



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 25 May 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 25 May 2023**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper)** took the chair at 10:00.

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

## *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that the routine of business for this day be:

- (1) Giving of general business notices of motions (for 15 minutes).
- (2) Consideration of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill.
- (3) At 11.00 a.m., question time and the accompanying routine of business.
- (4) Resumption of consideration of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill through all remaining stages or until 1.30 p.m., after which the Speaker to leave the chair.
- (5) At 2.30 p.m. the inaugural speech of the member for Wollondilly.
- (6) Resumption of consideration of the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill (if required).
- (7) General business notices of motions (not being bills).
- (8) At 4.00 p.m. the inaugural speech of the member for Vacluse.
- (9) Community recognition statements (for up to 30 minutes).
- (10) Private members' statements, after which the House to adjourn without motion until the next sitting day.

**Motion agreed to.**

## *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise members that a media photographer has been approved to cover the inaugural speech of the member for Vacluse this afternoon.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:18):** By leave: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to:

- (1) Permit the moving forthwith of a motion, of which notice has not been given, relating to the making of an order for papers under Standing Order 269 relating to investigations into money laundering in clubs and pubs.
- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits:
  - (a) Mover—seven minutes;
  - (b) Leader of the House or one member deputed—seven minutes;
  - (c) Manager of Opposition Business or one member deputed—four minutes;
  - (d) One crossbench member—four minutes; and
  - (e) Mover in reply—four minutes.

I seek to bring an urgent matter before the House in this call for papers because the Government is about to commence a trial into new technology to inform a framework and laws to better govern the operations of gaming machines to stop money laundering in pubs and clubs, and it is currently dealing with legislation to ban some donations from clubs with gaming machines.

Members need to understand the full extent of the problem to best assess proposed solutions. I have been informed that the New South Wales Crime Commission investigation into money laundering via electronic gaming machines may not detail the full extent of money laundering in clubs and that Liquor and Gaming NSW holds significant information and data based on analysis of centralised monitoring system—or CMS—data and associated investigations. It is not clear to what extent that data was incorporated in the Crime Commission report, and the House needs to know whether the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority has other information, details, analysis and advice. The House needs to understand what information there is and why it may not have been used by the Crime Commission.

From a report in *The Daily Telegraph* on 28 May 2022, we know that in November 2021 the Chairperson of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority wrote to the previous Government about a report on the extent of money laundering in clubs and pubs and requested a special commission of inquiry into money laundering in clubs and pubs. That report should be accessible to all members of this House as we work through the reform. As the Government and the House carries out such work in addressing money laundering through electronic gaming machines, members need to see the full picture of money laundering to move forward with appropriate reforms. This matter is urgent and should be dealt with swiftly.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:21):** The Government agrees that this is an appropriate matter for which standing and sessional orders be suspended. I also indicate to the House that the Government will support the substantive motion that seeks an order for the production of papers under Standing Order 269, and the Government agrees that proceeding down this path is urgent. The Government agrees that this is the best way to begin the process in relation to the allegations that need to be considered, as put before the House by the member for Sydney. I indicate, though, very clearly at the outset that it is not normal and the Government is not likely to agree, except in the most exceptional circumstances, to orders under Standing Order 269 and is not likely to agree, except in the most exceptional circumstances, to a suspension of standing orders to enable it to be considered. But these are exceptional circumstances.

The matters were raised prior to today with the Government, or certain parts of the Government. It was kept confidential until relatively recently so the Government agrees to the suspension, but I cannot express to the House more clearly that this is an exceptional matter and the Government thinks that this is the best way that the processes in relation to this matter should proceed. But the Government will not, except in the most exceptional circumstances, agree to suspensions for the purpose of Standing Order 269, unless the matters be serious, urgent or exceptional.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:23):** By leave: I indicate that the Opposition agrees to both the suspension and the substantive motion. Both sides of politics brought gaming reform proposals to the electorate at the recent general election. Although there were differences between them as to the legacy of the proliferation of poker machines under the 16 years of the former Labor Government that ended in 2011, there was at least a common position that there needed to be reform of gaming in our State. It is highly desirable that the information that is sought in this motion be made available to members of Parliament so that they can be best informed on this issue.

I must say we have heard a lot from the Government about wanting to do, in government, a new way of politics and a new way of transparency, so I was more than a little alarmed to hear the rider by the Leader of the House on what the Government's attitude will be to calls for papers of this kind under Standing Order 269. They should not be as limited as he suggested. They are an important facilitation of democracy. They are an important demonstration by the Government of actions to back up its rhetoric about a new way of doing politics and a new transparency of government. In speeches on a public sector amendment bill, Government members went on a lot about the desirability of transparency in the way that they go about things.

I was more than a little concerned at the vehement purported restriction on the Government's support of any future calls of this kind because I think they are important. I commend the member for Sydney for bringing forward not only the suspension of standing orders but also the substantive motion. It is important that we have evidence upon which to make decisions in this Parliament. For that reason the Opposition supports both the suspension and the substantive motion.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Documents***LIQUOR AND GAMING DATA COLLECTION****Production of Documents: Order**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:26):** I move:

- (1) That pursuant to Standing Order 269 this House orders to be laid before it on Friday 23 June 2023 by 10.00 a.m. the following documents created between 1 October 2021 and 30 June 2022 in the possession, custody or control of Liquor and Gaming NSW, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority and the Minister for Gaming and Racing:
  - (a) all emails, including summary data, attachments and Excel spreadsheets, sent by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Manager of Money Laundering Intelligence and Analytics regarding centralised monitoring system data on suspicious transactions at single or multiple venues;
  - (b) the section 21 notices under the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 issued to and the responses, including attachments, received from Bankstown Sports Club, Bardwell Park RSL, Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, Canley Heights RSL, Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club, Canterbury Leagues Club, EBP RSL, Fairfield City Memorial Club, Markets Hotel, Mekong Mounties Group, Mount Pritchard and District Community Club, North Sydney Leagues Club, Parramatta Leagues Club, Royal Exchange Hotel, Smithfield RSL, South Sydney Juniors and St John's Park Bowling Club Ltd;
  - (c) the analyses of the central monitoring system data that occurred after the responses to the section 21 notices, referred to in paragraph 1 (b), were received;
  - (d) the REGIS system records of any referrals of the premises referred to in paragraph 1 (b) to the Complaints and Enforcement Panel in Liquor and Gaming NSW and the minutes of any meetings regarding the REGIS records;
  - (e) any correspondence to the Complaints and Enforcement Panel regarding the premises referred to in paragraph 1 (b);
  - (f) any complaints made to Liquor and Gaming NSW regarding the forewarning of premises of compliance checks;
  - (g) any correspondence from the chairperson of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to the responsible Minister about money laundering in clubs or pubs and any recommendations to address it; and
  - (h) any documents relating to gaming machine compliance checks or the NSW Crime Commission Inquiry into Money Laundering via electronic gaming machines.
- (2) That the return to this order include any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.
- (3) That the return to this order is to include an indexed list of all documents tabled showing the date of creation of the document, a description of the document and the author of the document.
- (4) That the documents are to be lodged with the Clerk and upon which will be deemed to have been laid before the House.
- (5) That, until such time as further ordered by the House:
  - (a) the inspection of the documents be restricted to members only and that no copies or extracts thereof be permitted; and
  - (b) the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have the authority to access, manage and provide advice on the documents. Much is being said about money laundering in pubs and clubs based on the NSW Crime Commission inquiry into money laundering via electronic gaming machines. The report was damning and found that criminals spend their dirty money in clubs and pubs, with estimates in the billions. Spending and accepting the proceeds of crime is a serious criminal offence. But the information that I have received indicates that the Crime Commission's work does not show the full picture of money laundering in electronic gaming machines in clubs and pubs. The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority holds additional data based on the centralised monitoring system, or CMS.

The CMS is a regulatory tool that connects all gaming machines to the State's registered clubs and hotels. It is used to monitor and ensure the integrity of gaming machine operations for tax purposes. CMS data can flag suspicious transactions that indicate money laundering and spark further analysis. Liquor and Gaming NSW has powers under the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 to require clubs and pubs to provide information and records in response to any concerns flagged through the CMS to help piece together information about money laundering.

It is not clear to what extent this data and analysis was fed into or used in the Crime Commission investigation. If further information about money laundering, which I have heard exists with Liquor and Gaming NSW, is not included in the public Crime Commission report, members should have access to that information. My motion calls for papers surrounding the period when we know from the Crime Commission report that CMS data was being reviewed by Liquor and Gaming NSW. It covers information that has been brought to my attention that may have constrained the investigations by the Crime Commission. Provisions in the motion to limit access to members will ensure that any sensitive information for law enforcement purposes that could be included will not be made public.

The Government has promised a trial of cashless gaming technology, and it will be the job of this Parliament to ensure the trial is conducted with accountability, transparency and rigour. This will require a

comprehensive understanding of the problem and any interference with investigations that may have occurred. In addition, media reports last October confirmed an investigative team within Liquor and Gaming NSW was scaled back, with its investigation into money laundering stopped. At a time when the then Government was aware of potential money laundering in clubs, we need to understand what informed that decision. This information should not be kept from members, especially at a time when Parliament is about to embark on the biggest reform to electronic gaming in the State's history. We need this information to ensure that we appropriately navigate the complex reform process ahead so that we can stop money laundering in pubs and clubs. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:32):** The suggestions made by the member for Sydney regarding the availability of material that may have been withheld from the Crime Commission is a serious matter that requires scrutiny and investigation. Not only could it yield matters of grave concern, but the public policy positions of both the Government and Opposition—and the former Government and Opposition—are actually based upon the acceptance of the Crime Commission report and its recommendations. Whilst the Government and Opposition might have differing views on how to address money laundering, there is no suggestion by the Government that the Coalition was not genuine in its attempts to try to address the issue. Although it is always difficult to anticipate the views of the Manager of Opposition Business, I am sure he is not going to suggest that the Labor Party did not make a genuine attempt to address money laundering and the problems related to electronic gaming.

However, the Government, with its mandate, was in the process of addressing problems in relation to electronic gaming and money laundering based upon the Crime Commission report and the accuracy of its findings. If the material exists, as suggested by the member for Sydney, it is important that it be made available to members of this House. Members can view the material to determine whether or not there is additional information that needs to be taken into account in determining a viable and functional public policy position to be contained in legislation.

To be frank, when the Government considered the matters that the member for Sydney raised—and they were not widely raised but raised with me, the Premier and a legal adviser from the Department of Premier and Cabinet—it was to see whether there was a satisfactory alternate mechanism to conduct further investigations. Due to the nature of the matter and because of the way the Government wished to carry out its mandate to address electronic gaming, it was decided that, firstly, the suggestion by the member for Sydney was a far better solution so that at least we can access the information at an early stage. Secondly, we thought that if the matter went somewhere else for examination there would be a detailed investigation by another investigative body operating with its own secrecy provisions and the issue would disappear out of sight for an extended period. The Government did not think that was acceptable, bearing in mind the path it wished to proceed down.

I thank the member for Sydney for raising the matter with the Government in the way he did. I thank him for his patience in enabling us to determine whether this was the appropriate path to go down. I inform the House that the sensitive nature of the material that the member for Sydney has may have constrained his discussions with a number of other Ministers on other bills. The Premier and I understood where the member for Sydney was coming from with his position, but those Ministers did not. I indicated to them very recently that they should wait until this matter is resolved by the House and then the differences that exist between the member for Sydney and various Ministers may be resolved.

The issues are serious. The motion is an appropriate way to deal with this matter. Standing Order 269 is a rare exception in this House. It is no reflection on lack of transparency. I would have thought the Government agreeing to proceed down this path is the best example of transparency that one could have on one of the most serious matters. Other governments may well have just sent it to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and had the issue kicked down the road for some sort of future investigation and report. I do not suggest that there is a lack of transparency; this is a perfect example of transparency. The Government is committed to proceeding in a transparent way in respect of its public policy positions. If anything different is suggested, it should be evident by the way I have pursued this matter that I am not proceeding on a political basis. Before he makes his contribution, I invite the Manager of Opposition Business to consider who was running the State at the time that the issues occurred.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:39):** The call for papers under Standing Order 269 from the member for Sydney is extremely detailed. I commend the member and those advising him for the precision and detail with which the motion has been drafted. This is not a frivolous exercise; it is a matter of serious import. No member really knows what documents will be produced by the order, which I expect the House will agree to. This is an important process with regard to transparency on what is undoubtedly, according to all sides of politics, an extremely important issue. As I said previously, it is important that members have the best information available before making decisions in this place on the best way to move forward.

The Leader of the House did not listen to me very carefully. I spoke about transparency in respect of future calls for papers, and his comments about the reluctance of the Government to agree to future calls for papers. I did not refer to this matter as demonstrating a lack of transparency—in fact, I embrace the motion and the use of calls for papers as a great way to enhance government transparency. It will back up the rhetoric of Government members who claim they intend to conduct politics in a new way. I embrace the process. I commend the member for Sydney and those assisting him for the detail and diligence of their efforts. The Opposition supports the motion.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:42):** On behalf of the Greens, I offer support for the member for Sydney's call for papers. I commend the member for putting the motion together. It is a good demonstration of another mechanism to shed light on money laundering through gaming machines. It is shocking to consider, when members already know how prolific money laundering is in this space. It is incredibly concerning that there might be more information that Parliament has not been made aware of. Our democracy should not be tainted by things like this.

The ability of crossbench members to move such a motion is a good sign that the Parliament is working in the interests of the community. The Greens members are supportive of the move to garner as much information as possible about the damaging practice of money laundering through gambling. As the anti-corruption and democracy spokesperson for The Greens, I look forward to working with the member for Sydney and others in this Parliament to review the information provided in order to understand what needs to be referred and how the Parliament can take action on what comes to light to prevent money laundering through gambling going forward.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:43):** I inform the House that, as might be expected, I am a member of South Sydney Juniors and have been associated with them from a very young age.

**The SPEAKER:** The declaration of the member for Heffron is accepted.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:43):** By leave: I take this opportunity to contribute to debate. I support the work of the member for Sydney on the motion, and I thank him. It is high time that this was done. This is an extremely important issue and the public are calling for reform. It is on the lips and minds of everyone throughout my electorate—and, no doubt, throughout the whole State. Members know that gambling leads to broken homes, hungry kids and financial ruin. It also leads to criminal activity. There is no better way forward than to undertake an adequate and comprehensive inquiry to shine a light on the issue of gambling. The call for papers should leave no stone unturned; it must be comprehensive. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get to the bottom of criminal activity in the State and its links to gambling.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:45):** In reply: I thank the Leader of the House, the Manager of Opposition Business, the member for Balmain and the member for Murray for their contributions. The seriousness with which this Parliament, the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench members are addressing money laundering in clubs and pubs across New South Wales, which we know is a significant problem, is reflected in the unanimous support for the motion. I know that all parties took positions on this matter before the election and it is something that all parties wish to see addressed in this term of Parliament.

I thank all members for their support for the call for papers. I agree with the Leader of the House that the power to compel the production of documents should be used sparingly. It was last used in this place in the 1990s. Unsurprisingly, it was used by my predecessor, Clover Moore, the then member for Bligh. The documents we will soon receive may very well provide a new mandate and urgency to bring forward cashless gaming in New South Wales to help stamp out money laundering in clubs and pubs in the State. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (GRANTS) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 24 May 2023.**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:47):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023. I draw attention to the fact that the Legislative Council conducted an inquiry on this matter through the Public Accountability Committee. The committee made a number of findings, particularly concerning the administration of grants. Grants had been provided without a clear process or merit assessment. The final report made critical findings about the allocation of funding under the Bushfire

Local Economic Recovery fund and the Arts and Cultural Funding Program. The committee made 12 recommendations to the Government. All the recommendations were worthy, and many have been picked up in the bill.

I also cite work done by constitutional expert Ms Anne Twomey. She produced a detailed paper on pork-barrelling. Earlier, I read an article in which Ms Twomey said there was a grey area when dealing with a promise where there might be good public interest reasons for a project or grant, but where there were political reasons for proceeding. She said that Ministers are still obliged not to approve a grant unless it is proper, but that, in practice, a blind eye can be turned to such matters where an election commitment has already been given. She also talked about the problem of no actual policing or scrutiny of the process. From time to time, I do see some media scrutiny, but that is not enough. The scrutiny must occur within the process.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I call the member for—

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (10:49):** Kellyville this time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Thank you.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** It is only the third name change. I still live in the same place, I still have the same office and I still proudly represent 80 per cent of the same people as I have for 16 years in this Parliament, but it is now called Kellyville. It is part of being the representative of the fastest-growing area in this country in terms of housing development and population over the past 30 years. Unfortunately, the boundaries do change from time to time. It is my great pleasure to make a contribution to the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023. I do so from the perspective of a very proud member of the former Liberal-Nationals Government. I was also a proud Minister of the former Government.

I place some context on the parliamentary record as to why this bill is before the House. The bill is the result of a recommendation from an ICAC report into the alleged pork-barrelling of grants and funds that people felt were distributed across New South Wales in an unfair manner. I mention this point to give a bit of history and context. In 2015 the former Liberal-Nationals Government under Mike Baird made the decision, which it took to the 2015 election, that it would lease 49 per cent of the electricity poles and wires. The Government would retain 51 per cent control of that industry and the State would reap the rewards of 51 per cent of the dividends. In 99 years' time, in our grandchildren's lifetime, the entire 49 per cent that was leased will be returned back to them in its entirety.

At the time, the Coalition announced to the New South Wales people that it expected to receive in the vicinity of \$20 billion, which would be invested immediately into important and necessary infrastructure that had not been implemented by the previous Labor Government over the 16 years that it was in office prior to 2011. That infrastructure included roads, rail, hospitals and schools that would set this State up and provide for the growing areas of New South Wales. It was also to futureproof this State. The former Government's legacy of that infrastructure commitment will never be questioned. If someone was to walk down Martin Place and ask the first person they bumped into what the former Government had done during its three terms in government over the past 12 years, the first things that would undoubtedly be pointed to are the rail lines, light rail, hospitals and schools adorning every Sydney suburb across the length and breadth of New South Wales. That came about because of the clear policy of leasing 49 per cent of electricity poles and wires. I believe the former Government got not \$20 billion but very close to \$30 billion of net proceeds on that lease.

The former Government constructed WestConnex using those finances. Everybody living in Western Sydney, north-western Sydney and south-western Sydney who travels to the airport or Mascot could attest that it is one of the greatest pieces of infrastructure that has been implemented in the city of Sydney. It is a mere \$8 toll to travel all the way from areas such as Parramatta and Penrith. It only costs \$8 to go down the M4 and onto the WestConnex to travel to the airport. It is a fantastic piece of road infrastructure. The former Government then broke that up into three stages and sold sections of WestConnex as they were built. The former Government took on the risk and then sold it piece by piece. Ultimately, the money from the sales was recouped and reinvested back into future infrastructure.

Five billion dollars from one of those sales was directly committed into grants programs across the length and breadth of New South Wales. That has never been done before. I can guarantee to members of the House that they will not have to worry about this legislation because the Labor Government will never have anywhere near that kind of money. Indeed, it may not have any money to invest in grants to distribute like the former Liberal-Nationals Government did. We made it clear that \$5 billion would go to communities of need. I go back a little to 2011. When the former Liberal-Nationals Coalition won the 2011 State election, it held something in the vicinity of 73 seats. It was an overwhelming victory. It had three-quarters of seats in this Chamber. Why did the Liberals and The Nationals have such an overwhelming win? Because the previous Labor Government, over

four terms in government between 1995 and 2011, never invested into the infrastructure and services that this State desperately needed. If it had, there would not have been such an overwhelming and emphatic win by the Liberals and The Nationals.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! Members will enter the Chamber quietly. The member will be heard in silence.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** I appreciate that. The Coalition won and came into government on the back of the great need to provide infrastructure for this State. Under the former Government 180 hospitals and hundreds of schools were upgraded and rebuilt, and thousands of kilometres of road across the Central West were upgraded. The Pacific Highway, which had taken so many lives unnecessarily, was completed all the way to the Queensland border. The Great Western Highway was upgraded all the way to Katoomba at a price that was like the GDP of a small country. It was an excessive expense. The former Government funded and completed those roads. It built hospitals and schools on the back of leasing 49 per cent of the electricity poles and wires, and it then built the WestConnex and recycled the funds from the sale of it back into grants programs across New South Wales. That is the history; that is the proof.

When grants funding is being invested across New South Wales, people may question why it is being done. The former Government was opposed by the Labor Opposition of the time every step of the way. Labor opposed the leasing of the poles and wires, and it opposed infrastructure like the North West Rail Link and WestConnex. Labor opposed every piece of infrastructure that the former Liberal-Nationals Government brought to the House. When a government creates \$5 billion worth of new money from the recycling of assets—it did not come out of consolidated revenue—why would that government not have the right to choose where the funds should be invested?

Unlike with the previous Labor Government, the funds were not going into the pockets of the Labor Ministers and members who were so corrupt during their 16-year tenure. We remember them being rolled out. The person who should have been in charge of infrastructure in the previous Labor Government was Eddie Obeid. He got himself a coalmine. He knew how to get outcomes but, ultimately, very corruptly, as we well know. A government should have the choice when it has created funds and has been elected on the basis of investing in infrastructure across New South Wales. My personal belief is that, whilst we have a bill in front of us now that is ultimately going to attempt to more fairly distribute funds on behalf of the people of New South Wales, it will not get tested because this Government will never have the grants funds to distribute to the communities of New South Wales. This new Labor Government is already scrapping programs, rail lines, road upgrades, cost of living programs and the Active Kids vouchers that the former Liberal-Nationals Government implemented to help hardworking families. We did that on behalf of hardworking families and, sadly, those hardworking families are going to feel the pinch of the costs of living very soon.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** They all voted Labor.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** The funny thing is they did not all vote Labor because those opposite are in a minority Government. They need the crossbench to stay there. They only have 45 seats in this Chamber. It is a sad fact, but it is very true.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Government members will come to order. Members will enter the Chamber quietly and take their seats. I call the member for Cessnock.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:00):** I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023. What a lot of gobbledegook from the member for Kellyville! In a 10-minute speech he has tried to rewrite the history of what happened to the finances of this State and the pork-barrelling that took place. Although, I would not mind inviting him to be a witness for us in court. He openly admitted that the money was pork-barrelled into only certain parts of the State. I have so much more to say, but I am aware of the time.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I warmly welcome essential workers and their representatives to the gallery as guests of the Premier. I welcome guests of the member for Cootamundra from the Country Mayors Association of New South Wales: chairman Mayor Jamie Chaffey from Gunnedah Shire—I think I have spoken with him before; deputy chairman Mayor Rick Firman from Temora Shire; and general manager Mr Gary Lavelle, also from

Temora Shire. I also welcome guests of the member for Bankstown: Beryl Segers, Taghred Hamade and Dilan Bogdanovski. You are all very welcome.

I acknowledge students from the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program who have joined us in the Chamber today. You are very welcome in Australia's first Parliament, the oldest Parliament in Australia. I particularly acknowledge three students, two from Batemans Bay High School and one from Narooma High School, who were delivered by Dr Michael Holland, the member for Bega.

The member for Canterbury will come to order.

### *Question Time*

#### **POLICE TASER USE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06):** My question is directed to the Premier. With the tragic death of Clare Nowland, will the Premier update the House on the support the Government is offering the family, residents and carers at Yallambee Lodge and the broader Cooma community at this difficult time?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:06):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Obviously it is a very difficult time for the community in Cooma. I think everybody in the House would say, unambiguously, that our hearts and sympathies go out to the Nowland family. The police commissioner and the police Minister have been in contact with the family, respecting their wishes relating to the complicated processes of police investigation and the next steps in that inquiry. I am not going to detail those conversations in the House right now. But I would say that anything the New South Wales Government can do for the family of Clare Nowland, we will do. They deserve respect and privacy at this time, and I will make sure that this Government respects their wishes.

#### **EVERY DAY MATTERS PROGRAM**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:07):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the immediate action the New South Wales Government is taking to increase attendance rates in public schools and to get better outcomes for students?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:07):** I thank the member for Camden for her question. As a former teacher of face-to-face education in New South Wales schools, I need to tell the House that the challenges faced by schools and school students every day are profound. We need to do better to get better outcomes for schools right across this State. We do not want education in New South Wales to fall behind, but for that not to happen, we need to increase school attendance. There is a practical and reasonable reason why attendances in schools have declined in recent years, and I am not going to criticise the former Government for it. Clearly, it is as a result of the COVID pandemic.

One of the habitual things that happened for families across this State during the COVID emergency was that, because schools were closed down for a number of weeks, in some instances it became a practice for students to skip the odd day here or there. Every parent in this State has been there themselves. They understand the pressure early in the morning when making a borderline decision about whether to send their child to school, and they make a decision to keep them at home. That is completely understandable and no-one would blame any parent in this State for that. However, the New South Wales Government is launching a campaign with the Department of Education so that parents and students understand that every day matters. When it comes to a student's education, the odd day off can have a profound impact on their attaining their ultimate education. Having one day off a fortnight would lead to four weeks a year lost in absences, which, over the child's entire education, would amount to a full year of schooling lost as a result. I can imagine that these absences creep up on families. It is not necessarily immediately apparent that so many days in the classroom have been missed.

The Government intends to have a 95 per cent attendance rate for students in our public schools. In 2022 the attendance rate hit 85 per cent, which is 10 per cent lower than where we want it to be. That number has reached the high 80s, but we need to do better. We believe the Every Day Matters program will have a big impact on turning around educational obtainment in our schools. Independent studies reported in 2017 that positive attendance behaviour for year 7s led, on average, to three months of increased schooling or better outcomes for year 9 kids. That is a reasonably short period and an indication of how these things can add up if there are repeated student absences. [*Extension of time*]

I am aware, of course, of the irony of having a gallery full of school students in the Chamber and obviously not in the classroom today. I would love to tell them that they will get a better education in here than in the schoolroom. But, unfortunately, I cannot make that bold claim. But the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment results indicate that New South Wales has dropped from sixth to twenty-third in the world for reading, from ninth to thirty-first in the world for maths and from third to twenty-third in the world for science.



These are major and steep declines in education outcomes in New South Wales. We are determined to reverse it. Part of reversing it is improving wages and conditions for public school teachers, and part of it is ensuring that kids get the best out of their education, which means turning up whenever and wherever they possibly can.

### RENTAL MARKET

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (11:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. His very first piece of rental legislation has been referred to a parliamentary committee before it has even been debated. Is this because he forgot to consult stakeholders, renters and property owners, who are saying that his proposed ban on secret rent bidding would actually drive up rents?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (11:12):** I thank the member for Willoughby for his question. I am proud of the Government's record of having a policy positive reform agenda for the rental market. In the spirit of cooperation we are known for with our crossbench, we will do this properly. Not only that, but consultation occurred prior to the election, when we announced it and had a round table with our stakeholders. Of course, we also had consultation prior to the legislation being tabled. In the spirit of cooperation, I thank the member for Sydney, the member for Wagga Wagga and other crossbenchers who came and consulted with me about that. They said, "We want a little bit more time", and that is okay. In the spirit of cooperation, I think we need to do that. Funnily enough, I was anticipating this question from the member for Willoughby. I say this to him: The reason I want to do this in a nice, structured approach is—

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I want to take the time to do this right, to give our crossbench the opportunity to take this slow, because we want to do you slowly. That is exactly why. We want to do you slowly, buddy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Opposition Whip will come to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** What I am waiting for now is fightback on rental reform—fightback! I will give the good member some tips. I would suggest using oakleaf lettuce, which is a bit softer, dipped in warm water because we are waiting to be whipped with warm lettuce by the member for Willoughby with his rental package. I am looking forward to it. All I say is this: We have a great reform agenda on rentals. We understand that the rental market is stressed. This is a fundamental mismatch—

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** It is a fundamental mismatch between demand and supply, 12 years in the making. Can I have an extension of time?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has asked for an extension of time.

**Mr Tim James:** He is doing such a bad job, I am happy for him to continue.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** That is okay.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time is extended by two minutes.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We all know that the rental market stress at the moment is actually because of a fundamental mismatch between demand and supply. Nevertheless, we will continue with our reform agenda. We will start with ending secret rent bidding. This is fundamentally a disclosure measure, a notification measure about transparency and fairness and, I would have thought, about power to the consumer—the power of information to the consumer to make the best choice for them in the best circumstances. On top of that, we understand the financial pressures that renters are under. That is why our portable bonds scheme is so important. On average, a rental bond is about \$2,200. For most families, that is equivalent to about 11 weeks of groceries. So this specific measure is a real financial saving for the market. This is so important.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Why haven't you consulted?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** We have consulted.

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I have done more consultation on this process in the past two weeks than those opposite did in 12 years. Where were they?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Terrigal to order for the first time. The member for Tamworth will come to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Where were they for 12 years?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will cease assisting the Minister.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** We have a crux in the market that has been building up for 12 years. Those opposite were silent. They went to bed. They are the ultimate Gruffalos living in the cave. Here they are. All I say is this: Our reform agenda is big. In this colosseum of verbal policy contests, in this arena, we are policy weaponised, we are physically fit and we are ready to rumble.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired. I note the Minister's invocation of some memories of the Hon. Paul Keating. I appreciate that. I look forward to receiving advice from the student leadership group at some later stage as to how I can better manage the Chamber. Anything in writing would be appreciated.

### MOTHERSAFE PROGRAM

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:17):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will he update the House on the immediate action the New South Wales Government is taking to support pregnant women through the MotherSafe program?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:18):** I thank the member for Coogee, who is a terrific advocate for hospitals in the south-east, particularly the Royal Women's, which she has a very strong and productive relationship with. That is two Dixers in a row. I thank the member for Willoughby. That does not normally happen in this place. Before I touch on this issue, I will reach out to a couple of people I met last night at around 10 o'clock during one of my visits to Campbelltown Hospital. James, Christine and Lauren—a clinician, registered nurse and emergency consultant doctor—work in the Campbelltown emergency department, which was incredibly busy. They were working very hard to improve patient flow. I recognise them.

Hyperemesis gravidarum [HG] is a debilitating condition that occurs in one in 10 women during pregnancy. It can be completely debilitating, with women often not able to attend work or carry out even the most basic of tasks. It is a condition that is well beyond morning sickness. I am sure that those of us in this place who have known someone with it, or who perhaps have had it, will agree that it causes significant emotional, psychological, social and even financial distress. The member for Coogee and I recently met with Catherine at the Royal Hospital for Women. It was not Catherine, Princess of Wales, who also suffers from HG.

The Catherine whom I met, with the member for Coogee, was a nurse. She spoke to me about the debilitating condition that is HG and the way that it impacted on her entire family and on her experience during pregnancy. Her story and those of so many others is why the Minns Labor Government has made an incredibly important commitment: \$17 million will be allocated over four years to expand a highly successful service, and one of the first in the world, the MotherSafe telephone service based at the world-class Royal Hospital for Women. That commitment will go to a service that provides women direct access to trained counsellors and pharmacists, who can give rapid and specific advice around how they manage their nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Critically for me, and for many members in this place, the expanded service, which will now run from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., will be targeted at and available to women right across rural and regional New South Wales. *[Extension of time]*

It will enable them to access a MotherSafe doctor without being forced to travel sometimes many hundreds of kilometres, particularly in an electorate like that of the member for Barwon, where I was the other day, to access clinical care. This is a game changer for those women. I thank Catherine and the other women who have advocated to me for this service for some time. I know, as does the member for Coogee, that it will deliver real benefits. It is just one of the ways that the Minns Labor Government is driving services to improve women's health issues. Yesterday the Minister for Women talked about our landmark funding agreement, doubling the funding for women's health services—the first real funding increase in nearly three decades. I joined the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the member for Penrith, in Penrith, to make that announcement. The member for Shellharbour and I went to the Illawarra Women's Health Centre to make that announcement.

The 20 services around regional and rural New South Wales, including metropolitan areas, are making a real difference to the lives of women, particularly—and importantly, for me—vulnerable women who may not always be able to access primary health care in the way that others do. We are also expanding the role that pharmacies play. By July this year, we will have 1,000 pharmacies trialling urinary tract infection [UTI] diagnosis and rapid intervention so that women do not have to go to a doctor for an uncomplicated UTI. We will be trying

to deliver it as quickly as possible. We will do the same with the contraceptive pill. It is all about making access to women's health care as easy and effective as possible, no matter where women live across New South Wales.

### INNER WEST BUS SERVICES

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (11:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Considering the privatisation of bus services in New South Wales has been a disaster for commuters, particularly in Sydney's inner west, will the Government commit to bringing region 6 bus services back into public hands when the contracts expire in 2026?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:23):** I thank the member for Balmain for her question. I appreciate her interest in delivering reliable bus services for her community, for our community in the inner west and, indeed, for all passengers across New South Wales. We all know that the consequences of the former Liberal Government's privatisation of our bus services across our city and our State are very clear. We have seen hundreds and hundreds of trips cancelled. We have seen routes cut, stops closed and buses cancelled due to acute bus driver shortages, and with very limited communication to passengers and the community who need those services.

In fact, we have seen schoolchildren left on the side of the road, unable to get home, and thousands and thousands of passengers stranded in long queues waiting for a bus. We have also seen a two-tier wage system created, where two bus drivers driving out of the same depot and driving the same route are on different pay and conditions. That is one of the reasons bus drivers are leaving the industry in droves. It is absolutely clear that the system of privatised bus services set up by the former Liberal Government is not delivering for passengers or our transport workforce.

There is no easy fix. We on this side are determined to deal with the legacy of the former Liberal Government, because they have left a mess in every single mode of transport, including our buses. The member asks me about the future of region 6 and the contract that was signed by those opposite. It is two years away from expiring. But, as the member knows, passengers cannot afford to wait two years. So we went to the election promising to get to the bottom of these problems by establishing a Bus Industry Taskforce, with real teeth to drive real change.

*[Interruption]*

Those opposite might interject, but the fact is that we are dealing with a complete mess, which they left. The newly minted task force will play a key role in dealing with the consequences of the former Liberal Government's privatisation. It is chaired by John Lee, a former CEO of the State Transit Authority and of several private bus companies.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Those opposite might like to listen, because I know their residents would like to know when their buses are going to turn up too. John Lee is supported by representatives of BusNSW. *[Extension of time]*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kellyville will come to order or he will be placed on a call to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** John Lee is supported by representatives from the bus industry and BusNSW, by the NSW Council of Social Service, by Local Government NSW, and by workforce representatives from the Rail Tram and Bus Union and the Transport Workers' Union. This task force is going to look at better delivery of services, including contract and performance management, and the contracts that those opposite signed five minutes before the election. It is going to look at service planning, including the equity of services across our communities and, in fact, the review of routes, region by region.

We are also looking at the infrastructure and technology that supports the effective delivery of bus services and, in particular, the transition to zero-emissions buses. I know that the member for Balmain and her community enjoy those emissions-free buses. We want them across New South Wales and we want them faster. One of the bus task force's roles will also be to examine the future of bus contracts when they expire, and obviously that includes region 6. Critically, the task force is looking at driver shortages and how we can work quickly with industry to address them and set up a sustainable future for the bus industry. Every member in this House and every passenger across New South Wales needs access to the transport that they rely on to get to work and to school. That is the ambition, but the task force has a very big job ahead. We need to do better in service delivery and contract management. That is why the task force will have 12 months to deal with this challenge that we were left.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Those opposite keep interjecting, but they created the problem. We will deal with the consequences of the privatisation of our bus services left to us by those opposite.

### RURAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on what immediate action the Government is taking to make travel across regional New South Wales safer and more inclusive?

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Task force. Let me guess; go on.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:29):** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Goulburn. She has not come to see me, so she does not know what is going on in her electorate. And, no, it is not a task force. Wendy, don't jump in. Just slow down and wait for it. It is coming for you. The bus is going to pick you up, darling. But just wait.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Mr Speaker, the buses are coming for you too. I acknowledge the students—they might have gone now.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a new student cohort coming into the gallery.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I acknowledge the member for Bega. He is a wonderful MP in his community. He is also a wonderful person and a strong advocate for all of those issues. As I said yesterday, we know that transport and roads are a social determinant of health, education, opportunity and jobs. But the most important thing is that they are a benefit for social inclusion. I am so proud of what is happening in Transport for NSW from collaborative discussions with our workforce. In my first month as Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, I have had the pleasure of unveiling two initiatives, which really will make an absolute difference to the lives of people in our community who are living with disabilities.

I pay special tribute to the fantastic Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion because she is such a strong advocate. One of the first things we did together as Ministers was unveil the new lanyard that is being rolled out into the regions across New South Wales. It only went to the city under the former Government. People with hidden disabilities can use this lanyard to identify themselves to Transport staff. Some 90 per cent of the staff are trained specifically in dealing with the special needs of people with disabilities when they travel. They will identify themselves. People with hidden disabilities do not have to wear the lanyard if they do not want to, but it is available and they will know that a staff member will understand.

