abuse, and isolation. For over six years, Amy has led a team of individuals who organise community events and programs that assist women with employment skills, social skills, setting healthy boundaries, and creating safe and healthy relationships. The Zen Tea Lounge Foundation also coordinates programs that help women and their children who live with disability or neurodiversity, giving them a safe space to engage with others who understand the unique challenges faced by young people and families in similar situations. Another successful initiative is the opening of their Café in Smithfield, which provides a safe and comforting place for women affected by domestic violence or abuse. Thank you, Amy, for your dedication towards serving others. Your contribution to our community, particularly in Western Sydney where we require culturally adapted domestic violence and abuse services, is invaluable.

### **2023 SYDNEY GLOW FESTIVAL – SYDNEY ZOO**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Sydney Zoo for the success of the 2023 Sydney GLOW Festival – their annual lights festival held right in the heart of Western Sydney. This is a wonderful event that has been organised for our residents and families. This year, the GLOW festival is even bigger and brighter than last year – their inaugural festival. There are over 70 light up giant animal lanterns and installations, an Underwater Wonderland, a neon playground, a Ferris wheel, Glow Golf course. There is also an activities area and a food truck pavilion which showcases the amazing food vendors in Western Sydney. Visitors also have the opportunity to encounter hundreds of animals and reptiles, including amazing animals native to Australia. The GLOW Festival is a great opportunity to showcase Western Sydney, by drawing visitors from across NSW to participate in this event. It showcases the amazing, diverse and vibrant area that we live in, which I am privileged to represent. Thank you to Mr Jake Burgess, Managing Director, Sydney Zoo, Mr Peter Thiel, COO, Sydney Zoo, the Sydney Zoo Executive Team and GLOW organisers and staff for making this such a successful and enjoyable event in Western Sydney.

### **PEMULWUY COMMUNITY GROUP – 2023 EASTER EGG HUNT AND HAT PARADE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Pemulwuy Community Group for organising a fun and successful 2023 Easter Egg Hunt and Hat Parade on 19th March at Dirrabari Reserve, Pemulwuy. It was great to see nearly 100 members of our community, including residents, families, small businesses, and community leaders, come together to celebrate the Easter season. Children, their families, and loved ones had the opportunity to collect eggs with friends and showcase their amazing Easter themed hats. There was also a wide variety of local Western Sydney food trucks, local small business stalls with handmade crafts and jewellery, face painting, and kids' entertainment. In the Electorate of Prospect, we are lucky to be home to a significant number of young families and residents who love their community. This event was a wonderful display of the community spirit that our residents, families, and small businesses hold, especially when they come together. Thank you to members of the Pemulwuy Community Group and their President, Max Alves, who tirelessly volunteered their time planning the 2023 Easter Egg Hunt and Hat Parade, and for regularly ensuring that our community can participate in fun and amazing events such as this.

**ANN MARIA MARTIN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The work of Survivors R Us is very much valued and in demand. The Cardiff based charity aims to support anyone, regardless of their personal circumstances. As well as running an opportunity shop on site, the team provides free counselling services, maintains a discount food warehouse and supplies dignity bags and household furnishings for those who have lost everything. None of this would be possible without Ann Maria Martin. She is the founder of Survivors R Us and received a Highly Commended in the Volunteer of the Year category at the recent Lake Mac Awards. Ann Maria recognised that there was a gap in the charity supports offered to the victims of domestic violence, and those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage, and worked to fill it. She has been honoured for her work in creating an organisation that gives vulnerable people a safe place. Survivors R Us is a no-judgement zone and its dedicated volunteers are renowned for their kindness and drive to help others. It is now a much-loved and valued service with 50 daily volunteers. Survivors R Us has assisted 60,000 people since its opening in 2017. Congratulations to Ann Maria.

**OPERA HUNTER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It is very fortunate for the Charlestown electorate that Warners Bay Theatre hosts so many wonderful Opera Hunter productions, including their upcoming performance of La Boheme in June. Opera Hunter was recognised for its contribution to the arts at the Lake Mac Awards, where it took out the Lake Mac Community Event of the Year award. The not-for-profit organisation, which was formed in 1986, dedicates itself to presenting high quality performances to the community. Drawing on many local talents, it presents a wide-ranging repertoire, including classic operas such as Carmen and Don Giovanni, and more modern works such as Young Frankenstein. Opera Hunter staged four performances in 2022, and its performance of A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder received eight CONDA nominations, the City of Newcastle's Drama Awards. Thank you to Opera Hunter and its numerous volunteers including founding President Mercia Buck, Director Michael Blaxland who accepted the award on Opera Hunter's behalf, and supporters for continuing the hard work of enriching our region's cultural offerings. Well done to the Opera Hunter team!

**ALI KIMMORLEY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Ali Kimmorley's family was impacted by childhood cancer and her experience inspired her to make a difference. Her work for Camp Quality was recognised at the recent Lake Mac Awards, where she was named Lake Mac Volunteer of the Year. Ali has dedicated herself to Camp Quality and its work of supporting people going through childhood cancer, and their families. She is a volunteer, committee member and tireless fundraiser for the cause. Over recent years Ali has also challenged herself physically, completing three 1000km bike rides, the Kokoda Track, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and The Sandakan Death Marches in Borneo to raise funds for the cancer charity. Ali's fundraising drive and enthusiasm has contributed to Camp Quality's ability to fund a second Child Life therapist at John Hunter Hospital. Child Life therapists stay by a child's side in hospital every step of the way. They play a vital role in building coping skills, ensuring wellbeing, and offering distraction for children undergoing treatment. They are a huge support for the children and their families. Thank you, Ali, for all that you have done for your community.

**GARRY JOHN OWEN**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to pay tribute to Garry John Owen, the President of Chatswood RSL Club, who passed away recently. Garry was a true, long-time local leader. Since joining Chatswood RSL back in 1993, Garry loyally served the Club in various capacities as Board Member, Membership Director, Finance Director, Deputy President, and finally as President. A position he served in during 2006, and again from 2020 to the present. In addition to his leadership of Chatswood RSL, Garry held active roles in the Chatz Social Golf Club and has more recently been involved as Treasurer in the Chatswood RSL Social and Recreation Club. Garry was passionate about Chatswood RSL, its future and ensuring the Club was always a welcoming, hospitable place for all members to enjoy. I applaud Garry for his dedicated leadership of Chatswood RSL Club and thank him for the rich and enduring contribution he has made to the community life of Willoughby. I extend my sincere condolences to his family and community upon his passing. Vale a fine leader of Willoughby.

**CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Sunday 5 March, I had the pleasure of joining local volunteers to participate in the annual Clean Up Australia Day. My electorate of Willoughby is home to some of Sydney's most

spectacular bushland and our locals are passionate about protecting our natural environment and keeping it clean and pristine. In that spirit, we gathered at North Arm Reserve in Middle Cove to contribute to the annual clean up. I was proud of the part that my local community played in the national effort to clean up our parks, bushland, beaches and waterways. Founded by Ian Kiernan in 1989, Clean Up Australia Day is a fantastic community initiative. As a grassroots event attracting volunteers from all walks of life, it is a classic example of practical environmentalism in action. In towns, suburbs and cities across Australia, everyday people roll their sleeves up, doing their bit to make our land and water cleaner and less polluted. I encourage everyone to get involved and make Clean Up Australia go from strength to strength.

### **PINK ELEPHANTS SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The loss of one in four pregnancies to miscarriage is a tragedy, and one often suffered in silence with too many expectant parents walking alone. In February I was pleased to meet again with Samantha Payne of the Pink Elephants Support Network to discuss ways of better supporting those grieving the loss of their expectant child. The Pink Elephants provide the latest resources, information and support for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss. Using evidence, empathy and connection, Pink Elephants offers a single source of specialist support, whenever and wherever it's needed — for anyone who has directly experienced it, for family and friends, corporate partners or healthcare professionals seeking proven ways to help. This is a cause close to our hearts and to my own family. Founded by Samantha in 2016 shortly after experiencing a miscarriage of her own, Pink Elephants is a registered not-for-profit. I would encourage everyone to support the work and mission of the Pink Elephants Support Network.

### **BULLDOGS IFTAR**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—The annual Canterbury–Bankstown Bulldogs Iftar is held during the Holy Month of Ramadan. This year, on the 14th of April 2023, I was honoured to attend the event which was hosted by the Bulldogs Ambassador Hazem El Masri and his wife Arwa Abusamra. The Muslim community has for decades supported the Bulldogs on and off the field, and this is another opportunity to celebrate at a Ramadan Iftar which is held in the evening, at sunset, when Muslims break their fast. This year's event was held at the Belmore Sports Ground, with over 250 guests in attendance, and who better than the first Muslim Rugby League Player in NRL history to host it. Hazem Elmasri has led the club to continuously connect with the community and as a result, have new generations coming through joining the Junior League. The Friday evening Iftar event was unique because on the same Friday the Orthodox Easter was celebrated by our friends of the Christian faith. I want to thank the Canterbury Bulldogs Ambassador, Hazem and his wife Arwa, and the Canterbury Bulldogs Club for inviting me to attend this great day in celebrating Ramadan Iftar.

### **ST. EUPHEMIA 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 Euphemia Good Friday Holy Mass on Friday 14 April in my electorate of Bankstown. 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 commemorated the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, led by the Father Panagiotis Protosaltis. I was joined by my colleagues the Hon. Jason Clare MP and Mayor Bilal El-Hayek. The main highlight of this service is the spiritual gathering, in which hundreds of parishioners participated in a procession around the church. Students from St Euphemia College led the procession carrying a flowery arrangement, known as a bier, which is meant to represent Jesus' body or coffin. The procession signified a mourning of the death of Jesus but there was also hope in the eyes of the parishioners knowing that He will rise again. I thank St Euphemia Greek Orthodox Church of Bankstown and St Euphemia College for their ongoing support and for inviting me to join in their annual Good Friday Mass.

### **RAMADAN NIGHTS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Ramadan is the most sacred month of the year in Islamic culture. It is a time of reflection and spiritual renewal and a time of generosity, kindness, and charity. The month of Ramadan is a time for people of Muslim faith to fast during the daylight hours from dawn to sunset. At the end of each day's fast, Muslims gather for Iftar, the evening meal, to break their fast. Ramadan Nights Festival was founded 14 years ago by Canterbury Bankstown Councillor Khodr Saleh OAM. This event now draws more than a million visitors to the electorate of Bankstown. This spectacular month-long cultural event is a vibrant, global food bazaar which starts on the first night of Ramadan until the last day. The event is characterised by its rich cultures from Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh, Indian and includes many cuisines such as camel meat burgers and Jerusalemite Kanafa. The festival is attended by many Members of Parliament, members of



Diplomatic Missions and tourists from all over Australia. What a magnificent way to celebrate a historic event than in this country of Australia, where multiculturalism is practiced at its best which has the most multicultural societies on earth.

#### **ANNE KIEFER**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—As we have just celebrated Volunteer Week 2023 I think it highly appropriate to recognise the volunteering work of Ms Anne Kiefer of Tumut. Annie has been honoured for her many years of service to the community and especially to women with a Member of the Order of Australia [AM]. It was when Annie was living in the UK during her teenage years that she was drawn to volunteering. Annie's mother joined what was the Women's Institute and when she saw all the volunteering her mother did, she thought it was just great because it made her mother so happy. Annie joined CWA in 2004 eventually becoming state vice president in 2018, a position she held until stepping down in 2021. Annie has also given much time to other volunteering ventures over the years including helping maintain the Sydney Botanical Gardens and volunteering at the Art Gallery of NSW. Annie hopes that by receiving the award, she can encourage more people to give of their time to organisations like CWA. Congratulations Annie and thank you.

#### **LYN GIBSON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Generosity and compassion are vital for a community to prosper, and it's with an unreserved nature that Wagga Wagga local Lyn Gibson bestows both generosity and compassion to our community. Lyn has volunteered with Lilier Lodge in Wagga Wagga since 2018. Lilier Lodge is a home away from home for cancer patients who travel long distances for treatment. Her contributions to Lilier Lodge are many and varied, as she assumes whatever role is required, from helping in the office to taking a guest for a drive. Along with her husband, Jim, Lyn is volunteer coordinator of the Community Dinner Program, which involves different community groups hosting a dinner for Lilier Lodge guests. Lyn increased these dinners from monthly to weekly, and attends all dinners contributing to their ongoing success. These dinners provide more than just a home cooked meal, they lift everyone's spirits. Lyn's generosity knows no bounds, she also volunteers in her grandchildren's school canteen and is part of Our Lady Fatima Parish Council. This year I was delighted to announce Lyn as the 2023 Wagga Wagga Local Woman of the Year. I thank Lyn for heartfelt contributions to our community.

#### **GRAHAM "BEAR" AND NEROLIE FALCONER**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Year after year, Wagga Wagga locals Graham "Bear" and Nerolie Falconer make invaluable contributions as NSW Coordinators of the Black Dog Ride and organisers of the Wagga Wagga Black Dog One Dayer Ride. Black Dog Ride began in 2009 as a ride to raise awareness of depression, evolving into a national charity that has raised millions for mental health programs and fostered mental health awareness around the nation. Nerolie and Bear Falconer have ridden the Black Dog Ride every year since 2016. This year, Bear parted with his renowned beard to raise money for the Black Dog Ride and Ronald McDonald House. The "Bare the Bear" saw around 100 motorcyclists ride from Wagga Wagga to Junee before returning to Wagga for Bear to part with his beloved beard of 43 years. The event raised more than ten thousand dollars. It was very emotional for both Bear and Nerolie - and a significant sacrifice for them both in the name of the cause they love and for which they have given so much. I thank Bear and Nerolie for their ongoing efforts to foster mental health awareness.

#### **HELEN STUCKINGS – NOMINEE FOR LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Helen Stuckings has run her own hairdressing business in Maitland for 37 years, training over 50 apprentices, she loves seeing her apprentices grow and following their hairdressing journeys. This passion for the next generation of hairdressers has also seen her judge world skills at TAFE. Helen donates her time at Maitland United Church's MUNCH program which provided meal support for disadvantaged people in Maitland. Helen is also a talented singer bringing joy to the community singing at local service clubs including Senior Citizens, Probus Clubs, View Clubs, Lions Clubs, local nursing homes, over 55's villages and at World Vision Events. Through her business Helen generously sponsors local sporting clubs including soccer, netball, football and futsal, is a drop off point for the Hope in a Suitcase Foundation supporting foster children and has mentored local school students. Helen was recently nominated as Maitland Local Woman of the Year. It is testament to the high esteem in which she is held, and the recognition of her efforts to help others in the Maitland Community.

#### **DR JANECE MCDONALD – NOMINEE FOR MAITLAND LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Dr Janece McDonald works tirelessly for the community as President of the Maitland Regional Museum, National Trust member and organiser of Maitland Heritage Fest. Janece actively secures grants for museum events covering

Seniors Festivals, equipment, school holiday heritage and science workshops for primary age children, has curated a number of local exhibitions, written numerous books and is a strong advocate for people with disabilities, and ensuring that our public spaces are accessible. Janece is active in the regional science group "Pi in the Sci" which supports disadvantaged students to achieve their best in the region's schools senior science studies. Her love and knowledge of science has also enabled the Museum to run science workshops and has provided "Museum in a Box" STEM packages for regional schools. Importantly Janece is someone who encourages others to collaborate together to maximise community participation. She is a generous and kind leader who has made a significant contribution to the cultural life of Maitland. Janece was recently nominated for Maitland Local Woman of the Year as a testament to her many years of volunteering in our local community. Congratulations and thank you Janece!

#### **ALEXANDRA HAGGARTY – HIGHLY COMMENDED MAITLAND LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Alexander Haggarty has dedicated more than two decades to the Real Estate Industry in Maitland with 8 years as managing director and owner of First National Haggarty. Alexandra makes a point of encouraging and mentoring her staff to give back to the community, sponsoring organisations such as Carrie's Place, Maitland Rugby Club, Rams Hockey, Slow Food Market, Smith Family and Kids HelpLine. Alexandra has made a particular contribution to supporting victim survivors of Domestic Violence to source and maintain housing, partnering with Carries Place and assisting them with rehoming over 100 Maitland families leaving violence since 2010. She now works with DVNSW working with agents and DV service providers across NSW to replicate the program. Since 2019 Alexandra has sat on the Real Estate Institute NSW Property Management Chapter and chaired the domestic violence response subcommittee to provide best practice to agents, lobby government and provide expert information to stakeholders in the areas of DV, access to housing and homelessness. In March Alexandra was recognised for her efforts with a High Commendation in the Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards – congratulations and thank you for your hard work Alexandra!