The identifying lanyard came out of an unfortunate situation. What is really important is that Transport for NSW staff came up with a solution. They said that someone with a disability should be able to access the disability facilities—all those sorts of things—available in the transport infrastructure. They should not have to ask or beg. They should be able to identify themselves discreetly to a member of staff. Most importantly, they should know that Transport for NSW is an organisation and government service that works for everyone in our community, not just those who do not have any disabilities and can run to catch a bus or hop on and off easily. [*Extension of time*]

People with disabilities have barriers and we want to make sure we get rid of them. Another initiative we are trialling also came from the wonderful people at Transport for NSW, who are really service focused. This initiative came from those working the long-distance coach routes that continue our train link services into regional areas when there are no trains. I hate saying "defibrillators" because I cannot say it. The AEDs, automated external defibrillators—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Heart-starters.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The heart-starters, the packer whackers—whatever you want to call them—are being trialled on 53 routes to ensure that journeys of more than four hours to remote areas are safer. It might be a route from Dubbo to Broken Hill, Nyngan to Lithgow, or Moree to Grafton. People using those long-haul coaches will have added protection in the event of a heart attack. We know that those train link bus drivers are able to provide CPR. They are trained in first aid, but the AEDs will give them additional assistance until help arrives. Each year 30,000 people in Australia experience sudden cardiac arrest and currently only one in 10 will survive one.

The member for Bega is very concerned about the health of people in his community and across the State. But this initiative will really make a change. When administered quickly with early CPR, a defibrillator can increase a person's chances of survival by up to 70 per cent. They save lives. It is as simple as that. I am just so proud that we are taking a collaborative approach as a government. It is a fresh start. We are listening to the workforce and they understand that we want to hear their solutions. Not every good idea in government comes

from the politicians; often it comes from the people at the coalface. I congratulate everyone in Transport for NSW on their work.

### ENERGY PRICES

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (11:34):** My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Energy in the other place. Given the Australian Energy Regulator has confirmed electricity prices will increase by 20 per cent to 25 per cent from 1 July, why is the Government not providing \$250 of energy bill relief to all households across New South Wales, as proposed by the Coalition?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:35):** I have a kind heart. I feel really bad for the member for Drummoyne. I really do. I think it is really terrible that members on the other side of the House decided to give the member, who made her inaugural speech only yesterday, a question that will be absolutely smashed out of the park.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** That is patronising.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** The member for Miranda can say whatever she likes, but it is really unfair to put the member for Drummoyne in that position. I will say a few things. I will tell the member why we are not providing \$250—because we are providing \$500. The reason we are doing that is because we are putting our \$280 million with the Feds as well. Members sitting on the opposite side of the Chamber were providing \$250.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Upper Hunter will come to order.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** The problem is members opposite have walked into a problem and they do not want to hear the answer. We doubled their \$250. They did not have anything for businesses, but we are providing \$650 in energy relief. What is amazing is members on the other side of the Chamber seem to have forgotten the facade that they created. They had this great idea and they let us believe they were doing enormous things for energy. I remember the former energy Minister saying that they were going to reduce energy bills. He was walking up and down the Chamber, saying, "We're going to reduce energy bills by \$130 or \$400." The cost of energy went up by over 33 per cent. Mr Speaker, do you remember the renewable energy zones that were meant to make all of the difference in the world?

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** That is what they said they were going to do. Where are their renewable energy zones? They did not even get a shovel-ready project. It was all talk, all smoke, all mirrors and no action. Members opposite have asked about energy relief. We have an outstanding Minister in the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who has made an enormous change and is doing wonderful things.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Let me just finish off with this one point about the difference between members on this side of the Chamber and those on the other side. They went to the election and they said that there would be energy relief. Everyone was excited. We went to the election and announced \$500. When we got their books we discovered what they had done. Mr Speaker, guess what they had done. The reason the former energy Minister is quiet is because he knows what he did. They implied funds were there. They budgeted for only two-thirds of the population. They pretended it was their own. This side of the Chamber is the side of action and members on this side are getting on with the job. The opposite side is the side of smoke and mirrors. We are fixing their problem. We are going to help the people of New South Wales after members opposite let them down for 12 long years.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:38):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please inform the House on what measures the Government is taking to reduce development application [DA] times and get supply moving in New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:38):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his question and also for representing me recently at the opening of Carramar Park. His junior footy career did not put him on the map there, but his work as a local member certainly did. His work as a local member will be long remembered. But the member for Fairfield has cottoned on to the fact that housing supply pressures are gripping our State. They have been felt for a long time, and it is time for a fresh start. Our

population is growing, and the Commonwealth Government's National Housing Accord sets a shared ambition to build a million well-located homes over the next five years. Construction trends in New South Wales suggest that we will get to 180,000 of our share, which leaves us about 134,000 new dwellings short.

But the member for Fairfield asked about DA assessment times. Reports show that the average assessment times for development applications have blown out from 69 days in July 2021 to 116 days in March 2023. In other words, average DA processing times have doubled in a couple of years. Slow DA processing turnarounds are a roadblock that we cannot afford. We need to be moving faster, not slower. That is why I have requested that the Department of Planning and Environment look at regulatory reforms and new ways to speed up the system, including adding things like artificial intelligence to the planning toolkit, which could be used to help assess DAs more quickly against local environment plans and development controls.

That might be of interest to the students in the gallery today, because urban planning is one of the great occupations of the future. Urban planners can have a real influence on how their cities and communities are worked out. We have a shortage at the moment, so there are plenty of opportunities for those students. To increase the number of new planners, the Government is providing \$25,000 to up to 64 councils to help pay their tuition costs—a measure that has been welcomed by both the Property Council and the Planning Institute. The Property Council stated:

This is welcoming news to see the government working to improve and incentivise the flow of student planners into local councils to help bridge the resourcing gap [developing] at a local government level ...

The Planning Institute backed it in as well, so both the development side and the planning side are backing it in. The Planning Institute stated:

As the professional association for planners, we have a strong focus on workforce development to address the shortage of planners ...

We fully support Minister Scully's announcement of a \$25,000 bonus for the next generation planners.

Building more homes is a problem and a challenge we face together. [*Extension of time*]

We all need to do better to keep tackling the housing challenges that we face. But while the Government wants to build, others want to block. I have a treasure trove of information on the efforts members opposite have gone to to block housing supply in their areas, and I will go through them one by one. I will start with the member for Wairoa. He appears to have spent more time dedicating himself to the task of opposing the housing that key workers and students like those in the gallery might need than he did to his ministerial activities. In 2020-21 the member for Wairoa played a hands-on, active role in blocking a housing target of 3,000 to 3,600 new dwellings in the Ku-ring-gai local government area [LGA] over about a 10-year period. That is not a huge amount; it is not a huge uptake. He is over there—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** That is false—the target was being met.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for Wairoa is yelling that that is wrong, but the mayor actually acknowledged in a mayoral minute his efforts in knocking down housing targets in his own area. He was knocking them down in a whole LGA. Is it any wonder that young people like the students in the gallery walked away from you lot in droves at the last election? And they will keep doing it. Opposition members created the situation we are in, and they seem determined to continue to exacerbate that situation. They want young people and families not to have access to good homes, good jobs and opportunity. [*Time expired.*]

#### REGIONAL APPRENTICE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT TRAVEL CARD

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. The Minister has said that young people in regional areas matter. For the 5,302 regional apprentices currently using the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card and the thousands of university students still waiting to apply for one, because the Government is not allowing them to, will the Minister confirm that the card will not be axed in the September budget?

**Mr Chris Minns:** It is not in the budget.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** It has been fully funded, so will the Minister keep it?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. I am not sure whether he had completed his rather long question, but we get the gist of it. The question was directed to the Minister. Members will not debate it across the Chamber.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:45):** It is great to have that question from the member for Dubbo, who is welcome to ask about anything in his electorate at any time. But I give the member a little heads-up that some people on his team are not on his team, if you know what I mean. They are asking some questions in the other place and they are a little bit unsure of what happened when the member for Dubbo was a Minister, so they are saying things that are not quite true. If they were still Ministers of the Crown then they could be told that they were misleading the House, so it is really important.

First we have to go back to the budget issue. As we go through the budget line by line, we are discovering so many more budget black holes—\$7 billion, so it is a big problem. I think members opposite have been reading what is happening in the Legislative Council because they want to know how to ask questions in question time. It is good that they are trying to get some advice from somewhere, but do not get it from Sam; that is all I can say. Sam did not fund this. It appeared in the budget last June as a \$98 million spend, and we kept trying to get some clarity on it because we were worried about apprentices and university students as well. We were told there was money there, but my briefing stated, "Oh, no, Minister, the money"—

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Do you want the answer or not? Jenny has the conch.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is a very simple question: Will the card be axed in the September budget or not?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Manager of Opposition Business. I will hear more from the Minister.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The real issue here is the budget, and we have to talk about the budget. That is the situation.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** My first briefing stated, "No, Minister, there is no money. This is all out of the internal Transport for NSW budget. It is not extra, additional, new money." So where is the money coming from? It is coming from roads. All those apprentices on our roads who are breaking their rims, tyres and inner coolers are paying 400 or 500 bucks to get them fixed so members opposite can give 250 bucks to apprentices in their electorates. That is not the way to run a program to fix our roads. It is not a way to help with cost of living, because I do not know many apprentices who say—is the member going to give me more time? Does he want the answer?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I request an extension of time for the Minister to answer the question: Will she cut the regional apprentice and uni travel card from the budget?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will calm down. The general level of noise is making it very difficult for people, including Hansard, to hear. It is not a particularly good example for our guests in the gallery. I grant an additional two minutes for the Minister to provide further information.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Former Minister Faraway misled the other place last night when he said that the card could be constrained in its spending, because the problem from the get-go is that it flat out cannot. All they can do is check that it gets spent at a particular merchant, which might be a service station. When someone gets to the servo, do they have to pay for fuel? No. Can they pay for Fanta? Yes. Does that sound good, kids—Fanta and chockies? The students in the gallery are too young to smoke and should not take it up, but they could actually buy cigarettes with this card. That is a joke. This is not a public transport issue.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** If someone gets this card and goes down to Wagga, can they use it on the buses? No, because the buses do not take electronic ticketing. But if an apprentice wants to go to the pub on a Friday night, they can use it for the taxi fare on the way home—if there is still a taxi industry after members opposite have finished with it.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That is ridiculous, so we are looking at the budget and we will look at policy implementation, but we will not be looking at pork-barrelling that members opposite are going on with. Seriously, if you are going to copy questions from the Legislative Council, check the facts, do the research, and actually look at what this is about.

**The SPEAKER:** That was fun.

**TRANSPORT FOR NSW CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:50):** My question is addressed to the wonderful Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the result of the Government's most recent Transport for NSW customer satisfaction survey and what it reveals about the former Government's record on public transport?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:51):** I thank the member for Blacktown for his question and for his interest in quality public transport services for his community. As the member alluded to, recently I released the latest Transport for NSW customer satisfaction survey. The survey of 19,000 passengers across public transport was conducted in November and December last year. I have to say the results of the survey did not surprise me and I am pretty sure they would not surprise anyone on the Government side of the House. In fact, they would not surprise passengers who regularly use public transport. The figures reveal that satisfaction has declined across almost every mode of public transport, including in areas like punctuality, reliability, cleanliness and availability of information. All of those things are key to running a successful public transport system.

Let me go through some of the numbers. Satisfaction with buses and light rail declined 3 per cent overall, which is the lowest level in five years. Satisfaction with our train services completely fell off a cliff, declining 8 per cent in just six months, which is the lowest level of passenger satisfaction in a decade. This is the report card on the former Liberal Government's performance on public transport. This document represents the passengers of New South Wales giving a mark to the former Liberal Government when it comes to public transport, and what do we think it got? A big fat "F" for fail—a complete and utter failure!

The results reflect the deep-seated problems we inherited from those opposite that we now have to deal with. In fact, passengers have lost faith in public transport. People have lost faith because it is just too unreliable. I must warn the House that the results of the next few surveys are likely to be bad—if not possibly worse—because we are going to have to fix the mess that members opposite left us and it will take some time. Members opposite are probably grateful that this survey was not done in March. Do members remember the month of March? *[Extension of time]*

**Government members:** Yes.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Let's remember what happened in March. In March our trains system ground to a halt three times, leaving hundreds of thousands of passengers absolutely stranded. These are not just numbers on a page. These are people who are desperately trying to get home to their families, trying to get to appointments and trying to get to work on time. What they are telling us is pretty clear. They are saying their train or bus is late, that they have to wait too long between services and that those services are not clean. And what happens when something goes wrong? The sound of silence! Not enough information is provided to passengers. They do not know how long they will have to wait and they do not know what the other options are for getting home. All of this is absolutely obvious to Government members, but not to members on the other side of the House.

The former Liberal Government and its conga line of completely inept former transport Ministers were either oblivious or downright negligent, because now we know that they actually designed an unsustainable train timetable; that they knew that there was a backlog of maintenance; and that the system was neither reliable nor resilient. They sold off our buses to private operators and they wrote contracts that left them unaccountable for cancellations and underperformance. Then they went back time and again to buy overseas-made trams, ferries and trains, sending thousands of jobs offshore and leaving passengers and taxpayers with a complete and utter mess. This is the mess that the Labor Government inherited from those opposite across every single mode of public transport. The passengers have given the former Government an absolute "F" for fail.

**NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE REGIONAL GAMES**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:55):** My question is directed to the Minister for Sport. Given the success of the regional NRL games over the past three years, will the Minister commit to continuing the Coalition's legacy of funding NRL games in regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:56):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for that question. Of course, we are reviewing all expenditure in terms of supporting NRL and great sports. That is what we are about. We are not about just looking after one particular precinct or one electorate. We are about looking at the overall welfare of sport. We will definitely be looking to support activity in regional areas.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It doesn't need 16 years.



**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That is all you need.

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

### RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, representing the Minister for Energy. Will the Minister update the House on the status of renewable energy zone projects and outline the immediate action the Government has taken to get a better deal for New South Wales electricity users?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:57):** I thank the member for South Coast for this really important question. I commend the outstanding decision of the people on the South Coast, which is one of the most beautiful places in the world after Bankstown. A little while ago I spoke about energy and, lo and behold, I have another question. Today the Government published the inaugural *NSW Network Infrastructure Strategy*, which provides guidance about the transmission infrastructure needed to transport renewable energy from the renewable energy zones to where it is needed. That is important infrastructure. This is the first time that the time frames and costs of renewable energy zone network infrastructure have been published by the New South Wales Government. It is a damning indictment of the legacy of the former Government's approach to energy policy and transparency.

On many occasions the previous Government was asked about costs and time frames, and it remained silent. You cannot spin fantasy in pursuit of a headline without eventually being caught out, and those opposite have been found out for peddling in smoke and mirrors. We have discovered that the previous Government did not disclose that two projects will now be delivered later than initially expected. And, more than that, both of those projects will come in at a much higher cost than was first estimated in 2020. The New South Wales energy transformation is not smooth, and it is not easy, which is why the Government is being up-front. This is a fresh approach. The Government is being up-front about the likely costs and the time frame.

I remind the Opposition that when current Government members sat on the benches opposite, we gave a warning that this was coming. In February, when the Australian Energy Market Operator's *Electricity Statement of Opportunities* was released, I said—and I will quote myself—of the member for Hornsby, who was then the energy Minister, "The self-styled man with a plan is once again found wanting as his energy plan sees New South Wales on the verge of an energy crisis."

**Ms Liza Butler:** I request an extension of time for further information.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister obviously has more lines to deliver. An additional two minutes is granted.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I will quote from this speech in a couple of months as well. Labor pointed out that the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone did not have a single shovel-ready project even though it was the most advanced of the renewable energy zones. Labor members warned for years that when you privatise essential energy assets you forgo significant leverage to manage energy transition.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I am really pleased to say that the Government and the Minister for Energy have commissioned an independent check-up of energy policies. The Government is committed to the task of delivering the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

**Mr Matt Kean:** So you are going to keep the policy.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** What is different is that this Government is telling people what is going on. The check-up will identify what the Government needs to do to remove the barriers to delivery in order to accelerate the delivery of infrastructure into the ground.

**Mr Matt Kean:** You're so outraged that you're keeping it.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Those opposite are all talk; it is all action on this side of the House. The check-up will ensure that New South Wales has the right policy settings. The Government can manage any residual effects and will consider opportunities for New South Wales. This will be an eight-week check-up conducted by Mr Cameron O'Reilly of the firm Marsden Jacobs.

**Mr Matt Kean:** He helped write the policy! He was my senior bureaucrat. He'll tell you how good the policy is.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Those opposite may wish to laugh at that. We will make sure he is the right person. He is an energy and a public policy specialist.

**Mr Matt Kean:** He will tell you how good my policy is.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** What we are seeing here is someone who is protesting a little bit too much. The Government is fixing the problem.

**Mr Matt Kean:** I am not protesting. I appreciate you keeping my policy.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** We are moving forward. It was a bipartisan approach. Labor members have always said that if there is good stuff, we are going to work with it and make it better. We voted for it, if they remember. What we have got here is a government of action, a fresh start. We on this side are making a difference. The Opposition is peddling smoke and mirrors.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that the member for Hornsby was somewhat invested in that particular answer, but the member will come to order.

### WAKEHURST PARKWAY

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:03):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Roads. For too long, desperately needed upgrades to the Wakehurst Parkway have been neglected by successive governments. Will the new Government deliver its pre-election commitment of \$13 million for the flood mitigation works, as well as the previous budget allocation of \$75 million for the Wakehurst Parkway, so that the people of the northern beaches who rely on this crucial arterial road can have it fixed once and for all?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:03):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for the question and congratulate him on his emphatic victory on 25 March. I welcome our shared interest in things like cricket and also in better public transport services and safer, reliable roads. As the member well knows, and as his community knows, Wakehurst Parkway is one of the most important roads in the northern beaches. It passes through Oxford Falls, Narrabeen and Frenchs Forest to North Balgowlah. It is a critical thoroughfare but it is also surrounded by places of important cultural heritage and environmental significance, so the Government needs to get this right.

The parkway north of Warringah Road, as the member for Wakehurst and locals know, is prone to flooding. In fact it floods and is closed six to seven times a year on average. Consequently I am pleased to confirm to the member and to the House that the Minns Labor Government has committed \$13 million to fast-track work on flood mitigation measures along the Wakehurst Parkway. This funding is in addition to the \$18.1 million already provided to the Northern Beaches Council to improve flood mitigation on Wakehurst Parkway.

The member will also be glad to know that the New South Wales Government is investing \$75 million in total to improve safety and capacity on the parkway. The proposed improvements to the road will help to reduce accidents. They will improve access to the Northern Beaches Hospital—something that is very important for the member's community. Ultimately, it will save commuters time. The Government wants to make sure it is dealing with the environmental impacts. It will improve efficiency, safety and active transport along the corridor. It is also using technology better, particularly when it comes to flooding incidents. Along the way, the Government wants to ensure that it provides better access to public transport.

The Government is carrying out widening of Dreadnought Road to the Oxford Falls Road intersection, with an additional southbound lane from Dreadnought Road to Trefoil Creek, and improvements at Elanora Road at Elanora Heights and Mirrool Street at North Narrabeen. The investigations and works will ensure that this Government gets this right, and the community will be informed along the way. Ultimately, it will improve road safety, network efficiency, capacity for future traffic flow, public transport and active transport opportunities. While a lot of the work will be carried out to minimise traffic impacts, there will be some disruptions along the way, so I welcome the member's enthusiasm for these works. The Government will work with the member and his community to minimise the impact on commuters across the northern beaches.

### WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:06):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Women. Will the Minister update the House on what action the Government is taking to support and help women back into work?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:07):** I thank the member for Penrith for the question. I know that the member is truly embedded in her community, so she understands the issues and appreciates the work that the Minns Labor Government is doing to support women to re-enter the workforce. It is true that women's participation in the workforce has increased, but it still remains at a lower rate compared to men. Women often face common and persistent employment barriers. For some communities, there are additional complexities unique to their needs, life stages and circumstances. It is essential that women have every opportunity to participate fully in the workforce, whether they are entering the workforce for the first time or returning after a career break for parenting or caring commitments.

Increasing women's workforce participation is a cornerstone; it is essential to achieving gender equality and economic security. That is why the New South Wales Government's Return to Work Pathways Program is investing over \$2.7 million in funding to organisations supporting women to overcome persistent barriers to employment and giving them the skills, opportunities and confidence to carve out meaningful careers. Under the Return to Work Pathways Program, organisations are funded to deliver tailored wraparound supports to women experiencing enduring and complex barriers to employment, connecting those women to services, training and employment opportunities. The program will support more than 1,000 women, over two years, to become job ready and to secure sustainable employment.

Funding totalling close to \$2.74 million has been awarded to 13 applications. The target recipients in the successful applications include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls; women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; women and girls who have a history of, or who are currently experiencing, homelessness or socioeconomic disadvantage; carers; and women aged 65 years and older. The Government is thrilled to be supporting projects that deliver community-led, wraparound support to the women who will benefit most. I talk a little bit about one of the successful applicants, the Angus Knight Group. One of the programs under the Angus Knight Group banner is Real Futures. The CEO of that program is Christianna—Christi—Cartwright. [*Extension of time*]

Christi is a young Indigenous woman who grew up on the mid coast of New South Wales and was a teen mum. Programs like the Return to Work Pathways Program provided a young Christi with support and mentoring to transition into employment. In 2012 Christi became General Manager – Indigenous Programs at Real Futures. In 2022 she became the CEO. I am pleased to inform the House that Christi has also been awarded a scholarship to Harvard Kennedy School for rising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaders. Christi is just one example of what programs like the Return to Work Pathways Program can deliver to women in New South Wales. I look forward to hearing about the success of more women like Christi through supporting return-to-work programs.

On Monday of this week, I had the pleasure of visiting one of the successful organisations, the Two Good Foundation. It will be delivering the Work Work program, which will support women who have experienced domestic and family violence and homelessness on their pathway to employment. Participants will be supported to become job ready, with support from a social worker, coaching and training, along with meaningful employment in the Two Good kitchen. The recipients exemplify the grassroots efforts being undertaken by the Minns Government to support women to gain employment. Other successful recipients include Dignity Ltd, the Older Women's Network NSW, Carers NSW, Whitelion Youth Agency and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Those programs will ensure that women from focus communities receive the wraparound support that they need to return to work or enter the employment market for the first time. This Government is committed to increasing women's participation, which will lead to benefits for the entire State and foster economic equality. It was a great question from the member for Penrith.

#### SPORTING GRANTS

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (12:12):** Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I provide additional information for the benefit of the House. On 11 May the member for Hawkesbury asked a question about WestInvest. I advise the House that the Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, has portfolio responsibility for WestInvest. I encourage the member to direct her question to the correct Minister.

#### ENERGY PRICES

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice to a question asked by the member for Manly on 10 May 2023.

**DISABILITY INCLUSION**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked by the member for Kiama on 10 May 2023.

*Personal Explanation***ACTIVE KIDS PROGRAM**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:13):** By leave: During question time yesterday it was asserted by the Minister for Sport that in my capacity as sports Minister in 2022 I took a submission to the Expenditure Review Committee, a subcommittee of Cabinet, regarding Active Kids funding. He suggested that I tried a second time to get Active Kids funded at the end of 2022. I did not do any of the things the Minister alleged in the House during question time yesterday. The budget process for the next New South Wales budget had not started before the general election in March 2023. The advice to me when I was sports Minister was that the Active Kids program had been previously funded through the ordinary budget process and, as that process was to commence after the March 2023 election, that was the time to bring forward a funding proposal.

It was my intention to bring forward such a budget proposal if I had remained the Minister for Sport after the election. Inconsistent with the Minister's statement—and he would be aware of this through his department—late last year I authorised the development of a new IT platform prototype testing with a number of sports providers so that Active Kids vouchers could be available after June 2023 on a new IT platform. Those are the actions of a person contemplating that Active Kids vouchers would continue beyond the budget-funded period of 30 June 2023.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH****Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 24 May 2023, Janelle Anne Saffin was elected Deputy Chair of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health.

*Bills***GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (GRANTS) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:17):** It is with both pleasure and sadness that I continue my contribution to debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023. Prior to question time, I was making the point that the person who spoke on the bill prior to me, the member for Kellyville, as he is now known, was essentially rewriting the history books about what actually happened under the previous Government with its finances and implementation of various grants programs. There was a clear admission by the member in his contribution that the former Government deliberately and tactically went through grants processes to make sure that the funds it had made available were being targeted towards its own electorates.

That is quite an admission, but members should not be surprised. Former Premier Gladys Berejiklian admitted the same, and former Deputy Premier John Barilaro, the member for Monaro at the time, not only admitted the same but also gloated about the fact that the grants process had been so interfered with, so corrupted and so targeted specifically at government electorates that he proudly, openly and publicly took on the moniker of "Pork Barilaro". It is disappointing to be debating this bill today. Politics should be a noble profession. Unfortunately, every member of this House knows how politicians are mistrusted in their communities and their electorates.

Politicians have a pretty bad name. We have a bad rap. The reality is that most politicians are fantastic, decent, honest, hardworking people. But we pay the price for those who are a scourge on our role. We should not have to introduce legislation to say that a Minister must act with integrity. That should not need to happen. Sadly, over the 12 years that I spent in opposition, I watched the deterioration in the conduct and integrity of various Ministers on the front bench of the previous Government. During that time Premier Barry O'Farrell was elected by a landslide but ultimately resigned over his failure to disclose that he had received a bottle of wine. In recent years, it was common practice for Ministers to not tell the truth in this place, deliberately mislead in public and, behind closed doors, engage in a grants process that was not fair or transparent.

Indeed, the former Premier of the State was found to have shredded a series of documents relating to a particular grants process. That is right: The Premier shredded documents so they could not be revealed at some later date. Her actions were found to be inappropriate. More importantly, her actions were contrary to the New South Wales State Records Act, which requires that people like the Premier or a Minister keep hard copies of their records for the record books. We had a Premier who was dishonestly and inappropriately—and with a fairly strong tint of corruption—actively participating in the distortion of the grants process. We had a Deputy Premier who was crowing to the public about his willingness to do exactly the same. We heard secret recordings on FriendlyJordies that would make any New South Wales citizen's stomach turn, regardless of how they vote. It does not matter what your politics are; if you listen to that recording you will be disgusted by the frivolous language used about taxpayers' money.

The nub of it all, for me personally and for the State at large, is that for all the crocodile tears we now see from members of the former Government, so many things in this State need to be funded properly. We need funding security and certainty. Already this year question time after question time has been spent talking about the need to fund certain programs properly. But the former Government, now the Opposition, was rolling out grants programs by taking on debt. It amassed debt of more than \$180 billion. When the Coalition came to office State debt was around \$20 billion; 12 years later, it is \$180 billion. So the State racked up \$20 billion of debt in 160-odd years of Parliament, and then the previous Government put on another \$160 billion of debt in just 12 years. Now the State has an interest-only bill of \$7 billion a year. I emphasise that is interest only; we are not paying down the debt. A lot of that \$180 billion in debt was taken on to pay for grants.

Today the entire State has responsibility for the debt and the interest, but when the debt was taken on the funds were rolled out only to a select few. They only went to those seats that were yellow or blue politically. I have the great privilege to represent the people of Cessnock in this place. I know of at least two instances when grant applications were submitted by members of the Cessnock community, bureaucrats assessed the applications and considered them to be incredibly worthy and they were placed very high in the order of priority to receive grant funding, only for a Deputy Premier, a Premier or another Minister to throw out all the bureaucrats' work and install their own priority list. Essentially, an applicant needed to be in a Liberal Party or a National Party electorate to get a grant, no matter how worthy their project was. That is not how grants are meant to work. Grants, by their very nature, are meant to be open and accessible to all.

If Government members want to make sure that their local communities get money, then put that into the budget process. Do not call it a grant, put it into the public realm and give people a false sense of hope that they have equal opportunity to access it. That is being dishonest not only in the budget and to this House, but to the entire population of New South Wales—no matter how they vote. I emphasise that point because in every electorate some people vote for the sitting member and some do not. In my electorate there are National Party voters and Liberal Party voters, but they could not access grant money because they are represented by a Labor MP. The scenario was the same in other seats. It is sad and disappointing that we need a law to control the conduct of people who would become Ministers of the Crown. A person who does not have the self-control to conduct themselves with integrity, honesty and truth should, first, not come into this place; and, secondly, never accept a ministerial role where they are handling money, because they are not worthy. They are not capable and they should never, ever have that opportunity. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:27):** In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the second reading debate on the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023. As I said to the House in my second reading speech, it is clear that accountability, transparency and integrity need to be at the heart of government. That is the reason our Government has made this bill a priority. We believe placing these requirements in legislation—the one thing those opposite refused to do—is a serious statement of intent. If this bill passes, it is a statement by the House and the Parliament of how seriously we regard these matters.

As members will be aware, the bill proposes amendments to the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 to impose certain duties on Ministers and other government officials when approving or declining government grants; and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 to provide that certain information about government grants is open access information that must be made publicly available.

I now deal briefly with matters raised during debate. The member for Oatley queried what advice had been provided about the meaning of "value for money" and whether the inclusion of the requirement that a Minister be satisfied that a grant achieves value for money might reduce the concept to an economic or financial consideration only. In consultation with the Grants Community of Practice, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has already provided guidance on assessing value for money.

That guidance provides that determining value for money in grants administration requires an assessment of the lifetime benefits of a grant opportunity against its lifetime costs; and a cost-benefit analysis, which offers the most comprehensive means of assessing value for money, incorporates the complete range of expected benefits and costs across the grant lifecycle, and can consider economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits and costs, as well as their distribution across the community. The imposition of this new requirement will not affect the approach to assessing value for money. I note the comments made by the member for Kiama yesterday. I will address those comments in responding to the amendments he is seeking to move to the bill. The passage of this bill will strengthen the regulation of grants administration in our State. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum called for.*]

**Mr Michael Daley:** Madam Deputy Speaker, once a quorum has been called members of the House cannot walk out. That is disorderly and they should be counted in the quorum. There are four members left, we need 16 members.

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! I declare that a quorum is present. Standing Order 44, Disorder on call of quorum, states:

It is disorderly for any Member:

- (1) To call attention to the absence of a quorum when a quorum is present.
- (2) To leave the Chamber after attention has been called to the absence of a quorum.

I draw that standing order to the attention of the Opposition members who left the Chamber after a member of the Opposition had called for a quorum. Keep it in mind for next time.

### Motions

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:37):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the International Day of Mourning occurred on 28 April 2023 and Unions NSW and SafeWork NSW held an official memorial service at Reflection Park, Sydney.
- (2) Notes that the International Day of Mourning is observed worldwide to pay tribute to those who have lost a loved one to a workplace accident and raise awareness about the importance of safe workplaces.
- (3) Recommits itself to reducing the number of people killed in workplace incidents or due to work-related diseases.
- (4) Extends its sincere condolences to family, friends, colleagues and communities affected by a workplace incident or workplace disease. Madam Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to your important position. It is with great honour but also sadness that I introduce this motion on the International Day of Mourning in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament of New South Wales. I spoke on the International Day of Mourning at Reflection Park at Darling Harbour. It is a very significant and difficult day for thousands of families across Australia and around the world. When I spoke on that day, alongside me was a gentleman named Dave White. Dave lost his son, 18-year-old Joel White, who was electrocuted on a roof. It was absolutely devastating for that family. The Cassaniti family lost Christopher Cassaniti four years ago, another 18-year-old man, who celebrated his eighteenth birthday a few days before he died. I acknowledge Trish Cassaniti and the incredible work she has done establishing the Touched by Christopher Foundation.

I have met many families who have lost loved ones due to a fatality at work. We have a long way to go. This Government has inherited a very difficult situation with respect to SafeWork NSW. In opposition we advocated very strongly to ensure there was a review into SafeWork, and that is currently being carried out by Justice McDougall, who will provide a report.

**Mr Michael Daley:** He is a very good judge.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I acknowledge the interjection by the Attorney General. Justice McDougall conducted the review into icare, and he is currently conducting the review into SafeWork. At the International Day of Mourning, Unions NSW's Mark Morey spoke on behalf of affiliates who represent thousands of workers in construction, maritime, electrical, manufacturing and other high-risk industries. Yesterday, delegations of essential workers organised meetings with MPs, and I met with a number of those in maintenance and manufacturing. Safety issues at work—near misses and rushing to finish a job—arise again and again. I am passionate about safety at work and the Labor Government takes workplace safety seriously. I am honoured that the Premier appointed me Minister for Work Health and Safety.

We want to ensure that we not only strengthen our laws but also have our wonderful SafeWork and safety inspectors on the ground at construction and other high-risk industry sites. Unfortunately, over the past two weeks, close to 10 people have died at work. Those fatalities could have been avoided. I acknowledge the role of the union movement and the incredible work it does in ensuring that people come home from work safely. That is what our Government wants to see. I am grateful to the Injured Workers Campaign Network that Unions NSW has established. I am also proud that, after a lot of advocacy, SafeWork NSW has a Family and Injured Workers Support and Advisory Group, which supports injured workers and families who have lost loved ones.

We need to listen to people and what their families are going through. The role of this Government, and mine as Minister, is to listen and take action to make sure that we have more inspectors. We want to establish a tripartite protocol and a consultative group, made up of employers, industry, government and unions, that involves sitting around the table, listening to each other and acting. It is very important on the International Day of Mourning to reflect and to take action as the Government.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:44):** On behalf of the Opposition, I mark the International Day of Mourning that occurred earlier this year. It is right that we should recognise it in this place. Every year, that day marks an occasion for us to reflect, to remember those who have lost their lives, and to look at what more we can do for those who have suffered a workplace-related illness. On such a day we think deeply about those who have lost loved ones. But our thoughts and sympathies are also with all families and friends affected in any way, including those who suffer from ongoing conditions or illnesses through workplace engagement.

Workplace death and illness have a lasting toll and come at a heavy personal and social cost, aside from economic and other considerations. It is common ground for all members in this place to say that everyone deserves to come home from work safe and sound, because we all care about that and share that aspiration. A lot has been achieved in recent times to improve workplace safety. We have come a long way from where we were as a society, as a State and as individuals. We are doing more today than has been done in years gone by. Indeed, New South Wales does very well by world standards. But we can always do better and more. Any death in a workplace is one too many. It should be, and is, our goal to strive towards no deaths in the workplace.

On the International Day of Mourning we pause and commit to working towards enhancing practices, measures, risk management and protections for workers to further improve workplace safety. The former Government took a number of steps. We provided a unified and consistent framework for work health and safety, emphasising the shared responsibility of employers, workers and other duty holders in maintaining a safe work environment. It was the Coalition Government that set up SafeWork NSW as the State's dedicated work health and safety regulator. We made comprehensive reforms to the workers compensation system to improve recovery and return-to-work outcomes for injured workers, whilst reducing the financial burden upon employers and the community more broadly. We assisted small businesses in meeting and implementing safety improvements through programs, rebates and much more.

The Minister for Work Health and Safety referred to the review by Justice McDougall, and we look forward to its outcomes. I look forward to engaging as part of that process when the time arises. There is no question that work health and safety matters to all of us. Importantly, these days that includes physical health as well as mental health. Again, I think we all share high aspirations in both respects. I recognise all the people who work and serve in this space, whether it is in a professional, charitable or personal capacity or otherwise. The many people involved in work health and safety matter, and I recognise them on this day. I will be very much engaged in listening to, acting for and serving this important part of our State, our economy and our community. Once again, we on this side of the House mark the International Day of Mourning, and we pause, reflect and remember those who have lost their lives or suffered in workplace-related events and/or illnesses.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:50):** I support the motion. On the International Day of Mourning, we remember the dead and we fight for the living. The date, 28 April, was originally chosen by the North American trade union movement to commemorate workplace deaths and fatalities. It chose 28 April because that date corresponded with the enactment of occupational health and safety legislation in Canada and the United States of America. Workers' Memorial Day in the North American continent has spread and has now become the International Workers' Memorial Day or International Day of Mourning to remember those who have lost their

lives because of their work or because of an accident at work. It is a worldwide commemoration of workplace safety.

The theme for this year's commemoration in New South Wales was "A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work". Parliament should embrace that theme on a bipartisan basis and commit to do more than we have been doing to make workplaces safe. We continue to have a persistently high number of workplace fatalities in this country. We know that more people die at work worldwide than are killed in wars. Many of the workplace fatalities in this country also relate to risks that the wider community are subject to, particularly transport risks. That is one of the bigger areas of workplace fatality in this country. I am sure that there are a whole bunch of things that we could work together on across the aisle and in Parliament to improve our record in that regard.