#### **CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—Last week I was thrilled to welcome hundreds of new Australian citizens, many from Leppington, at a Citizenship Ceremony in Camden. It was also a pleasure to see the newly elected Mayor of Camden, Ashleigh Cagney, officiate her first Ceremony in the Mayoral chains. It is always a privilege to be a part of welcoming the newest citizens to the community and to witness a major milestone in their lives. Australia is a diverse and inclusive country and there is no exception in Leppington. Our community is built on respect, inclusion and equality. Becoming a citizen is more than just a set of rights and privileges, it provides a sense of belonging and identity. Congratulations to all new conferees. We are proud to have you and look forward to seeing all that you will achieve in the years to come. I am confident you will make immense contributions to our community.

#### **AUTISM ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On May 6, I attended the 2023 Foundation of Hope Charity Ball hosted by the Autism Advisory and Support Service. The Ball was a great success, raising over \$100,000. These funds will go to supporting the AASS in their essential work assisting individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families. The AASS is a not-for-profit charity established in 2007 and it was created to empower children and adults with autism and their families through knowledge and support, but most importantly, to positively impact and influence their social and emotional development. The work done by the AASS is incredibly valuable for many in our community. Yet AASS receives no recurrent Government funding, leaving gaps in the funding for essential services. I want to congratulate the AASS team and the founder and CEO, Grace Fava OAM, for their invaluable work they do for our community. I also want to thank all the donors, guests and volunteers for ensuring the event was a major success. I look forward to seeing the huge impact these funds will make Leppington.

#### **RAVENSWOOD AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ART PRIZE 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 12 May, I was proud to attend the Opening Night of the Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize in Gordon. Launched in 2017, this art prize is an initiative led by Ravenswood School for Girls to inspire, promote, and advance opportunities for emerging established female artists in Australia, including Indigenous artists. They received a record 2,042 artworks, with 119 selected for exhibition. Despite up to 70% of art school graduates being women, less than half of gallery exhibitions and prizes across Australia feature artwork by women. It is events like these that help to address the gender imbalance of artwork by women artists, and this event continues to be the highest value art prize for women artists. I would like to acknowledge Ravenswood Principal Anne Johnstone, Chair of the Foundation John McLean, Patron Jennifer

Turpin, and the judges for their fantastic efforts in organising this event. I would also like to recognise all the women who participated in this event and congratulate the prize winners in their respective categories. I look forward to attending this wonderful event in the future and pay tribute to Ravenswood School for Girls for pursuing this worthwhile initiative.

#### **TAIWANESE PINEAPPLE APPRECIATION TASTING EVENT**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was pleased to attend a Taiwanese Pineapple Appreciation and Tasting event on Saturday 6 May in Chatswood. This event showcased an impressive range of fresh and ripe pineapples. This included the famous golden diamond pineapple, the winter honey pineapple, the milky pineapple, the sugar-apple pineapple, the smooth cayenne pineapple, and the perfume pineapple. What was amazing about this event was the various ways that this sweet and delicious fruit can be prepared into various culinary forms. Pineapples can be enjoyed fresh and raw, and incorporated into fried rice, grilled and added to a smoky flavour to cooked meats, and frozen into a sorbet to enjoy on a hot summer's day. Pineapples can also be enjoyed when used as a topping on pizza. Taiwanese pineapples are an example of the benefits of free trade, in conjunction with our necessary biosecurity laws. Over 400 people of the Davidson electorate identify as Taiwanese and I am grateful to have attended this event. I acknowledge constituent Jonathan Liu for helping organising this event and I look forward to enjoying many more pineapples in the future.

#### **MOTHER'S DAY LADY GAME COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN CAKE STALL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was delighted to attend the Mother's Day Cake Stall at West Lindfield Shops on Saturday 13 May. The stall was a fundraising initiative by Lady Game Community Kindergarten and has been held annually for more than 60 years. I can report that the stall was adorned with an array of exquisite cakes, and I am pleased to say that the cakes I took home were very much enjoyed by all. I would like to acknowledge each of the bakers who put their effort into creating these delectable treats. What was especially heartfelt about this stall was the bustling of family, friends, and members of the community who stopped by to purchase a cake for the wonderful mothers in their lives. I congratulate Lady Game Community Kindergarten for organising such a special event. The wonderful cake stall truly embodied the spirit of Mother's Day. I look forward to purchasing many more delicious cakes in the future.

#### **ORANGE CITY RUGBY UNION CLUB**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise Orange City Rugby Union Club, the Lions. Orange City Rugby Club recently marked a momentous milestone as they celebrated their 50th anniversary. This remarkable achievement is not only a testament to the club's enduring spirit and dedication but also highlights the profound impact it has had on the Orange community. For half a century, the Club has been a unifying force, fostering camaraderie, and instilling a sense of pride among its members. The club has become a cherished institution, woven into the fabric of the community. Its influence extends far beyond the rugby field. Through the years, the Lions has provided a platform for personal growth, promoting physical fitness, teamwork and discipline. It has nurtured talent and produced athletes who have brought glory to the community. Beyond sports, the club has actively engaged in community initiatives, supporting local charities, hosting events, and fostering a strong sense of belonging. It has become a hub for social interaction, creating lasting friendships and connections that span generations. Orange City Rugby Club stands as a testament to the power of sports, unity, and the unwavering spirit of a remarkable club. I congratulate Orange City Rugby Union Club.

#### **PRUNUS LODGE MOLONG**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Prunus Lodge Molong on 30 years of providing care and dignity to aged care residents of the community. Prunus Lodge opened their doors to locals on 1st May 1993 as Molong's first Residential Aged Care facility. Prunus Lodge is a 28-bed facility operated by the United Protestant Association of NSW, offering 24/7 care and incorporates Rose Cottage, a dementia-specific unit offering highly specialised care in a secure and familiar haven. During its lifetime, Prunus Lodge has been a safe home to senior citizens, provided employment for hundreds of locals and has supported a variety of local businesses. Community support for this beloved facility has been shown over the years with extraordinary sums in vital fundraising raised over the years and community attendance at events. Prunus Lodge has been fundamental to the lives it has touched. They have ensured residents have stayed socially connected with the community thus promoting emotional wellness, building and fostering of friendships, new skills and benefits to physical health. I congratulate Prunus Lodge on 30 years of care, and I wish them a long and successful future.

#### **MIDDLE HARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOL RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to acknowledge Middle Harbour Public School for creating their Reconciliation Action Plan. Middle Harbour Public has implemented a vision to create a culture of respect, understanding and meaningful action to develop stronger relationships between First Nations peoples

and the community. Classroom settings will provide more opportunities to celebrate cultural identities and engaging learning activities. Middle Harbour Public's Reconciliation Action Plan supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and is dedicated to paving the way for future change makers. Around the school the action plan will improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians, increasing knowledge, and respect of the histories and cultures, all staff will be ensured to comply with these policies in their daily practice. Within the wider community where appropriate, significant events will commence with a Welcome of Country, by incorporating this we recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as First Australians and custodians of their land. I congratulate Middle Harbour public school on its commitment to reflecting on the progress made in the growth of knowledge and pride of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island histories, culture, and contributions within the school community.

### **MARY'S HOUSE MOTHER'S DAY FUNDRAISER 2023**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to congratulate Mary's House Services on their recent Mother's Day fundraiser that saw them raise over \$12,245. Mary's House Services operates Mary's House Refuge which is a community funded refuge that accepts women and their children escaping domestic violence. They also run the Daisy Centre which is a non-residential domestic violence service that aims to reach as many women as possible and provide victim-survivors with the tools of empowerment to rebuild their lives. The significance of Mary's House and the work they undertake is the commitment of saying 'No' to domestic violence, protecting, reducing risk and saving lives. For mother's already doing it tough, Mother's Day can be particularly tough living lives affected by trauma of domestic violence. All funds raised are put towards women and their children part of Mary's house accessing the essential services. Mary's House ensures a safe environment, immediate support, food, shelter, clothing and developing tailored plan helping women move forward in line with their own needs and goals. I congratulate Mary's House on their fundraising efforts, all in aid to keep local women safe from domestic and family violence.

### **VALE CAMERON GUTHRIE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the recent passing of local Mosman resident Cameron Guthrie. Cameron sadly passed away in April, just aged 53. His death was a shock to all, especially members of Mosman Cricket Club, who have been greatly affected by his passing. Cameron was known as a legendary local player, making his first debut in 1991/92 as Cap number 354. Cameron started in the Mosman Cricket Club in the under 10s through to the over 40s master team. He played in two 2nd grade Premiership teams scoring a match winning 120 against Bankstown in the 2004 Grand Final. In 2009 Cameron was awarded the 45th Life Member, joining his father Bob as the club's only father and son life member. Tributes have flowed from the Mosman Cricket Club who will never forget Cameron's on and off-field banter. I extend my deepest sympathies to Cameron's family, friends and the local Mosman Cricket Club members. Vale.

### **NASHWA KARAFOTIAS**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to congratulate Ms Nashwa Karafotias on being awarded a National Excellence in Teaching Apple Award for her hard work and dedication leading the students of St Agnes Catholic High School towards a positive future. Since joining the school in 2019, Ms Karafotias has provided willing students with the opportunity to speak with local industry leaders to undertake traineeships and apprenticeships as well as received scholarships and participate in work experience. Ms Karafotias is one of only four teachers in NSW to receive this award and I wish to congratulate her on this achievement, which is a testament to her dedication.

### **DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE MICHAEL BARR**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—One of the highlights on the Chifley Police calendar is the annual awards ceremony. It was held earlier this month and the most significant recognition within the local police district is the Paul Quinn Memorial Award. Paul was fatally wounded in the line of duty at Perthville in 1986.

This year Detective Senior Constable Michael Barr was chosen as the recipient for his devotion to honouring the memory of colleague Kelly Foster. Kelly, who was stationed at Lithgow at the time, was tragically drowned trying to save the life of a 24-year-old international student in the Blue Mountains in 2021. Detective Senior Constable Barr was acknowledged for not only of his support of Senior Constable Foster's family, but also his efforts in honouring her memory. He was a driving force in establishing the Kelly Foster Memorial Garden outside the Lithgow Police Station. I know that Detective Senior Constable Barr continues to maintain a close relationship with Kelly's family and for his efforts in going above and beyond the call of duty I can't think of anyone more deserving to be awarded the Paul Quinn Memorial Award.

**GLEN STEWART**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Glen Stewart is a local Oberon Show legend. Glen has been a driving force in ensuring the Oberon Show continues and has grown over the past few years. He brings his business management and development background, strong community commitment and humility to several voluntary roles in the local community. For all volunteers Show Day requires a huge commitment. Glen's experience ensuring that all the threads are pulled together is as invaluable as his leadership, support and encouragement of all Committee members, and his endless list of contacts to ensuring a great community event for all. Glen contributes to every aspect of the Show and is a selfless quiet achiever who does not seek recognition for his services. Oberon Show Society believe Glen Stewart is the best example of a local Show legend you could find. Well done and thanks Glen!

**WARWICK LARNACH**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Warwick Larnach was a highly involved member of the Bathurst and Rockley communities. His life revolved around agriculture, Mr Larnach's farm was in his happy place. After teaching himself the art of mulesing sheep, Mr Larnach became one of the first accredited mulesing and OJD (ovine johnes disease) vaccinators in the Bathurst area. He worked on a lot of properties in the region throughout his life and was also part of the Bowyer and Livermore team at the Bathurst Sale Yards. Mr Larnach was a dedicated volunteer for the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural & Pastoral Association (Bathurst AH&P) and held the roles of wool classing and fleece judging at the Bathurst Show. He was a life member of the Rockley Rodeo Committee which he was president of, the Rockley Rural Fire Brigade - after joining at 16 years old and working up to become the senior deputy captain, and the Bathurst Merino Association which he was the longest serving president of. All of these positions Mr Larnach held until the day he died, after a two-year battle with cancer, on March 12, 2023. He will be truly missed in our community.

**VALE – ARTHUR RICHARD GATES**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the many achievements of Mr Arthur Gates, long time contributor and innovator of the sheep industry, who passed away recently aged 88 and whose family shared many memories of his outstanding contribution to Australian agriculture at a service held at the Armidale Services Club in March. Mr Gates was an early adopter of the NSW Meat Sheep Testing Service and a force behind the New England Performance Breeders. He actively promoted the first use of ultrasound to measure fat and muscle in live sheep and encouraged other breeders to participate in the testing service. He was also active in on-farm trials with NSW DPI, specifically around genetics and carcass development. I commend Mr Gates the many leadership roles he undertook during his involvement in the sheep and meat industries including Chair of NSW Farmers Sheep Meat Committee, board member of Sheepmeats Council Australia and Chair of the NSW Lamb Strategy Team. In 1990 he received the NSW Agriculture Award for his outstanding service to Agriculture. A highly regarded innovator and industry leader, Mr Gates is survived by his loving wife Joan and children Susan, Rick, and Peter.

**DAVID YOUNG – BINGARA RSL SUB BRANCH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Mr David Young of Bingara for his Certificate of Achievement presented by the Bingara RSL Sub Branch. At the same presentation, Mr Young was also awarded a special RSL NSW Quilt, a tradition which is saved for extraordinary service. Mr Young has served as the Bingara RSL Sub Branch President since 2005 and he has been instrumental in organising both ANZAC commemorations and Remembrance Days. I congratulate David on receiving the Certificate of Achievement and the RSL NSW Quilt, honours which signify the high regard that both the members of Bingara RSL Sub Branch and the NSW RSL hold his record of duty and himself as a man of integrity. I commend David for this particular achievement, but it would be remiss not to mention his many other contributions to the Bingara community as President of the Bingara Show Society and as a Board Member of Touriandi Lodge Aged Care. His past affiliations are many and David is a great example of community service.

**SMITH'S BRISTOL FARMINGSMITH'S BRISTOL FARMING**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—The Northern region winners were announced in Dubbo last month finishing with a 7.0t/ha and score of 209. The Suncorp Bank Championship Dryland Field Wheat Competition, run by AgShows NSW is judged across four regions ahead of the state final. The judging process meant that sponsors needed to go to each farm in each region individually to inspect the wheat. Given the heavy rainfall in 2022 which impacted crops sown later in the season, it presented such hurdles for sponsors throughout the process. Many two-day trips turned into three with numerous roads cut off, huge detours and a full week of judging being pushed back as towns were inundated with water. I congratulate Dave and Bronwyn on being awarded regional champion in a division which consisted of 28 towns and dealing with such challenging

weather. I thank the sponsors who without, this competition would not go ahead, Lowes Petroleum, The Land Newspaper, Dual Chelate and Suncorp who have sponsored the annual wheat competition for more than 10 years.

#### **HELEN BENNETT**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise Mrs Helen Bennett of Tinonee who was recently awarded 2023 Local Woman of the Year for the Myall Lakes. Helen is a long-time member of the Town Head canteen ladies group, serving local farmers and their wives since its conception some 40 years ago. Helen is a foundation member of the Taree Branch of Trefoil Guild and received a 40 year medal from Girl Guides Australia for her support and dedication. Helen has been involved with the Tinonee Memorial School of Arts Hall and in 2017 was appointed patron after 25 years service. Thank you Helen for your service to the community and congratulations on this well deserved accolade.

#### **CLUB TAREE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise and congratulate the CEO and staff of Club Taree. At the recent annual ClubsNSW Clubs and Community Awards, Club Taree received a highly commended award in the Mental and Social Well – Being category. The award recognises the Club Taree Mental Health Challenge, an industry leading initiative which focuses on the connection and strength of team, opening the conversation about mental health, the encouragement of improved mental well-being and the financial support of mental health and mental well-being resources. I congratulate Paul Allen and all staff at Club Taree on this wonderful accolade. Club Taree has been a mainstay of these awards for the past 10 years and they should be proud of their commitment to making a positive difference to our community.

#### **GREAT LAKES COLLEGE TENNIS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise the Great Lakes College Tennis Teams that recently competed in the Hunter Region Finals of the Stan Jones and Floris Conway Cups. The girls team consisting of Ruby, Evie, Kirra and Stevie defeated Hunter Sports Hugh 8 set to 0 in the semi finals and then defeated Swansea in the Final 5 sets to 3. The girls will now progress to play the best schools from all other regions. An outstanding achievement! The boys team comprising of Finn, Maxim, Dylan and Camden finished third, going down to Warners Bay in the Semi-finals 5 sets to 3 and then defeated Hunter Sports High in the 3rd/4th playoff 5 sets to 1. All players should be extremely proud of their efforts and achievements at this event.