I take the opportunity to note that New South Wales has held a commemoration service on 28 April since 2006. A memorial wall was built in Ourimbah in 2006, where the names of 25 local people who lost their lives at work or because of their work are recorded. The trade union movement and the wider community have held a service at Ourimbah since then. It is a great credit to the Central Coast unions—I was a member of one at the time—that they inaugurated that commemoration. I acknowledge the support that then Wyong shire mayor Bob Graham provided. That was handy because the ground on which the memorial sits is public land managed by council. I acknowledge the many members of the asbestos disease association who reside on the Central Coast. They have been big supporters of the memorial service. I encourage all members of the House to support the motion.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:54):** The Greens support the International Day of Mourning motion moved by the Minister for Work Health and Safety, and recognise the significant grief caused to family members and workers when someone dies in a workplace. As we have heard, the International Day of Mourning plays an important role in commemorating workers who have died in workplace incidents or as a result of workplace illnesses, as well as those who have been disabled, injured or made unwell as a result of their work. On 28 April every year, colleagues, friends, family and comrades come together to commemorate their loved ones' lives and share their memories. But we also use this day to reflect on how we can work together across the political divide to prevent these incidents from ever happening in the first place and pledge our solidarity to the collective action of unions and workers to continue the struggle for safe workplaces.

We should never accept that anyone in our community might go to work and not return home or might suffer a long-term illness causing death as a result of their work. But, sadly, too many existing workers in New South Wales are not afforded that dignity. I acknowledge that the past couple of years with the pandemic was a particularly difficult time in terms of work health and safety. The inequity of worker safety was laid bare. While so many of us, including members in this place, were able to safely work from home, many—nurses, paramedics, doctors, teachers, delivery drivers, aged-care workers, hospitality staff and those working in temporary and gig-related economies—faced significant risks and challenges in their workplaces during that time. Many international students and those on temporary visas had little or no choice but to rely on getting money in unsafe or insecure work. The impacts on them and their families and, in some cases, the tragic consequences of that work, are significant.

It is also important to recognise the failures of governments, particularly in recent times, to provide adequate support and oversight of work health and safety. I acknowledge the fact that I feel a sense of optimism and hope, as I am sure many in the Injured Workers Support Network do—whom the Minister and I met with on a number of occasions—as well as those workers and union members who come together at the memorial that Unions NSW holds every year on or around 28 April to commemorate those who have lost their lives. I acknowledge the fact that there is a sense of optimism that the new Minister will take these issues very seriously. For the past 12 years under the former Liberal-Nationals Government, putting the interests of workers over the interests of big developers, big construction industries and big corporations and their profits has sadly never been a priority.

I believe that this Minister and this new Minns Labor Government will do exactly that. New South Wales can start the process by legislating to ensure that industrial manslaughter is an offence. I am proud to say that The Greens have been trying to do that through private members' bills for more than two decades. Members may recall Michael Organ, who was for a brief time The Greens member for Cunningham in Federal Parliament. I acknowledge the fact that, when my partner worked as a staffer for him, he drafted The Greens' first private members' bill to try to recognise industrial manslaughter in legislation. I acknowledge the grief and loss that families feel. We all have a responsibility to make sure that everybody is able to return safely home from work.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:58):** The health and wellbeing of workers across New South Wales has always been, and always will be, a part of core business for the New South Wales Labor Party. Time and again, across many years—100 years—the union movement has advocated continuously and the efforts have



been never-ending to ensure the health and safety of workers in New South Wales. Unions do so much for workers in this State, including ensuring safety. I acknowledge a couple of unions that have consistently done that well: the United Services Union, under the stewardship of Graham Kelly; and the Health Services Union, under Gerard Hayes and Lynne Russell. Those three incredible union leaders in our State have been around for a long time, and every time I hear them speak, it is always about work health and safety and protecting workers.

Injuries and deaths have been reduced significantly over the years, but everybody who goes to work has the right to come home the same way that they left. Workplace deaths are tragic for the victims, their families, their friends and their communities, because one death from a workplace issue affects hundreds of people. It is not just that one death but the ongoing psychological trauma that goes with it, which is passed on from generation to generation. The never-ending effort of the union movement cannot be underestimated, and I pick up on the calls by the member for Newtown to legislate mandatory sentencing. That is an admirable place to start, but there is so much to be done. If we relax on that issue, it will only get worse and more people will die.

I remember sitting in opposition in this place in 2012. My friend the Attorney General was there at the time, and he will remember the night when the Liberal-Nationals Government took a sledgehammer to workers compensation legislation. They reduced it almost to the point of no return. That night was one of the darkest in my time in this place. It was around 2.00 a.m., so it was under the cover of darkness, but the people of New South Wales knew exactly what members opposite were doing.

They then got rid of police death and disability arrangements while they were at it, and since that time I have met numerous people in my electorate office in Shellharbour who have been injured in accidents at work but unable to access appropriate treatment. That must change, and I point my finger directly at the Liberal Party and The Nationals for where we are today. That disgraceful legislation did not need to happen—maybe some work around the administrative area of the Workers Compensation Act, but not what members opposite did. They made things so much worse for so many families and so many injured workers.

**Mr Michael Daley:** It has cost lives.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** It has cost lives. That legislation has resulted in suicides, and those opposite should absolutely hang their heads in shame. Government members will never forget what happened in 2012 and will ensure that we strengthen that legislation.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (13:02):** I support the motion recognising the International Day of Mourning. In doing so, I pay tribute to the memory of workers who lost their lives during the course of their employment—everyday people like you and me, earning a living, providing for their families and making plans for their future. According to Safe Work Australia, in 2021 there were 169 workplace fatalities. New South Wales accounted for the largest number of workplace deaths, with 46. That is approximately one worker out of every 100,000 who stepped out their front door to go to work and never came home.

We all grow up expecting to live long, fulfilling lives, and every workplace death is a tragedy. Tragically, it is not only the victim who suffers from a workplace fatality; it is their loved ones—their spouse, partner, parents, children and grandchildren. The people left behind are made to suffer the sting of losing not only a loved one but also in many cases a provider. In 2021 over 25 per cent of reported work deaths were workers aged between 55 and 64. Just under 20 per cent were aged between 45 and 54, and approximately 15 per cent were 35 to 44 years old. Many were mums and dads who did not come home to their loved ones—families who not only feel a great personal loss but also are burdened with financial hardship and uncertainty.

The International Day of Mourning takes places on 28 April each year. Unsurprisingly, the union movement marks the occasion by commemorating the hundreds of loved ones who have lost their lives at work and by making a commitment to fight for greater safety standards in the workplace. On 28 April Unions NSW and SafeWork NSW hosted official State memorials in the Sydney CBD, the Central Coast and the Illawarra. The movement responsible for securing meal breaks and rest breaks, long service leave, sick leave, unfair dismissal protection and workers compensation unsurprisingly ensures that the people who have lost their lives at work are not forgotten. Over the past 12 years the expertise and voice of the unions have been sidelined in New South Wales. That ended on 25 March with the election of the Minns Labor Government, which is committed to working with the union movement to make our workplaces safe. At its heart, the International Day of Mourning is not about loss; rather, it is a commitment that we will continue to strive to make our workplaces safer.

It is not surprising that the 2021 Work Shouldn't Hurt survey, completed by over 25,000 workers across many different industries, found that workplaces with union safety representatives were safer workplaces overall. The survey concluded that 79 per cent of workers with a health safety representative present said their workplace complied with work health and safety policies, as opposed to 51 per cent of workers with no health safety representative present. I commend Unions NSW and the union movement for their vigilance in ensuring our

workplaces are safe, so that one day we may have fatality-free workplaces. I honour the memory of workers who were not able to return home to their families as a result of a workplace tragedy.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:06):** By leave: The International Day of Mourning takes place on 28 April, when we commemorate the lives of people who died at work—lives that in most cases are tragically taken decades prematurely. The following day, on Saturday 29 April, I joined the community that I represent at the Cumberland City Council's annual workplace tragedy memorial service, which they hold every year at the Goodlet and Smith Brickworks site in Holroyd Gardens in Merrylands. The brickworks site is historically significant as the first mechanised brick plant in the region and one of the very earliest in New South Wales. It was also the first place in Australia to manufacture Marseille tiles. The brickworks is also a site where workers lost their lives. The memorial was attended by representatives of the Asbestos Diseases Foundation, who come every year because so many people in our area have lost their lives or are faced with the horrors of terminal illness through asbestos diseases.

I reflect on a contribution made that day. At the memorial site there is a wall of the old brick pits with plaques for the many local residents who died prematurely at work or from injuries sustained at work, in many cases through asbestos diseases. Leah Norman attended the memorial. Her great-uncle Albert Kearns was killed in the brick pits. He died on 9 August 1927 from the severe injuries he sustained after getting caught in some of the brickworks machinery, when he was only 18 years old. He lived only a few hundred metres away on Pitt Street in Merrylands. Having died so young, he never had the opportunity to marry or have children. It was a great loss to Leah's grandmother—his sister—and his life has not been forgotten by the family. It is an absolute tragedy that someone so young would die at work.

I also reflect on the legacy of asbestos diseases. In the electorate I represent, there are still numerous sites where fill containing asbestos is constantly being found and new cases are being diagnosed every year. In 2021, 722 people were diagnosed with mesothelioma. In 2020, 701 people with mesothelioma died. Between 1982 and 2021 the number of new cases of mesothelioma reported annually increased steadily from 135 to 577 for men, and from 22 to 145 for women. Over the 2018-21 period in New South Wales, 805 men and 184 women—a total of 989, or roughly one-third of the cases across Australia—were diagnosed with mesothelioma. That is an absolute tragedy, and one that we see all too often in the area around the James Hardie site. No-one should die at work and no-one should die from the legacy of the work that they do.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:10):** In reply: I thank all members who have spoken on this very personal and moving motion, including the shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building and member for Willoughby; the member for The Entrance—and I acknowledge the work he does on the Central Coast; the member for Newtown for her passionate speech; the member for Parramatta, who I know has walked alongside many of the families of those who have died at work; the member for Shellharbour, who I thank for her passionate speech and her advocacy; and the member for Granville. I share with the member for Granville that I too have been invited to the memorial at the Holroyd brickworks. Everyone ought to go there—the spirit of the memorial ensures that we continue to reflect, to mourn those who have passed and to learn lessons.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm that the Minns Labor Government's commitment to workers' safety does not end with words and acknowledgements. I draw attention to the headline, "Minns pledges to ban the most dangerous engineered stone benchtops". In February, Labor's leader and now Premier led the way. A few days after the Premier announced Labor's commitment, New South Wales was the State with the highest number of silicosis deaths. Silicosis is a preventable occupational disease. Labor has a strong policy of working with our Federal counterparts. Minister Tony Burke is doing some very important work. Labor's commitment is to ban manufactured stone with silica concentrates above 40 per cent by July 2024; to consider the introduction of a mandatory registration and licensing scheme; to work to strengthen regulations based on experiences in Victoria; and to establish an expert panel to review and strengthen the screening regime. I am also pleased that Labor is committed to providing \$5 million to the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute.

I am very proud of the fact that the New South Wales Government has a very full agenda, because it has listened. The number of people dying from silicosis, an entirely preventable disease, has increased, and we also still have people dying from asbestosis. Last Friday I visited the Dust Diseases Care Health Screening Clinic. I thank the workers and clinicians there for their very important work. I acknowledge what has been said by the shadow Minister and member for Willoughby. It does not matter whether you are blue, green, yellow or red: The Minns Labor Government's commitment is to see people go to work, work in a safe environment, and return home safely to their families.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Members*

### INAUGURAL SPEECHES

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Wollondilly, I warmly welcome all who are here in the public gallery to watch her inaugural speech. They include family, friends and Mr Laurie Ferguson, former Federal member for Reid.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (14:32):** Can I say what a joy it is to be introduced in this House as an Independent member by an Independent Speaker, surrounded by noisy political parties on both the left and the right and with so many Independents in our very considered and influential crossbench. Many inaugural speeches claim for a hope of big political opportunities and careers to come and a desire for the ministry. From my perspective, and the people I represent in Wollondilly, there are no personal aspirations to get in the way of what is most important and what we can achieve along the way. I am ready to take on the challenge and bring all of my life experiences and learnings to the Parliament. The late and great Dr Seuss once wrote, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Lifelong learning is what motivates me to defeat the challenges for myself and to help others.

The start of my journey in many ways began with my mother, who was always helping someone in the community. She was one of the first Queen's Guides in Western Sydney. When I was seven, she enrolled me as a Brownie. To this day I remember the promise I made on receiving my badge. It went like this, "I promise to do my best, to do my duty to my God and my Queen, to help other people every day, especially those at home." I learnt that a promise is something you make for life and that home means community. It was a promise not made lightly and a promise I hope to continue to fulfil for my community.

I was raised in Western Sydney with a very mixed background: Chinese, Spanish, Scottish and English grandparents. It is a diverse gene pool. With a mixed and eclectic family, I learnt that diverse heritage was something to be very proud of. As a child, I thought our family were very rich but, as the years went on, I learnt the family was simply rich in experience, love and joy. We made party hats from newspaper and kites from broken school rulers that we used to let go of and chase for what seemed like miles. My father was an exceptional sportsman. He made basketball hoops and high jumps for me. He ran kilometres with me to help me prepare for cross-country races. I am not sure about pinching the top of your nose to forget you have a stitch, but anyway.

My father's most incredible effort was that every morning he sat outside freezing while I clocked up many laps at Granville pool. My claim to fame was swimming in the next heat of the 100 metres freestyle just after Shane Gould broke the world record. That was a hard act to follow, but I always tried to do my best. I learnt that someone is always faster than you. I still enjoy swimming, but I shined most when I played hockey. The grass fields I played on were rough and very different to the astroturf that we have these days. When the ball was headed to the sideline and it seemed useless to chase, I kept on going because often there was a bump in the grass that would hold the ball up. Seeing as everyone else had given up, I used to take that advantage and often scored. Some say I was stubborn, but I had already learnt never to give up, no matter how long it seems to take, and others began to learn that they should not underestimate my determination.

My parents also taught me that humour is important. My parents had an engineering business where they would sometimes raise large bales of metal on a platform using a big metal pole. One day my father slipped and the bar hit his head, splitting it open. My mother drove him quickly to the hospital, but she could not find a parking space. She let him out of the car in the ambulance bay at Auburn Hospital and went to find a car spot. Inside my father stumbled to the counter and told the staff as a joke that his wife had hit him over the head. As she entered the hospital and faced the glares of the nurses, she learnt—and, believe me, later on he learnt—that jokes can cause problems if they are inappropriate. I dread to think what might have happened if he had actually died!

I learnt education was a privilege. My mother was very frustrated by being denied the opportunity of tertiary education, because women were taught to go to work, get a husband and have children. When she had three daughters, she ensured we were all given the opportunity. I attended Parramatta High School and went to the University of New South Wales. I remember on enrolment day someone looking over my shoulder and reading my address. They said, "Granville? How did you get here?" I learnt you should never judge anyone by their appearance or where they come from.

I studied and became an optometrist. While many of my fellow students opened optometry practices in fancy inner city locations, I always looked closer to home for those that I could help. For many years I looked after the eyes of my childhood community of Granville, Lidcombe and Guildford. In fact, quite a few members of this place or their families have had their eyes tested by me at one time or another. I recognise Laurie Ferguson,

the former member for Reid. I know somebody said he was their Laurie Ferguson, but I say he is my Laurie Ferguson. I was always ringing Laurie's staff to get some problem sorted out for a constituent. He was one of the hardest working members I have ever known. At work I applied my Brownie promise in helping those, especially those at home. During those years as an optometrist, I was often covered by my friends Sam Chu and Andrew McKinnon, some of the optometry association and my staff while sadly having several miscarriages and a stillbirth along the way. I learnt that some things in life stay with you forever.

Besides achieving qualifications in mediation and hypnotherapy, completing a Master of Business Administration and obtaining a private investigator licence, I have worked as an optometrist my whole career. I finished my optometry life as the chair of the Optometry Board of Australia, where we were working on getting better health outcomes, especially for rural, remote and Indigenous populations. With that and many other times in my life as a councillor, I learnt that bureaucracy takes way too long. It was in the Lidcombe practice that my political life began, although I think there is as much politics in the P&C and the local dog club.

I had a call from my mother's solicitor, Wayne Merton—whom many of you will remember—saying they were looking for a candidate for the Auburn by-election. I said no, of course, as any sensible person would do. I had been the Chamber of Commerce president and was well known in the area by my maiden name. Encouraged by a patient I was seeing at the time, I finally agreed, even though by then I lived in Wollondilly. I learnt to take an opportunity and never stay in my comfort zone. I also learnt that you could win a preselection in two days, even if you are not a member of a party, if no-one else wants to stand in that electorate.

As it was an incredibly safe seat, I was highly unlikely to be elected—although it was one of the biggest swings against the Carr Government. During that election campaign I became friends with many members in this place, including Kerry Chikarovski, who was the Opposition leader, and others in both government and opposition. Former Premiers and members helped me in their much younger years. I learnt a hell of a lot! I would also learn later that, despite friendships and effort, others can disrupt and steer their own agenda for personal political gain.

After the Auburn by-election, when the lovely Barbara Perry became the member, I realised that you could get attention for the plight of the community. I thought it would be amazing to get the same attention for my home area, so I decided to run for Wollondilly Shire Council in 2004. My first council election was at a time when only Independents ran for Wollondilly Shire Council. There were no parties or teams—just a list of five names. I stood in North Ward, and I had the honour of being elected. It is an honour I have continued to hold to this day, after being re-elected many times over.

But it was not smooth sailing in 2004. The day I was elected to council was also the day I was informed by my very glum-looking GP that I had adenocarcinoma and they did not know where the primary cancer was. I actually cannot remember my first two years on council, as I had many rounds of chemo, radiation and surgery. Once, when I was feeling sorry for myself in the radiation clinic, a very pale young child with no hair, sitting in a wheelchair, dressed in a hospital gown, asked me if I was okay. I told myself to buck up; I had nothing to complain about. I learnt someone is always worse off than you.

During this time there was a drug called Herceptin that took my chances of survival from fifty-fifty to 95:5. The problem was the cost, which was \$3,300 every three weeks for an entire year. Coincidentally, that is close to the same amount as the political donation cap during New South Wales elections. Even though I felt extremely unwell, I worked hard to afford it—but how could I sit next to another woman who could not? I learnt about the unfairness of financial inequity, but also the fruits of advocacy. With loads of help, I managed to get the drug PBS listed. I got my last treatment for free, but others who followed would get their entire treatment covered. I also volunteered to have my reconstruction surgery on TV, unknowingly sharing the screen with Sarah Jane from *Big Brother* having a breast reduction. I did this to encourage others to check themselves and act; to do my duty and fulfil the pledge I took when I was seven years old.

I have enjoyed—mostly—the years spent on Wollondilly council as mayor and councillor, often being the sole female in all levels of government locally. With this, I have learnt to have a very thick skin. In many ways, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee have always had strong Independent voices, both with mayors and local councillors. There have been many strong personalities among long-time councillors, like my friend, Emeritus Mayor Michael Banasik, and often political opponent, Col Mitchell. They were all unique and colourful. Phil Costa, as an Independent councillor who was selected in the final term of the former Labor Government, was really suited to either the benches of the Government or the Opposition. As he and I have learnt, with local politics, the political parties can often get in the way.

I thank all the councillors I have worked with over the years. I give a huge thank you to Councillor Bev Spearpoint, who pulls up the boys' club when the bullying starts. Yes, sadly, it still occurs. Thanks to my many running mates and friends around the council table, including Robert Khan; Noel Lowry; Matt Gould; Di Lange;

Michael Beshara; Simon Landow; the late Terry Atkins; the late Shane Read; and Benn Banasik, who was once my political adversary, now my friend and political adviser. I am not sure if it was a promise or a threat that he made to chain himself to me all those years ago, to protect some sort of area. I was pleased to serve as a councillor with many of you and to campaign with many of you for all those council elections. I value your friendship more than anything.

As an Independent councillor for close to 20 years, I have learnt it is tough to do it on your own. By accepting help from my community and others, you can level the playing field with the parties. I have learnt the value of building a movement and the real power of my community. To this end, I thank the donors and helpers for the 2023 election campaign who asked nothing in return. Some were Greens, some were conservative, and many were just believers in workers' rights. Firefighters campaigned strongly, along with the nurses and teachers who bust themselves every day for the benefit of us all. There were many good friends, and some people who just wanted to make a difference.

During the State election campaign, I met others who also stood and were passionate about their communities. Many of them are women, and many have been tagged as a group called "the Teals". The parties like to tag anyone who is not a member of a major party in this way. They use this tag in the media to diminish the passion you have for your area and your electorate. While women's rights have improved, we have a long way to go. The women who have been successful in getting into this place have learnt to deal with a structure and system often limiting what we can do and achieve. I am not just pointing this out to women. Critically, every member needs to learn from this.

Just last week, on being invited to turn the sod on the Performing Arts Centre in Wollondilly—which I got the funding for when I was mayor—I learnt that the builders assumed the member of Parliament must have been one of the men. Sadly, even in the lift in Parliament this Tuesday, I was asked by another member who I worked for. I am unable to understand how sticking up for gender equity, looking after our environment and, most importantly, integrity, is something to be snarled at. Perhaps it is that the major political parties feel the threat of someone with authenticity and passion. Some of those women were close to being in this place, including Jacquie Scrobie, Karen Freyer, Joeline Hackman, Victoria Davidson, Helen Conway and Elizabeth Farrelly. To these independent, strong women, I say, "Do not give up." I have learnt how New South Wales has missed out on your skills and intelligence. I look forward to a day when you are all here so that Parliament can also learn what fantastic representation you can bring.

I live in "God's country", as my friend Ally Dench calls it. Wollondilly is full of birdlife: kingfishers, cockatoos and lyrebirds. If I talk to you on the phone while at home, you can hear the bellbirds "ringing", or my guinea fowl "good-lucking". They seem to have adopted me as their unwilling leader. They come running when they hear my car arrive home or if they spot me through the window of a morning. It was with much shock that, on arriving in my parliamentary office a week or two ago, I noticed there was a painting of a guinea fowl on the wall. Coincidence? Probably, but maybe it is a sign I was meant to be here. There are goannas that steal my chook eggs, and wombats, kangaroos and koalas. A few years ago, I delivered a petition with over 13,000 signatures to save our chlamydia-free koalas. I was so disheartened when the Chamber talked about it for less than five minutes—mind you, not as disappointed as I have been with the clearing of the remaining habitat since. I learnt Parliament does not always recognise what the community values.

With changing climates, Wollondilly has suffered numerous floods and fires in the past couple of years. It is one of the most naturally beautiful places in New South Wales but is also one of the most neglected by everyone except land bankers and developers. We need to protect our unique lifestyle and our farmers, who supply much of the food for Sydney. We can have some development, but we also need the infrastructure to match. We are larger than the entire Sydney metropolitan area, and we only have one very small, underfunded hospital, two public high schools, no tertiary education provision, and a major town connected by a one-lane bridge and a hole in the wall. I might add that a bypass was promised for over 30 years. There is also an almost non-existent, badly timed public transport system.

As a Minister said to me a couple of hours ago, "You stand to gain a lot here because you've got nothing at the moment." There are families living in Coles and Woolworths car parks because of the shortage of housing and the rising cost of living. I invite all members to a forum in my electorate in July to bring together stakeholders to find solutions. Let us remember that Wollondilly, my electorate, is 95 kilometres from one end at Warragamba to the other at Burradoo. It encompasses both the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee council areas. Everything requires long travel times on our massively crumbling road network, whether it is going to school, to hospital or to work. I have learnt that you can have huge developments, but the promised infrastructure does not necessarily follow. It is time that developers and government learn that you cannot treat a community like this. In many ways, my election shows that my community has had enough.

My electorate is made up of many small villages and towns, and they are all very different. It is the land of the Dharawal and Gandangara people, whom I acknowledge today. One of our young Indigenous ladies is here with us today. It is also home to Sydney's water supply. Thank goodness the irreplaceable Indigenous heritage areas and the endangered flora and fauna are hopefully now out of danger with the threat by the former Government to raise the dam wall extinguished. I have learnt how lucky I am to live in Wollondilly. There is the new airport on our northern border, and landowners have had nonsensical impositions placed on their rights that need to be reviewed. You can now build a house with 10 bedrooms on acreage but not two houses with two bedrooms. We have had privately owned land locked up and used as offsets by government for the new aerropolis city. It is not right.

In other parts of the electorate, we have had rezonings for thousands of houses being made overnight in secrecy and with no community consultation. I have learnt that action needs to be taken to stop this, and account must be taken of the environment. The cost to live there, the long travel times to get to work, the lack of necessary health services for our aging population—particularly in the southern end of the electorate—the unfulfilled promises of infrastructure and the loss of agricultural land are but a few of the issues in my electorate. One time while I was advocating for this, I was attacked on radio by Alan Jones. I invited him out to my electorate, but I insisted that he catch public transport out there. Surprisingly, I never heard from him again. I learnt that you can call out an empty threat, and I had the honour of joining the likes of Jacinda Ardern and other prominent women that Alan Jones has targeted.

The Wollondilly electorate has been taken for granted by both major parties—by one because they think they own it and by the other because they say it is too hard to win. Funds and grants should not be divided on the criteria of a fight to win a seat. The electorate did not get anywhere near a fair share of the funding from WestInvest or the Black Summer bushfires funding. Funds went to electorates that were not affected or already had amazing facilities. The criteria used against us is that if funding is for metropolitan areas, we are called rural; if it is for rural areas, we are called metropolitan.

We have seniors unable to get the \$250 travel allowance in areas that are over 50 kilometres from any public transport. I have learnt, and I hope the parties have learnt, that there is no such thing as a safe seat. I need to do my best and do my duty. I thank many people, some of whom are here today and some are not. Some have been friends for years and some only more recently. The Bates, the Booths and the Bjorklunds—I am sure you will see your names mentioned in public acclamations I make in Parliament as most of you continue to do selfless community work for Wollondilly.

I have some special thank yous to make. I thank the whole campaign team, ably led by the amazing Di Mills and her partner in crime, Louise Edgecombe, who is the best graphic designer and now the manager of my office. Without those two ladies, I would not be here today. Over 200 local people worked tirelessly on the campaign, and they are Team Judy. I thank each and every one of you. I give a special thank you to the beautiful couple of Jan and Royce Wilson. You are family to me. I thank the Whites, the Barretts, Keith, Virginia, Alex, Brett, Frank, Graham, Ally and Sandra. I give a special shout-out to Sue and John, who were kicked out of their home for 40 years for no other reason than political revenge. I feel like I am Miss Helen in *Romper Room* looking through the glass. The list goes on and on.

I cannot name everyone because it would take forever, and I would definitely forget someone. It is not Judy Hannan's seat but rather the community of Wollondilly's seat. Thanks to you all, I am privileged and honoured to represent you. I acknowledge the previous members for Wollondilly—Phil Costa, Jai Rowell and Nathaniel Smith—and thank them for their service to the community. I also commend the other candidates in the election. There was Angus Braiden, who had just turned 18; Jason Webster; Rebecca Thompson; and Lldiko Haag. You all represent a part of the community, and I look forward to your input over the next four years. As I have learnt as a councillor, even with different opinions we can all get along for the benefit of others.

I thank my family. I thank my sisters, Deborah and Lynette, and their families. I apologise for pinching the soft drink and not returning your shorts. We were jokingly told by our parents that we needed to elope the night before we turned 21 to save Mum and Dad money on birthdays and weddings. To my sisters, you both rock. To my forgiving children, who have had an interesting upbringing, I am so proud of all of you. Going to school in the multicultural area of Granville while living on a small farm in Wollondilly built a lot of character for my children. Their teachers and the other students were always stunned by their excuses for running late, such as, "The cow had bloat and it had to be relieved by sticking a knife in it." I still remember the children sitting about two metres away from a pet cow that was giving birth and asking them what they thought. One of them replied, "Why did it go up there?"

I adore my children: Alicia, who is unable to be here because she has got COVID, and Glenn, my son-in-law, who was recently naturalised by the other orange candidate, the member for Wakehurst; Lachlan and Amelia; and my son Morgan, who is doing his PhD in Italy because he is so disillusioned by the Department of

Planning and Environment in New South Wales. I have also learnt that life throws you hurdles when you least expect it. I give a special mention to Lachlan and Amelia, as they have given me the most delightful identical twin grandsons, Arthur and Oscar. Arthur is undergoing treatment for leukemia, and they have sat by his bed with devotion for hours. Those two little boys are such a delight for all of us. I love you all dearly. You are all wonderful human beings who will fight for anyone who is in trouble or being put down. I remember a politician pulling me in close and slamming a kiss straight on my mouth, just to embarrass me. My adult son—the one who is in Italy—responded back to him by pulling him in by the hand and whacking a kiss on his mouth. The look on the polli's face was priceless.

My husband, Neil, who calls himself "the handbag", has stood by me and thrown himself into whatever support I have needed—I know you have learnt that your wife is a bit crazy but very stubborn—even when we agreed there would be no more politics and my friend Noel Lowry said, "Just one more shot!" We have had our ups and downs, but mostly ups. We have had some wonderful adventures to many countries. I am still trying to explain to people why, when I got elected, you left the country. I love you and thank you with all my heart. No-one else can share the absolute pride we have in our wonderful children. Neil, your parents were the best in-laws one could hope for; their support was wonderful. Even with the missing pet snake, your mother believed you could do no wrong. That was until she realised she was in the house it went missing in. As both of my parents passed away at very young ages, through their loss and my own illness, I have learnt that every day is precious and can be taken away in a blink.

While I did not have to wait as long for this job as King Charles III waited for his time, it still feels like it took a lifetime to come to this Parliament. Who would have ever thought! I keep my Brownie promise. I am obviously persistent, and I keep on learning. People will laugh about me quoting Dr Seuss, but there is a lot of good stuff in those books. Dr Seuss wrote *The Lorax* over 50 years ago, chronicling the plight of a community and the environment. According to the words of the Lorax, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." I thank my community of the Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands for allowing me to care.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Wollondilly for her inaugural speech. I will now take a moment for the gallery and the Chamber to settle. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you enjoy some time with the member for Wollondilly after this.

#### *Motions*

### **ACTIVE KIDS PROGRAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:04):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Government for not committing to the Active Kids voucher scheme past 30 June, leaving families worse off during a time of mounting cost-of-living pressures.
- (2) Recognises the detrimental impact cutting the program would have on the physical and mental health of young people across the State.
- (3) Calls on the Government not to scrap the Active Kids voucher program.

I speak on a very important matter: the Active Kids program. Unfortunately, due to the new Government, the future of the program is in doubt. It is in doubt for thousands of families and kids across the State. That is a shame because it is a very popular cost-of-living program which is relied upon by families to get their children out in the community playing sport and to assist the physical and mental health of young children.

The Opposition has spoken about the Active Kids program every day since the resumption of this Parliament because we believe that it is truly important to the wellbeing of the children of this State. New South Wales needs a Minister for Sport who is willing to stand up for the young children of this State and fight against Labor's slash-and-burn approach to cost-of-living programs. I like to think the best of people but, unfortunately, those opposite are struggling to understand the importance of the program so we need to take some time to talk about exactly what it offers. When I introduced this motion, those opposite were not even aware that there were two \$100 vouchers available to the people in their communities.

Under the previous Government, two \$100 vouchers were made available for people to use on sports activities for their school-aged children. I can see the confusion on the faces of those opposite—yes, there were two \$100 vouchers available. Not only that, but the Creative Kids voucher was able to be repurposed to be put towards a physical activity as well. So up to \$300 in vouchers could be used for each school-aged child to play

sport. Those opposite are still looking confused. It is quite concerning. Labor members think that they are capable of running the State, yet they do not even know what it is they are about to cut.

As I said, the Active Kids program reduces barriers to participation and helps change the physical activity behaviours of children and young people in New South Wales. For many families, particularly low-income families, the vouchers are the difference between whether a child participates in a sport at any level or at all. For some families, it means that children have the ability to participate in both a summer sport and a winter sport. Sadly, 75 per cent of children in New South Wales are not meeting the recommended daily level of 60 minutes of physical activity each day. A further 22 per cent of children aged five to 16 are reported as being overweight or obese. Since the program's implementation, over 5.8 million vouchers have been redeemed across our State, making it the largest grassroots sports-funding initiative in the nation. The program has been so successful that similar programs now operate in Labor States like Victoria and Western Australia. Adding an extra \$100 per child—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Was it in the budget?

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Slashing the Active Kids program, removing access to that extra \$100 when a child wants to play sport, will sadly mean that some children will not be able to participate in sport at all.

**Ms Anna Watson:** So it wasn't in the budget?

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** I note the interjection of the member for Shellharbour. At the end of question time, the former Minister for Sport raised how the budget process works and how budget bids are made. I appreciate that Labor has not been in government for a very, very, very long time, but clearly the member for Shellharbour is choosing to ignore the facts. That is quite standard for Labor Party members, frankly, because when you do not like what you hear you simply lie. Today the Opposition wants the Government to tell hardworking families across the State whether or not it will support the Active Kids voucher program succeeding in the future.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Point of order: The member should direct her comments through the Chair. Further, by saying that Labor Party members "lie" the member is using unparliamentary language. I ask that she retract that comment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I uphold the point of order. The terminology used by the member for Miranda is commonly considered to be unparliamentary language. I ask the member to withdraw it and to consider reframing her sentence.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** I note your comment, Mr Temporary Speaker. I will do so, accordingly. The mere prospect of the program being cut led to Sutherland Shire Little Athletics writing to me and to the member for Heathcote—who I note is sitting opposite and should be reflecting the views of her community. They have expressed concern. In a letter dated 9 May, it wrote of the "positive health and social outcomes delivered through grassroots community sport" and the value the vouchers have provided "in building a strong and healthy population that values community sport" and urged us both to continue the program. I tell Michelle from Little Athletics very clearly that on this side of the House we support the Active Kids program and we have listened to the concerns of the Sutherland shire community. We are standing up for the Active Kids program. I urge the member for Heathcote to do the same.

Of the 93 electorates represented in this place, 49—which is more than half—have had a take-up of over 70 per cent of eligible community members. This includes the electorates of a number of new Government members and crossbenchers, including Balmain, Camden, East Hills, Heathcote, Parramatta, Penrith, Wakehurst and Wollondilly. I note the time remaining is limited. The program is important to every community in the State but especially to some I have mentioned. I urge members to consider the program's importance to their communities and stand up for the hardworking families who rely on this initiative to help ease the burden of cost-of-living pressures and ensure that our young people are physically fit and mentally healthy.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:11):** I move:

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

"condemns the former Liberal-Nationals Government for not funding the Active Kids program in its budget beyond 30 June 2023 and for making no provision in the forward estimates."

**Mr Gurmeh Singh:** Point of order: I ask that you rule the amendment out of order as it has nothing to do with the original motion.



**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The amendment from the member for Heffron is in order. The amendment is about the Active Kids vouchers. The member for Heffron may proceed.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I begin by quoting Abraham Lincoln, who said, "No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar." Never has a greater fraud been committed on the people of New South Wales than the Coalition Opposition's assertion about the Active Kids vouchers. Virtually everything Opposition members have said in accusing the Government of some failure regarding the Active Kids vouchers has been inaccurate, untruthful and, in my view, improper. The reality of the situation is that the cost of the Active Kids vouchers and the Creative Kids vouchers is \$200 million a year, and \$800 million over the forward estimates. The \$200 million was not contained in the Coalition's budget in order for it to be funded past 30 June 2023 and it was not contained in the forward estimates—at all. Those opposite in government had no intention to fund the Active Kids vouchers or the Creative Kids vouchers in the short term, the medium term or at all over a four-year period. They just promised prior to the election to keep spending.

I put before the House some material from the Office of Sport so that people will be under no illusion as to what the factual circumstances are. This might put an end to the Opposition's attempt to smear the Government, which has been in office for a mere seven weeks. The Office of Sport attempted to secure an extension of the program through various channels in 2022 and 2023; however, no discussion occurred at a ministerial level and no decision was made. The Office of Sport states that an Expenditure Review Committee [ERC] decision is required to secure funding for the program's extension. The proposal to prepare a submission for the ERC in 2022 for the continuation of the Active Kids in its current form was done. However, though the Office of Sport secured a place on the forward agenda of the ERC, the proposal was never endorsed to be brought forward, and a submission was therefore never considered by the ERC.

A draft submission was prepared in the event that approval was granted for the ERC to consider the proposal, but it did not progress. New policy proposals for the continuation of the Active Kids and First Lap programs were prepared. The draft business cases were prepared for the purposes of attaching that program for both the Active Kids and First Lap programs. They were circulated to Treasury for feedback, but they did not progress any further. Service NSW had long held the position that, if Active Kids were to be extended, it would be delivered on a new platform. The Office of Sport has a service-level agreement with Service NSW to deliver a digital platform. The Office of Sport's preference was that any re-platforming work for Active Kids should wait for a decision by the Government as to the future of the program. However, given the significant amount of work required to re-platform Active Kids, Service NSW made the decision to commence the project in mid-2022.