#### **CROOKWELL MENS SHED**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Crookwell Mens Shed, located at 7 Park Street, Crookwell and open on Monday and Wednesday from 9am and 3pm. The Crookwell Men's Shed is an important and active resource entrenched in the Crookwell community built on old-fashioned mateship. With the members of Crookwell's Men's Shed coming from all walks of life they are united in their goals of being productive, contributing to the community, connecting with friends, and maintaining an active body and mind. The Crookwell Men's shed gives locals from far and wide the opportunity to learn new skills or showcase their honed talents – for the benefit of others. I was delighted to recently visit the Crookwell Men's shed to chat with the Men and honorary Women members of the shed to see their projects and see their crafts. There was much going on, in progress, from concepts to finished projects from lovingly restored furniture to a rocking horse and leather art classes. I applaud the Crookwell Men's Shed and its members for their work, support and contribution to the community.

#### **GROW SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise GROW Southern Highlands, once the Moss Vale Commerce and Progress Association, where they have been supporting businesses across the Southern Highlands since 1996 and is today continuing to help the region thrive and grow. Focused on fostering, supporting and collaborating across business including; hospitality and tourism, producers and growers, professional services and the creators involved in Highland's vibrant arts and culture scene. GROW is a part of the national business chamber movement, and its members reap the benefits of the advocacy, investment, connection, collaboration and promotion that is behind GROW Southern Highlands.

The focus of GROW is the economy unique to the rural region, establishing the Food Wine Clusters which cover local villages, showcasing growers and producers with unique events, and developing the Southern Highlands Hospitality Hub and Battle of the Buskers events. From delivering change to improving the business conditions in which their members operate, securing funding for projects, and developing of critical relationships and organisations, GROW has its sights set high – and they are delivering. I comment GROW, the board and their members for the active and innovative programs and wish them the best in the future.

### HARBISON CARE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Harbison Care. Harbison is a community-owned organisation providing aged care accommodation and services in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales for over 60 years. Harbison is a not-for-profit organisation, reinvesting their revenues in the development of better care services. Last year, they began of 'Harbison Playgroup', the latest development in their Intergenerational Care Program. There are many wonderful activities for the residents to participate in with a group of local children aged between 0-5 years old including art, singing and story time. The playgroup provides opportunity for residents and children to create meaningful connections and rewarding relationships. In celebration of Global Intergenerational Week, I visited Harbison in Moss Vale. I took my opportunity to join in with the Intergenerational playgroup - because who could pass up a game of parachute? The playgroup is a chance for residents and children to form new friendships, create beautiful memories and bring joy to each other's lives. I would like to congratulate Harbison on this amazing initiative and in particular congratulate David Cochran, CEO, Zac Hulm, Partnership Manager and Vanessa Tasker, who has been instrumental in getting this project off the ground.

### KITE FLYING FESTIVAL

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—It was a celebration of all things Indian at the annual Kite Flying Festival, held earlier this year at the Castle Hill Showground. The Indian Cultural Association puts together this event every year, which marks the arrival of Spring, and is an important day on the Indian calendar. The showground turns into an ecstasy of colour, with more than ten thousand people attending, many in traditional dress, to fly their kites, eat their wonderful food which was aplenty, and celebrate their culture. The Indian diaspora has made a great impact on Sydney, particularly in the North West, and festivals like this are an important way of recognising that, whilst also giving the Indian community a taste of home, living so far away. My thanks in particular goes out to Kaushal Parikh and Jay Trivedi for their hard work in organising the event, and my thanks to the many people who turned out to celebrate their new and old communities.

### RIDING FOR THE DISABLED – TALL TIMBERS

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the Riding for the Disabled – Tall Timbers annual volunteer appreciation day. This is a charity that does such great work in my area for disabled people and uses equine therapy to assist them with their motor skills, awareness and emotion. The horses are just wonderful, and are trained excellently by the staff, who turn them into very patient, gentle and caring animals. The organisation relies heavily on volunteers due to the obvious upkeep needed in caring for horses, and local rotary and lions clubs always step up to the mark. I remember some of the earliest days of the organisation, dating right back to when it was based in Kellyville Ridge – I was humbled to receive a certificate of recognition acknowledging those 20 years. My thanks goes out to all the tireless staff of Riding for the Disabled, many of whom have worked there for decades – including Life Members Kerry Souter, Karen O'Neil and Nicole King.

### SAM DONNI

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to thank Police Senior Constable Sam Donni for his 28 years of service to the community. Sam has been a vital help for vulnerable people in the Kings Cross Police Area Command as Crime Prevention Officer since he transferred in 2015 after terms as youth liaison officer in other commands. His work has been recognised in awards like the Betty Makin Youth Award and Kings Cross Rotary Police Officer of the Year. Police often see people with complex needs who have not been able to get the help they need. At Kings Cross, Sam has been the go-to officer to find ways around barriers and harness health and welfare support. Through early intervention, Sam has helped young people into education and employment and has been a key support for seniors' welfare in the community. My office has relied on Sam's commitment to helping vulnerable people and going way beyond the call of duty in his own time and using his own resources to help people. I thank Sam for his compassion, practical help and always being ready to make a positive difference.

### CRAIG PARKINSON

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to thank Police Leading Senior Constable Craig Parkinson for 16 years of service to the Surry Hills community as Crime Prevention Officer who has now retired. My office has worked with Craig for many years, relying on his ability to look at ways to prevent crime with practical measures and linking people with mental health and alcohol and drug services to get support. He's been a vital help for vulnerable people with complex needs for whom arrests, fines and prison don't help. Craig was the key Surry Hills contact for addressing problems like public injecting, graffiti, mail theft, neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour – all concerns that impact on safety and amenity but require

creative responses that involve a range of health and welfare organisations. Craig facilitated the Community Safety Precinct Committee for many years, bringing together local stakeholders to identify safety concerns, plan responses and take coordinated action. He patiently built effective working relationships across businesses, residents, government and service providers. I thank Craig for his many years' service to the Surry Hills community which helped make it a great place to live, work and visit.

#### **JACKSON O'MARA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise today to acknowledge and commend the achievements of young Glenmore Park resident, Jackson O'Mara. I have spoken about Jackson in this chamber before. He is an eager, passionate and enthusiastic young man who strives to do his very best at every task he sets his mind to. At the age of 12, Jackson recently participated in the woodchopping event at the prestigious Royal Easter Show. It is noteworthy that he competed in the Junior Development Program, an exclusive competition open only to individuals nominated by the New South Wales Axemen's Association. Jackson's dedication and talent in this field deserve recognition and his accomplishments serve as an inspiration to other aspiring woodchoppers. I applaud Jackson O'Mara for his remarkable achievements and wish him continued success in his future endeavours.

#### **JOANNE AND ANDREW PORTELA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise today to extend my congratulations to the franchisees of a new Coffee Club location in Glenmore Park, Joanne and Andrew Portela. The opening of a business takes courage and dedication, Joanne and Andrew have demonstrated both. Their hard work, vision and commitment to providing a welcoming environment, quality coffee and food to their customers are truly commendable. The opening of this business also highlights that the electorate of Badgerys Creek is one of the best places in NSW to start a business, live, work and raise a family. The Portela's investment in our community is a testament to the potential of our region, and it is exciting to see the growth and prosperity that this new business will bring. On behalf of the community, I would like to congratulate Joanne and Andrew on the opening of The Coffee Club in Glenmore Park and wish them every success in their new venture. Their presence will undoubtedly contribute to the richness and diversity of our community and I look forward to seeing the positive impact of their business on our local economy and beyond.

#### **TODD ALEXANDER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Congratulations to Todd Alexander on the release of his new book, "Over The Hill & Up The Wall." Through his dry wit and personal experiences, Todd has created a funny and relatable collection of anecdotes that encourages readers to laugh at themselves and their loved ones. As a long-time resident of Colyton and St Clair, Todd and his family hope that their stories will resonate with fellow locals. Well done Todd and although you have promised not to write a sequel, I will be waiting with bated breath for what you do next. The book is currently available for purchase and an audiobook version released in April.

#### **BELMONT COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I acknowledge Belmont Country Women's Association (CWA) on hosting a beautiful opening ceremony earlier this year for their commemorative seat. The seat recognises 100 years of the CWA. The CWA of NSW was first formed on 20th April 1922, with a goal to make a positive difference in the lives of women and children in country areas. The CWA has become a force to be reckoned with when it comes to addressing social issues. Branches also ensure women right across the country have a space to meet and establish friendships and life skills. The Belmont Branch is a prime example of this, with each of the members collaborating to deliver for the community. This includes their monthly markets, where they raise funds to make donations to local charities. The members love the community, which was reflected through their decision to dedicate a seat for all to use. It was also lovely for them to invite Branch Patron Jennie Brice to do the honours of cutting the seat ribbon. Congratulations to the Belmont Branch on recognising CWA's milestone in such a thoughtful way.

#### **MITCH FORD**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge local legend Mitch Ford, who sadly passed away at the end of last year. Mitch was a proud Life Member of Catherine Hill Bay Surf Life Saving Club. He also held the positions of Director of Lifesaving and Trainer at the club and completed 23 years of patrolling service. All year round, you would find Mitch supporting the club. Whether it be filing in on a patrol, doing water safety at Nippers on a Sunday, or running board and IRB training, Mitch was there. Mitch truly was a top bloke. No matter who you were to ask from the club and local community, they would tell you that Mitch was a great person who impacted the lives he touched in a positive way. He was a friend, a mentor and an absolute legend that I know is missed dearly. Vale Mitch Ford.



### NEWCASTLE AND LAKE MACQUARIE ART SOCIETY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I acknowledge Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Art Society (NALMAS) on celebrating its 90th birthday earlier this year. I was a great privilege to attend the Society's luncheon and art exhibition at Belmont Golf and Bowls Club to celebrate this remarkable milestone. What was originally known as Newcastle Art Society was established in 1933, to encourage and foster art within the Newcastle and Hunter region. The group started out with just 22 members, but has grown over the years to more than 90 members. The increased membership shows the interest in local art and let me assure you the members are extremely talented. I had the pleasure of presenting the winner of the exhibition, Lance Marsh with his award. Over the years, the society have jumped at every opportunity to display and sell members' art, holding stalls at Charlestown Square, Belmont Citi Centre, and Hunter Wetlands Centre, just to name a few. The society also contributes to the local community, through its involvement with the Woodlands Retirement Village at Wallsend and Rathmines exhibition. Congratulations to NALMAS on 90 years. I look forward to seeing more of the Society's wonderful displays in the area.

### KIAMA GARDEN CLUB SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Kiama Garden Club on the launch of this year's Spring Garden Competition. Gathered gardeners heard from Luke Maitland from Native Grace Nursery in Robertson and Denise Limbrick, senior horticulturist at Burnetts On Barney. Vivienne Marris was an excellent host and kept the afternoon running smoothly. Entrants will compete in up to eight categories, tending their gardens over the winter and spring months before the competition will be judged in October. Since its launch in 1971, Kiama Garden Club has aimed to foster friendship through gardening. Gardens promote physical and mental health in a diverse group of people, with our local competition providing a much-needed goal for many to work towards which brings enjoyment to gardeners and the all who enjoy the results of hard work and green thumb skill. My thanks to the garden club for providing a wonderful morning tea on the morning of the launch. My dog Oscar enjoyed attending so much so that he took a cheeky bite out of the celebratory cake when no one was looking. Thank you to Club Members that gave him his own special slice!

### RED SHIELD APPEAL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of NSW acknowledges the tremendous effort of those involved in the Red Shield Appeal across our community. Specifically, I want to shed light on the Kiama and Jamberoo Red Shield Appeal which kicked off last weekend, fundraising to help those in need through community collection, door knocking and online fundraising. Zone director Tracey Wicks is in her second year of managing the appeal after taking over from long-time director Graeme Packer, who retired in 2021 after 23 years of organising the local event. As a 24-year Salvation Army veteran, Ms Wicks has seen firsthand how the organisation delivers vital community programs and social services including emergency financial assistance, refuge for women and children in crisis, shelters for those facing homelessness, housing, youth drop-in centres and support programs, emergency and disaster relief, drug and alcohol addiction recovery and rehabilitation support, employment training programs, as well as rural and prison chaplains. Fundraising will continue with donations being collected at local markets across Kiama and Jamberoo. To each and every hard working and dedicated Red Shield Appeal Volunteer, thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

### NORTHERN SHOALHAVEN MEALS ON WHEELS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges North Shoalhaven Meals on Wheels who were celebrated at an appreciation lunch in Nowra last week. I want to commend the work of Volunteer Coordinator Mikayla Barnes, who is keen to welcome more volunteers to Meals on Wheels. I acknowledge the efforts of Directors Susan O'Brien, Charlie Mula, Diane Slye, Marilyn Kellett OAM and Luke Sikora in keeping this essential service running. Our local Shoalhaven community is deeply appreciative of the time and effort Meals on Wheels volunteers give up to provide a meal to those who need that extra culinary support and assistance. General Manager Angela Pendlebury said the service has recently seen a huge increase in local demand, prompting a call for volunteers with skills in cooking, driving, admin and logistics. North Shoalhaven Meals on Wheels is supported by 250 volunteers providing meals seven days a week to over 200 clients across the Shoalhaven. Over the years, I have enjoyed working with Northern Shoalhaven Meals on Wheels to secure grant funding for projects that support their fantastic local service. Congratulations and thank you to each of the very special volunteers.

### ALF JOHNSTON & GEORGE TEMPLEMAN – MELVIN JONES FELLOWS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to acknowledge Alf Johnston and George Templeman from the Lions Clubs of Laurieton for recently being honoured with a Melvin Jones Fellow for their longstanding contribution to our community. A presentation was held by Laurieton Lions Club on 29th April to

recognise Alf Johnston and George Templeman for their volunteer service over many years with Lions International and before that Apex. Both men amplify the mission of Lions "We Serve" through the various fundraising activities and volunteer work undertaken to strengthen our communities. A Melvin Jones Fellowship is the highest form of recognition bestowed on an individual which embodies humanitarian ideas consistent with the nature and purpose of Lionism. The Laurieton Lions Club are an invaluable service organisation in the Camden Haven. In the past they have coordinated Australia Day events and hosted the Camden Haven Cup. The local SES and Marine Rescue have largely benefited from Lions through the purchase of operational equipment and supplies. Laurieton Lions have also purchased books for school prizes and supporting Little Athletics with expenses. Role models in our community, I congratulate Alf and George on this wonderful achievement through service to others.

### **RIDE THE WAVE FESTIVAL 2023**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the annual Ride the Wave Festival in my electorate which raises valuable funds for the Make a Difference [M.A.D] charity. Held from 28th to 30th April on Town Beach, the three-day music, surf and skate festival attracts literally hundreds of locals and tourists to the town each year and is proudly sponsored by the NSW Government's Regional Events Acceleration Fund. Make a Difference director Erin Denham has now championed the event into its third year embracing an inclusion and cultural heritage theme on the backdrop of the beautiful Hastings River. A new inclusion this year featured a silent disco and the trial of a vest allowing people with a hearing impairment to feel vibrations in harmony with the music. Importantly, the Ride the Wave Festival donates profits each year to the M.A.D charity which offers emergency assistance for people in times of need through the connection with social services and the provision of food through a mobile van. The incredible volunteers of M.A.D also target those impacted by domestic violence through crisis support. I congratulate Erin and her entire team in coordinating another successful Ride the Wave Festival in Port Macquarie.

### **ASHLEY GRUMMIT - AUSTRALIAN MASTERS HOCKEY TEAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise the praiseworthy achievements of local sportsman, Ashley Grummit who is part of the over 55's Australian Masters Hockey team. This talented team has just won the Trans Tasman Masters over 55's Challenge in Christchurch, New Zealand with a 4-3 goal win. Ashley's skilful play contributed to the win with 'an individual goal and a goal assist in a tight back and forth tussle.' Ashley is very involved in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Hockey Association, having played for many years, and coaching junior teams and has been closely involved with the Committee and decision making for the Club. He has dedicated a great deal of time to nurturing young, upcoming players and helping to develop their skills and love of the sport. The representative teams were selected at the recent Hockey Australia Men's Masters Championships on the Gold Coast. Excited competitors departed for Christchurch on 29th April and commenced competition on the 2nd May and to return home victorious was the icing on the cake. I congratulate Ashley on his remarkable prowess, fitness, skill and sporting achievements and hope that he continues to swing a hockey stick for some time to come.