We heard the former Minister for Sport say that he authorised it. The reality is that, according to the Office of Sport, it was a decision made by Service NSW. There was no ministerial approval and no decision made by the former Government to move forward with this program. Other information I put before the House is that prior to 25 March 2023 the Office of Sport prepared a draft submission to the ERC for the Active Kids program, which was provided to the office of the Minister for Sport by the Office of Sport. While the Office of Sport secured a place on the forward agenda for the ERC, the submission was never endorsed by the former Minister for Sport to be brought forward and a submission was, therefore, never considered. Despite the work being done, such as the economic evaluation of the Active Kids program, dated 5 July 2023—which is a valuable document—nothing happened. There was no authority from the Minister even to bring the matter forward. The matter never received any consideration. It was never funded in the budget. It was never endorsed by the ERC. It was never contained within the forward estimates.

The reality is those opposite opened it up, desperate to find some event to smear the Government or the Minister. They are responsible for the project not being funded. When the Government said that we wanted to go and find the money because it is not funded and we have been in office for only four or five weeks, they began to attack this Government and the Minister and opened up their own credibility. Those opposite can withstand no scrutiny on this matter whatsoever. They should be ashamed of themselves and should apologise to the people of New South Wales.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:18):** It is very disappointing that, rather than engage in a serious manner with the Opposition on this issue, the Labor Government again chooses to turn the motion completely on its head and not deal with the substance of the motion. Looking at the motion, I can understand why those opposite wanted to get rid of the first point, where we condemn them. But the second point of the motion recognises the detrimental impacts that cutting the program would have on the physical and mental health of young people across the State and—

**Ms Anna Watson:** You did not fund it.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Listen.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Don't you point at me.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** I didn't point at you. The third point calls on the Government not to scrap the Active Kids voucher program. Three out of four children in my electorate of Coffs Harbour use the program. Last year alone, \$1.5 million worth of stimulus was provided to the Coffs Harbour community through the program. Swimming was the top sport for males and females. Being a coastal city and electorate, it is very important that children learn how to swim. What we also see in a regional area—something far more applicable than in a city area—is much more participation. Rather than just having under-10s, under-12s and under-14s, we start seeing under-11s and under-13s as well. It is much fairer for the people of those age groups. We see more teams in different age groups and that means many more opportunities for young athletes.

The member for Miranda also touched on the fact that families had two of the Active Kids vouchers per year, with a Creative Kids voucher that could also be used for sport. Or, if your child was not sports oriented, they could use all three vouchers for creative activities. While the commentary so far has been on the Active Kids vouchers, there has been no discussion at all about whether the Labor Government will scrap the Creative Kids vouchers as well. What I find most interesting about the behaviour of the Labor Government on this issue over the past couple of weeks is the disingenuous, false and misleading way in which those opposite make claims against the former Government.

They do not take responsibility for sitting on that side of the Chamber. They are in government now. They are the ones making the decisions. If they do not want to be the ones making the decisions, why don't we on this side go to Government House and we can be sworn in as the Government? Then they can attack us all they like about this year's budget. We would happily do that. They need to step up and take responsibility for the commitments they have made to their stakeholders, who are wandering around the building on levels 10 to 12, clogging up the lifts and taking up space.

**Mr Steve Whan:** That is what he thinks of members of the public.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** It is their union bosses, going office to office, floor to floor and door to door, making sure they are doing their bidding instead of helping children and families across New South Wales with the cost of living. Are the members for the electorates of Penrith, East Hills, Balmain, Monaro, Camden, Riverstone and South Coast going to stand with their communities, or are they going to do what their party bosses tell them to do?

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** My point of order is on relevance. The role of trade unions in ensuring that workers are safe, and the reason public servants and our essential key workers are in the building, has no relevance to the debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I ask the member for Coffs Harbour to return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** I will return to the leave of the motion. Being in government is about making decisions. Those opposite are making a decision not to fund the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers. The former Minister for Sport made it very clear that those vouchers are in the budget process. Maybe those opposite need to pay more attention to what is going on in the Chamber instead of being on their phones and talking to each other. We will see what happens after their September budget. We will see whether they side with the communities and families in their electorates or with their party and union bosses.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:23):** Is that really the best that the Opposition has? Those opposite have become a bit of a one-trick pony. We are six days into Parliament, and it seems to be the only thing that they want to talk about. There are so many other things we should be talking about—the healthcare crisis and the vocational crisis that they created. We could talk about the \$180 billion debt that they have created. But this motion is really the best they have. The thing is the hypocrisy of all of it. There is a hard reality, whether or not members want to hear it: You cannot cut something that has not been funded.

The reality is that if they believed that this was so important, why did they not include it in any of their Expenditure Review Committee [ERC] forwards? The Active Kids voucher programs are due to expire on 30 June 2023. That was a decision made by the former Government. Let us be very clear. The Office of Sport attempted to secure the Active Kids program extension via the ERC. A proposal was prepared, bringing a submission to the ERC. But the proposal was never endorsed or brought forward. The submission was therefore never considered by the ERC.

I understand that the new shadow Minister for Sport is trying to prove her way back up to the front bench. Maybe that is the thing—if the vouchers are so important to her, why is she not asking the people who were sitting around the table at the time? That includes the member for Hornsby, the member for Wahroonga and all of the people who sat around the table when the proposals were brought forward to them and rejected. Again, let us be clear: The Office of Sport attempted to bring submissions when those opposite were in government, but they refused. That is the reality. The Office of Sport prepared the draft submissions, not the government of the day—now the Opposition. The hypocrisy of this motion is that those opposite claim to care about it, but the reality is so far from that.

We on this side of the House have inherited \$180 billion in debt. We are trying to undo it. The answer is clear: They have defunded the program. Now they are asking us, and we have to clean up their mess. We are working through it. We have made a commitment that we will come back as soon as possible with an answer, but it is a mess that we have inherited. It is an absolute joke. I am in favour of the amendment moved by the member for Heffron. The Office of Sport tried to get funding twice, and yet their Cabinet rejected it. They cannot talk about what we are not doing, when they were in power for 12 years and could not secure the program.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:27):** I support the motion of the member for Miranda. I use the sporting clubs of Manly as an example, or a microcosm, of sporting clubs and organisations around the State that have come to rely on the Active Kids vouchers to support their wonderful work. The vouchers have provided an opportunity to families across the State for their young people to get involved in sport of all different types. The uptake of the Active Kids vouchers for the electorate of Manly was 82 per cent of the eligible population. The gender breakdown was 49 per cent female and 51 per cent male. The top activity for males was soccer, with 2,300 vouchers created. Soccer was equally the top sport for females. Then it was swimming, cricket, basketball, rugby union, tennis, Australian Football League, surf lifesaving, active recreation and rugby league. A great mix of families, sporting codes and organisations were making use of what was a wonderful program.

Looking at the average cost per season for some of those sports, hockey is over \$800 per season; basketball is more than \$700; football is more than \$500; Aussie rules is more than \$500; touch footy is more than \$490; and on it goes. I cite research from the University of Western Sydney. It is a great example of how the Active Kids vouchers went some way to offsetting the cost-of-living pressures experienced by families across the State. I received correspondence from the president of Brookvale Football Club, Sam Mesite, writing on behalf of the club's 1,200 registered footy players. He said that the program was critical to the Brookvale Football Club:

... vouchers have significantly helped families of our young football players as they have had to contend with the challenges of COVID-19 (two seasons in a row) and now rising interest rates and the pinch that places on families with mortgages.

He also wrote:

These are times when families are being forced to make decisions on what they can and can't afford and a decision to continue to allow their children to participate in sport has numerous benefits for the people of NSW.

...

We implore the NSW Government to continue funding the AKV Program for 2023/24 and beyond.

I also received a letter from the chief executive officer of Surf Life Saving Northern Beaches, Tracey Hare-Boyd, a fantastic member of a local club of mine. She wrote:

There is a concern for me, not only as a member of Surf Life Saving but as an active patrolling member.

She wrote that, over the COVID lockdown, youth suffered when it came to getting involved in sport and she noted how useful the Active Kids vouchers were in providing families with the opportunity to get kids to learn to swim. She said that nippers who join the club come from not only around Manly and the Northern Beaches but also out of area, and that families drive from all over Sydney to attend and remain involved in the Sunday morning nippers program. Members opposite have used so many words to say absolutely nothing—the former Government this, the former Government that. The motion offers a very simple opportunity. Members opposite should just support it. They are in government now. They can make the decision to back in the Active Kids program.

Believe me, I know it can be difficult to acknowledge getting things wrong. But Government members need to acknowledge it happens. It is very simple to acknowledge that it was a great program. We have heard from members opposite about how useful, important and powerful the program has been in changing people's lives and in supporting young kids across New South Wales. For those reasons, they should support our motion. One member said that the House should be debating many other things. Well, I do not think so. We should be debating this topic. Members opposite have the opportunity to support the motion and continue the program, so as the Government they should get on with it and do it.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (15:31):** What rank hypocrisy from the Opposition. After question time during the personal explanation from the member for Wahroonga, the Opposition effectively confirmed exactly

what the Government has been saying about the Active Kids program being unfunded. We have already heard today about the history of proposals being prepared but not submitted to the Expenditure Review Committee. In that personal explanation after question time, we heard the former Minister saying something along the lines of, "The Treasurer told me it would be considered in the next budget so I didn't put it forward". What an admission that is. It is like *Oliver Twist* saying, "Please, sir, may I have some more?" "No, you may not." And why not? Because, very clearly, the former Government set the program up so that it was not funded over time and then members could walk into this Chamber and set off a landmine during the budget process.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The member for Monaro has misrepresented to the House my personal explanation after question time. I request that you ask him to withdraw the misrepresentation. He can read what I said in *Hansard*, but he is not to misrepresent my personal explanation to the House after I have gone to the care of giving it. He is a former Minister of the Crown. He ought to know better.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** To the point of order: The member for Wahroonga has not taken a point of order. If he wants to make another personal explanation, he should do it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Monaro will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It is very clear from what Opposition members have been saying that they had no plans to fund this program. How do we know that?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** We don't fund things in opposition. You fund things in Government. That's the way it works.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** We had a funding proposition is the interjection from the member opposite. The fact is, if you go to the Parliamentary Budget Office's [PBO] election funding requests—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Monaro will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** We can see how sensitive the member for Wahroonga is, because he has tried to mislead this House constantly over this matter. When you go to an election in this State, the PBO receives budget costings.

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The member for Monaro has accused me of misleading the House. He ought to withdraw that personal imputation. He knows there is a right way to make an imputation and it is not like that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member has asked that the member for Monaro withdraw his comments.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** To the point of order: "Misleading" is not unparliamentary language. It is well accepted in the course of parliamentary debate to use the word "misleading".

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** To the point of order: Further to the comments of the member for Monaro, imputations of improper motives fall under Standing Order 73. The member should refresh his memory.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I have sought advice from the Clerk. The point of order taken by the member for Miranda was that imputations against members must be made by way of substantive motion. That said, a great deal of terminology has been thrown around the Chamber in this debate. The term "misleading" is not considered unparliamentary in the way that the word "lying" is. However, I ask the member for Monaro to focus his comments on the leave of the motion rather than on the member for Wahroonga.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It is entirely relevant for me to question the comments of Opposition members in the debate. They rolled into this House on the second day of sitting with this pre-prepared landmine because they knew they had not funded this program. We know they had not funded it because it was not in their forward estimates, they had not made a submission to ERC, and they had not submitted the program to the Parliamentary Budget Office for their election costings. The people of New South Wales need to know that members opposite are a bunch of hypocrites who have come into the Chamber calling for something that they were not willing to fund. We know the attitude of The Nationals. They think essential workers are clogging up the lifts of Parliament. That is pretty appalling language.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Monaro will be heard in silence.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I can tell members opposite that sports participation is very important for this State. I spent a long time working on sports policy, and people in difficult economic circumstances cannot participate in sport for a number of reasons. The people of New South Wales can be assured that Labor will take those reasons seriously. It will not respond to the political games of those hypocrites opposite.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:38):** In reply: Unfortunately, this debate has disintegrated and it is now not about the wellbeing of young people in the State. That is what we were trying to debate today—why every young boy and girl who wants to play sport while growing up should have the opportunity to do so. The debate is also about why they should continue to have the assistance that was afforded to them by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, which eased the cost-of-living pressures and also ensured that they had the opportunity to be physically fit and mentally healthy.

That is a shame because members opposite are now in government. Governments set budgets, and they are avoiding the very simple question: Will they fund the Active Kids vouchers? I am not interested in hearing their excuses about what they think may have happened, because we all know they are wrong. The Minister offered an explanation after question time, but that is not good enough. Members opposite are in government, so they should step up and make a commitment. They should tell the people of New South Wales, unequivocally, that they will fund the Active Kids vouchers. If they are not funding them then they should go back to their electorates—to Heathcote, Shellharbour, Coogee and Monaro—and tell those families that they are not prepared to support young people in sport.

On 20 March the Premier said, "Yeah, we're going to roll them over in a similar way to the New South Wales Government." He was quite happy to say that to the people to get their votes but, now that he is in government, he is not prepared to follow through and fund the hardworking people of New South Wales. Young children will ultimately miss out as a result of members opposite. They are happy to give \$16 million to Ultimate Fighting Championship cage fighting but, when the Minister was asked whether he would fund Active Kids, he had no answer. He could not even tell us how many vouchers he could have created out of that \$16 million. The Minister says it is not his job to work that out, so I will make it really simple for all those opposite. Sixteen million divided by 100 is—drum roll—what is the number, guys?

**Opposition members:** A hundred and sixty thousand!

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** A hundred and sixty thousand. Every member on this side of the Chamber can do the maths; it is little wonder that members opposite cannot. Those opposite are only interested in finding money to run the agenda set by the union bosses; they are not interested in the cost of living.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 76, which is relevance to the debate. I ask that the member for Miranda come back to the leave of the motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I uphold the point of order. The member for Miranda will return to the leave of the motion and the amendment.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Members opposite continually say that they do not have the money to fund the program, but it is quite simple: They are in government, so they can spend the money on whatever they want. That should be the Active Kids vouchers.

**Mr Steve Whan:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Steve Whan:** Taking the lead from the member opposite, that was a misrepresentation of the position put by Government members. To be very clear, we said that members opposite had not allocated the funding when they were in government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** There is no point of order. The member for Miranda will be heard in silence for the remaining 20 seconds.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Labor members need to come clean with the families and kids across New South Wales about why they are looking to cancel vouchers, increase cost-of-living pressures and ultimately force many young people out of sport. On this side of the House we want to see that important program continue for the families and young children across the State.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Miranda has moved a motion, to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....52  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....16

**AYES**

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Hagarty, N  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M

Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Regan, M  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Whan, S (teller)  
Wilkinson, K

**NOES**

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M

James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D

Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

**PAIRS**

Minns, C

Clancy, J

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....52  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....16

**AYES**

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S

Hagarty, N  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J

Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Regan, M

## AYES

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

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Minns, C

Clancy, J

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

### DAPTO RESIDENTS MOTORWAY ACCESS

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:54):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the residents of Dapto and West Dapto do not currently have fair access to the M1 Princes Motorway, including the Albion Park Rail bypass, between Dapto and Yallah.
- (2) Recognises that the previous Government unfairly denied access to the M1 Princes Motorway for residents of Dapto and West Dapto.
- (3) Acknowledges that the Government will now act to ensure fair access to the M1 Princes Motorway for residents of Dapto and West Dapto after 12 years of inaction by the former Government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will leave the Chamber quietly.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The people of a large section of my electorate, including Dapto and West Dapto growth areas, have been treated as second-class citizens by the former Liberal Government, including the former Liberal Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. This stunningly beautiful part of the world is one of the fastest growing regions of New South Wales.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Who?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Opposition members will come to order. I am sure the member for Shellharbour will not incite Opposition members further.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** People moving to those suburbs, including the brand new greenfield subdivisions in places like Wongawilli-Horsley, deserve to have fair access to the main highway that cuts through their region, the M1 Princes Motorway. The residents of this area, including the hardworking people of Kanahooka, Koonawarra and Haywards Bay can see the M1, hear the M1, put up with the air pollution from the M1, but they cannot easily access it. What a joke! The newest section of the M1 that cuts through the Illawarra is the Albion Park Rail Bypass—a truly fantastic piece of infrastructure that cost taxpayers around \$690 million but that the local people cannot use.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I warn Opposition members, particularly the member for Kiama, that I will call them to order and then they will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** Yes, throw them out. That would be great.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Shellharbour will refrain from inciting interjections.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** There is nothing in this life that I regret.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Kiama will remove himself from the Chamber for the next seven minutes for making that inappropriate comment.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** Good decision.

**Mr Paul Scully:** The best seven minutes of this Chamber's history.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I might be legally blind, but I am not legally stupid.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He should be out for longer after that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Kiama left the Chamber at 15:57.]*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I will consult the Speaker. The absence of the member for Kiama from the Chamber may be extended. Government members and Opposition members are behaving in an unparliamentary manner. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The half-cooked Albion Park Rail Bypass has made access to West Dapto an absolute nightmare for residents. As it stands, residents and workers from this area are forced to use the old Princes Highway, which increases travel times and impacts on local residents by adding to congestion on local roads. We all know why this was done. It was done so that wealthy residents from the leafy North Shore and the eastern suburbs of Sydney could have a clear run down the coast to their holiday homes. The Liberals do not want Labor voters from Dapto interrupting their journey by merging into their lanes—no, we cannot have that! Imagine the uproar from those opposite if the Government proposed to build a new road through one of their electorates and excluded constituents from using it.

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** This is a textbook case of what can go wrong when a Liberal government cares only about electorates that Liberal members consider to be theirs. It is a pure case of pork-barrelling that would even make the master himself, John Pork-Barilaro, so very proud.

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The Liberals have long abandoned the people of Shellharbour and they have long abandoned the people of Wollongong to their born-to-rule leaders, with the member for Kiama—who has just been removed from the Chamber—leading the way. Obviously, the thought was, "Why waste money on those Labor voters from Dapto? Let's just take that money and send it down to Kiama. Let's just do that." That is exactly what they have done. The Liberals thought that it would surely pay off in 2023, but they may have some regrets now that the member for Kiama is on the crossbench, potentially voting with Labor. Who knows? That would hurt, wouldn't it? All that the member for Kiama has ever offered the residents of West Dapto was a privately owned and operated jail. He was the poster boy for the new jail. Fancy that! Whilst the member for Kiama may be good at looking after his own electorate—

**Mr Matt Kean:** You should withdraw that.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** He was absolutely the poster boy for that jail.



**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Shellharbour will direct her comments through the Chair. There is a gallery full of visitors and spectators and Opposition members are not displaying their best behaviour.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73, personal reflection. If a member wishes to reflect on another member, they can do so via substantive motion. I ask the member to withdraw the comment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I did not hear the comment. The behaviour of Opposition members is not good. The member for Shellharbour will stop inciting them. I will consult with the Clerk about extending the absence of the member for Kiama from the Chamber. What I heard him say, not just once but twice, was totally inappropriate. If the member for Shellharbour has made an inappropriate comment, then I ask her to consider withdrawing it.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I have considered it and I have no intention of withdrawing it. The member for Kiama was the biggest advocate for that jail in Dapto. He was supposed to go for a new jail in a brand new area—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** It being 4.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the giving of an inaugural speech.

### *Members*

### INAUGURAL SPEECHES

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Vacluse, I first welcome to the gallery a number of special guests. I welcome the family of the member for Vacluse: her husband, Mr Adam Connolly, and their boys, Tom Connolly and Will Connolly. I welcome former members of State and Federal Parliament, including the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, Mr Michael Yabsley and Mr Peter King. I welcome Mr Stuart Ayres and Mr Trent Zimmerman.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vacluse) (16:08):** I have done a lot of public speaking, but this is a unique setting, as you have all learned in the past few minutes. It is a great honour to be standing before you as the member for Vacluse—only the tenth person to do so in almost 100 years since the formation of the electorate in 1927. I thank our community for entrusting me with this great responsibility, and I pledge to always remember that this role does not belong to me; it is yours. This community is not mine; it is ours. Well before Europeans occupied this stunning headland, it was and is theirs: the Gadigal, Bidjigal and Birrabirragal peoples have lived across the eastern part of Sydney for millennia. I acknowledge our Indigenous history and culture. I will promote ongoing friendship and respect, and I will honour their intrinsic link to the land and waterways by pledging to protect our natural environment for future generations.

Vacluse is just 24 square kilometres. It is one of the smallest and most densely populated electorates in the State. Behind the sparkling harbourside fringe that we are so often stereotyped by, lies a community that I love for many other riches—a diversity of cultures, of enterprise and of ideas. Half of those living in our electorate are first generation Australians with both parents born overseas, and many more come from other parts of Australia and Sydney. We choose to live in a place marked by contrasts. You will see barefoot surfers in budgie smugglers at Bondi; crisply uniformed officers at HMAS Watson; Jewish families heading to synagogue; people dropping a fishing line at the historic village of Watsons Bay; fast cars moving slowly through Australia's version of Rodeo Drive in Double Bay; parents, babies and dogs at Seven Ways in North Bondi; and high-rise after high-rise, because two-thirds of our electorate is made up of flats and apartments. A further 20 per cent is made up of semi-detached houses, so we are packed in.

I love the rich tapestry that makes up our busy and diverse community. My challenge as a local MP is to represent everyone equitably, whether young, old, born and raised locally or, like the majority of those in my electorate, have come from somewhere else and chosen our amazing electorate as home. I am one of those people. I grew up in regional South Australia, first in the west coast tuna-fishing town of Port Lincoln and then north of Adelaide in wine country in the Barossa Valley. I am a country girl at heart. Dad ran a small business and Mum worked at the local school. My sister, Juliette, my brother, Adam, and I were taught that we could achieve anything through hard work, persistence and, most importantly, honesty. Service was part of our upbringing. Mum and Dad were always part of clubs, such as Apex and Rotary, sports clubs, arts clubs and local health committees. Dad recently retired as mayor. My parents have always put family and community ahead of any personal ambition. I like to think that those values have shaped who I am today and have taken me on the pathway here to community representation.

I am proudly public school educated and went to Nuriootpa High School—hello, everyone in the Barossa—before juggling university and a cadetship at the ABC, where I began my career as a journalist. My first ever

interview as a journalist was with the then Premier on my birthday week when I had just turned 18. I was thrown straight in the deep end, but that is how I like it. I was drawn to political reporting, so I sat up there in the press gallery. I loved the contest of ideas. I moved to Sydney in 1997 to join the Nine Network, where I would spend 14 years with a front-row seat to history, hosting major network shows and covering breaking news at home and abroad. I interviewed prime ministers, plenty of movie stars, business leaders and sporting heroes. I got to see inside submarines and fly in Black Hawk helicopters. I covered the Oscars and danced with John Travolta in his private jet. Adam is so sick of that story. I would bet that not too many people say that in their inaugural speech. I had a lot of fun; it was a great privilege.

But it was the events that impacted everyday people that shaped me as a person. It was a privilege to be able to give a voice to the quiet Australians who were doing it tough or had been silenced. Those people feel that politicians in this place and in Canberra do not have their best interests at heart, behave poorly—you wouldn't do that, would you?—talk too much about themselves and not about their communities, and do not act in the public interest. I promise all of the people I have interviewed that I have taken note. Journalism immersed me in so many different worlds, and I shared many life-changing moments with people. I have been with families when they have lost their homes to flood. I have been at fire fronts. I have seen the flames and witnessed the sheer terror of that destructive force. I saw the indescribable relief, as well as the simultaneous guilt, that families felt when their neighbour's house burned to the ground and, inexplicably, their home was spared.

I witnessed the trauma in the aftermath of the Bali bombings when I covered the tragedy in Kuta that took the lives of 202 people, including 88 Australians. Twenty of those were from the eastern suburbs. I remember the shock and disbelief we felt as a nation. I remember the heroism of the doctors, the holiday-makers and the Balinese people who came together in that time and achieved extraordinary acts of humanity. I still feel the pain of those families and survivors today, and I remember them more than 20 years on. It is impossible to not be changed by that experience. It is giving me goosebumps talking about it today. Something that binds us in all of our experiences, and the only thing that saves us from disaster, from loneliness, from grief and from struggle, is family and community. The strength of community comes from many hands joined together. It comes from a powerful cohesion, a sense of common purpose and a sense of belonging. It is the job of governments to support communities and ensure that they create policies that bring people together—not divide them—and give them individual autonomy within a supportive network. That is how a society thrives. I have seen that up close as a journalist, and it was a privilege.

While that was important work, and work that is fundamental to our democracy, it increasingly frustrated me that I had a voice but not a direct influence. I could be a critic, I could talk about the change that needed to happen and what others should do, but that was not enough for me. When my husband, Adam, and I had our three wonderful boys, I felt things more deeply. Two of them are here today. The other is on school camp and cannot be here. Hello, Lachie, if they are letting you watch. When we had our boys, it changed me immeasurably. My heart broke in a different way when I was with families suffering from grief. When I saw an injustice, I found it harder to stand by and not be an active participant in the change I wanted to see. I used to keep a quote on our fridge—I do not know if you remember it, boys—and I would refer to it when I talked to my boys about making friends, about standing up for what they believe in and about why they should intervene when they see a bully or someone who needs help. It is a quote from Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt that members might be familiar with. He said:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena.

So here I am in the arena, or the bearpit, trying to not be a sideline critic. I am trying to bring about change to elevate people and support communities and families. That journey began for me after journalism when I shifted to the education sector as CEO of an organisation called Life Education, most commonly known as Healthy Harold. I was a volunteer, then a board director and then, in a sliding doors moment for my career and my life, I took on the role of CEO. I started at State level, based at Colyton in Sydney's west for four years, and then at national level. It was great work. We worked to improve the lives of young people by giving them the tools, knowledge and strategies to make better choices around their mental and physical health, whether it be nutrition, cyber safety, bullying, resilience or vaping and other emerging issues for their schools. We were not fixing their issues, giving them the solutions or telling them no, but empowering them to make those choices for themselves. In many ways, they are truly Liberal principles.

I felt I was making a positive difference to hundreds of thousands of young lives. It was incredibly satisfying to work with teachers, parents and schools right across New South Wales, from my electorate in Vacluse to Lakemba, Lismore and Lightning Ridge. I gained broad insights into the issues that mattered to young people. I gained a deep respect and admiration for the educators I employed and for the hardworking teachers we supported in schools across the country, particularly during COVID. Through that role, I made a lot of friends in

this Chamber. I saw the very best side of politics and politicians. I saw people in this place shifting the dial for their communities. I saw their behind-the-scenes advocacy, care and commitment. I saw the power of the grassroots advocacy that they all do every day that is largely unseen. I thought that perhaps I too, through politics and policy, could make an even greater contribution.

My work in education connected me with young people, and I loved that. I want to continue to hear from young people in my new role as the member for Vacluse. I want to ensure that their input is part of the decision-making in Australia's oldest Parliament. Australia has the most impressive generation of young people aged 18 to 25. Statistically, they drink less, smoke less and take fewer drugs than generations before. They are a socially minded cohort of problem-solvers, change-makers and innovators. They are impressive. But they are growing up in a world that is complicated and busy, with a torrent of information via the internet and social media that can often be overwhelming and a distortion of what real relationships look like, what real bodies look like, what success looks like and what community is.

One of our biggest modern social challenges is how to balance an era of information and misinformation, a time of exponential change, of artificial intelligence, of uncertainty, of division, of left and right rather than right and wrong, with the care, connection and stability that this young generation needs. They have never had so much information, so much online connection, but so much loneliness and fragility. Suicide is the leading cause of death in 15 to 24-year-old Australians. Around 20 per cent of young people report high or very high levels of emotional distress. Young men are most at risk. When we champion our young women—and we must, and I will in this place—we also need to praise and champion our boys. They need it. It is important for us to listen more to our young people, ensuring that their voices are heard in our policymaking and that they feel engaged with the political process.

That is why I invited student leaders from across the Vacluse electorate to join us today. I ask them to stand. In the gallery today from Kincoppal Rose-Bay School are Charlotte Field and Ariella Perkins; from Cranbrook School, Josh Smith, Ed Walker and Owen Magee; from The Scots College, Will Destro and Archer Pullen; and from Rose Bay Secondary College, Isaac Hemsworth-Smith and Zac Villa. Thank you all for coming today. Let me know how to better represent you. My door is always open. I am so grateful that you took the time, most of you during an HSC year, to come to the Parliament today.

Young people in my community tell me that one of their greatest priorities is the environment, and that it is a shared priority with their parents and grandparents. It is a priority for me. That is why it is with great pride that I have started my parliamentary career as the shadow Minister for the Environment. What a privilege it is to immerse myself in policymaking and decision-making that will preserve our natural environment, our waterways, our lands and our forests for future generations—not just preserve but enhance. That is a job I relish. I can apply that to my own backyard, continuing to protect the spectacular South Head, the marine life in Parsley Bay and the penguins that popped up in Point Piper last week. Great work is being done by Woollahra and Waverley councils on grassroots environmental initiatives.

Going back to young people, I thank the most important young people in my life: Tom, Lachie and Will. Boys, you will be at the front of my mind in every decision that I make in this place. I am here to make a better future for you and for your generation. I thank you for your love and support, for the laughs, for keeping it real and for your understanding of the long hours that have already gone into this role and that will continue. I thank my husband, Adam Connolly. We are coming up to our twentieth wedding anniversary this year. Adam, I love you so much. I am grateful that you are in my life. You are the best decision that I have made. You are a great dad to our boys. Thank you for making me laugh—I needed that quite a bit over the past six months.

To my mum and dad, who I wish could have been here today, thank you for teaching me what matters, for being incredible role models, for teaching me the difference between right and wrong, that kindness matters, that humility is a trait to be admired and that service to others is an obligation to be embraced. Thank you for giving us so much. To "Spud" and "Schweet", my brother and sister, sitting in the gallery, thank you for coming and for keeping it real. To my grandmother, who is 97 and cannot be here today, Pumma, I promise I will not let politics change me—at least not for the worse. I mean it. To someone who knows me probably better than anyone, my best friend, Nina Stephens, who tried to talk me out of this when I first mentioned I was considering politics but who, nonetheless, like good girlfriends do, supported me protectively through this crazy journey—thank you.

Behind every woman who does something big is a tribe of other women supporting her. Mine included Annabel Merz, Amanda Lawson, Rowena, Amelia, Vix, Mel, the school mums, and Anna Hayes, who has known me longest. I also acknowledge Gabrielle Upton, the former member for Vacluse, who I think deserves applause. Gabrielle, thank you for your friendship and support. You are a class act and you have made my job so much easier. We both follow some trailblazers, like former member for Vacluse Rosemary Foot, who was the first Australian woman to be endorsed by a major party to contest an acknowledged safe seat. She entered Parliament in 1978, one of only two women in the Legislative Assembly—and for a while she was the only one. Back then,

the bearpit was an aggressively masculine environment—I emphasise back then—but she held her own and she is an inspiration.

I mention her for a couple of reasons. She was a trailblazer but also a vocal critic of the ocean-outfall sewage disposal system and its effects on eastern suburbs beaches, a situation which was a local public health issue. I am afraid to say that 45 years on, you would not believe it, sewage still pours off our cliffs, untreated, directly into the ocean. It is an environmental and health hazard. It is unique to my electorate and a legacy of our aging infrastructure. I again pay tribute to Gabrielle Upton and the former Coalition Government for committing funds and action to put an end to that. I will ensure that project is completed.

Connection to my community comes through many channels but I especially thank my Liberal Party conference—all 700-plus branch members. I am sorry we could not fit you all in here. Thank you for the wonderful support you have given me, especially the branch presidents and the campaign committee led by Darel Hughes. Thank you to our amazing conference president, Janet McDonald, who has done so much for the Liberal Party and for our conference, and to the SEC executive. Thank you to my wonderful friend, Sally Betts. There are so many more people I would like to call out individually.

I thank the hundreds of volunteers who gave their time to post corflutes in the electorate, who stood at our polling booths and who put signs up in their backyards. I am in awe of your commitment and your support. I really and truly hope, and I will try my hardest, to meet your expectations. To Vacluse: thank you. How will I help you? The issues will change over time, but my values will not. I believe in freedom of worship, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. That is partly because so many people have emigrated to Vacluse from different parts of the world to flee systems that denied them the same freedoms that we take for granted today.

The most important job I can do for you is to remove barriers to your individual success. These are Liberal values, and they are my values. We have become accustomed, in recent years in particular, to governments solving our problems. The pandemic made that necessary for a short period, but we must resist the heavy hand of government intervention in perpetuity. We need less bureaucracy, less regulation, fewer taxes and less interference in our daily lives. Enough of being told how to think, how to act, how to vote, how to parent, how to look and who to love. You should be able to dream big, get on with the job and make this State a better place. The best thing I can do is to help clear the way for you. A community is not a homogenous group; it is a collection of individuals, fortified by the contribution of new ideas and by respect.

I believe New South Wales is the best State in the best country in the world, and I believe we have not yet reached our potential. Our best times are ahead of us. We can be smarter. We can improve our education system—and we must. We need to be more inclusive. We need to encourage more innovation and we need to better celebrate our arts and culture. Our CBD needs to be so much more dynamic. There is so much opportunity, and to be in this place and to be able to make a contribution to that change is incredibly exciting for me. I still cannot believe it. To the young people in the gallery, if you have a goal, be patient. More importantly, be persistent, because that is what it is all about. This is a late addition—I quote the amazing Tina Turner, an awesome woman who, sadly, passed away today. She said:

I believe that if you'll just stand up and go, life will open up for you. Something just motivates you to keep moving.

I am motivated to keep going for the electorate of Vacluse no matter the challenges. I will not take this important role for granted. I will measure my achievements not by the years I spend in this Chamber and not by the outcomes. I am in this arena not to be a critic, although I sometimes will be of those on the other side. My priority and my main objective is to be, first and foremost, a contributor. I will strive to make this State and my electorate a better place for future generations.

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for Vacluse for her inaugural speech and thank all the visitors in the gallery.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **TAI TUIVASA**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:35):** I recognise Tai "Bam Bam" Tuivasa for his accomplishments in the Ultimate Fighting Championship [UFC] heavyweight category. Tai, who grew up in Mount Druitt, made his UFC debut in November 2017 when he became the first Indigenous Australian to win a UFC fight. Tai has won five out of his seven UFC fights so far and has an extensive history in professional fighting, in both kickboxing and mixed martial arts. On 18 May the Premier and the Minister for Sport joined Tai and the vice-president of the UFC in Australia and New Zealand to announce a partnership that will see three

events take place in Sydney over the next four years. I congratulate Tai on his achievements and wish him every success for the future.

#### **CRONULLA COMMUNITY CAFE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (16:36):** Cronulla Community Café has served the Cronulla community for over 17 years. Established in 2006 by the Uniting Church, now NEW Beginnings Uniting Church, it remains run entirely by volunteers. Open every Wednesday, it serves morning tea and lunch to some 25 people from around the shire. The café helps the homeless, those in need of support and those looking for social interaction. It never turns anyone away. I recognise volunteers Mick Angyan, Maryanne Ayres, Merla Ayres, Ian Bewes, Barbara Bowers, Karen Creighton, Linda Deguara, Cathy Dyson, Pamela Feinbier, Jan Fisher, Monique Fletcher, Alisi Gilsenan, Karmini Govender, Vanessa Jones, Carol Kirkman, Nina Korotki, Paulette Meath, June Midgley, Robyn Newton, Kelly Quinn, Noelene Redman, Greg Streater, Paul Truong, Deb Watson, John Way and Sue Woolridge.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE NSW OPEN DAY**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:37):** On May 14 I had the pleasure of popping into Horningsea Park to visit our local firefighters on Fire and Rescue NSW Open Day. Across the State, Fire and Rescue NSW opened the doors to stations to give locals the chance to meet their local firefighters and take part in firefighting demonstrations, station tours and safety presentations. I was at Station 007, Horningsea Park, in my electorate to say hello and thank the team for the amazing work it does to keep us safe. Stations were open to 2.00 p.m. and the sausages were sizzling. I take this opportunity to acknowledge International Firefighters' Day, which is observed each year on 4 May. Our fires deserve to be recognised and celebrated for the incredible work they do. It can never be recognised enough that they put their lives on the line to protect the community. I thank Metropolitan South Zone Commander Superintendent Gregory Wright and all the firefighters who serve our community.