### **GARY DRUMMOND**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I'd like to extend my sympathies to the family and friends of Gary Stephen Drummond, a much-loved member of the Lake Macquarie community and treasured life member of Macquarie Scorpions Rugby League Club. Gary was a long-term Scorpions player who was on the winning side when the club's reserve grade defeated Western Suburbs at the Number 1 Sports Ground in 1974. Even after hanging up his boots, Gary continued to work with the club as a trainer and manager for many years. He also played with the Dora Creek and West Wallsend clubs before retirement. Gary also worked tirelessly as a wellbeing officer with the Men of League Foundation, showing compassion and support to past players and their families who were doing it tough. Gary was the dearly loved husband of the late Lynne Drummond, and the loving father and father-in law of Stephen and Gina, Louise, Dianne and Brian. He was the brother and brother-in-law of Trevor and Lorraine and partner of Susie, as well as a grandfather and great-grandfather. I send my condolences to Gary's family, friends and all at Macquarie Scorpions. Vale Gary Drummond.

### **HAROLD VIVIAN FISH**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I'd like to congratulate Harold Vivian Fish - affectionately known as Viv - on his 100th birthday. Viv is a valued member of the Cooranbong community who, despite becoming a centenarian on May 7, continues to work two days per week at Cooranbong Community Centre. He is also an active member of Avondale Memorial Church where he has many behind-the-scenes jobs. He recently read the Ode at the Dora Creek Anzac Day service for the third consecutive year, and once again marched with pride while adorned with his medals. Viv joined the army when he was 18 and served in the Second Field Ambulance Regiment for approximately four years. In 1951 he married Dulcie Sheppard. They lived in Victoria and had two children Russell and Ann before Dulcie sadly passed away in 1966. Years later Viv found love again and married

Bobbie-Mae Johanson in 1980 and moved to Lake Macquarie. He spent 38 wonderful years with Bobbie-May before she sadly passed away. To date Viv has two children, five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren, in addition to his even bigger step-family.

I salute him on his 100th birthday!

#### **BRONWYN MARKHAM**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I'd like to recognise the invaluable achievements of Bronwyn Markham, but sadly extend my deepest sympathies to her family because Bronwyn recently lost her battle with cancer. Bronwyn was a beloved member of the Lake Macquarie community and an integral member of Hunter Mountain Bike Association, and a St John Ambulance race support person. Her fellow riders in the mountain biking community remember her as an extraordinarily caring lady who always gave up her time to help others. They will dearly miss her bright personality, smiling face and caring ways. Bronwyn was herself an accomplished mountain bike rider having competed in many races, including the Westpac Rescue Helicopter charity rides and Port to Port events. She provided professionalism and comfort to those who sustained injuries during races. Bronwyn was extremely generous with her time and volunteered with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter service and Hunter Horse Rescue. However, her biggest loves were her four children Jaime, Chard, Tracy and Markham along with her grandchildren and dogs. She was larger than life, unique, energetic and happy. She meant so much to so many and was fondly referred to as Nana Bron.

Vale Bronwyn Markham.

#### **ANZAC DAY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate the RSL sub-branches of the Clarence Electorate, who once again have provided the Electorate with several ANZAC Day commemoration services. I was fortunate to attend the South Grafton, Grafton dawn service, which were both very well attended. I thank Mr. Denis Benfield, who invited me to read the prologue at the Grafton dawn service, where hundreds of people turned to pay their respects. I would also like to thank Mr. Mark Blackadder, who laid a wreath on my behalf at the 10:45 am service. To Owen Newell and his members of the Casino RSL, well done, and thank you for your invitation to attend your service. The Casino service was also well attended by the Casino community; the service was held at the Casino RSL Club. The RAAF flyovers are also an excellent addition to the mid-morning events. ANZAC Day is truly a day of National Remembrance, and my community will never forget the sacrifices made by many so we can enjoy the freedoms of today.

#### **BRUCE GRAY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Bruce Gray was named the 2023 Wee Waa Lions Senior Citizen of the Year. Bruce has lived in Wee Waa his entire life and is well known for his generosity and endless volunteering, whilst still carrying out his own farm and agriculture work. Bruce has been heavily involved in most community organisations including school committees, the tennis club, Wee Waa Hospital board member to name a few. Bruce has been a lions club member, holding various positions for 20 plus years. I congratulate Bruce on receiving this year's Senior Citizen of the year and thank him for the years of valuable commitment to his community.

#### **100 YEARS OF LEGACY BROKEN HILL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—A soldier's promise to look after "the missus and the kids" led to the formation of Legacy. A network of Legacy Clubs exists throughout regional and metropolitan Australia and have responded to the needs of families of defence force veterans for 100 years. The Legacy Club of South Australia and Broken Hill is a voluntary organisation supported by veterans, servicemen and women and volunteers drawn from all walks of life. In the past legatees were ex-servicemen however, today they are men and women of high personal standards who share the ideals and obligations of Legacy. In Broken Hill, Mark Winen has organised a Charity Golf Day as a fundraiser for about twenty years. This is the largest fundraiser locally and is supported by most of the business houses in the Broken Hill community. Mark is the Secretary Treasurer of the Broken Hill branch and is dedicated to helping Legacy's widows. Mark was recently nominated to participate in the Legacy Centenary Torch Relay as Broken Hill's representative, recognising his selfless contribution. Thank you, Mark Winen.

#### **UKI SCHOOL OF ART SHOW**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I would like to congratulate the pupils at Uki Public School for the innovative art works they recently exhibited at the Uki Post Office. The works consisted of a wonderful range of animals made of hand painted papers, cats on chequered backgrounds, paintings of vases, underwater scenes, woven God's Eyes. There were also many budgies using the Indigenous Art technique of Dot Painting. Special mention must be made of Year 5/6 teacher Ms. Renee Mill. It was her brainchild with all of the art work linked

to the curriculum. Thank you is also in order to Librarian Ms. Jo Spiller for curating these fabulous works. A big shout out to the students who used their vivid imagination linking the work to their Maths, English, History and Geography studies. I once read a great book that showed how one teacher, who loved art, used it as the basis to teach. She got fabulous results with the students who learnt well and developed a love of learning. When we let 'teachers teach' wonderful things happen. Great work Uki Public School students I hope you keep on enjoying and creating art works and develop a love of learning.

### **MURWILLUMBAH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT SURVEY SCORES AMONG BEST IN THE STATE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I congratulate Murwillumbah District Hospital Emergency Department Staff and all Murwillumbah health staff who support them for receiving this top tier patient survey state score. Patients rated the Emergency Department higher than the NSW average across 14 results and I commend them for achieving this outstanding result. To have the patients treated with kindness, care, compassion and dignity when at their most vulnerable is reassuring to families and communities. I know that the area the hospital serves very much value their local hospital and staff and rightly feel proud of them for achieving this score. It is truly a tremendous thing to be recognised and celebrated and through the toughest of times our staff have gone above and beyond to care for our community. It goes without saying that doctors, nurses, midwives and hospital staff all over the state are performing miracles every day as they serve our families and communities. This demonstrates the high-quality care they provide, the attention to their patients and the dedication of the hospital team in their delivery of health care in a professional and timely manner done with care and compassion.

### **BRUCE WESTON TRIBUTE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I would like to pay tribute to Bruce Weston following his recent passing. Bruce was the owner along with his partner Susan of the Gallery Motel South Murwillumbah, where I often stayed when visiting Murwillumbah for my work. Bruce was a wonderful host; always welcomed me with a laugh wearing one of his colourful Hawaiian type shirts and making sure I had the best room available. Bruce and Susan have been through a number of floods in the time they have been in Murwillumbah and this last two in 2017 and 2023 were the worst of all. The Gallery Motel was badly damaged and the road in front of the motel washed away, but they bounced back as they do as very good business and community people and are open for business. I want to acknowledge them both for their hospitality, great conversations and updates on what was happening locally as well as in the world. I know that Bruce will be sadly missed by his wife Susan and family of whom Bruce was so proud and by his guests and the Murwillumbah District Business Chamber where he often had much to say and contribute. VALE Bruce

### **THE HUDDLE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to recognise a wonderful collaborative event held in Orange this month which encourages and empowers women in business. 'The Huddle' is the brainchild of entrepreneurial Orange business woman Pip Brett and is described as 'a weekend of inspiration and learning for kick-ass business women'. Ms Brett conceived the Huddle during a visit to a Melbourne trade fair several years ago, while NSW was locked in its most crippling drought. Businesses were suffering but the sentiment behind the Huddle, connect and collaborate, resonated and more than 400 people attended with tickets sold out within a night. This year's Huddle brought more than 700 inspired women to Orange to network, learn and motivate each other in a nurturing and fun environment, an amazing number considering lockdowns of the past two years. I congratulate Pip Brett and her hardworking staff on the creation and the growth of 'The Huddle', which is carving out a reputation as transformative opportunity to enhance women and their businesses in country NSW.

### **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK RFDS DUBBO SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—National Volunteer Week, even though it was last week, is a great time to appreciate and recognise the efforts of dedicated volunteers. The Royal Flying Doctor Dubbo Support Group plays a crucial role in supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service [RFDS]. The RFDS provides vital aeromedical services to remote and rural areas of Australia, ensuring that people in those regions have access to emergency medical care. The work of the Dubbo Support Group contributes directly to the success of the RFDS mission. Volunteers from the Royal Flying Doctor Dubbo Support Group help in various ways, such as fundraising, community outreach, organising events, administrative tasks, and raising awareness about the RFDS services. Their commitment and dedication help ensure that the RFDS can continue its life-saving work. It's important to recognise and appreciate the significant contributions of volunteers like those in the Royal Flying Doctor Dubbo Support Group. Their selfless service and commitment make a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities in need.

### NARROMINE HEALTH SERVICE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise Simone Purtell, Grace Allen, and the Narromine Health Service. Simone Purtell, a nurse at the Narromine Health Service, was recently recognised as Nurse of the Year at the 2023 Nursing and Midwifery awards of the Western NSW Local Health District.

Simone's dedication and devotion to her patients has earned her the respect of her peers and supervisors. She approaches each new patient with empathy, seeing them through the eyes of a close loved one. Simone's role is especially crucial as she cares for individuals in their most vulnerable moments. With 26 years of nursing experience, she considers it a privilege to provide care, even during end-of-life situations, which can be both rewarding and challenging. Another remarkable individual at the Narromine Health Service is Grace Allen. Grace was nominated for Leader of the Year within the Western New South Wales Local Health District. Her exceptional organisational skills and commitment to continuous learning have enabled her to manage routine activities efficiently and effectively. Her dedication, hard work, and positive energy have contributed to her nomination and recognition. Congratulations Simone, Grace and the Narromine Health Service and thank you!

### DUBBO COFFEE BEAN ROASTING HOUSE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise Dubbo's Coffee Bean Roasting House, which recently took home five prizes at the prestigious Royal Adelaide Coffee Show. Launched this year by the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia (RAHS), the Royal Adelaide Coffee Show is South Australia's first independent coffee show. The show's judging panel was composed of 15 industry professionals, who took into consideration each coffee's appearance, aroma, taste and body. The Coffee Bean Roasting House competed for the top spot against over 300 entrants from across Australia, and came home with an impressive haul of awards, including two golds, two silvers and one bronze. Its Colombian coffee blend 'Qué Chimba!' won gold in the Latte Single Origin Category, silver in the Plunger Imported Blend category, and bronze in the Latte Imported Blend category. While its single-origin coffee took home gold in the Latte Single Origin category, and silver in the Espresso Single Origin category. Well done to the team at Coffee Bean Roasting House! Can't wait to see what's next!

### OYSTER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Oyster 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 Oyster Bay Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Charlie Green, Lucinda Herrett, Jemima Bartels, Ava Turner, Leo Ruddell, Heath Watson, Eloise Clarke and Max Gambrell. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Wanita Bowles, 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 Oyster Bay Public School's motto of 'each for all'.

### JANNALI PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Jannali 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 Captains Samuel Pring and Tom Hankin and Vice Captains Maia Engelbrecht and Tumelo Gibbons. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Narelle Chaplin, 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 Jannali Public School's motto of being 'strength in wisdom'.

### JANNALI EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Jannali East 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 Jannali East Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Captains Lahni Wedd and Henry Dillon and Vice Captains James Tello, Dylan Harris, Zoey Bender, Ursula Thorburn. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Katherine Horner, 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 Jannali East Public School's motto of 'Inspiring excellence – Achieving personal best'.

#### **OATLEY AUTUMN MARKET DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I rise today to congratulate the Oatley Lions Club, for hosting a successful Community Market Day which had a fantastic turnout! Despite the dreary conditions on the day, the Oatley community showed up in droves to support the Lions Club, small businesses, stalls and other community organisations. It was a wonderful atmosphere, with live music, a community barbecue, and countless stalls selling everything from second-hand books, to candles, to craft. I had a fantastic time attending on the day, as did many others. There were lots of families out and about enjoying their time. A big thanks to the Oatley Lions for hosting such a successful event, as well as their wonderful team of volunteers. These sorts of events would not be possible without your consistent effort and dedication to the local community. I'd also like to thank the organisations who sponsored the event, including Oatley Hotel and Georges River Council. Without your support, this event wouldn't have gone ahead. I look forward to working closely with the Oatley Lions into the future!

#### **MORTDALE FIRE STATION OPEN DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I recently had the privilege of visiting the Mortdale Fire Station for their annual Open Day. This is an event that I have had the pleasure of attending for many years now. The Open Day allows members of the community to get a look behind the curtains, learning what it takes to operate a Fire Station, whilst also zeroing in on the importance of home fire safety. There was plenty on offer for the little ones, with live demonstrations, the chance to see real firefighting equipment, as well as opportunities to sit in the truck. My two boys have thoroughly enjoyed the open day over the years. The Mortdale Firefighters do such an important job within our community. They work tirelessly, day in and day out, to save lives and properties. Many of them played significant roles during the 2019 bushfires in New South Wales. I'd like to thank the Captain of the Mortdale Fire Station, Craig Koschel, as well as the team of the Firefighters for the incredible work they do. I look forward to attending next year's open day.

#### **40 YEARS OF BROADCASTING AT 90.1NCB FM**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I rise to recognise and congratulate 90.1NCB FM for reaching 40 years of broadcasting earlier this month. What a fantastic achievement that I'm sure they are incredibly proud of. Now operating with over 100 volunteers, the station came from humble beginnings, when members of the Narwee Baptist Church noticed a gap in the community radio market in the St George. The station is now headed by announcer and chief executive, Paul McGrath, who has had a myriad of experience working in commercial radio. He now utilises these skills to give back to his local community, talking to local organisations like the Lions Club and Rotary, all the while playing the best hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. I've had the pleasure of being a guest on the show numerous times and have always felt welcomed by the entire team. They have recently undertaken a gender diversity initiative, with several female presenters taking turns hosting the broadcast. I'd like to thank Paul McGrath and 90.1NCB volunteers for the fantastic work they do, day in and day out. I wish them all the best in the next 40 years of broadcasting.

#### **BLAGOWLAH SUNS MND**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I rise today to inform the House of a fantastic upcoming event, the Balgowlah Suns Big Freeze to Fight MND. The Suns hosted this event last year and raised over \$10,000 for Motor Neurone Disease. This year, they are aiming even higher. I encourage everyone to get along to Balgowlah Oval on Sunday the 4th of June from 9am-12:30pm. This year will be even icier with the addition of a dunk tank that I was able to secure with the support of Michael Regan the Member for Wakehurst. I hope to see the whole community there and maybe even some of my colleagues on the other side looking to see me get dunked.

#### **MANLYGEES**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I rise to recognise the fantastic work of the Manlygees, a local group of volunteers who last year sponsored a Syrian refugee family to move to Australia. Since the family arrived in November, the Manlygees have supported them through accessing housing, education, government services and with the broader transition to life in Australia. Earlier this year, the family decided they would like to move to Western Sydney as they have connections with the Syrian community there. Once again, the Manlygees were there to help by taking the family to house viewings, speaking to agents and once they had found a place, helping

on moving day. I can share that the family is happy and thriving in their new home. The Manlygees represent the best of the community through their compassion and hard work, and I wish them all the best with their upcoming projects.

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