#### **PITTWATER UNLEASHED**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:38):** As sure as gravity, the electorate of Pittwater has the best beaches, the best and most beautiful natural environment and, of course, some of the best people. Pittwater is also home to tens of thousands of families with dogs. For nearly two decades, Pittwater Unleashed has advocated to have fair access to public space. They seek access to a few hundred metres of space on certain parts of two beaches at certain times—a modest ambition, when compared with the nearly 25 kilometres of public beach space. Their proposal also enjoys 85 per cent community support. This has been a tough struggle, which continues to be faced with all sorts of red tape. I pay tribute to the Pittwater Unleashed founder, Michele Robertson. Michele has led the charge locally for many years, and I am so grateful for her tenacity, conviction and perseverance, as are many families with dogs. My commitment to Michele and to families with dogs is that I will continue to advocate for fair access to public space for all those people concerned.

#### **SWIM FOR UKRAINE**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:39):** I take this opportunity to thank Natalia Borodina from the Ukrainian Council of NSW, Ingrid Studholme, members of Bondi Icebergs Club and Bronte Surf Life Saving Club, and the community for opening their hearts and welcoming some 50 Ukrainians into the community. The refugees are being taught to swim at an ocean pool at Bondi Beach, while Bronte Surf Life Saving Club and Bondi Icebergs Club are teaching children and adults how to identify rips, swim between the flags, swim among waves and be confident in ocean water. The surf at the beaches and along the beautiful coastline of New South Wales are unlike those of Ukraine. The skills that the refugees are learning are potentially lifesaving. The Swim for Ukraine program has been nominated for the Volunteer Surf Club Community Activity award at the Waverley Council awards. Those volunteers are giving freely of their time and skills. Regardless of the outcome, they are winners in our community.

#### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FLORA RESERVE WORKING GROUP**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:40):** I recognise Southern Highlands Flora Reserve Working Group. The working group undertakes a range of activities, which include but are not limited to rubbish removal, upgrading and rehabilitation of flora reserves and fire trails, facilitation of community access to walking tracks, recovery programs to protect endangered wildlife and fauna, and surveys. Of significant importance are the strong values held by the working group, which they demonstrate through their actions and planning. Their ability to communicate, consult and work with stakeholders such as police, property owners, National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, community members and First Nations people have been essential ingredients to their achievements thus far. High on their agenda is the importance of conducting surveys to protect, maintain, rehabilitate and promote the natural and cultural heritage across the Southern Highlands flora reserves. I sincerely

congratulate Southern Highlands Flora Reserve Working Group on all their achievements thus far and wish them continued success.

### PROJECT BUCEPHALUS

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:41):** Recently a small group of enthusiastic students from the Illawarra travelled to the United States with a dismantled robot packed in their suitcases to take on some of the best robotics teams in the world. Project Bucephalus, named after Alexander the Great's warhorse, competed in the Silicon Valley regional competition of the FIRST Robotics Competition, working with world-leading teams. They took out the Impact Award, which is the most prestigious award at FIRST, recognising teams that serve as role models for others, embody the mission of FIRST and achieve the goal of transforming culture to inspire children's engagement with STEM education and careers—an impressive result. Winning the Impact Award put them in the running for the Impact Award at the world championships in Texas. Of the 700 teams at the championships, more than 100 were eligible for that award. That group was reduced to six finalists, of which Project Bucephalus was one—a world-class effort from the team from the Gong. I was at the robot launch and saw the dedication and enthusiasm of the team and their mentors. This is a fantastic achievement and only builds on the reputation of the Illawarra for producing world-class results and flying the flag for Australia.

### TAMWORTH ROTARY CLUBS

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:42):** I celebrate the achievements of Rotary clubs in my community that have been working incredibly hard to provide opportunities for fun, interest and learning for the people of Tamworth. No matter your age and no matter your interest, a Rotary club had something for you to do over the past couple of weeks: the Tamworth Motor Show, hosted by the Rotary Club of Tamworth West; the Pharaoh's Ball, hosted by the Rotary Club of Tamworth Sunrise; and the Careers Expo at Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre, hosted by the Rotary Club of Tamworth First Light. It is incredible to think of the amount of volunteer hours that went into organising those events for the benefit of our communities. I congratulate all who have donated their time to provide our communities with an opportunity to enrich their lives. We are all grateful for the work they do.

### FIRE AND RESCUE NSW OPEN DAY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:43):** I congratulate and thank all our fireies across the Central Coast. It was fabulous to join in the fun and education at Umina and Kariong fire stations, alongside large crowds from the community, on Fire and Rescue NSW Open Day. It was also lovely to see so many young people and families taking the opportunity to climb into the trucks, use a hose and collect a colouring book and hat. At Kariong we even had a chance to look at crash vehicles that had been cut open as a part of rescue training. I say a special thanks to local towie Jeff Steer for providing the Kariong station with the cars for training, and for removing them when they had been cut to pieces. I thank every member—permanent and retained—for opening their doors to our community and, most importantly, for the essential work they do keeping our communities safe.

### MAYOR SUE HEINS

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:43):** I congratulate and recognise the new mayor of Northern Beaches Council, Sue Heins, who was elected at the council meeting last Tuesday evening. The northern beaches is so fortunate to have Sue step up to the role. But who is Sue Heins? She was elected to Warringah Council in 2012 and then continued with the amalgamated Northern Beaches Council from 2017. Sue has lived and worked on the northern beaches for over 25 years. She is a passionate supporter of the local small business community, running networking events and facilitating mentoring programs. Sue was also president of the Warringah Chamber of Commerce. She is deeply involved with several charities and is currently chairperson of Women and Children First, which provides domestic violence services, and the Women's Healing Sanctuary. Sue is also now a carer for her beautiful partner, Nigel. In 2015 Councillor Heins received the Minister's Award for Women in Local Government for her outstanding contributions to council and the community. We are proud to continue to work with Sue to improve the lives of those in our community. I get to call her friend and mate. I have no doubt that Councillor Heins will make a great contribution as the second, and first female, mayor of the Northern Beaches Council.

### NATIONAL SORRY DAY

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:44):** National Sorry Day is a time to acknowledge the profound grief, suffering and loss that has touched our First Nations people as a direct result of assimilation and forcible removal policies. At 10.00 a.m. on Friday 26 May the City of Parramatta and our community will observe Sorry Day at Old Government House. Parramatta, on the land of the Burramattagal people of the Dharug Nation, has a shameful past that saw the implementation of the assimilation policy as early as 1810 in front of Parramatta Town

Hall. Many of our significant heritage buildings are former government institutions filled with vicious memories for many of our First Nations people who experienced the pain firsthand or whose family and friends lived the pain as they passed through those doors. I am proud to be a member of a government committed to reconciliation, treaty and a Voice to Parliament for our First Nations people.

#### ITALIAN MIGRANTS OF RYDE BOOK LAUNCH

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:45):** Those who say that angels do not walk this earth have clearly never visited Ryde. The Italian Migrants of Ryde Committee recently celebrated a significant milestone with the successful launch of its book, *A One-Way Ticket*. The history captures the incredible stories and journeys of Italian migrants who embarked on life-changing adventures to Australia, leaving their homelands behind. The book is foundational to our community's character, and the legacy lives on today. I extend a heartfelt thank you to Angelina Bonifacio, whose vision and dedication brought this project to fruition. Her commitment to preserving the rich history and experiences of Italian migrants is truly commendable. Additionally, I acknowledge the contributions of Anna Mifsud, Rosalba Egiziano, Lydia Scuglia, Roseanna Gallo, Josie Howes, Annette Lentini, Maria Zarro, Regina Torrisi and Chris Lacono, who make up the Italian Migrants of Ryde Committee. *A One-Way Ticket* is a testament to the enduring spirit of those Italian migrants and serves as an inspiration for future generations.

#### HANNAH BIRD

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:46):** I recognise the achievement of Hannah Bird, who has been acknowledged as the Southern NSW Local Health District Midwife of the Year for 2023. Hannah was awarded this honour on International Nurses' Day, 12 May 2023, in Braidwood. Hannah has worked for more than 10 years at the Southern NSW Local Health District. She previously held the role of midwifery unit manager at the South East Regional Hospital in Bega, as well as working at the former Pambula District Hospital maternity service. She currently holds a leadership role as clinical midwifery consultant for the Southern NSW Local Health District. Hannah has been recognised for her passion and enthusiasm in her profession, as well as the kindness and compassion she has shown to women in her care. Hannah Bird represents the highest qualities of the midwives who provide excellence in maternity care in New South Wales. I congratulate her on her achievement.

#### TAREE HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA STUDENTS

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (16:47):** I recognise the wonderful year 9, year 10 and year 11 drama students from Taree High School who recently performed in the unscripted drama sections at the Taree Eisteddfod. Special mention must go to Charlie Dempsey, Baylee Fletcher, Rachel Ollerton and Eva Wood McGuire for placing first in their section, which was the largest of the day. Samantha Hollis, Carly Hooper, Jennah Powell and Anabelle Starr also received highly commended recognition. I offer my congratulations to all students on their participation and outstanding achievements in this wonderful local event.

#### SYDNEY MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:48):** I recently attended the Sydmal Carnival 2023 in Liverpool, organised by the Sydney Malayalee Association. Founded 45 years ago, the Sydney Malayalee Association seeks to nurture and promote the rich culture and heritage of the Malayalee diaspora in Sydney and support those in Kerala. Held at Woodward Park in Liverpool, the carnival brought together Sydney's Malayalee community and a variety of other cultural groups, and was attended by over 1,600 people. The carnival featured fabulous displays from music and dance to fashion and magic shows, including a grand cultural diversity display, showing various acts from India, Cambodia, China and Afghanistan. Topping off the celebration, I thoroughly enjoyed the outstanding Bollywood fusion dance that was choreographed by Meera Joy. I thank President Beena Ravikumar, the entire executive for their sustained involvement with the Sydney Malayalee Association, and all the attendees who supported the Sydmal Carnival 2023. I look forward to their Onam celebration later this year.

#### YOM HA'ATZMAUT

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:49):** On Wednesday 3 May I was delighted to attend a seventy-fifth anniversary gala reception for Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, with many in the Davidson electorate. The event was organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Zionist Federation of Australia, and the Zionist Council of NSW. I acknowledge the board members of all those organisations, in particular the Jewish Board of Deputies president, David Ossip, and chief executive officer Darren Bark. Independence Day in 2023 was on 25 to 26 April. I am proud to represent an electorate with a large and vibrant Jewish community. I know they have a deep love for the State of Israel. Some were born there, have family there, or frequently visit. Israel and Australia have shared values that underpin our relationship. I visited Israel in 2014 and in 2017. I am proud to have made a commitment as the member for Davidson to visit again within my first two years in Parliament. I look forward to fulfilling that commitment. Finally, I note the bipartisan

nature of the event. As far as I can remember, the Premier and Leader of the Opposition have always attended. I hope that continues long into the future.

#### **TRIBUTE TO TONY VECELLIO, OAM**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:51):** I express my grief at the passing of my dear friend Tony Vecellio, OAM. I knew Tony for more than 40 years, during which I observed with great admiration his passion and commitment to our community and to athletics. Tony served the Randwick Botany Little Athletic Centre since 1970 as a committee member and later as its president. He dedicated his life to providing our children with the opportunity to be involved in athletics and in a social community where lifetime friendships are made. Tony was recognised with an Order of Australia medal in 2000 for his extensive and unwavering contribution to our community. He continued his work in Little Athletics for as long as his health would allow him. He is survived by his wife, Judy, and his children, Jane and Anthony Vecellio Jr, who has since taken up his parents' mantle as the new president of their historic club. Vale, Tony Vecellio, OAM.

#### **WALGETT MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE NURSES**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:52):** The Walgett Multipurpose Service nursing team has been awarded Team of the Year at the 2023 Nursing and Midwifery Awards to help mark celebrations for International Nurses Day. The nurses at Walgett are renowned for their supportive team environment. They have shown amazing commitment to continued education, with over 80 per cent of staff completing the new emergency nursing pathway and embracing change with gusto. The Walgett nursing team excel at collaborative communication, starting with safety huddles that make sure that everybody is given an opportunity to speak up about their achievements and that collaboration is recognised. The nursing staff are dedicated to enhancing client care, including spending time individualising the needs of their clients and assisting people to be proactive at home to reduce hospital presentations. This has been a major focus and achievement for the Walgett health service. I congratulate the Walgett Multipurpose Service nursing team on this well-deserved award.

#### **RIVERSTONE FESTIVAL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:53):** The annual Riverstone Festival is a day where residents, performers, schools and businesses gather together to celebrate our community. For the past 23 years, the festival has gone off without a hitch thanks to Phyllis McAlpine. Phyllis has been at the helm of the festival since its inception. What started as a one-off passion project with local church groups has grown into a highlight on the calendar for our community. The highlight of the day is the legendary street parade, undoubtedly the focal point of the event. Stallholders offer a range of attractions from rides and activities to delicious food, goods and services. The festival really is a wonderful display of community spirit and inclusivity. It symbolises what it means to call Riverstone home. I congratulate Phyllis and the other members of the committee—Cheryl Ramsden, Kurt Hippe, Alan Millard, Helena Greedy and Joel Vemuri—on their hard work. Of course, the festival would not be possible without the assistance of Blacktown City Council and the Riverstone police. It was a privilege to attend this year's event and engage with the community as the elected member for Riverstone. I look forward to the festival continuing to grow and thrive for many years to come.

#### **HUNTER THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION AWARDS**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (16:54):** A highlight of Scone Horse Festival is the annual Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association [HTBA] awards. I congratulate all the winners. Julianne Christopher, former HTBA executive, was recognised with the Employee of the Year (Administration) Award. Arrowfield Stud's Jess Hood was honoured with the leadership award. Jeannie Harris from Widden Stud received the Murray Bain Award, recognising 40 years of service to the thoroughbred and veterinary industry. Daniel Morgan was recognised with the President's Award For Lifetime (Industry) Achievement. Godolphin's Roger Boulton was awarded the Employee of the Year (Horsemanship) Award. Godolphin also collected two horse awards, with Anamoe named Champion Racehorse of the Year and Circular named Champion Broodmare. Arthur and Harry Mitchell of Yarraman Park collected the Champion Sire trophy for I Am Invincible. The Champion First Season Sire was Harry Angel from Darley Kelvinside. Racehorse trophies were awarded to Coolmore for Shinzo as the Champion two-year-old Racehorse and Giga Kick won Arrowfield the Champion three-year-old Racehorse crown.

#### **SURF LIFE SAVING NSW AWARDS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:55):** Today I express my heartfelt congratulations to the exceptional individuals who were recognised and honoured at the recent Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence. The Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence provide a platform to acknowledge the outstanding achievements and commendable service of individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Our volunteer surf lifesavers' passion for safeguarding our coastal communities, coupled with their extensive training



and expertise, exemplifies the spirit of community and selflessness that makes our State proud. A particular mention goes to Sharon Deans, who was awarded Coach of the Year; Maria Luise Ossimitz, who was awarded Assessor of the Year; and Cate Kyling, who was awarded Youth Volunteer of the Year. They are all from Coogee Surf Life Saving Club. From Clovelly Surf Life Saving Club, Sarah Eliasson was awarded the under-15s Surf Lifesaver of the Year and Tom Hetherington was awarded highly commended and runner-up of the Betty's Burgers Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year. I congratulate all of them and I thank them for their service.

#### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:56):** Last week it was a pleasure to welcome 150 new Australian citizens at the Sutherland Shire Council citizenship ceremony at the new Pavilion Performing Arts Centre, led by Mayor Carmelo Pesce. It was great to be joined by my fellow local, State and Federal colleagues. Australia is incredibly diverse and Holsworthy, which spans the Liverpool and Sutherland shire local government areas, is no exception. That is most apparent at citizenship ceremonies, where we all come together as one to celebrate what we all have in common: being Australian. It is an honour to be part of the proceedings in which our newest citizens are welcomed to the community—something that many have worked years towards. As they embark on this new journey, we embark on a similar journey of growth, sharing our wonderful community and adding to our unique tapestry. I congratulate all the citizenship conferees again. Let us collectively celebrate their achievements and unite in cherishing the diversity that makes Holsworthy a truly special place to call home.

#### **BOB WHITNEY**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:57):** I congratulate Mr Bob Whitney on a long and distinguished career in the New South Wales paramedic profession. Bob is currently on long service leave until his official retirement in March 2024. By that time, he will have served 47 years in the New South Wales ambulance service. His career started in 1976 at the age of 19 in Dubbo. The driving motivation to enter his profession was the tragic loss of his 16-year-old sister in a motor vehicle accident. Bob has served in Gilgandra, Queanbeyan, Tamworth, Wee Waa, Goulburn, Liverpool and the Bega Valley, where he has worked for the past 12 years. Mr Whitney served the State during disasters such as the Thredbo landslide in 1997 and the 2019-20 bushfires. He is a role model for the classic rural paramedic. I acknowledge his long service to his profession and New South Wales, and I wish him well in his well-deserved retirement.

#### **COMO-JANNALI FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:58):** I acknowledge Como-Jannali Football Club, which is the successful recipient of \$44,000 from the former Government's 2022 Community Building Partnership program. Established in 1956, Como-Jannali has worked hard to create a welcoming community for nearly 1,000 registered players and their families and friends, truly exemplifying its motto of "Honour Above All". The grant funding will assist in refurbishing its clubhouse with the replacement of windows, the installation of new bi-fold doors and upgrades to the internal walls. Just in March I was pleased to join the club and its members at its season launch and saw firsthand the important role the clubhouse plays in bringing the community together. Of course, none of this is possible without the hard work and dedication of the Como-Jannali Football Club Executive Committee. I acknowledge Adam Cranney, Thomas Finlay, Greer Cash, Rodney Edgar, Melissa Hillery and Kirsty Sharman for their efforts. I thank the members of the Como-Jannali Football Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and look forward to joining the club again when work is complete.

#### **HANNA VALENZUELA, HANNA BRAGA AND KATE LANEY**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:59):** Hanna, Hanna and Kate are simply the best. Since 2020 Hanna Valenzuela, Hanna Braga and Kate Laney have been fighting desperately for the future of education in Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills and have hit roadblock after roadblock. Despite the challenges, they pushed on. Hanna, Hanna and Kate campaigned for years, handing out material and posting on social media about how much the community needed those two schools for their children. Finally, to quote Hanna, "It feels weird to be coming here to post a good story but here it is!" Thanks to the tireless advocacy of Hanna, Hanna and Kate, land is being searched for in Gledswood Hills and Gregory Hills for a new high school. I have had the opportunity to meet with both Hannas and Kate to thank them and congratulate them on their amazing work, but I thought it only right that I thank them formally in this place. I thank Hanna Valenzuela, Hanna Braga and Kate Laney for their hard-fought campaign in organising the first steps for their much-needed schools and congratulate them on their amazing achievement.

#### **MIRANDA COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:00):** I acknowledge the Miranda Community Garden, which is the successful recipient of \$8,600 from the New South Wales Government's 2022 Community Building Partnership program. The Miranda Community Garden was established in 2010 and is located in the GyMEA-Miranda Uniting

Church, just around the corner from my electorate office. It is a place where members of the community connect, share gardening tips and grow fresh produce in a sustainable way. The grant funding will provide for the installation of a new gazebo and hand dryers. Those new facilities will provide the Miranda Community Garden's almost 30 members with much-needed shade when tending the garden and will encourage greater participation from the wider community. Of course, none of that is possible without the hard work and dedication of the Miranda Community Garden executive committee. I acknowledge Maggie Nagy, Sally Peterson, Bill Lewis and Brian Sowerby for their efforts. I thank the members of the Miranda Community Garden for bringing the importance of the project to my attention and look forward to seeing the positive impact it makes on our community.

### **GIRLS OF STEEL PROGRAM**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:01):** The Skill Engineer is paving the way for a new generation of trailblazing women through the Girls of Steel program. The program aims to break down barriers and diversify the engineering workforce, as well as tackling the skills shortage in the sector. Based in Kariong, the Girls of Steel program is a fabulous initiative that looks to empower women by giving them the skill set and training needed to thrive in the industry. The program creates an incredible sense of camaraderie and mutual respect in an environment that fosters individual and team growth. Sheet metal fabrication, welding, fitting and turning are all skills of focus, which in turn have been used to create brilliant sculptures, park furniture, signposts and bespoke letterboxes. Participants are not only developing their skills but also pursuing a certificate II in engineering. The Skill Engineer and the Girls of Steel program have provided a wonderful opportunity for women across the Central Coast to develop the skills and education to work in a trade, as well as an opportunity to showcase their talent. I thank the Skill Engineer and cannot wait to see what other fantastic programs it will bring to our community.

### **GYMEA TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:02):** I congratulate the incredible team of students from Gymea Technology High School who won the secondary school champion award at the Department of Education's Game Changer Challenge. The Game Changer Challenge is an award-winning design thinking competition open to public schools across the State that challenges students to discover solutions for a real-world problem by applying classroom learning. These exceptional year 9 students developed an application with a radio frequency identification chip that links to information on how to use first-aid kits in different activities, excursions and locations. The application uses the same technology as tap-and-go credit cards, stores data, links to navigational icons and works in locations where there is no mobile to bring up information on how to use different items within a first-aid kit. I recognise the members of the school's team—including Aisha Redmond, Jessie Davies, Thomas Sheekey, Oliver Locker and Felicity Poniris—who are also studying information processes and technology as an accelerated HSC course. I congratulate the students from Gymea Technology High School on their win and extend my best wishes for the future.

### **TIMORESE UNITED ASSOCIATION**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:04):** After many years of struggle and sacrifice, on 20 May 2002 Timor-Leste finally gained independence. In honour of that the Timorese United Association, which represents the thriving Timorese diaspora in my electorate, kindly invited me to join them in their celebration of 21 years of freedom and democracy. The night consisted of an excellent display of cultural dance performances, a seven-course meal consisting of a variety of dishes from Timor-Leste, and live music from the talented community band Pop Orchestra. The Timorese United Association has been a pillar of the multicultural community in Liverpool for many years, advocating tirelessly for the interests of the Timorese diaspora and allowing Timorese families to connect with their heritage and pass on culture and traditions to their children. I sincerely thank everybody at the Timorese United Association, with particular thanks going to president Carlos Pereira and secretary Nidia Mendonca for their contribution to that wonderful event. I look forward to celebrating Timorese independence for many years to come.

### **LIVERPOOL CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (17:05):** I recognise the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Liverpool City Netball Association [LCNA], which was first established in 1968. LCNA is located at Woodward Park Liverpool and spans both the Liverpool and Fairfield local government areas. LCNA currently has 231 teams and over 2,000 registered participants. The players' ages range from five up to all age groups. They are led by President Rebecca Wakefield and her team of administrators, volunteers, supporters, coaches, umpires and players. The association works hard to deliver both winter and spring playing seasons, with over 5,000 attendees per round. LCNA also holds three carnivals every year, one club carnival and two representative carnivals. Those carnivals are held on Sundays in May, June and August. Over 100 teams from across New South Wales participate, with 7,000 to 10,000 attendees per carnival. In 2022 LCNA had 16 representative teams, which included male, female

and mixed netball teams; New South Wales Metro League Teams; 11 years development squads; junior and senior State title teams; and New South Wales Summer Series teams. I thank the club for its continued contribution to our community.

*Private Members' Statements*

**GRANVILLE ELECTORATE**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:06):** On 25 March New South Wales changed for the better, and for the first time in 12 years it has a Labor government. I put on record my thanks to the voters of the Granville electorate for putting their faith in me for another four years. I was first elected in 2015 with a very narrow 2.1 per cent margin, defeating the Liberal Party, and this year I was re-elected with a much healthier increased margin of 21½ per cent. That is because over the past 12 years the Liberal Government short-changed the people of Granville time and again.

I put those things on the record because I am really looking forward to many of them being addressed, starting with the train services. As we heard earlier today, Sydney commuters reflected incredibly poorly on the performance of the transport system across all modes towards the end of last year when the customer survey was last done. But train timetables in the Granville electorate have been appalling for years. On top of that, we suffer from the poor reliability problems that everybody is enduring at the moment. In 2013 Granville lost its express train services, and in 2017 it was taken off the western line altogether. For the first time in 160 years it was not considered a major train intersection. The train timetable will be reviewed and I am hoping that we can have express trains return to Granville, because the time it takes to travel to the city for work has doubled.

In education, our local schools have seen huge shortages of teachers. Some schools had dozens of vacant positions at the start of term 1 this year, and I am pleased that the new education Minister has spoken directly to teachers and has already started putting temporary teachers into permanent positions. That restores faith in the education system and will hopefully stop the huge numbers of people who have been leaving that profession in recent years. More than 40 per cent of Granville residents rent private sector properties. For the past 12 years they were hoping for a better deal from the previous Government—a better deal that they did not get. The Labor Government will ensure that, if someone is to be evicted, that can only be done for a good and valid reason rather than a tenant objecting to rent increases or complaining about maintenance. Any number of people have come to see me to say that they have received notice of termination coincidentally very shortly after refusing an unfair rent increase or complaining about a lack of maintenance.

The Granville electorate has also seen firsthand the public housing sell-offs. Across my electorate a lot of public housing has been sold off. Last year a tenant I know, who I have been helping to find a new property, was evicted because their property was being sold off; yet only six months before—knowing full well the whole complex was about to be sold off—the landlord renovated the kitchen because they had COVID money to do it. What a grandiose waste of money it was to put a brand new kitchen in a building that was about to be sold off and demolished. It is insane. That is the type of waste and mismanagement that has led us to having a \$7 billion black hole in this year's budget and record debt in this State.

My electorate is also home to many staff of Westmead Hospital. They are staff who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. They have been denied pay rises and decent numbers of staff rostered to work with them, so they are working crazy amounts of overtime. They are looking forward to being paid a fair wage for the work they do instead of feeling as though they must move to Queensland. I want them to stay, and I am very proud that they have put their faith in me to represent them for the next four years.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** In light of the special occasion at the household of the member for Balmain tonight—her son's tenth birthday—she will be moved up the speakers' list. I apologise to members in advance if that puts them out five minutes, but it will make someone happy.

**BALMAIN ELECTORATE TRANSPORT SERVICES**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:11):** Public and active transport—let us talk about it. Fast, connected and safe public transport is at the heart of an efficient and socially just city. Our ailing public transport and traffic congestion bring stress and frustration to people across our State. This costs families precious time and has a negative impact on economic activity. Encouraging public and active transport can address these issues and have a positive effect on pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle. Despite all this, we have seen successive governments focus on polluting and expensive tollways rather than on critical public transport and active transport investments.

Governments soon fall into line with the motorway and infrastructure lobby and spend billions on projects that are highly profitable for the private sector while imposing multiple costs on the community. The evidence is

clear: These tollways are expensive, polluting, induce demand and, more importantly, they lock people into private vehicle use. Simply providing more roads supplies induced demand and drives a mode shift to private vehicle use. It is the opposite of what good policy demands. When good quality, reliable and affordable public transport is built, people in my electorate and across this State have used it and will use it.

During the last term of government, the former Liberal Government cut the direct 445 service to Balmain East wharf, forcing people to change at Gladstone Park. This unnecessary and frustrating change is a disincentive for people to use the service and it should be reversed. For so many people in the electorate, the 370 bus route provided an important service, yet it was cut. It is critical that this route to Leichhardt be restored. The former Government also cut the Elliot Street ferry, which came as a huge shock to the local community. The Government claimed a lack of patronage, but since the closure large-scale development has been constructed adjacent to the wharf, which changes the equation and makes the excuse of the former Liberal Government redundant. This ferry stop is also next to a large social housing complex where many people have mobility issues. Denying them this important and accessible service has had a real impact on the lives of vulnerable people.

In 2016 the former member for Balmain presented a feasibility study to the then Government on the introduction of a Glebe ferry, with the campaign succeeding in having a new service established in 2019. While the route of the ferry has gone through several iterations, the direct service to Barangaroo is seeing hundreds of passengers per day. All this reduces car trips and bus congestion. The use of our harbour for public transport should not end at the new ferry service to Glebe. There is huge demand for services to be extended to Annandale and Pyrmont. Extending the service will enhance its viability and the provision of a second ferry will mean that travel times will not blow out by the addition of more stops. Crucially, the service needs to be included in the Opal network to allow for the benefits of Opal to be enjoyed by passengers. If this route was placed on the Opal network, there no doubt would be a substantial increase in patronage.

When we talk about Annandale, we cannot forget the ridiculous bus service to the city that requires passengers to take a bus from Annandale back to Rozelle and change buses to then travel directly to the CBD. This route means that bus passengers need to double back to travel away from the CBD to get a bus that goes in the right direction. It is clear that there needs to be a service from The Crescent and Johnston Street directly to the CBD rather than going via Rozelle. I also take a moment to address the lack of reliable connectivity to the different transport modes. In Balmain we have an ongoing issue with the inability of transport planning to ensure that the connection between ferries and buses is convenient for passengers. We continue to receive reports, even today, of buses leaving just as the ferry pulls in and offloads passengers, leaving the passengers to wait for a later bus. An adjustment of the timetable by just a few minutes and allowing for some flexibility on the part of drivers would solve that frustrating problem. The electorate of Balmain has no train services, so bus and ferry services are critical.

Today I am calling on the Government to honour its election commitments and to take further steps to systematically deliver public transport improvements for the people of New South Wales. I congratulate all those members of my community who have been such strong advocates for public and active transport. Thank you to the members and leadership of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union for their advocacy and the tenacious activists from EcoTransit. I am absolutely committed to ensuring that these systemic changes take place and that we change the way our transport systems in New South Wales are funded. Public and active transport must be the focus. Together we can deliver a world-class network that focuses on social justice, human health and the environment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I thank the member for Balmain and, in particular, I thank the member for Wahroonga for allowing her to move up the speakers' list.

#### ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:17):** On the day prior to my father's fifteenth birthday, the Netherlands was invaded by the Nazis—very much like the current invasion of Ukraine by the Russians. Freedom is inherently fragile, and war is sometimes required to defend or win back freedom. These are timeless lessons, particularly for our young people so that they may put into context the sacrifices made by our service men and women to protect our modern-day freedoms. It is now 108 years since 25 April 1915, which was when, in the early hours of the morning, the Anzacs—many of whom were very young men—landed on the beaches of Gallipoli.

In the recent Anzac commemorations, many members of the Wahroonga electorate awoke to attend in large numbers at dawn and later at local Anzac Day ceremonies like I did at West Pymble, Wahroonga and Turramurra. They respectfully commemorated all of the men and women who served our nation, too many of whom never returned home. It was wonderful to see young people of a similar age to those original Anzacs playing a major role in the commemoration services, as they have in recent past years, particularly through Scouts and Girl Guides. At the dawn service in West Pymble Bicentennial Park, Wahroonga's community spirit was on full

display with large numbers of people in attendance. That service was followed by the morning services at Wahroonga Park and Turramurra Memorial Park.

Two days prior, I joined the Anzac Day march at the Hornsby District War Memorial that was organised by the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch. In the days after Anzac Day, I had the honour to join local Anzac Day services at the West Pymble Public School and Barker College. Each service was well supported by young people who remembered the timeless Anzac qualities of valour, courage and community before self, which we need more of in our modern world. I commend the Sydney North Region Scouts, Girl Guides NSW, local Rotary clubs, Hornsby RSL Club and the schools for organising the various services and ensuring that the memories of our fallen will live on through subsequent generations.

Anzac Day is a commemoration of the lives lost in all wars. It is a reminder that war must not be taken lightly as human life is fragile. Unfortunately, we are again reminded of these lessons today as Russia continues to advance its war against Ukraine. It is estimated that there has been over 16,000 civilian casualties and more than 100,000 casualties on both sides. As a result of the war, around 5,000 refugees have come to Australia seeking refuge. This is a tragic loss of home and life overseas, and it is a reminder of how lucky we are in Australia. As a descendant of a veteran, I remember the story of my father who joined the Dutch resistance at the age of 17 during World War II. He was reluctant to talk about the war as it brought back sad memories of the friends and family that he lost.

My father did not march every year on Anzac Day but we were always proud when he did. It was not until his fiftieth wedding anniversary, when I took my mother and father to the Netherlands, that we learnt that his main job in the resistance was to risk his life stealing guns from the Germans. There was a depot where the German soldiers used to place their guns on a fence. After taking the opportunity to steal a rifle when the Germans were not looking, my father would then walk for about 15 minutes to the city in the middle of the day—in daylight—with a rifle hidden under his coat. He would take it down a lane to the rear door of a private bank where an arm would come out of the door after he knocked. He never saw who was on the other side of the door and they never saw who he was. The rifle would be handed to the person in the bank and the door would then close.

My uncle Jacques Henskens was in the Dutch East Indies army and fought and survived capture by the Japanese. He was subsequently made a prisoner of war. He was on the Burma railway with many Australians. When the camp was liberated, he was only 40 kilograms in weight—he was 182 centimetres tall. On his return to the Netherlands, Jacques was hospitalised for six months because of the malnourishment and ill-treatment that he suffered. He told me that every second he was in the camp, he could think of nothing but food as he was starving every day. My father and my uncle never forgot their experiences of war, and neither will I. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Lest we forget. What an incredible story in the family.

#### **TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:21):** On 18 May our Tamil community came together to commemorate the lives lost in what is now known as the Tamil Genocide. The day is an important day of remembrance and respect for our Tamil community throughout the electorate of Prospect, Western Sydney, Australia and the world. On the day we mourn the tens of thousands of innocent unarmed men, women and children who lost their lives over many decades, and particularly during the Sri Lankan Civil War. Ethnic Tamils were persecuted deliberately by the Sri Lankan Government with the intention of destroying Tamil identity and their ethnic, cultural and religious autonomy. Discriminatory government policies and legislation began in post-colonial Sri Lanka and led to ethnic cleansing, pogroms and finally genocide.

No-one should have to face and suffer the most serious abuses of human rights—hate crimes, war crimes, and crimes against humanity—just because of who they are and what they believe. Though persecution against the Tamil community was heightened at the final stages of the war, the Sri Lankan Government began this campaign much earlier. In 2013 the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal of Sri Lanka found detailed evidence and cases of deaths, rapes and injuries relating to numerous pogroms and massacres perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Government from 1983 onwards. Sri Lanka's institutionalised ethnocracy and social constructs—the result of a systematic engineering of society by British colonial influence—created conditions that promoted the Sinhalese language, culture, identity and land while simultaneously destroying Tamil language, culture, identity, education and history.

This included the burning of over 95,000 books and manuscripts at Jaffna Public Library by police and Sri Lankan Government-sponsored paramilitaries as part of an organised pogrom that saw the destruction of local Hindu temples and Tamil cultural and religious sites. In 2011 the United Nations Panel of Experts found that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by the Sri Lankan

Government, particularly at the final stages of the civil war. Between September 2008 and 19 May 2009, the Sri Lankan army advanced its military campaign into Vanni, where widespread shelling caused thousands of civilian deaths and the loss of homes. The Sri Lankan Government also denied humanitarian aid to non-combatants in the conflict zone and sought to intimidate and silence the media by using threats, abductions and executions.

I stand in support of members of our Tamil community in the electorate of Prospect and across the world who are still living with the wounds and scars of this conflict. I also stand in support of those who face trauma, who lost their family or who are still seeking answers about the whereabouts and fate of their loved ones. To this day the Sri Lankan Government has made minimal effort to address these past actions and has not reformed institutions that may cause the recurrence of human rights violations against Tamils living in Sri Lanka. I commend the efforts of Tamil organisations across the world and the ones in my local community, such as the Australian Tamil Congress, who work tirelessly towards building accountability, seeking reconciliation and justice, and strengthening Tamil diasporas across the world.

On Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day, we also recognise the resilience of our Tamil community who have rebuilt their lives and families in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries. They have persevered through their hardship and created strong cultural and religious communities. As the member for Prospect, I am honoured to stand in solidarity with my vibrant Tamil community. I have had opportunities to collaborate with many Tamil organisations on cultural, social, political and religious matters, and I look forward to continuing to work with them in future years. This May we remember all those lives lost during the Tamil genocide.

### DUBBO SHOW

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:26):** I bring to the attention of the House the importance of local shows and recognise the significant milestone commemorated last weekend at the Dubbo Show as it celebrated 150 years. I must admit, I cannot pinpoint exactly when I went to my first show, but I remember feeling like it was a really important event and one that you wanted to be at. That feeling continues to this day. Growing up at Mendooran, the show was a massive event in the community. I have some fond memories of taking part in a range of events, from showjumping to pushbike events and all sorts of other things. I also remember coming to the show in Dubbo and how much bigger everything felt than in Mendooran. The Dubbo Show itself has grown from small beginnings in 1872 to now being recognised as a major agricultural show in New South Wales. The feeling in our amazing city when the show is on is second to none.

Today I recognise Jen Cowley, OAM, who was tasked with capturing the rich 150-year history of the Dubbo Show Society in book form. The book is simply called *Three Days in May*. I should point out it is not a chronological record of the past century and a half. Instead, it features stories from people who have been involved in the show over the years, bound together by snippets of history and key moments. At 3.00 p.m. last Saturday the 150th Dubbo Show was officially opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, the Governor of New South Wales. It was a great feeling for all involved to have the Governor and her husband, Dennis, at our show. Dennis went to Dubbo High School.

I was delighted to announce Savannah Dimmock as the 2023 Dubbo Show Young Woman. Savannah is an agriculture and science teacher at Macquarie Anglican Grammar School. She holds a Bachelor of Agriculture and a Master of Teaching (Secondary). She is a member of the Dubbo Show Society cattle committee and is also a swimming teacher. Savannah says she wants to provide quality agriculturally based education to students with interpersonal and workplace skills built in. I also acknowledge Rebecca Hale and Emma Geale who were entrants in the competition. We all know it takes a great deal of courage to put one's hand up to compete in that sort of thing. I hope to see both of them taking part again. Well done, Rebecca and Emma. Well done also to the Rural Achiever, Courtney Knaggs. Courtney entered the Rural Achiever Competition to build a personal brand and to support the Dubbo community to grow and attract more people. I must also congratulate the former Dubbo Show Society president, Chris Edwards, who was recognised with honorary life membership for his 30-plus years with the society, including as president from 2015 to 2020. Well done to Chris.

Just shy of 30,000 people passed through the gates of the Dubbo Show from Friday to Sunday on those three days in May. All money raised through ticket sales will go back into putting on the show next year, as well as upgrading and maintaining the Dubbo Show Society infrastructure, including showjumping equipment, fencing and pavilion stands. The highlights of the weekend included the main entertainment, Furnace and the Fundamentals, which is a high-energy cover band. They played on Friday night, supported by the Dubbo hospital band, Where's Andy. On Saturday night the famous Dubbo Show fireworks display was followed by a live set from Golden Guitar winning country musician Amber Lawrence. Of course, the Demolition Derby took place on Sunday afternoon as the final piece of entertainment to close the show.

From dagwood dogs to dodgem cars, woodchopping, the animal nursery and huge cake exhibits in the pavilion, the show had a little bit of something for everyone. Well done to each and every person who entered exhibits. That is exactly what makes the show so special in every community across the region. From the cattle, sheep, pigs and birds to the fruit and veg, arts and crafts, and so much more—I thank everyone for supporting the show. The show would not be possible without the support of sponsors, both large and small. I thank Regional Australia Bank, 2DU, Zoo FM, Dubbo Regional Council and 123 Tix. They all play an important role in keeping the Dubbo Show running each year.

The people behind the scenes are, of course, the ones who deserve the credit. For 150 years, dedicated community members keep turning up to ensure the show is everything it should be. These days around 700 volunteers help bring it all together. Without their support and assistance, the show just would not happen. The show always includes exciting exhibits and headline entertainment to keep people coming back, but it also retains the traditional elements we all know and love. That is what makes the show all the more special in 2023. Communities are united by their shows. I know that the Dubbo Show will continue to unite the community well into the future. Well done to the Dubbo Show and the Dubbo Show Society. The 151st Dubbo Show will take place on Friday 10 May to Sunday 12 May 2024.

### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:31):** I call attention to the dismal state of school infrastructure within my electorate of Riverstone. Access to free public education is a legal obligation of the State. Moreover, it is a fundamental right and the cornerstone of Australian society. Quality education is the bedrock of a skilled workforce and creative community. Education is critical for the prosperity of future generations. Riverstone has the highest number of students of any electorate in the State—over 20,000. That number will only grow in the years to come. Our students are our future, yet the previous Government failed to deliver an adequate number of educational facilities to cater for population growth in the area.

Almost every school in the electorate has exceeded its enrolment cap—some by more than double their permanent capacity. Classes are overfilled and teachers are overworked. Playgrounds, which foster many of the children's most important interactions and teachable moments, have been covered with demountable classrooms—in some cases multistorey. Students deserve adequate attention at school, and teachers deserve manageable class sizes. The Audit Office of New South Wales has found that students are learning less effectively in overcrowded schools, and that the chronic underinvestment in school infrastructure has led to situations where many schools have more students than can be accommodated in existing classrooms.

A disproportionately high number of the victims of this chronic underinvestment are the hardworking students and parents of Riverstone. There are some who can afford private schooling options; however, the majority of families, struggling with cost-of-living pressures, cannot. This problem is especially pertinent when considering support unit classes. Already several families have come to me concerned about the lack of support unit classes for students with special needs in their area. It is a worry that no parent should have to face. The failure to support young families does not end with the lack of schools and subsequent overcrowding. It extends also to the critical transport infrastructure that students rely upon to travel to and from school. On a daily basis, my electorate office receives emails and phone calls from parents asking for extended or additional bus services, especially for services to schools.

Students who are only a 15-minute drive away from school are resorting to long and drawn-out public bus services, which take up to 90 minutes extra in some instances. Myriad connection points and differing modes of transport are regularly undone by one late bus or rail service. Children should not have to wake up at the crack of dawn and spend up to three hours a day travelling to the local school that is only a few kilometres from their homes. This acute failure in planning is forcing parents to drive their kids to school, piling cars onto the roads and heightening peak-hour delays. Before entering Parliament, I was aware of the overcrowding being experienced by schools in Riverstone. But immediately after I took office I began to understand the true depth of the problem. One school, with an expected total cohort of around 500 students in 2020, enrolled over 2,100 students this year. The after-school care alone caters for almost 500 students.

Siblings are being separated by changes in catchments. Parents are forced to organise their days around school drop-offs or pick-ups because bus services have not been extended to school routes. Instances like these are commonplace in Riverstone. Students and parents are bearing the brunt of poor choices made by a government that neglected them. Our hardworking teachers, who are at the forefront of education delivery, are also overlooked and forced to take on larger volumes of students. I say to the people of Riverstone that they have voted for change, they have voted for a fresh start and this Government will deliver.

It is my privilege to be part of the Minns Labor Government, which is tackling this matter head-on. We promised a new primary school in Nirimba Fields with a co-located preschool. We promised a new high school

for Schofields and Tallawong, as well as upgrades to Riverbank Public School and The Ponds High School to help alleviate the currently crowded school infrastructure. We will ensure that Riverstone gets the investment it needs. This Government plans for the future and it plans for growth. I say to the parents, students and teachers of Riverstone that I hear their concerns. The Government hears their concerns. I have met with the Minister for Education and Early Learning and explained the challenges we face. The Minister has confirmed that we will work towards revitalising schooling in Riverstone, and towards delivering to our students the quality education they so desperately need and deserve.

### COAL AND GAS MINING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:36):** My constituents are worried that coal and gas mining is putting basic life essentials like food, air, water and biodiversity at risk for short-term, unsustainable private profit. Since the Paris Agreement came into effect in November 2016, 26 fossil fuel projects have been approved in New South Wales. Over their life cycle, these projects will produce 4.8 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, which is equivalent to more than 30 years of the State's current annual emissions. Our survival depends on an urgent transition away from fossil fuels to mitigate the worst climate change impacts. We cannot afford a business-as-usual approach to fossil fuel mining.

Disturbingly, a desire to extract as much coal and gas from the earth as possible before the transition to renewables is seeing mining creep into our precious and irreplaceable food bowl on the Liverpool Plains. The Liverpool Plains provide some of the most productive agricultural land in Australia, where barley, chickpeas, faba beans, sorghum, sunflowers, soybeans, maize, wheat and cotton are produced, and beef cattle and sheep graze. The black volcanic soil is highly fertile, while the reliable rainfall ensures year-round good crops even when the country is in drought.

Liverpool Plains crops yield 40 per cent more per hectare than the national farming average and contribute about \$332 million to annual gross domestic product. The region is fundamental to the long-term food security of the country and the State, yet it is under serious threat from mining. The Pilliga Forest, which adjoins the Liverpool Plains, will be destroyed by the 850 coal seam gas wells approved under the Narrabri Gas Project. The forest is Australia's largest temperate woodland forest and a vital recharge area for Australia's largest groundwater basin, the Great Artesian Basin. Two massive lateral high-pressured gas pipelines are proposed to transport the gas: the Lateral Pipeline, which will splice through the Pilliga, and the Hunter Gas Pipeline, which will traverse the Liverpool Plains.

Seismic testing is occurring across the Liverpool Plains, despite fierce resistance from farmers and landholders. During caretaker mode in March, the previous Government approved the reactivation of the Kahlua pilot wells on the Liverpool Plains, which will be flared for two years. The groundwater system of the Liverpool Plains is fragile and interconnected, with aquifers that are a crucial water source for agricultural productivity. Contamination from coal seam gas extraction risks destroying the water source for the entire region. The pipelines could shift the flow of water across the plains, as occurred on the Darling Downs in Queensland, which stopped the soil from draining and rendered it unproductive. Pipe cracks, leaks or breaks could blow massive holes in the food bowl. Constructing multiple compressor stations across the region to maintain pressure in the pipes so that gas keeps flowing would introduce heavy industrial structures in what should be a natural food-growing region.

Many in the local community believe the pipelines are aimed at creating a gateway to facilitate fracking on the Liverpool Plains. The Liverpool Plains were once off limits to mining, but recent approvals covering 600,000 hectares, including three open-cut mines across 4,000 hectares of the most productive farming land, have given mining proponents hope. The Liverpool Plains are a long-term asset that should be protected for food security and our future survival. By contrast, coal and gas are fossil fuels that contribute to climate change, biodiversity destruction, and air and water pollution. They are being phased out by the global community. The fact that mining and exploration is already occurring on and around the Liverpool Plains demonstrates that our planning system is failing. We need to make the Liverpool Plains and the surrounds that support its agriculture fertility off limits to mining.

The previous Government designated the Narrabri Gas Lateral Pipeline as State significant infrastructure. That designation can be reversed. The Hunter Gas Pipeline has been approved as State significant infrastructure but requires ministerial approval under the Pipelines Act 1967. The Minister should reject it at this final step. We need third-party appeal rights for coal seam gas projects to allow farmers and traditional owners to test the merits of approvals in court. Climate change should be embedded in all planning decisions, with proponents required to provide a climate impact statement.

The new Government needs to replace pro-coal and gas policy statements with proactive policies requiring decision-making to properly consider and actively minimise climate impacts. Importantly, we need to ban gas connections and new developments, and establish a road map to substituting gas connections in households and



businesses so that we can achieve net zero emissions and remove any reliance on gas. I join farmers, the Gomeroi traditional owners, environmentalists, my constituents and the wider community in calling on the Government to protect the life-sustaining Liverpool Plains and Pilliga forest by stopping the Narrabri Gas Project, the Hunter and lateral gas pipelines and any further mining in this important food bowl from going ahead.

### WATERLOO PUBLIC HOUSING

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:42):** I confront a matter that is causing considerable confusion, concern and distress to thousands of my public housing tenants in Waterloo. Last week the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rose Jackson, announced a pause on further sales of public housing in New South Wales following the absolute chaos of rash public asset sales by the Coalition. In their 12-year tenure, those opposite managed to offload 7,628 properties, including 4,858 homes. That is almost \$3.6 billion in public housing stock and other land and assets disposed of without a proper plan to renew and reinvigorate our social housing stock or to reinvest those profits for the benefit of the public. Despite selling off so many sites, the former Government managed to deliver only 4,500 homes with that \$3.6 billion and left the NSW Land and Housing Corporation straining to cope with maintaining the current housing stock.

One would think that with all of their ornate corporate and investment backgrounds, members of the previous Government would be capable of providing a decent return for the people of New South Wales. Instead, they outed themselves as fiscally oblivious and utterly unconcerned with doing what is best for the State, and not just for their developer mates and other friends in expensive places. The Liberal Party's intentions for the Waterloo public housing estate were made clear in 2016 when it announced a new metro station at Waterloo, adjacent to the public housing precinct. The station will be located within a few minutes' walk from both Redfern and Green Square railway stations, leaving the rest of Waterloo and other areas of my electorate, like Zetland, without conveniently located public transport options.

What rationale could have possibly existed for the placement of that station unless the Government of the day had a vested interest in that placement? It was clear to our community that the former Government was strategically preparing for the site to be privatised. It planned the station to inflate the value of land on which my residents have spent their lives, holding their homes to ransom for a one-time profit. That is why thousands of tenants have been stuck in limbo and living in fear of being relocated for years, with no guarantee that they would have a home to come back to. That is simply not good enough. Where the former Government saw only dollar signs, this Government sees a site that has a special meaning to the public housing tenants living there. It is a site that should not be dangled like a carrot in front of developers. It should benefit the people of New South Wales who need it the most.

If I can assure my residents in Waterloo of one thing, it is this: A Labor government will not treat them with the same contempt as our predecessors. In my 10 years as the member for Heffron, I have been inundated by maintenance requests and complaints about the failing condition of public housing assets in Waterloo. This includes recurrent mould, frequent water damage, issues with accessibility, inadequate rubbish management, cockroaches and other pests, broken lifts and a litany of other general maintenance requests. After decades of neglect, many of the buildings in Waterloo are in need of renewal. Something must be done, which is why part of Labor's freeze on public housing land sales includes a strong review of Waterloo south.

The dignity and wellbeing of residents on the Waterloo Estate has always been immensely important to me. I spent more than a decade fighting the former Government to respond to their needs. No-one should have to feel like they are asking too much by wanting to live in a safe, secure and healthy home. The Minister for Housing is doing her best to determine whether Labor has inherited enough scope to take the Liberal Party's cash-cow redevelopment plan and transform it into a properly staged renewal project that benefits the social housing residents of Waterloo—one based on good planning principles and a much greater capacity to provide social and affordable housing.

The Government wants to ensure that its plans cause the least amount of disruption possible to tenants and guarantees that every current tenant can look forward to a better, safer and healthier home in Waterloo. When the Government knows more, it will be up-front about the decisions and time frames required to execute that long-term vision. This Labor Government is not interested in treating Waterloo residents like pawns in a game of capitalist chess. Instead, it will build a social housing system that New South Wales can be proud of.

### STAN GRANT

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:46):** I speak in support of celebrated Australian journalist Stan Grant. I am a representative of the Strathfield electorate, on land that belongs to the Wangal clan. It is one of the most culturally diverse electorates in Australia. The people in my electorate have heritages from many different shores, including China, India, Nepal, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Italy, Greece and many more. Over 70 per cent of

Strathfield residents come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I am one of those residents. We look different; we sound different.

I am sure that many residents of my electorate will have experienced at least some of the racism, discrimination and hate that has caused Stan Grant to take time away from the media. He did not just walk away noting that he would be back; he also acknowledged, with great courage, that he was part of the media establishment that was the problem. He said powerfully that we do "not have the love or the language to speak to the gentle spirits of our land" or, I believe, to lead our community to reconciliation and unite Australians behind a shared purpose and sense of belonging.

Even in this dark moment, Stan chose to focus on love as a source of strength, healing and hope. I recently experienced a little of what Stan must have confronted on a daily, ongoing basis. I wrote an article for Anzac Day that argued that Anzac was not just a white Australian story but in fact encompassed contributions and sacrifices from people of all different backgrounds who had not been afforded the opportunity to be part of our nation's celebrated Anzac story. Then, shockingly—but perhaps not surprisingly—there was a lot of abuse on social media. Some of it was the usual racial abuse—that I should go back to China, that I had no place here in Australia, that the Anzac tradition only belonged to white Australia and nobody else.

But perhaps more insidiously there was another argument that had a certain logic—a dark, gaslighting, dangerous logic that because I had raised the issue of race that made me the racist. That logic says that any talk of race should be buried, that we should pretend that race does not matter, that we should pretend that we all are the same and we enjoy the same privileges and circumstances. That logic says that race does not matter, and that is profoundly wrong. Race is relevant because it is on the basis of race that people are abused, discriminated against or vilified. It is on the scaffold of race that much structural disadvantage is built.

Much of this racism occurs online, hidden behind cowardly, anonymous accounts, but much of it still happens in the real world, on public transport, on the streets, in broad daylight. More subtle, nuanced forces of racism are peppered through our everyday speech and interactions, and in the decisions and judgements we make about who to hire, who to befriend, who to trust, who to let in. Racism is like a dark fog that hangs around us. It clears up sometimes, the sun shines through and for that moment we feel that we can do anything and be anything, but the fog is still there. So we have to keep talking about race and we must keep calling out racism and discrimination. We must not pretend it does not happen.

We must keep talking about race, particularly at this time when later this year Australians will vote in a referendum on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. We must continue our fight to get more people from different cultural backgrounds into positions of leadership to be role models, to change the culture of our institutions and to assert by the powerful example of them being there that everyone can belong in Australia. So to Stan Grant, I say: I stand with you. Australia needs your voice. To all of those from migrant and minority backgrounds who have experienced racism and discrimination, I say: We stand with you.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I thank the member for Strathfield. I was very fortunate to be in the Chamber to hear that contribution.

#### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:52):** Election campaigns are a key part of our democracy. I learnt that in my first election campaign. It set a very high bar for what an election campaign should be about and how it should be conducted. I begin with the story of my first campaign. It was 2003, I was fresh out of high school, and I was campaigning for my good friend and then member for Hornsby Judy Hopwood. It was election day at 4.00 a.m. I had set up my booth and was ready for the heat of battle that would be election day. The Labor volunteer turned up, with an esky in hand, and the first words out of his mouth were to offer me some water and some food. He ended by saying, "Please, help yourself for the rest of the day. This esky is yours too." We had a lovely day together. We discussed politics and history throughout the day. Many on the other side of the House might know that individual—it was former Carr Government Minister Ron Dyer, OAM, who retired from the Legislative Council at that 2003 election.

My first election campaign taught me that we run against opponents, not enemies. So for my first private member's statement in the New South Wales Parliament, at the start of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament, I would like to talk about the importance of democracy and the 2023 election. Democracy is the foundation stone of our society, and I am a very passionate advocate. As I have said previously in this place, it is one of my key values. All of us in this place were democratically elected by our communities. This place is very special. We may not always like the election results, but we must always respect them because this is how democracy works and this is what makes our society great. Power always comes from the grassroots up, not from the top down. It currently works this way, and it should always work that way.

I acknowledge the 60,040 people in the Davidson electorate who were enrolled to vote in the 2023 State election. I particularly congratulate all the voters who voted for the very first time. I was one of five candidates who put themselves forward for consideration. I acknowledge my fellow candidates: Janine Kitson, Independent; Caroline Atkinson, The Greens; Andrews Willis, Sustainable Australia Party; and Karen Edelstein, Labor. The campaign was professional. We were courteous and respectful at all times, and the people of Davidson should always expect that from their candidates.

When it comes to public policy, I believe we all have much more in common than uncommon. We all care about the big issues and we each have ideas about how we as parties and individuals can go about working out those issues. As the Liberal candidate, I ran on three main themes: the first was to help ease the cost of living; the second was to prevent inappropriate development without supporting infrastructure, in order to protect our community's character for future generations; and the third was to help end the stigma often associated with mental health. I thank the people of Davidson for giving me a mandate to get to work on addressing these three main issues. I look forward to updating the House on how we are tracking.

I would not be here without the Liberal Party. I acknowledge and thank the Davidson State Electorate Conference, led by president Alan Lipman, vice presidents Jenny Powell and Namoi Dougal, secretary Brendon Zhu and treasurer Sam Ngai. They all went above and beyond the call of service. I also thank the local Liberal Party branches: Gordon, Killara, Killara Young Liberals, Lindfield, Pymble, St Ives, and members from the adjoining The Forest and Roseville branches. To the amazing booth captains and individuals who went above and beyond to help: Margaret Baker; Guy and Robyn Campbell; Chima Ekemezie; Declan Flaherty; Patricia Forsythe, AM; Penny George-Farlow; Graeme Howard; Peymon, Rama and Aryan Illkhani; Anna Karelas; David Knox; Councillor Simon Lennon; Michelle Lam-Li; Michael Lane; Alan and Lyndy Lipman; Catherine Lowden; Councillor Sam Ngai; Jacquie and Greg Parker; Ian Plambeck; Jenny Powell; Jonathan and Heather Powell; Victoria Qui; Massoud and Olivia Mangholi; Paul and Sarah Ritchie; Martin and Mary Ryan; Brett Sham; Lianda and John Stoel; Les Taylor, AM; Andrew Thirwell; Richard Tilden; Councillor Barbara and Gary Ward; Tony, Jan and Sarah Ward; and Councillor Brendon Zhu, I say a very big thank you.

Of course, I have to thank my favourite booth captain, who also happens to be my wonderful wife, Gessika. She stood at St Ives for the whole of pre-poll, and I very much thank her for her love and support. I am happy to say to the House that she is far more popular in the seat of Davidson than I am. She made some really wonderful friends there, particularly amongst the volunteers for the Labor, Greens and Independent candidates. That was really wonderful. My office received a card from one of those volunteers. It was addressed to Gessika, thanking her for her wonderful companionship at the booth. I seek leave to table a list of the names of all my other volunteers.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

#### **MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (17:57):** I am honoured to stand here today as the re-elected member for Macquarie Fields. I thank my constituents for trusting me to serve and represent them for a third term. I am very fortunate to represent a diverse electorate. It is home to many hardworking families who simply want a better life and to provide their children with a better future. Macquarie Fields is where they want to achieve these aspirations. People see the outer south-western suburbs of Sydney as an attractive place of opportunity and community.

The priorities of my constituents are straightforward. They want access to essential services, and they want a fair go. They want access to good local schools that provide quality public and private education to prepare their children for the future. They want access to the best health care. They want access to the best roads and to public transport that gets them to and from work and school safely, on time and without a hit to their hip pocket. They want access to clean and green spaces for leisure and recreation. They want access to good-paying local jobs that provide them with a stable income and grow our economy. They want access to affordable housing, and they want some relief from the cost-of-living crisis. These are things that are not unreasonable, and not too much to ask. The priorities of my constituents are the same priorities of working people across New South Wales, and they are the priorities of this Minns Labor Government.

Over the past 12 years there have been some challenges for our community, but we persisted. Despite the pork-barrelling that worked against our community, we did not relent. The rare occasions when the Coalition Government did act to meet the needs of the Macquarie Fields community were only after years of campaigning

by me and my community's groups. We were successful in keeping Hurlstone Agricultural High School at its rightful home at Glenfield and we were successful in fighting for and delivering more commuter carparking at the Edmondson Park train station. But the fight for our fair share continues.

The voters made their voices heard loud and clear at the election. Like most of the rest of the State, they voted for a fresh start for New South Wales. They voted for their fair share. They voted for a Minns Labor Government. I am proud to be part of this new Labor Government, which is committed to delivering to the Macquarie Fields electorate and everybody else their fair share and has a real, bold and progressive vision to unlock new opportunities for the people of our great State. This Government shares the same priorities as my local community. We are committed to properly funding our public schools, keeping public service delivery assets in public hands, building new affordable housing, upgrading our train stations, capping road tolls and investing in our nurses, paramedics and frontline staff members. We will help ease the cost-of-living pressures for working people and make sure that everyone in this State has a fair go.

And we are not wasting our time. Already, in the first sitting week of Parliament, the Government introduced legislation to protect Sydney Water and Hunter Water, which are important public assets that rightly belong to the people of New South Wales, from being privatised, and to make renting fairer for the one-third of our State who are renters. This Government is serious about working for working people. Once again I thank the community of Macquarie Fields. I am always first and foremost the local member for Macquarie Fields. I will stand up for my electorate at every opportunity and continue to fight for our fair share. The Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering for all the community. Now is the time to get on with the job.

### UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:01):** I speak this evening on an issue important to some of the newest constituents of the Upper Hunter electorate. During the election campaign, residents of the Branxton area raised concerns about the pressure that new residential development in their area is placing on Branxton Public School. Key among those concerns is the need for a new high school to be built locally. At this point, I will give a brief history to date on the planning approval process for the new large residential development for those not familiar with Huntlee New Town. The development is located south of the Hunter Expressway, between the existing village of North Rothbury and the township of Branxton. Huntlee was first gazetted for development back in December 2010. The Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] granted development consent for stage one in April 2013. The PAC approval included the requirement of one allotment for a primary school.

On 31 October last year, the Department of Planning approved a further modification of the development consent, which now encompasses two lots—one for a primary school and one for a high school. Stage one of Huntlee was approved to develop almost 1,500 residential lots. On 14 April, only a few weeks ago, the planning secretary's environmental assessment requirements for Huntlee stage two were released so that the developer could prepare an environmental impact statement and a development application. The second stage proposes approximately 5,000 dwellings and will see development progress from the Cessnock City Council area over the local government boundaries of Singleton, in my electorate of Upper Hunter.

In a Department of Planning and Environment report to the Independent Planning Commission from January last year, the applicant states that stage two will provide another two school sites. I point out that at this stage, despite the initial reservation of a school site, Huntlee has no public or independent school and relies on existing education infrastructure. In May last year, one of my Upper Hunter constituents wrote to advise me of the concern in the Branxton area about the delay in progress for a high school at Huntlee. I made representations to the then Minister for Education and Early Learning and was advised:

The Department of Education is monitoring enrolment demand and notes the voluntary planning agreement includes dedication of a primary school site to the department.

However, the lot development threshold for transfer has not yet been reached, and there is no current funding at present for a new school, including for a new high school." Additionally, the Department of Education advised:

The educational needs of primary and secondary school students in Huntlee are currently being met by Branxton Public School and Rutherford Technology High School.

The community decided to then launch a Build Huntlee High School campaign to put it firmly on the agenda for the March State election. At this point, I acknowledge the representation I received on 13 February from General Manager Jason Linnane of Singleton Council. He advised:

Singleton Council strongly supports the community's campaign for Huntlee High School.

The mayor made similar representations. However, given the department's initial advice and the time pressures relating to the impending State election, I could not make a commitment beyond building the initial primary school. That was then and this is now. The member for Londonderry, who is now Deputy Premier, and Minister

for Education and Early Learning, went to Branxton on Friday 17 February and committed NSW Labor to commence building a high school at Huntlee if elected on 25 March. The Deputy Premier made that promise, is now in government and has three years and 11 months to deliver on it. I look forward to working with the Branxton, Elderslie and Belford community to ensure the commitment that has been made is honoured and delivered in full—permanent buildings and staff.

### HUNTER-CENTRAL COAST RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONE

**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) (18:06):** Tonight I speak on an issue of concern to a large element of my community—namely, the consultation for the proposed offshore wind farms was pretty light on. Many people in my community do not oppose wind farms per se, but they are concerned because the renewable energy zone comes within 10 kilometres of Norah Head, which is a pretty iconic place, not just in my electorate but on the whole Central Coast and, I would argue, in New South Wales. It is home to Norah Head Lighthouse and is a great spot for watching whales, which come in great numbers. I am a member of the surf club there. It is great to be on patrol and see the whales breaching just off the shore.

The community's concern is that the Federal Government held a consultation process that was not well advertised and the people who did go along to it were not really able to get any information. I could not make the meeting because I had other obligations, but I committed to assisting them in organising and making sure that the Federal Government and any company that puts forward a proposal does so in a way that involves proper consultation with the community. I think we would all agree in this place that getting the right information, so that people fully understand the consequences of having any sort of development—whether it is onshore or offshore—is so important, particularly when it will be there for not one or two years but maybe 50 or 100 years, and will be impacting that area.

I have contacted the local Federal member, Emma McBride. I know that she is committed to a proper consultation process as well. Together we will make sure that the community's issues are heard and taken into account throughout the process. I note, through contact with the department, that the community will have multiple opportunities to comment on the proposed project moving forward. I certainly encourage the community to participate in that process, particularly through the new group, which is called Love Norah Head—as we all do. It is important that we get this right. We need the energy mix. There is no doubt about that. We want to get rid of fossil fuels, but we have to do it in a way that does not adversely impact on wildlife or the community.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:11):** There is no denying that we are in an unprecedented housing crisis. From the inner cities to the regions, people are being forced to sleep in cars or tents, families are being priced out of their rental homes, and students and young people are languishing in overcrowded share houses. Each day a new horror story hits the headlines, and people are finally waking up to the reality that so many in our community, including The Greens, have been pointing out for years—the private housing system is broken. But it did not break overnight. Choices made by successive State and Federal governments on both sides of the aisle to prioritise the profits of their big developer and investor mates have contributed to the dire situation we face today, in Newtown and across New South Wales.

In the past fortnight, I welcomed the new Government beginning the process of progressing solutions. We welcome the audit of government-owned land that can be used for housing, and the freeze of public housing sales in recognition of the fact that selling off public housing in the midst of a housing crisis is not the answer. But we push back on the eagerness to rely on market solutions only to solve market problems. The Greens reject the ideas that institutional investors will radically improve the situation for renters, that high-rises are the silver bullet to the lack of affordable housing, and that building more private supply alone, without also boosting public housing, is a way out of this crisis.

We wholeheartedly reject any extension of the former Coalition Government's logic that the only way to increase public housing is by demolishing and privatising existing public housing and breaking apart the communities that call it home. Handing over any percentage of public land to a private developer is privatisation. No matter how one spins it, that is what it is. Most of all, we push back on the idea that the burden for tackling the housing crisis should fall anywhere other than on the Government. Whether it's nimbys, the migrants, the international students, international investors or the rich Chinese developers, every week we seem to hear that there is someone else to blame for the housing crisis.

Governments are responsible and they cannot continue to shift the blame. From flogging off public housing to private developers and transferring Land and Housing Corporation property to community housing providers,

to touting private supply solutions like build to rent, the Government needs to stop outsourcing responsibility for addressing the housing crisis and start taking accountability. Hopefully, that is what we see from the Government. We want to combat the nimbys and address housing affordability in the meantime. Let us roll out inclusionary zoning and make it mandatory for all new private developments to have at least 30 per cent affordable housing as a condition of development consent.

If we want to address the massive shortage in public housing supply and the over 50,000 approved applicants on the public housing waiting list who are waiting for homes that do not exist, then we need to investigate sustainable solutions for boosting supply that do not require demolishing existing estates, and instead look at things like infill and refurbishing the 3,000-plus public housing dwellings that are sitting empty across the State. If we want to stop investors syphoning properties away from the long-term rental market and turning them into short-term letting, we need to empower councils to cap and regulate short-term rentals based on community need and rental vacancies, and implement an empty property tax on rentals to stop them being used in this way.

None of these solutions are new. They have all been rolled out in other jurisdictions and in other countries, where they have had a significant impact on bringing the housing situation back under control. The Greens want to see an end to the narrative, whether it is pedalled by the media or even in this Chamber by the planning Minister during question time, that the community opposing development or the former Government are solely to blame for the lack of housing affordability in this State. We want to bring the focus back here, to the future and to what we can do together in this place to work constructively to end the housing crisis that has been allowed to fester for too long. The change in government means we have an opportunity finally to act. But that means we need to put developers in their place, strengthen protections for renters and radically reimagine the housing market so that we are once again putting people before profit.

### BEGA ELECTORATE SALEYARDS

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:16):** Mr Assistant Speaker, I speak about something that will be of particular interest to you, as the member for Strathfield. I speak about the human, animal and cultural benefits of active saleyards in the Bega electorate and across New South Wales. There are approximately 67 animal saleyards across the State, alphabetically from Adelong to Young. In Bega the saleyards are one of the few in south-east New South Wales and East Gippsland. It is the biggest on the far South Coast, with the nearest being in Bairnsdale in Victoria to the south and Nowra to the north. It is relatively remote, being more than 100 kilometres from the nearest saleyard.

Transport in the region is difficult and expensive, with the unimproved north-south connectivity and neglected Snowy Mountains highway over Brown Mountain providing east-west connection. The saleyards have weekly prime cattle and bobby calf sales, as well as consolidate loads of dairy heifers before being sold to export markets. There are over 100 vendors with more than 20 permanent workers, as well as transport operators employed directly or indirectly in the industry. The saleyards have a monthly turnover of more than \$3 million to \$4 million. It is by nature a bartering and business point but, as those who live in rural and regional areas know, it is also a social centre and safe place for both humans and animals.

Farmers are not cruel to their animals. They have a duty of care to their stock at a human and an economic level. At a human level, they are also not as tough as people in the city think. The *Social Value of Saleyards Research Report* in 2022 stated:

Saleyards in rural Australia are often the backbone of rural communities, and they provide substantial economic and social value to those who visit. They are a place to connect and engage socially, uphold tradition, and share services and information that continues to grow the livestock industry, as well as maintain positive social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

They provide producers with the opportunity to socialise, experience a sense of belonging, network and share information. In addition, saleyards present an opportunity to raise awareness of local professional services for producers' wellbeing.

Farms in the Bega electorate are equally vulnerable to mental health issues, if not more so with the recent bushfire and flooding disasters. Therefore, community and social interaction supports their resilience. The saleyards have also functioned as evacuation centres during disasters, sheltering both humans and animals. They have functioned as stockfeed storage centres during those critical times. They also provide an important function for protection against biosecurity threats, disease surveillance and animal welfare investigations. They have recently been supported by the introduction of Local Land Services veterinarian graduates, who work locally with field veterinarians.

As mentioned earlier, farmers are responsible for the wellbeing of their animals. As a result, the Bega Saleyards manages penning densities and has introduced soft floor matting. The matting has reduced hoof soreness and increased sales by 20 per cent to 30 per cent. The Bega beef cattle cooperative is advocating for government funding for pen shading. In our environment of increased average temperatures, this shading would mitigate the

stress of dehydration to cattle. This leads to better animal welfare outcomes and meat quality. These outcomes meet producer, community and market expectations. It must be noted that seven other saleyards—Carcoar, Yass, Moss Vale, Cooma, Scone, Gloucester and Wagga Wagga—have been upgraded under bushfire recovery funding.

I note the recent closure of the Moree Saleyards because of safety issues as a result of the lack of financial resources from local government. The New South Wales Government recognises the increased modern health and safety standards required for humans and animals in the livestock industry. The Bega beef cattle cooperative has the support of the Far South Coast Dairy Development Group and the support of the Federal member for Eden-Monaro, the Hon. Kristy McBain. I extend my support to this necessary improvement for the benefit of human and animal welfare and the social, cultural and economic benefit of the Bega electorate

### LOCAL ARTS PROJECTS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:21):** I talk today about how important it is that we all work together to support local arts projects in our electorates. I have been discussing with my friend in the other place the Minister for the Arts the importance of local musical theatre projects, and I can say with confidence that the Minns Labor Government is fully committed to supporting local arts. Local arts have the power to change communities. I have seen children that I have taught flourish in school music programs and community organisations instead of being caught up in, shall we say, less desirable extracurriculars. Local school music programs keep kids in school and engage them, not leave them on autopilot.

Prioritising local arts keeps communities alive. Places like Engadine, Randwick and, of course, Camden thrive off the joy that local arts bring to our communities. I was grateful to receive an invitation by the member for Heathcote to watch a local performance in her electorate. I was extremely impressed by the level of talent on offer—not quite as amazing as Camden, but still pretty good nevertheless. Local arts projects stimulate growth in our communities as well, particularly in our outer metro regions. People come from all across Sydney and the Southern Highlands to watch Camden performances, especially from amazing organisations like the Camden Community Band and the Camden Musical Society.

Tourists not only support our local arts organisations but also stop for coffee or a meal at the local cafe for breakfast, have lunch at the local pub and take a quick tour of the Australian Botanic Gardens at Mount Annan before popping in to watch the Camden Musical Society's recent amazing show *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. That is what local arts can do for our communities. It can tackle the tough conversations like homelessness and climate change. It allows for local issues to be driven forward in spectacular ways. Musical theatre, in particular, has effected so much change over the years and brought to light really important issues.

We must start protecting our local artists. For far too long, local artists have been told things like, "I can pay you in experience", or, "I can pay you in exposure." No other industry allows for that degree of normalised free labour. That is why I thank the Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy for not only standing up for the interests of performers but also ensuring that, after 12 years of inaction, New South Wales finally has a government that cares about local artists. Our local artists do not just need pay. Many of my constituents are involved in community organisations that want to support the community through their passions, but they do not have the rehearsal spaces to do so.

I have been contacted by numerous performers begging for rehearsal spaces in Camden and they keep hitting brick walls. Those artists are crying out for local accessible spaces to rehearse and perform but, as with many issues that Camden faced under the Coalition, infrastructure has not kept up with development. It is incumbent on all of us in this place to listen to our artists. I cannot understand why the former Government did not, but now it is our job. We need to treat artists like the lifeblood of our communities, because in all honesty they are.

### NORTHERN BEACHES BUS SERVICES

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:24):** During the election campaign and in the months since, the deterioration in reliability of bus services on the northern beaches has been raised with me time and again. In my electorate of Wakehurst, buses are the only form of public transport available. Day in, day out, people plan their lives around bus routes and services to get to work—to Parliament House, in my case—to school, to shops, to play sport and to see family and friends. Particular routes, depending on where someone lives and works, are an essential part of the rhythm of everyday life for so many in Wakehurst.

We all understand the logistics of daily life and how a bad public transport experience can throw plans into disarray. When people arrive at a bus stop for a scheduled, timetabled service and it does not show up and they check the live tracking on the transport app and find out it has been cancelled at short notice, one can understand their frustration. Then, when this happens multiple times for months, one can understand their outrage. Yesterday

a constituent wrote to me in relation to the 174X route into the city from Allambie Heights. She explained that this express bus service to the city has had every second bus cancelled for the past six months. Her email said:

The 174X bus route into the city from Allambie Heights is becoming a professional issue as it's preventing many people from arriving punctually to work ... I would believe there are serious contract breaches at play and if not, there's likely been poor contracting done to begin with in allowing higher than acceptable levels of cancellations.

It is clear that the provisions in the contract between the previous Government and the private operator relating to penalties for cancelled services are inadequate. Given what has played out with the buses, we must reflect on the implications of privatising the bus service on the northern beaches—a decision by the former Government. I understand there is a national bus driver shortage and that a shortfall of drivers is the underlying factor causing the service cancellations; however, we must acknowledge that conditions and work culture are important factors in attracting and keeping workers. For example, the free Opal cards provided to drivers employed before privatisation should be provided for all ongoing drivers. These things clearly matter.

I welcome the new Labor Government's focus on improving bus services and its announcement of the Bus Industry Taskforce chaired by John Lee. I thank Minister Haylen for joining me at Brookvale Bus Depot with the drivers and the mechanics to talk through those issues. I look forward to the interim findings being released on 10 July. I will be participating in this inquiry, closely monitoring its progress and holding the Government to account on time frames and deliverables so we can implement smart solutions as soon as possible. I will also continue my engagement with the Minister directly, as well as with Keolis Downer, Transport for NSW and CDC NSW, so that they hear the voice of the people of Wakehurst and understand the urgency around this issue.

Yesterday I met with staff from Transport for NSW to communicate with them the frustration of so many in Wakehurst about the recent rate of bus cancellations and to discuss short- and long-term solutions. I told them service reliability must be the key priority. We know that, when public transport is regular and on time, people love it. The popular B-Line service is a testament to this. When people catch the bus, we help get cars off the road, save people money and time, improve quality of life and support the smooth running of the economy. It is win-win. I thank all the residents of Wakehurst who have written or spoken to me about this for sharing their experiences. I encourage them to continue to communicate with my office about the bus service reliability. I am using this information to directly inform my advocacy on the matter.

I understand how important a high-quality bus service is to the people of Wakehurst and, indeed, the entire northern beaches. The current situation and rate of bus cancellations is simply not good enough. Through the Bus Industry Taskforce and through direct advocacy to the Government, I will continue to fight for the best possible services for our area. That means a reliable and regular service people can rely on. I look forward to continuing to work with the Minister, the Government, Keolis Downer and CDC NSW for the people of Wakehurst, who have this shared mission. Watch this space.

#### MICK CRONIN

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:29):** There are few things as synonymous with Parramatta as the Parramatta Eels, and there are few players who epitomise the club as well as Michael Cronin, who has rightfully been inducted into the NSW Rugby League Hall of Fame. Mick Cronin joined the Parramatta Eels in 1977. Despite the distance from his hometown of Gerringong, he stayed true to the club, playing with the Eels for a decade and then returning as coach from 1990 to 1993. Known as "The Crow", Mick's sporting record is nothing short of remarkable. A magnificent centre, he is the greatest pointscorer in the history of the Parramatta Eels. At the time he retired he was the highest scoring player in NSW Rugby League history, with a total of 1,971 points. He represented Australia on no less than 33 occasions, scored 543 points in one season and played centre at the inaugural State of Origin game in 1980. Mick Cronin's contribution to rugby league, the Parramatta Eels and Parramatta is so significant that the eastern grandstand of Western Sydney CommBank Stadium is named the Mick Cronin Stand in his honour.

The Parramatta Eels are one of the most well-supported NRL clubs, with over 27,500 members and over 454,000 supporters. The Eels are integral to Parramatta's identity and culture; they are as much a part of the rich fabric of Parramatta as Parramatta Park and Parramatta River. The success of the Eels in the 1980s was due in no small part to Mick Cronin's skill, dedication and talent. The Eels enjoyed four premiership wins in 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1986. The fans thrived in that golden era, and to this day Mick Cronin's two pressure goals that steered his team to a 4-2 grand final victory over Canterbury in 1986 are a part of Parramatta folklore. That success was one of the cornerstones that the club's enduring support and popularity were built on, and I assure my colleagues that the Eels will finally see that success again soon.

It was my pleasure to meet Mick on grand final day in 2022, when he joined with some of his former teammates—Ray Price, Peter Wynn, Steve Ella, and David Liddiard—to cheer on the grand finalists. The triumphs of the 1980s were not repeated on that day, but the aura surrounding Mick and his teammates remained



the same. That aura is now encapsulated in a powerful public artwork in Parramatta Square. *Place of the Eels* is an eight-metre, vertical, highly reflective chrome vintage bus representing the 1960s Leyland Worldmaster bus that Parramatta Eels coach Jack Gibson bought his rugby league team in 1981. The bus was used for team meetings after their home base at Cumberland Oval was burnt down by the fans. The Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro artwork pays homage to the Eels team of the eighties, along with other interesting aspects of Parramatta's past.

Mick Cronin's induction into the NSW Rugby League Hall of Fame is a fitting tribute to a player who has left a lasting legacy on Parramatta. He is a true sporting legend, who won unprecedented consecutive Rothmans Medals in 1977 and 1978, who has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of service to the sport of rugby league football, who received the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 and who was further honoured in 2001 with the Centenary Medal for service to Australian society through the sport of rugby league. On behalf of the Parramatta community and Eels supporters around the world, I thank Mick and congratulate him on that well-deserved and remarkable achievement.

**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) (18:33):** I congratulate the member for Parramatta on her private member's statement this evening. I reflect that on 30 August 1981 I was sitting on the hill at Cumberland Oval for that 20-20 draw. But I was in maroon-and-white because I am a Manly supporter, so over the years Mick Cronin was a thorn in our side. In 1982 and 1983 his kicking ensured that we did not win either of those grand finals, but I have a lot of respect for Mick Cronin as a player for Parramatta and for New South Wales. He is indeed a legend, and everyone in New South Wales can look up to him. I am probably not as enthusiastic about Parramatta winning its next grand final, but I certainly remember that day with great fondness—the dust of the old Cumberland Oval and, of course, everyone wanting to take a bit of the oval home after the game as a souvenir.

#### DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:34):** I am very grateful for the opportunity to represent the constituents of the Drummoyne electorate in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. I wish to advise the House about election commitments that were made during the campaign. Those election commitments were made by the Perrottet Government, and I will work constructively with the new Minns Government to secure funding for my community. Continuing the redevelopment of Concord hospital is incredibly important. The former Liberal Government invested \$341 million into stage one of the redevelopment of Concord hospital. The completed clinical services building has brought a new comprehensive cancer centre, the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare, new aged-care and rehabilitation wards, and more beds for the local community. That long-overdue upgrade has been welcomed by my community and by staff, patients and visitors to the hospital.

I advocate for further investment in the hospital for my growing community to ensure that they can access healthcare services close to home and without travelling out of the area. In March the then Premier, the member for Epping, and then health Minister Brad Hazzard announced a further commitment for Concord hospital for a new and expanded emergency department, intensive care unit, cardiology wards and more beds. Unfortunately, Labor did not make a similar commitment. The New South Wales Liberal Party also committed to the Concord High School upgrade. Plans for that upgrade should continue, as it would greatly benefit local students and families attending the only public high school in my electorate. I have met with Concord High School P&C representatives on several occasions, and they have told me how vital the upgrade is to encourage learning for students and teachers.

In supporting local sporting clubs, the New South Wales Liberal Party made a commitment for an amenities upgrade at Queen Elizabeth Park in Concord. It is the home ground of the Russell Lea Women's Soccer Club, the only female club in the Canterbury district, and would go a long way towards empowering female participation in sport. A similar commitment was made for St Lukes Oval to support amenities upgrades for female players at local AFL clubs the Canada Bay Cannons, Drummoyne Power and Concord Giants, as well as Concord Briars and Little Athletics. I spoke to some local AFL players who told me that new facilities would mean that they would feel more comfortable in the change rooms and bathrooms on game days and would encourage more female players to take up the sport.

My electorate is known for its Ferragosto Italian street fair along Great North Road in Five Dock. The Liberal Party committed \$300,000 over the next four years to assist with the costs associated with bringing the event to life. It is an incredible celebration of the Italian community that celebrates our vibrant culture in an inclusive and fun way. I ask that the new Government consider matching that commitment, as it is a great boost for local small businesses and is a wonderful multicultural event that is much loved by my community and all who visit. I look forward to working with the new Government to secure funding for my community.

*Bills***REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Returned**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 18:37 until  
Tuesday 30 May 2023 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**STEM CHALLENGE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Approximately 300 students from across the Macleay and Hastings area gathered at Melville High School recently to take on The University of Newcastle's Science and Engineering Challenge (SEC). The SEC is a nationwide outreach program that encourages young people to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The challenge, which first began approximately 23 years ago in Kempsey, is run in more than 53 regions across Australia in partnership with higher education, local Rotary clubs and community sponsors. West Kempsey Rotary Club Science Challenge Co-ordinator Richard O'Leary and former Rotary district governor Garry Johnson helped start the challenge in 2000 and since inception, the Macleay Valley has only missed one SEC in 2020. The students engaged in several activities giving them the opportunity to develop STEM skills and talk to experts about what they're interested. I'd like to congratulate Mr O'Leary, who I note is excited to see the SEC still running in Kempsey – and all the sponsors for this year's SEC event including Engineers Australia Newcastle, Melville High School, Kempsey Shire Council, Gordon and Heather Chirgwin, Kempsey's Scotts Hydraulic Services, Dennis Partners Engineers as well as the Kempsey, West Kempsey and South West Rocks Rotary Club.

**ROTARY RIVER RUN**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The inaugural Rotary River Run was held with runners and walkers taking on a 5km course along the Nambucca River. Beginning at Florence Wilmont Drive and finishing at the Nambucca Boatshed & Cafe, Nambucca Heads, more than 60 entrants took up the challenge. Rotarian Veena Tilly said the event was to celebrate the community and how "they have all come through the pandemic, bushfires and floods". Another reason to celebrate the opening of the bike track between Macksville and Nambucca Heads – a state and local government initiative. It is likely that the Rotary River Run will be an annual fixture on the Nambucca Valley sporting calendar, with proceeds from the event being used to support Rotary Youth Projects. The event had seven categories and the winner of each category will have their names placed on perpetual trophies that will be on permanent display in the Nambucca Heads RSL Club. My congratulations to Rotary and the following category winners: Adult Male – Will Davies; Adult Female – Olivia Langley; Junior Male – Daniel Williams; Junior Female – Lumi Watt; Team – Club/Corporate – Solitude Health; Team – Family – Marsden Family; and Team – High School – Coffs Harbour Christian College

**MEMORIAL HALL**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Last month the Bellingen Memorial Hall welcomed back patrons after a multi-year renovation for the return of the Screenwave International Film Festival (SWIFF). Upgrades to the Memorial Hall were first announced in 2018 by the State Government, with major work commencing upon its closure in January 2021. The Hall refurbishment boasts exciting new features such as a multipurpose studio including Kitchenette and AV capability, upgraded green room facilities for large performances and stage productions, new seating on a stepped platform for increased capacity and improving the view to the stage, and additional parking and accessibility including upgraded bathroom facilities, stage lifts and ramps. The old building has been reimaged, refurbished, and revitalised and despite supply-chain disruptions and adverse weather, through the hard work and dedication of both council staff and contractors, the venue has finally been transformed from a community hall into a wonderful creative and artistic hub, with multiple performance spaces and facilities that will bring the community together. The Hall is the largest venue in the Shire and supports multiple large events each year with numerous other smaller events that compliments the calendar of events. I look forward to attending many functions at the Hall.

### **ADDI ROAD WRITERS FESTIVAL 2023**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to congratulate the fantastic team at Addison Road Community Centre on another wonderful Addi Road Writers festival. Building on the huge success that the festival was last year, organisers Sheila Ngoc Pham and Mark Mordue brought together a collection of authors, artists, songwriters, poets and other prolific creatives to focus on the theme of Inner Worlds, exploring struggle, transcendence and the tension between public and private selves. Panels, workshops and exhibitions on the day provided diverse perspectives on the innermost facets of the human experience, featuring artists from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and many different walks of life. These included pioneer indigenous rock band, No Fixed Address, and Damien Linnane, editor of the journal Paper Chained, which features artistic expressions of those impacted by incarceration. The festival on the 14th of May marked the third year of the Addi Road Writers Festival, and I know I am not the only one in the Inner West, and beyond, that hopes this festival of ideas is able to celebrate many more years in the heart of Marrickville.

### **INNER WEST LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—It gives me great joy that so many businesses in my electorate have been honoured as best in their categories at the Inner West Local Business awards. On May 10th, businesses from all over our area gathered to celebrate the wonderful efforts of so many of our favourite Inner West shops, cafes, restaurants and more. As anyone who has lived, shopped or visited the Inner West would know, there is tough competition every year, as our area is host to so many outstanding businesses. I would like to congratulate the following winners: San Valentino Bakery in Haberfield, who took out Best Bakery. Dulwich Hill Gourmet Meats for taking out top spot in the Butcher category. Sydney Emergency Plumbing in Dulwich Hill for Outstanding Plumbing Services. Campione Jewellery Haberfield for winning Best Jewellery Store. Velour Beauty Parlour Dulwich Hill for nabbing top spot in Beauty Services. Corinthian Rotisserie Marrickville winning Best Restaurant. Lift Inner West for their Outstanding Fitness Services. And last but not least, Suzanne Evans-Booth of Village Wholefoods for taking out Businessperson of the Year. Congratulations to all of the winners, and the fantastic nominated Inner West businesses.

### **CHRY'S MEADER AUDITORIUM**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Chrys Meader was a dedicated historian and an icon of the Inner West. Her walking tours of the area were legendary, and her chronicles of Marrickville's history provided our community with a profound sense of place and belonging. Chrys also worked with the Enmore Theatre, another Inner West landmark, to document an entire history of the venue, and wrote a comprehensive history of Henson Park. Chrys' father Charlie Meader had his own storied legacy recognised with the naming of the Charlie Meader Memorial Gates at the entrance to Henson Park, following 53 years of service to Marrickville Council. Chrys sadly passed away in November of last year, and while it is difficult to encompass in a single tribute just how much she gave to the community and uncovered about the history of our area, I am proud that Inner West Council has renamed this landmark auditorium at Marrickville Library the Chrys Meader Auditorium. Given her decades of service at Marrickville Library, and her deep love of Marrickville's history, naming the Auditorium at Marrickville's award winning library is a fitting tribute to this remarkable woman.

### **PROFESSOR LUCY MARSHALL**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I recognise and congratulate Professor Lucy Marshall as the Rockdale Local Woman of the Year for 2023. Lucy is an outstanding local woman with an impressive track record as an academic engineer in the field of water resources. As well as important work in hydrologic modelling, environmental model optimization and quantification of uncertainty in water resource analysis, she has significantly advanced our understanding of flood prediction in unmeasured catchments in Australia. Lucy has also devoted a significant portion of her career to bringing under-represented groups into the engineering profession including women, students from indigenous backgrounds, and students from financially deprived backgrounds. Her efforts have seen many people from such backgrounds gain entry to the fascinating and important fields of engineering. In late 2022 Professor Marshall was deservedly appointed to the position of Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Macquarie University, where I am sure she will continue her work ensuring women and other under-represented groups are given access to careers in the engineering sciences. Congratulations Professor Marshall and thank you on behalf of our entire community. Your award of Rockdale Local Woman of the Year is highly deserved.

### **NORTHERN DISTRICT LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—One of the best little sports clubs in my electorate of Hornsby, Northern Districts Little Athletics Club, recently showed what community spirit is all about. After hosting a recent

"Pinkletics Day" their members raised funds for the McGrath Foundation, which helps to provide invaluable support for women and men experiencing breast cancer. The committee then doubled that amount and presented \$750 to the McGrath Foundation. In parallel, this great little club raised addition funds for Ronald McDonald House through their "Sock It! for Sick Kids" event, which assists families dealing with traumatic childhood illness. Again, the club's committee doubled the funding to provide a final tally of \$750 to Ronald McDonald House. When not for profit community clubs create great community spirit, involve kids in caring for others while showing the generosity of people in our electorate, it makes us all feel proud of the good that can be done. Well done Northern Districts Little Athletics Club. They have a dedicated committee and wonderful volunteers that help make it the great club it is.

#### **PROUDLY ARCADIAN GROUP**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—It is my pleasure to recognize a community group based in the beautiful rural area on my electorate of Hornsby. The Proudly Arcadian Group is a greatly respected community organization that provides significant support to the rural villages of Galston and Arcadia. As part of my annual community awards last year, I was pleased to congratulate members of the Proudly Arcadian Group and acknowledge their ongoing support of their local community. Not only are they well known for their friendly faces and purple t shirts, but they are behind anything and everything that goes on in their area, as they work hard to keep their local residents connected. Over the pandemic lockdown period, they kept everyone in fine spirits by introducing activities such as 'Festival of the Scarecrow' which returned the following year due to its success. The group includes Andy and Sonja Cameron, Peter Jones and Kathy Carter-Jones, Meegan Gamsen and Lori Modde amongst others who make up the Arcadia Galston Residents Association also known as AGRA. I would like to acknowledge their significant efforts and thank them for all the work they do. They liken the area where they live to "Living in Utopia".

#### **PACIFIC HILLS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE OF THE SOUND OF MUSIC**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Pacific Hills Christian School in Dural recently held a massive production of The Sound of Music school musical. I am reliably informed that it was a masterpiece professionally presented by the school's dedicated students, staff and crew. I was disappointed that a clash of events prevented me from attending however I have been told that the audience was left in awe of the school's captivating performance. It was simply exceptional! Hornsby's Hills were truly alive with The Sound of Music through this performance as it took people on a musical journey to Austria to be utterly charmed by the heart-warming story presented through the power of creative arts. Congratulations to Pacific Hill Christian School and everyone involved with your wonderful performance of The Sound of Music school musical.

#### **KOREAN CULTURE FESTIVAL 2023**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I congratulate the K-POP cover artists who have been selected as one of the ten teams from over two hundred participants who attended the prestigious Korean Culture Festival 2023 at Excelsia College in Macquarie Park on the 6th of May. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the K-POP cover artists and thank my colleagues on Ryde Council, particularly Councillor Daniel Han for endorsing a grant to support this spectacle. The grant provided by the council not only recognises the artistic excellence of these talented individuals but also highlights Ryde's cultural diversity and talent on the world stage. A special thank you to producer James Lim and director Skye Lim, who played a critical role in shaping and guiding the journey of these talented artists. Their guidance, expertise, and unwavering support have undoubtedly contributed to the success and recognition that the K-POP cover artists have received. I am immensely proud of the K-POP cover artists for their outstanding achievement and for being ambassadors of our community at the Korean Culture Festival 2023. Their participation in this prestigious event will not only highlight their immense talent but also make Ryde a place of K-POP excellence.

#### **RYDE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS - COMMUNITY HEROES**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I recently attended the City of Ryde Volunteer Recognition Awards event, an evening dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the exceptional individuals who make our community shine. A special category, developed in 2022 while I was Mayor, recognises Ryde's 'Community Heroes'. These are people who have consistently worked to improve our community through their volunteer efforts, and can even be awarded posthumously! I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the nominees who were recognised for their unwavering commitment and dedication in 2023. Each nominee has made a profound impact within our community, embodying the true spirit of volunteerism and service. Amongst the remarkable nominees, I am delighted to announce Elizabeth Moran, John Manenti, Lindsay Mar, Margery East, Pamela Wood, Rolf Schafer, Samantha Profilio, Sunja Yoon, Werner Klarenaar and Yeghia Gharibian as the 2023 Ryde Community Heroes. Each has been nominated from among their peers for a contribution that is well and truly worthy of hero status. To each of them, I say thank you and congratulations!

### NEW SILK ROAD MODEL CONTEST

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I was honoured to attend the NSR Overseas 2023 New Silk Road 19th Model Contest Grand Final, where a number of Eastwood-based dancers and models competed to perform in Beijing later this year. Established in 1989, New Silk Road has successfully established itself as the most reputable fashion and commercial model agency in China. As one of the most influential and dynamic agencies in the world, they have a diverse roster of models from all backgrounds, including China, Japan, Korea, and Europe. New Silk Road has a global fashion and modelling presence, working closely with the best in the fashion industries at home and overseas. They have exported many of their models to leading fashion brands and have also graced covers of several fashion magazines. 2023 is the first time New Silk Road operated in Australia and offers great opportunities for Australian talents to explore a career in the modelling industry. Congratulations to David Zhou and his company for bringing this contest to Australia, and to Hugh Lee for extending the invitation to Ryde Councillor Justin Li and I. Your efforts have highlighted the brilliance of Ryde on the global stage.

### PHILLIP BLACKMORE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Phillip Blackmore, who was awarded the Commissioner's Award for Valour, the Rural Fire Service's highest honour, for his response to a major incident. This is the first time the Award for Valour has been bestowed upon an officer in ten years and Mr Blackmore is only the fourth recipient. On Father's Day 2020 the town of Gwandalan was shocked by a car explosion caused by an acetylene cylinder. Mr Blackmore an ex Captain of Gwandalan – Summerland Point Rural Fire Service rushed to assist a man injured in the explosion, commencing resuscitation. Mr Blackmore was assisted by off-duty NSW Ambulance Officer, Mr Matthew Wilson with the pair working on the injured man in an extremely volatile environment as the car still burned. Brigade members from the Gwandalan- Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade and the Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade attended the scene to respond to the incident. Congratulations to Mr Blackmore on being awarded the Commissioner's Award for Valour. It is extremely well deserved given the bravery shown in responding to this incident.

### GWANDALAN - SUMMERLAND POINT RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I acknowledge Gwandalan – Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade, who were awarded the Commissioner's Citation for Service (Unit) for their response to a major incident. On Father's Day 2020 the town of Gwandalan was shocked by a car explosion caused by an acetylene cylinder. Ex Captain and Deputy Group Captain Phil Blackmore rushed to assist a man injured in the explosion, commencing resuscitation. Mr Blackmore was assisted by off-duty NSW Ambulance Officer, Mr Matthew Wilson with the pair working on the injured man in an extremely volatile environment as the car still burned. Brigade members from the Gwandalan- Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade and the Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade attended the scene to respond to the incident. Congratulations to the Gwandalan- Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade for being awarded the Commissioner's Citation for Service (Unit). The community is extremely proud of all our local firefighters and thankful for the work they do in protecting the community.

### LAKE MUNMORAH BUSH FIRE BRIGADE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I acknowledge Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade, who were awarded the Commissioner's Citation for Service (Unit) for their response to a major incident. On Father's Day 2020 the town of Gwandalan was shocked by a car explosion caused by an acetylene cylinder. Ex Gwandalan and Summerland Point RFS Captain and Deputy Group Captain Phil Blackmore rushed to assist a man injured in the explosion, commencing resuscitation. Mr Blackmore was assisted by off-duty NSW Ambulance Officer, Mr Matthew Wilson with the pair working on the injured man in an extremely volatile environment as the car still burned. Brigade members from the Gwandalan- Summerland Point Rural Fire Brigade and the Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade attended the scene to respond to the incident. Congratulations to the Lake Munmorah Bush Fire Brigade for being awarded the Commissioner's Citation for Service (Unit). The community is extremely proud of all our local firefighters and thankful for the work they do in protecting the community.

### ALEX XENOS

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of Mr Alex Xenos. Mr Xenos kindly volunteers his time at the St George Family Support Services to provide free legal advice to those in need. The St George Family Support Services work with vulnerable families, many of whom are experiencing domestic violence and are wanting to escape difficult situations but are unsure of their rights. Many of them are overwhelmed and traumatised and don't know where to start with Family Law issues. Mr Xenos is sensitive towards the complex issues they face and has a natural ability to make them feel comfortable

and at ease. He gives freely of his time and knowledge and has continually shown passion and understanding towards their needs at a most crucial time in their lives. Alex is never too busy to assist. His clients come away feeling understood, supported, and respected and speak highly of him without exception. The St George community is extremely grateful for the valuable service that Mr Xenos has provided in ensuring the most vulnerable members of our community are looked after and supported.

#### **ROCKY FAMIGLIETTI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—As part of National Volunteer Week, I would like to recognise the service of Rocky Famiglietti. For the last seven years, Rocky has been volunteering with Kogarah Community Services (KCS) Aged Care Program. The program is hugely important for elderly residents, allowing them to remain living at home independently for as long as they choose and to stay engaged and connected with their community. Rocky has undertaken multiple duties as part of KCS' Aged Care Program, including supporting the KCS Social Support small activity clients to remain connected with their community, whether it be to assist individual clients within the activities, assisting in the setup of activities themselves or transporting individual clients to and from locations where clients are meeting to engage in a variety of activities. Rocky also volunteers across the broader KCS community. He is renowned for attending larger KCS events to cook and prepare barbeques and to support other members of the community to join with KCS and enjoy activities and events being run by KCS. I would like to sincerely thank Rocky for his dedication and the valuable work he does as part of KCS.

#### **ANNA HARDING**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the President of Kogarah Public School P&C, Ms Anna Harding. Ms Harding has been instrumental in re-energising the school's P&C after a long period of non-engagement. She has led the P&C executive in creating a warm and welcoming environment for parents and carers. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in parental engagement at P&C meetings both onsite and via ZOOM as well as at school run events such as the Parent Coffee Club. Ms Harding has continuously strived to bring the community together, raise awareness of the local developments impacting the school and worked to increase social interaction amongst families. Her contribution as a parent volunteer has been invaluable to the school. I want to thank Ms Harding for her dedication to improving student outcomes and for fostering a positive and enjoyable environment for both students and parents at the school.

#### **JADE LEES**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Jade Lees, who is a remarkable constituent of the Shellharbour Electorate and an outstanding player in both League Tag and Rugby League. Jade's passion for sports began at the age of 10 when she started playing League Tag, eventually progressing to full contact Rugby League. Currently, Jade plays for the Warilla Gorillas in both Ladies League Tag and Open Women's Rugby League. Her exceptional skills have earned her a coveted spot on the Great Britain Exiles team for the 2023 Oztog World Cup, which will be held in Ireland from July 31 to August 6. I am delighted to hear that Jade has also been involved in the Women in League Round celebrations organised by Group 7. She played for the Warilla Lake South Gorillas against the Como Jannali Crocodiles. I applaud Jade for her achievements in sports and her selection to represent her family heritage as a member of the Great Britain Exiles. I have no doubt that she will continue to excel in her sporting career, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

#### **RAY TARLINTON**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Ray Tarlinton has been a constant presence for over 50 years, overseeing Cec Glenhomes Oval in Lake Illawarra from his vantage point above the dressing sheds. Whenever the rugby league matches of his beloved team, the Warilla-Lake South Gorillas, take place, Ray can be found in the scorekeepers' box, diligently fulfilling his responsibilities as a time-keeper and ground announcer. Originally hailing from Cobargo, Ray's family later moved to Jillat Jillat, where his passion for rugby league ignited. At the young age of 17, he made his debut for Tathra's reserve grade side in 1961. In 1970, a serendipitous encounter at the Warilla Hotel led Ray to embark on a lifelong association with the Warilla Gorillas. Although he never played for the club, his contributions through involvement in raffles, timekeeping, and ground announcements have been invaluable. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my gratitude and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Ray for dedicating over 50 years of voluntary service to the Warilla-Lake South Gorillas. His unwavering commitment has made a lasting impact on the club and its community.

### **ALBION PARK RSL SUB BRANCH - ANZAC DAY SERVICE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Every year, on 25 April, we join together in remembrance of the courageous men and women who have served Australia with unwavering bravery. On ANZAC Day this year, the Shellharbour community gathered at various services to honour the sacrifices and bravery of the original ANZACs, as well as the resilience and courage exhibited by our service personnel both at home and overseas during times of conflict and peace. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those selfless servicemen and women who dedicatedly served our great nation. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all those who diligently organized and attended the ceremonies within the Shellharbour electorate. In particular, I want to thank the committee of the Albion Park RSL Sub-Branch for their outstanding efforts in coordinating the ANZAC Day ceremony. I commend the President Robyn Hanckel, Vice Presidents Wayne Burgess and Harry Davenport, Honorary Secretary Andrew Horne, and Welfare Officer Deborah Hamilton for their unwavering commitment. Their tireless work and dedication do not go unnoticed by the Shellharbour community.

### **CAREY BINKS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation's Chairman's Medal identifies outstanding volunteers who set aside their own priorities to better the community. This year, the Chairman's Medal has been awarded to Carey Binks for his ongoing care, commitment and compassion for seriously ill children and their families, during his work with Ronald McDonald House Newcastle. National Volunteer Week is such an appropriate time to acknowledge and highlight Carey's incredible contribution to children and families utilising Ronald McDonald House Newcastle. Carey has been recognised for his six years of volunteering with Ronald McDonald House Newcastle, including giving over 3,500 hours as an overnight support for families. Carey continued to support families during COVID-19 through his volunteering, a critical role in allowing Ronald McDonald House Newcastle to continue to operate through the extremely difficult and isolating time. Thank you, Carey, for your volunteering efforts and your remarkable contribution to children and families utilising Ronald McDonald House Newcastle, and congratulations on being awarded the 2023 Chairman's Medal. It is well deserved.

### **FEDERAL PARK VANDALISM - COMMUNITY RESPONSE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Some time in the very early hours of 13 May, a vandal in a car drove over the wet surface of Federal Park Wallsend, damaging the surface that would be used by Fletcher FC to play football on the very next morning. On Saturday morning, Fletcher FC President Wade Buckton arrived to find the ground had been vandalised. Mr Buckton quickly put out a call to members to help repair the damage and within 30 minutes more than 40 volunteers showed up to lay top soil over the damaged portion of the ground. Incredibly, Mr Buckton's quick thinking and the overwhelming response from the community allowed the games to be played on the day. As disappointing as the vandalism was, the community response was stronger. Congratulations to Wade and to the Fletcher FC community for their quick response and community minded approach.

### **JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL - WARD GRANNY VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The John Hunter Hospital Ward Grannies are a team of volunteers who give their time to assist parents and children who are on the ward at John Hunter Hospital Children's Ward. The Ward Grannies provide essential support, company, comfort and reassurance for families with sick kids. This is a huge help for parents to provide a bit of respite knowing a caring adult will be around their kids. The stress of having a sick child on a ward can be a lot, so for parents of sick kids to be able to go for a walk and get fresh air, get a coffee and know their kids are with a caring Ward Granny is a huge benefit. The Ward Grannies establish a lovely bond with the families and provide immeasurable comfort and support to both the sick kids and their families. Well done to these amazing volunteers who no doubt endear themselves to the hearts of many families in the Hunter and beyond.

### **ASTRID HOCKING**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Astrid Hocking from Kilaben Bay who goes to extraordinary lengths to protect children. Astrid is the chairperson of Lake Macquarie charity Hearts and Hands Community Development. I had the pleasure of recently meeting Astrid and some of her volunteer team. We discussed their Umbrella Hearts campaign which spreads the message "It's not ok to hurt a child, every day it's not OK" across communities. Astrid is aligned with numerous charities and organisations and has been a strong advocate for the rights of children and foster carers since the 1980s. She has personally cared for more than 90 children over the years. Her core belief is that it's society's responsibility to take care of the most vulnerable, including children, victims of domestic abuse, the homeless and those with disabilities. Her ongoing advocacy recently saw her become an Australia Day Ambassador and a finalist for NSW Senior of the

Year award. She's also the recipient of a Service to the Community Award from Rotary, and received the Family of the Year for NSW award. I congratulate and thank Astrid for all she does in the local community.

#### **RUSSELL GRUNDY**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I want to acknowledge the outstanding contributions that two-time Australian skateboarding champion Russell Grundy from Morisset Park has made to the sport internationally, nationally and at home in Lake Macquarie. At a local level, Russell has drawn on his professional skateboarding experience to help design local skateparks, run community skatepark activations, mentor youth, coach, run skateboard competitions, and work with local companies to provide free skateboards for youth who had shown great initiative. During 2022 Russell held 14 youth activation events at local skateparks around Lake Macquarie, travelled around Australia judging national competitions, and travelled to Italy as the Oceania representative judge for the 2024 Olympics pathway program held by World Skate. It should be noted that he accomplished all of this while having three children at home and a full-time job. Russell is a mentor to budding skateboarders, teaching not only skills but also the importance of having respect for our public skateparks so they can be enjoyed for years to come. It's hardly surprising that Russell was named the 2023 Lake Mac Sports Leader at the recent Lake Mac Awards. I congratulate him and thank him for his efforts.

#### **MELISSA VALENTINA BAEZ**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to acknowledge Lake Macquarie's very own Karate Kid, 10-year-old Melissa Valentina Baez who is ranked number one in Australia for her division by the International Sport Karate Association. Melissa has worked extremely hard over the past year, displaying determination and perseverance to win a host of titles including the Australian Open, Victorian State Championships, and Central Coast Open Championships to name a few. She has also competed in several Australian Chitokai Karate Association Championship tournaments, winning more than 10 gold medals over the years, including four gold medals in the past year. Melissa is an inspiration to both her peers and to the younger students at Morisset's Hunter Valley Martial Arts Centre where she is part of the leadership program. Her dedication and commitment to others has also seen her chosen as a 2022 Junior School Leader at Charlton Christian College. Melissa was also named the Young Sports Star of the Year at the recent Lake Mac Awards. I congratulate Melissa on her efforts and wish her every success when she represents Australia in Japan next month.

#### **MICHAEL NOLAN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Congratulations to Warners Bay local Michael Nolan, whose vocal studio was awarded the gong for Champion Music Tuition at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards in Sydney last month. Michael was there to pick up his award in Sydney in front of more than 1000 guests. The COVID-19 pandemic was difficult for many entertainment-centred businesses and for Michael to turn it around and achieve this national recognition is exceptional. Michael's vocal studio aims to encourage and enhance expression through singing and excellence of vocal performance and develops singers from eight years old. The Michael Nolan Vocal Studio Showcase is always a great annual event to attend. Michael has previously been recognised as Young Business Person of the Year at the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards and was named Citizen of the Year for Lake Macquarie in 2019 for his contributions to the performing arts. I know the difference Mr Nolan can make to young people's lives through singing as my son was actually one of his students. I can truly vouch for his ability to work with people from all walks of life. Thank you and congratulations, Michael!

#### **OZHARVEST NOURISH GARDEN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Where once there was a little used concrete corner of a car park at Lake Macquarie PCYC in Windale, there is now a beautiful array of planter boxes full of fresh herbs and vegetables. The PCYC is now the proud home of a Nourish Garden. The garden will allow students taking part in OzHarvest Newcastle's kitchen operations training (known as Nourish) to have access to fresh produce for their cooking. The Nourish program aims to offer participants more than just hospitality skills. It is a supported pathway for young people who face the barriers of intergenerational unemployment, low literacy and numeracy, and mental health challenges. The garden will act as an educational aid, but it will also be a beautiful, peaceful space that will be an asset to the wider community that use makes use of the PCYC. The project drew on the skills and talents of many contributors, including a Charlestown Rotary Club team headed by Ted Atchison. The result has been a lovely resource for the community, which will continue to give back for a long time to come.



**JACOB COOPER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Cancer survivor Jacob Cooper has achieved a remarkable feat – he has now completed the 150km Charlie's Run 4 Kids event three times. And he is only 21 years of age. It was only in 2016 that Jacob and his family were the recipients of Charlie's Run 4 Kids' fundraising efforts. It was during his second battle with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and the donations helped support Jacob and his family during that very tough time. Fives years on from a bone marrow transplant, Jacob was cancer free. At just 18 years old, he signed on to be a full-time CR4K runner. Over five days, the group runs the 150km from Seal Rocks to Dudley. Jacob was one of 30 full time runners to take part in the 2023 event. Now in its 10th year, Charlie's Run 4 Kids has raised more than \$1 million for local families facing childhood cancer. It is no surprise that Jacob has thrown himself wholeheartedly into the charity. At just 12 years old, he wrote a book about his cancer journey in the hope it would help others facing the same challenges. Congratulations to Jacob on his wonderful achievement for Charlie's Run 4 Kids.

**MANLY WARRINGAH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Today I congratulate the Manly Warringah Softball Association on being named Affiliate of the Year at Softball NSW's annual awards. This is a huge honour for the association that has been a part of the community for over 50 years. Further it highlights the fantastic work president Doug Freeman who oversees this fantastic organisation that is growing in popularity with their last season seeing a 17.5% increase in membership. I commend all players and coaches involved and wish them the best of luck for the upcoming season.

**HERITAGE HOUSE ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Today I congratulate Nick Jordan of the Heritage House Association who on the 29th and 30th of July is leading two walks on Manly's Eastern Hill. These walks are designed to provide an insight into the fantastic heritage homes that make up the Eastern Hill. The aim of the walks will help improve the community's understanding of Manly's architectural history and I commend Nick on his dedication to ensuring local history is recognised and shared.

**CURLY UNITED BOARD RIDERS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Today I recognise the fantastic work of the Curly United Board Riders Association (CUBA) especially the association elders Michael Griggs, Matt Bemrose and Scott Mellis. Three years ago the association decided they wanted to foster a greater sense of community for younger surfers in the area. This aim led to the creation of Micro CUBA which provides competitions and training sessions for younger surfers. Micro CUBA has created a stronger sense of community and allowed for a link to be created between younger and older surfers. This sense of community has resulted in fantastic growth as they have gone from 8 kids three years ago to 80 kids today. I again commend the fantastic work of CUBA in building a stronger community and ensuring vital surfing traditions are passed down to the next generation.

**MINTO COBRAS JRLFC EASTER FAMILY FUN DAY 2023**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—Local sporting clubs give our communities more than fun and fitness. They foster a strong community spirit and bring people together to help those doing it tough. This was shown by the Minto Cobras Junior Rugby League Football Club at its inaugural Easter Family Fun Day at Benham Oval, Minto in April. The Minto event was hosted in partnership with other community organisations to provide a fun and happy Easter celebration for the whole community at a time when working families are struggling with rising costs of living. The Fun Day in the heart of Minto showcased the heart of Minto – one that beats with enormous community pride. Suburban clubs like the Minto Cobras may not make the big headlines but they make a big impact in our community. I saw this in the many laughs and smiles on the day. I congratulate and thank the Minto Cobras and everyone involved in the Easter Family Fun Day on delivering an amazing community celebration to bring people together.

**CEDARS OF LEBANON 46TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 1 April 2023, I had the honour of attending the Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric Group's 46th-anniversary celebration at the Bryan Brown Theatre in Bankstown. This milestone event was celebrated with a wonderful cultural music and dance display. The founder, Eli Akouri, established the group in March 1977 to foster an interest in the Lebanese Dabki dance. Eli, a teacher, and

choreographer used his training to introduce this cultural dance to young people of Lebanese heritage. The concert was a vibrant and colourful celebration of folklore dancing and costumes. The audience was treated to a night of history, culture, and dance evidence of the passion and creativity of Eli and his dance group. The Cedars of Lebanon dance group's anniversary celebration was not just a tribute to the group's achievements, but also a testament to the enduring spirit of Lebanese culture and community. Through their performances, outreach, and education initiatives, the group continues to promote and preserve the rich heritage and inspire others. They have played a vital role in preserving the traditions and customs of the Lebanese community. Congratulations to the Cedars of Lebanon on this wonderful milestone!

#### **MULTICULTURAL EID FESTIVAL AND FAIR**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 30 April I was delighted to be joined by more than 25,000 people at the 38th Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair. The event was held at Fairfield Showground in Prairiewood to mark the end of Ramadan. In my speech on the day, I reaffirmed my commitment to be a voice that celebrates the richness of our diversity. The event was an experience of multiculturalism at its best, with thousands of people from over thirty-five cultural backgrounds in attendance. There were many food stalls serving delicious cuisine, and amazing multicultural performances. Also, hundreds of market stalls and shows such as Dragon Training Zoo, an art exhibition, Julian Bull's Amazing Magic Show, the Future Thinkers Workshop, Ghanaian drumming and Drum Circle, a vibrant musical group, the Three Rivers Ensemble, and many more. It was a great celebration to mark the end of a month of fasting and a good time for young and old to enjoy fun events, rides, and games. I want to thank the organisers and sponsors of the Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair, Human Appeal, Emitley, SBS Radio, and Powerhouse Museum Parramatta for making the event possible.

#### **52ND ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAY OF BANGLADESH**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I was honoured to receive an invitation to attend the 52nd Anniversary of Independence and the National Day of Bangladesh on Wednesday, 26 April 2023 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Sydney. My esteemed colleagues, the Honourable Penny Sharpe MLC, the Honourable Stephen Kamper MP, and the Honourable Sophie Cotsis MP were also in attendance. Australia was the first developed country to recognise Bangladesh's Independence in 1971 and established a mission in Dhaka in 1972. We have a strong and enduring friendship that is grounded in shared values and mutual respect. We are also bound by our common love for cricket, food, and culture. As Australians, we share in the joy and pride of our Bangladeshi community and stand in solidarity with the people of Bangladesh as they continue to build a modern, democratic, and prosperous nation. The Bangladeshi Australians, who have made my electorate their home, continue to make a significant contribution to our community and have always provided me with significant support and encouragement. A highlight of the evening was the musical performances by Bangladeshi artists. Congratulations to the people of Bangladesh on this special day.

#### **NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club on its success at the 2023 Surf Life Saving Sydney Awards of Excellence. The Awards of Excellence celebrate the extraordinary people in the Sydney Surf Life Saving Branch and their impact on their clubs and local communities. North Cronulla had success across multiple awards categories. This included North Cronulla SLSC winning the Most Awards per Operational Area Cronulla/Sutherland, and its award with Elouera SLSC and Cronulla SLSC for a joint rescue operation. The Tony Hughes Official of the Year was awarded to Dave Hargreaves for his significant contribution to both officiating at a state, national and or national level and to the educational development of other officials in surf lifesaving. Anita Pryke won the Trainer of the Year Award for her commitment to building the skills of others and delivering a positive learning experience. Youth Athlete of the Year was awarded to Sari McKee for her supporting excellence in the youth and or open aged competition. I commend the dedication and commitment of the award recipients. Their efforts remind us of the value of surf lifesaving in the community.

#### **WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Wanda Surf Life Saving Club on its success at the 2023 Surf Life Saving Sydney Awards of Excellence. The Awards of Excellence celebrate the extraordinary people in the Sydney Surf Life Saving Branch and the impact they have on their clubs and local communities. Wanda SLSC had success across multiple awards categories. This included the Community Education Program Award for Wanda's "Swim Brother Program". The Swim Brother Program is a ground-breaking, culturally sensitive lifesaver training program which trains lifesavers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Wanda SLSC was also the Pointscore Winner in the Age/Youth and Opens categories at Branch Championships.

I commend the dedication and commitment of the award recipients. Their efforts remind us of the value of surf lifesaving in the community.

#### **ELOUERA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Elouera Surf Life Saving Club on its success at the 2023 Surf Life Saving Sydney Awards of Excellence. The Awards of Excellence celebrate the extraordinary people in the Sydney Surf Life Saving Branch and their impact on their clubs and local communities. Elouera had success across multiple awards categories. This included Elouera winning the prestigious Club of the Year Award. This award is one of the highest levels of recognition within the Awards of Excellence framework and recognises Elouera for its operational and strategic excellence. Elouera also won the Patrol Efficiency by Operational Area Cronulla/Sutherland Award and shares a joint Rescue of the Year Award with North Cronulla SLSC and Cronulla SLSC. David Kowald was the Surf Lifesaver of the Year, recognising his contribution to the delivery and development of surf life saving frontline services. Brett Richardson won the National Emergency Medal for his outstanding contribution to the frontline service. Michael Byrne was awarded the Support Operations Member of the Year award for his volunteering efforts in support operations. I commend the dedication and commitment of the award recipients. Their efforts remind us of the value of surf lifesaving in the community.

#### **BALRANALD 5 RIVERS OUTBACK FESTIVAL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the Balranald 5 Rivers Outback Festival. The Balranald community, through the auspice of Balranald Inc. staged the first 5 Rivers Outback Festival in October 2010. This is a festival that celebrates all that is wonderful about living in a rural and outback NSW community surrounded by five of the most iconic river systems in NSW. The 5 Rivers Festival has a very successful program, partnering with local businesses and community groups to deliver fantastic entertainment and activities to locals and visitors alike. Activities include the Bal Archies art exhibition, the 4X4 muster, community markets and the popular Saturday Riverbank Bash. Saturday's musical entertainment gives opportunity to upcoming and local talent through open mic sessions, solo artists and popular local bands culminating in a great headline act. Thousands of dollars in tourist revenue are injected into the festival and local business thanks to the Many hundreds of visitors in attracts. Today, I offer my congratulations to the Committees of both events and thank them for their valued commitment to their community.

#### **STEPHANIE DICKIE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Stephanie Dickie of Griffith for her dedication to her local and surrounding communities. Stephanie is a support worker and member of Griffith Disability Housing Services and Northcott Disability Services and highly regarded for her pet therapy with miniature horses. Stephanie has dedicated her life to communities in need and her volunteer work focuses on making children smile and raising funds to tackle health issues that affect rural communities. She has witnessed great improvement in children's behaviour and development when they interact with her miniature horses. The list of fundraisers Stephanie has helped with is huge and I will list a few here: the Hillston Show, Rainbow on the Plains, Piccolo Family Farms and Autism Support Group activities. Generosity is her hallmark: Stephanie has donated all proceedings to MND, CanAssist and cystic fibrosis research plus other support groups essential to her community. I commend and thank Stephanie for her extensive and tireless work in her local and surrounding communities.

#### **ADRIAN GORMAN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Adrian Gorman from Balranald, a gentleman in his 96th year. For more than 60 years, Adrian has helped with community and sporting organisations. That's quite the legacy and to mention just a few of his achievements: 13 years as Chair of the Balranald Heritage Trail Project, Deputy Chair of Balranald Incorporated, and a member of Growing Business, Industry and Tourism Advisory Committee. For this he was awarded the Balranald Shire Australia Day, Citizen of the Year. In addition, Adrian came up with the idea for and has driven the success of the Heritage Military Trail, honouring the men and women of Balranald who served in both world wars. The trail has now become a popular tourist attraction. Adrian also wrote a book about Balranald boys in the skies – a tribute to the airmen and women of Balranald and all those who served to secure freedom. I congratulate you Adrian on 69 years of happy marriage to your beloved wife Patricia and your valued contribution to the community of Balranald.

#### **JEWISH COMMUNAL ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was pleased to join the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men & Women at their Jewish Communal ANZAC Day Commemoration event on Sunday 23 April at the Jewish War Memorial in Darlinghurst. The event was attended by many members of the Davidson community. I was pleased to join local, state and federal parliament colleagues and members of the Jewish

community. Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW was also in attendance. By the end of the Second World War, over 400 Jewish Australians had paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country, and so it was touching to be invited to pay my respects to those fallen heroes. Wing Commander Dr Howard Roby CSM, a critical care specialist who served in the Royal Australian Air Force, delivered a moving Occasional Address and spoke about the tragic human costs of war. I would like to acknowledge to President Roger Selby and other members of the NSW NAJEX team for organising this exceptional event. I look forward to engaging with NAJEX and other Jewish community groups into the future. Lest we forget.

#### **108TH COMMEMORATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Monday 24 April 2023, I attended the National Armenian Genocide Commemoration Evening hosted by Armenian National Committee of Australia in Chatswood. The event brought together local, state and federal representatives from all sides of politics, as well as members of the community. We came to remember the 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred as part of a genocide committed 108 years ago. Many people in the Davidson community are direct descendants of those who lost their lives. I would like to acknowledge the Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee, Mr. Michael Kolokossian, and all members of the Board for overseeing this very important event. Dr. Ümit Kurt from the University of Newcastle delivered a thorough and detailed keynote address. I am proud to support our Armenian community. May we never forget the atrocities committed against the Armenian people and may events of the Armenian genocide never be repeated. Never, ever, again.

#### **ANZAC SERVICE AT KOKODA MEMORIAL WALKWAY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was honoured to attend the ANZAC service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord West on Saturday 22 April. Over 500 people, including community members from Davidson, attended the service to pay their respects to those brave individuals who served this country at the highest level. The Walkway opened in 1996 as a result of the hard-working community members who wanted to commemorate those who served in the Papua New Guinea. Having trekked the Kokoda Track in 2017, it was special to meet 99-year-old Reg Chard, who laid a wreath as part of the service. Mr Chard enlisted in 1942 at only 18 years old before being deployed to the Kokoda Track to halt the Japanese advance. Lieutenant Colonel Garth Callender, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, delivered a moving keynote address to the service. I would like to acknowledge the Master of Ceremonies, Mr John Gatfield OAM, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Chair Ms Jennifer Collins AM and Secretary Ms Alice Kang, Concord Hospital Chaplain, Reverend David Anthonisz, all members of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Board, and parliamentary colleague Stephanie Di Pasqua MP for organising this touching service. Lest we forget.

#### **COLITA AND SUGAR-RAY HAKENA**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Siblings Sugar-ray and Colita Hakena recently moved from Papua New Guinea to Lithgow and are already making names for themselves in the local community thanks to their involvement in sport. They started playing tennis five years ago when they were introduced to tennis by their Grandfather. A unique opportunity presented for the pair to study and live in Australia when they got a tennis scholarship in Sydney at a school called McDonald College. They attended training camp for two or three months before their mother reached out to a friend in Lithgow asking if they could stay there. Now they are training at Zig Zag School and are excited to begin high school in the local area. Already the siblings have been named as finalists in the South Pacific sports awards for representing Papua New Guinea at an international level. They now have plenty on their schedule with a tournament in June on the Gold Coast followed by the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in July. There's also plans for a trip to play in Darwin in the future which demonstrates the important role sport is starting to play in their lives.

#### **LILY BANNAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Giving back to her hometown is something that former Lithgow student Lily Bannan loves to do. Lily has received well-deserved recognition for her dedication to the local community by being awarded the 2023 Hoskins Lithgow Scholarship. The Hoskins Scholarship is awarded annually to students in the area who are wishing to undertake tertiary education and work hard to achieve their full potential. Lily graduated from Lithgow High School last year after completing her Higher School Certificate and during that time was deeply involved in leadership programs. She was a member and Vice President of the Student Representative Council and a School Captain, but has also had a sense of community since a young age, competing in fundraising activities, as well as helping with event organisation with Lithgow City Council. Lily is the first person in her family to attend university and is presently studying nursing at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, with aspirations of continuing to serve her community by becoming a paramedic. With young people like Lily in our community, it's clear our future is in good hands. Good luck with your studies.

**LEANNE SARGEANT**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Great news for the wider regional community of the Central Tablelands with Leanne Sargeant being appointed as the first prostate cancer specialist nurse at Daffodil Cottage. She is working from Daffodil Cottage two days a week and since beginning her role has become the point of call for 179 men in the area who are living with prostate cancer, whether they are newly diagnosed, or in advanced stages. Ms Sargeant services the Bathurst, Blayney, Oberon, Cowra, Lithgow and Rylstone areas. Her role includes supporting men and their families navigate a diagnosis of prostate cancer, as well as helping them explore treatment options and potential side-effects of these treatments. She is also able to refer men in need to specialists, health care providers and support groups, and to provide assurance that help they need will be available at any given time. This is great news for our region, but it's still vital that men should be tested when they reach 50 years of age, or 40 years of age if there is a family history of prostate, breast or cervical cancer. Remember, early diagnosis is the key which means a very, very high cure rate.

**DUNLEA CENTRE ENGADINE**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—There are so many wonderful organisations located throughout the Heathcote electorate. One of those organisations is Dunlea Centre in Engadine. The registered charity's aim is simple – to help families and children who are at risk of a family breakdown, and to restore those relationships. While the aim may be simple, achieving that goal requires incredible passion, patience and persistence on behalf of the team at the centre. Dunlea Centre also acts as an out-of-home care service and a residence for students. The centre was originally founded in 1939 and called Boys Town, after the original Boys Town in Nebraska, in the United States of America. However, in 2010, the need for a residential girls' unit was identified and so a name change of the facility also followed. The Dunlea Centre has entered into a range of partnerships over the years in order to expand its services. Partners have included: Centracare; Bankstown Community Services Co-operative; the Catholic Education Office; the Knights of the Southern Cross Community Services; Engadine District Community Aid and Information Service; and the NSW Department of Education. Thank you to those at Dunlea Centre for your efforts and hard work.

**ENGADINE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—We are so lucky to have a plethora of schools throughout the Heathcote electorate filled to the brim with dedicated, passionate and committed staff and teachers. One of those schools is Engadine High School. Established in 1969, the school has gone from strength to strength over the past five decades. This has been particularly highlighted by the school receiving three Director General's Awards. The first, in 2002 for excellence in performing arts; the second in 2004 for consolidating a strong learning culture; and the third in 2006 for the outstanding linkages program with primary. Those achievements speak volumes of the school's culture and commitment towards providing the best learning outcomes for its students. The role of teachers and staff in shaping our youngest generations should never be understated. It's the experiences and knowledge gained from a student during their time at school that ultimately shapes their future. I have the utmost respect for teachers and staff and the incredible work they do on a daily basis. That gratitude certainly extends to the teachers and staff at Engadine High School. On behalf of the entire Heathcote electorate, thank you.

**SYDNEY MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—On Saturday 13 May, I attended the Sydmal carnival in Liverpool, organised by the Sydney Malayalee Association. Founded 45 years ago, the Sydney Malayalee association seeks to nurture and promote the rich culture and heritage of the Malayalee diaspora in Sydney and support those in Kerala. Held at Woodward Park in Liverpool, the Sydmal carnival brought together Sydney's Malayalee community and a variety of other cultural groups. Attended by over 1600 people, the carnival featured fabulous displays from music and dance to fashion and magic shows, including a grand cultural diversity display, showing various acts from India, Cambodia, China and Afghanistan. Topping off the celebration, I thoroughly enjoyed the outstanding Bollywood fusion dance, beautifully choreographed by Meera Joy. I would like to thank President, Beena Ravikumar, for her sustained involvement with the Sydney Malayalee Association and for all the attendees support of the 2023 Sydmal carnival. I look forward to the Onam celebration later this year.

**MOTHERLAND AFRICAN FESTIVAL**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—On Sunday 21 May, I attended the Motherland African Festival held in Liverpool, celebrating the rich culture of African communities in south-western Sydney. The festival featured an exciting display of many timeless traditions, not limited to dance, cuisine, music and fashion. It was extraordinary to see the wide cultural presence at the event, transcending linguistic and religious boundaries to portray customs from various countries such as Sudan, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Egypt and Mauritius. The dazzling fashion show showcased an array of African materials by Fabrics of Multicultural

Australia. This reflected on the depth and creative history of African cultures. The fabulous dance and drumming performance, courtesy of global performer Lucky Lartey, brought the event together to make for an excellent night. I want to thank everyone who supported and took part in the event. I would like to acknowledge the organisational efforts of Liverpool City Council in putting the festival together. I look forward to further supporting African communities in the Liverpool electorate going forward.

#### **EAST TIMORESE INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—On 20 May 2002, after many years of struggle and sacrifice, Timor Leste finally gained independence. Honouring this, the Timorese United Association, representing the thriving Timorese diaspora in my electorate, kindly invited me to join them in their celebration of 21 years of freedom and democracy. The night consisted of an excellent display of cultural dance performances, a 7-course meal consisting of a variety of dishes from Timor Leste and live music from the talented community band, Pop Orchestra. The Timorese United Association has been a pillar of the Multicultural community in Liverpool for many years, advocating tirelessly for the interests of the Timorese diaspora and allowing for Timorese families to connect with their heritage and pass on culture and traditions to their children. This includes through a community language school that runs weekly in Hinchinbrook. I would sincerely like to thank everybody at the Timorese United Association, with particular thanks to President, Carlos Pereira, and Secretary, Nidia Mendonca, for their contribution to this wonderful event. I look forward to celebrating Timorese independence for years to come.

#### **TRACEY FAZULLA**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Cobar's Auto Port staff member Tracey has been named the Australian Customer Service Champion 2022 for independent Shell Service Stations. The award is part of Shell's employee reward and recognition program, People Make the Difference Real (PMTDR). In March Tracey travelled to Perth for the annual awards ceremony where she received her award. Tracey was one of three finalists for the Australian title and as the winner will now go on to compete at regional level in Budapest in June, where she has the chance for the world title. I congratulate Tracey on receiving this award and look forward to hearing the outcome of the world title award.

#### **WALGETT MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE NURSING TEAM**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—The Walgett Multipurpose Services Nursing Team have been awarded Team of the Year at the 2023 Nursing and Midwifery Awards, to help mark International Day of Nurse celebrations. The nurses at Walgett are renowned for having a supportive team environment. They have shown amazing commitment to continued education with over 80% of staff completing the new emergency nursing pathway and embracing change with gusto. The Walgett Nursing team excel at collaborative communication starting with safety huddles to make sure everybody has the ability to speak up about their achievements and that collaboration is recognised. The nursing staff are dedicated to enhancing client care including spending the time to individualise the care needs of their clients, and enhancing people in being proactive at home to reduce presentations has been a major focus and achievement of Walgett health Service. I congratulate the Walgett Multipurpose Service Nursing Team on this well-deserved award.

#### **WAGGA WAGGA AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Wagga Wagga celebrated some of its community champions at the 2023 Australia Day Awards. Alan Pottie was named Citizen of the Year, in recognition of his work organising the annual Relay for Life that raises vital funds for those affected by cancer. Alan has been named a Global Hero of Hope by the Cancer Council, a title only held by 36 people worldwide. Young Citizen of the Year Maimuna Zaman is an active volunteer in many Wagga Wagga organisations and community groups, including Ronald McDonald Charity House, Wagga Wagga Rotary Book Fair, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, and her local karate club. The Ted Ryder Sports Memorial Award was presented to Henri Moreels, a highly respected member of the local sporting community who has served as a soccer player, referee, and administrator for more than 60 years, in addition to contributing to Wagga Wagga basketball for over 30 years. Environmental Citizen of the Year was awarded to local community organisation ErinEarth for its work striving towards a sustainable society. Aunty Isabel Reid and Aunty Kath Withers were named inductees to the Wagga Walk of Honour for their service to education, families and First Nations people.

#### **ULTIMATE HEALTH GREYSTANES - MY ABILITY EXTRAVAGANZA**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was wonderful to attend the My Ability Extravaganza hosted by Ultimate Health Greystanes on Sunday 2nd April. The My Ability Extravaganza was a great opportunity for our local Western Sydney community to come together and support individuals and their families who live with disability. On the night, there were fun activities and live music, instrumental, and music performances from

individuals with disability. Over 300 people attended the event – a testimony to the amazing support and community spirit we are lucky to have in the Electorate of Prospect. Ultimate Health Greystanes is a wonderful Allied Health practice in Western Sydney which offers a variety of services such as speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy to aged care services. Their health professionals provide holistic and personalised care to each of their clients. We are lucky to have such an amazing team of health professionals that serve our community for their health needs, and who also regularly engage in philanthropic community events. Thank you to Sylvester Jacob, Owner, and Lisa Jacob, Director of Ultimate Health Greystanes, and their team of health practitioners and staff for organising a wonderful event and for their dedicated service to our community.

#### **GREATER BLACKTOWN BUSINESS CHAMBER - BUSINESS AFTER FIVE WITH FOODBANK NSW AND ACT**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to attend the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber – Business After Five event with Foodbank NSW & ACT on Thursday, 20th April. I was joined by over 50 small business owners in the Greater Blacktown business community to visit Foodbank's distribution warehouse in Western Sydney. We had the opportunity to tour the premises and hear from Foodbank's CEO John Robertson who spoke about increasing food demand shortages due to rising cost of living expenses. This was a wonderful and vibrant networking event, and all the attendees were able to gain valuable insights about how Foodbank effectively works with over 1,100 community partners and schools to deliver food to those who face food insecurity and poverty across NSW & ACT. Congratulations to Trevor Oldfield, President, Greater Blacktown Business Chamber for organising another successful and valuable Business After Five event, giving our local businesses the opportunity to network and learn. I also thank John Robertson, CEO, Foodbank, for sharing his experiences and for leading a team of diligent staff and volunteers to support vulnerable members of our community.

#### **ASSYRIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT - IRAQU DELEGATION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I had the pleasure of welcoming the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ZOWAA) - Sydney Chapter Iraqi Delegation to the Parliament of NSW on Thursday, 11th May. It was great to be joined by visitors from Iraq, Mr Yousif Eisho Yousif, ADM Central Committee Member, and Mr Hurmez Moshi Odisho, ADM Media Sector. We were also joined by key members of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ZOWAA) – Sydney Chapter: Mr Immanuel Sada, President, ADM Sydney Chapter; Mr Georg Adam, ADM Sydney Chapter, Vice President; Mr Sargon Kelaita, ADM Sydney Chapter, Board Director; and Mr Hemlir Shimun, ADM Sydney Chapter, Board Director. It was great to discuss how a Minns-Labor Government in NSW can work together to support our Australian-Assyrian community with my Parliamentary Colleagues: The Hon. Steve Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism; Mr Mark Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism; Mr Tri Vo, Member for Cabramatta; Mr Nathan Hagarty, Member for Leppington; Mr David Saliba, Member for Fairfield; and Ms Charishma Kaliyanda, Member for Liverpool. Thank you to ADM President, Mr Immanuel Sada, for your leadership and efforts to strengthen our Australian-Assyrian community, especially in Western Sydney where we are lucky to have a vibrant Assyrian population.

#### **SNOWY VALLEYS AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to congratulate recipients of Australia Day awards for 2023 for Snowy Valleys Council. Thomas Moss, from Khancoban, was named Snowy Valleys Citizen of the Year for more than 40 years of tireless support of regional and defence communities. Jen Vinge from Jingellic received the Snowy Valleys Service to the Community award, for her contributions to the Jingellic Show, Jingellic Trail Ride, Jingellic Rural Bushfire Brigade and the Jingellic Hub. Snowy Valleys Sportsperson of the Year was Piper Duck from Tumut. Piper is an Australian Wallaroo who competed at the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand in 2022, as well as representing the Australian Rugby 7s and being a NSW Waratah playing in the Super W competition. Piper is known for her commitment, courage, discipline and self-belief, whilst remaining humble and displaying good sportsmanship. Snowy Valleys Sports Team of the Year was awarded to Franklin Public School's Girls Basketball Team, from Tumut, who were the NSW PSSA Knockout Champions for 2022. This was an incredible feat considering 218 schools across NSW competed. I wish to thank and congratulate all winners.

#### **LOCKHART AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to congratulate the recipients of Australia Day Awards for the Lockhart Shire Council for 2023. Keith Edgerton was named Citizen of the Year. Keith has shown outstanding service volunteering across many local organisations and groups, including Woodhaven Aged Care, Lockhart and District Aged Care Association and Lockhart Lions Cub. Sportsperson of the Year was awarded to Aaron McCarthy, an inspirational local who little more than a year after a life-changing accident is excelling in wheelchair sports. Aaron successfully competes in wheelchair tennis, basketball and AFL, while raising awareness of inclusion of persons with disability in sport. Nick Madden was named Young Citizen of the Year. A keen

football and cricket player, Nick is an active volunteer for both his local football and cricket clubs whilst displaying skill and commitment when playing both games. The Australia Day Award was bestowed on Michael Flinn whose contributions to the community are wide span. For many years Michael has volunteered with the St Vincent De Paul Society; he is a Life Member of The Rock Yerong Creek Football Netball Club contributing as a player and volunteer; and has held multiple roles with the Returned Services League Sub-branch.

#### **KYLE WOOD SOUTHSIDE PHARMACY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Southside Chempro chemist's managing partner Kyle Wood has done a wonderful job at restoring the pharmacy in its longstanding and widely recognised location in Casino Street, South Lismore. Kyle was left to consider moving locations but felt a strong sense of responsibility to serve the community during what was a truly devastating time for many. Southside was one of the first pharmacies back open ensuring people that were left without cars could still collect their scripts and pick up medical supplies. Southside is the only healthcare provider in South Lismore, and the community spirit there is mighty. Southside pharmacy has a long rich history as a small family-orientated community pharmacy, previously managed by Michael Hermann a well-respected pharmacist who worked there for decades, all the locals know how good the service has and continues to be there. I thank them for continuing to operate and deliver services where they are as they are a true asset to the greater Lismore community. I want to commend Kyle and staff for all their hard work rebuilding what is a bright and beaming new fit out which will continue to service the community for many years to come.

#### **CENTRAL COAST KIDS IN NEED**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Central Coast Kids in Need is a small volunteer group established almost 30 years ago of dedicated people looking to make a positive difference to the community. They assist local families with accommodation costs to stay with their sick children while undergoing specialised treatment in Sydney/Newcastle hospitals. They also assist with high-cost prescription items, specialised formula's, quality of life equipment and travel expenses. The families they assist have children with cancer, premature babies with life threatening health issues, bone marrow transplants, organ transplants, spina bifida, cystic fibrosis, Autism and ADHD and children with disabilities. Rhonda Doyle has been the groups Treasurer since 2004 and her sister Lorraine Churchill has held the positions of Assistant Secretary and Secretary since 2005. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and compassion of these two wonderful ladies.

#### **SHIRLEY SHUTTLE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge the great work the team at Community Transport Central Coast provide through the Shirley Shuttle service. I recently attended the launch of two new Shirley Shuttles which provide transport-challenged cancer outpatients transport to and from oncology treatment centres within the Central Coast region. These vehicles were donated by CancerCare Australia, the Rotary Club of East Gosford and Freemasons Central Coast. The Shirley Shuttles are named after Shirley Galvin who after being diagnosed with cancer moved into her daughter Barb's home on the Central Coast. During attendance at numerous medical appointments both Barb and Shirley were unable to overlook the many challenges of many other patients to attend potentially life-saving appointments. The Shirley Shuttle commenced on 4 March 2008 with Barb Galvin's donation of a Toyota Hi-Ace Minibus to the Cancer Council NSW to transport cancer outpatients to and from oncology treatment centres within the Central Coast region. Community Transport Central Coast agreed to administer the service and Central Coast Health agreed to pay for fuel. Central Coast Community groups and individuals' generosity help to replace 4 vehicles every two years and there is a dedicated team of volunteer drivers.

#### **KARIONG-SOMERSBY ROTARY CLUB PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AND COMMUNITY AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I recently had the pleasure to attend the Kariong/Somersby Rotary Pride of Workmanship and Community Awards Night. Pride of Workmanship, as a concept, was instigated in 1975, for the recognition of outstanding individuals in our community. Further discussions led to the suggestion of a "Pride of Workmanship Night" with the co-operation of the local business community. It was envisaged that an award be made to employees who had been nominated by their employer as being deserving of such an award. The award has now been expanded to include other awards such as Community Service awards. Mountain Community Children's Centre, Scott Bellchambers from East Coast Juices and River Cares were all well-deserved recipients of awards of the Kariong/Somersby Rotary Pride of Workmanship and Community Awards Night.

#### **YASS FM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Today, I acknowledge Yass FM. The community radio station in Yass Valley, that you can tune in to on station 100.3. Created after a public meeting held in August of



1998, measuring the interest in establishing a community radio station where approximately 20 people from various organisations across the region attended, a steering committee was formed, and the community has steadfastly supported the station since. Yass FM is a fantastic illustration of the potency of community-driven endeavours. The tireless commitment and unwavering determination of their volunteers are commendable, and the radio station offers a plethora of indispensable and enjoyable services to its listeners. Whether it's alternative, iconic or classic music, local and community news or another topic of interest, Yass FM has something for all tastes. Mr Speaker I acknowledge the dedicated volunteers who are steadfast in keeping their community entertained and informed, as well as providing a rich and balanced community news outlet.

#### **MACCA'S BOYS - YASS GOLF CLUB**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Today I recognise "Macca's Boys" at Yass Golf Club. The Yass Golf Club is a fully irrigated eighteen-hole golf course, with a grass green course that covers 5193 metres and is the 29th oldest course in NSW. To the eye it may look small and an easy course, however, do not be deceived by this, as it has many hidden feats for players, who need to bring their top game to succeed on this course. To maintain this beautiful course, there are a wonderful group of ten to twelve volunteers, known fondly as the "Macca's Boys" who arrive each Tuesday morning to undertake a variety of tasks and do whatever is necessary around the club and keep the magnificent course extra tidy. The average age of this group is around seventy-five years, plus. They are a spirited group and an absolute joy to have visit each weekend. They provide an untold level of support for which the club is truly appreciative of. I commend the generosity of the "Macca's Boys" for their time and volunteering spirit to support the Yass Golf Club.

#### **LINDSAY COSGROVE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Today I recognise Mr Lindsay Cosgrove. The Southern Tablelands Football Association (STFA) was founded in 1970 and currently has eight clubs competing in the local competition and has become a fundamental part of the sporting landscape of the region. The steadfast nature of the STFA has had the opportunity to develop and grow, which is also enriched by having a very loyal and committed volunteer as Mr Lindsay Cosgrove. Mr Cosgrove is a retired railway employee and former president of soccer who has now taken on a volunteer role at the Cookbundoon Sports Ground. Mr Cosgrove undertakes a range of activities, which include mowing of the lawns, line marking and general ground maintenance. Mr Cosgrove also took on the role of coaching the local Under 12s girls' representative team. The Board of the STFA have expressed their utmost appreciation and acknowledgement of the work undertaken by Mr Cosgrove and have stated that he is "a priceless addition to our team." I acknowledge and congratulate Mr Cosgrove on his dedication and work and his involvement with soccer in the local community for the past fifty years.

#### **UMINA BEACH PRIMARY FUNDRAISING DRIVE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It was such a delight to have Elizabeth from Umina Beach Primary School pop into my office last week with bags and bags of donations for We Care Connect. The families, teachers and children of Umina Beach Primary held a fundraising drive to collect items to support local kids and mums on the Central Coast who are living in poverty. The donations included clothes for babies and kids, nice warm blankets and jackets as well as these beautifully packaged toiletry kits for mum. It warms my heart to see members of our community taking time out of their day and finding ways to support those in need. Thank you Umina Beach Primary!

#### **KIDS CLUB CHILD CARE GOSFORD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Huge congratulations to everyone involved in the development of the fabulous new Kids Club Child Care Centre at West Gosford. The new West Gosford shops are fantastic and to top it off, - literally on top - we now have an amazing facility that will cater for approximately 120 children with over 25 staff. I was honoured to be invited to the grand opening and thrilled by the long queues awaiting a visit to this fabulous facility. Whilst it's a high-rise early childhood education facility above a shopping centre, the design of the Kids Club Child Care makes you feel like you have your feet grounded in the earth; the resources, play equipment, ideas, stimulating activities, stage, slides, beauty salon, toys filled me with joy on my very first visit. Thanks so much for the effort and education and training that has been undertaken prior to the point of opening, and thanks much for providing another very-much-needed early education facility on the Central Coast. Our families appreciate you!

#### **MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU, BWSC UMINA**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to congratulate Brisbane Water Secondary College, Umina Campus on their May the Fourth fundraiser, which was a huge hit for the school. Teacher, Mr Phillips, dressed as Darth Vader and students from the Student Representative Council, (SRC), dressed up as Emperor Palpatine and a Stormtrooper. Students paid a gold coin donation for their photo opportunity, with all donations going to one of

our community members. It is fantastic to see our local school community come together to help one of their fellow students. I am extremely proud of the comradery of this school group. I look forward to seeing it take place again next year!

#### **RIVERSTONE FESTIVAL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—The annual Riverstone Festival is a day where residents, performers, schools and businesses gather together to celebrate our community. For the last 23 years, the festival has gone off without a hitch thanks to Phyllis McAlpine. Phyllis has been at the helm of the festival since its inception. What started as a one-off passion project with the local church groups has grown into a highlight on the calendar for our community. The highlight of the day is the legendary street parade, undoubtedly the focal point of the event. Stallholders offer a range of attractions – from rides and activities to delicious food, goods and services. It really is a wonderful display of community spirit and inclusivity. It symbolises what it means to call Riverstone home. I congratulate Phyllis and other committee members Cheryl Ramsden, Kurt Hippe, Alan Millard, Helena Greedy and Joel Vemuri for their hard work. Of course, the festival wouldn't be possible without the assistance of Blacktown City Council and Riverstone Police. It was a privilege attending this year's event and engaging with the community as the elected Member for Riverstone. I look forward to the festival continuing to grow and thrive for many years to come.

#### **NORTHERN SUBURBS LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Saturday 25 February, I was pleased to come together with the Northern Suburbs Little Athletics Club at its homebase on the Rotary Athletics Field in Lane Cove North. Celebrating fifty years since its founding in 1973, Northern Suburbs Little Athletics has a proud history of providing inclusive sporting activities to young children of all abilities in the local area. Inspired by the Little Athletics motto of 'family, fun and fitness', the Club is committed to providing children with the opportunity to learn new skills and practice those skills in a friendly and safe environment. Active during the summer season, Northern Suburbs runs weekly carnivals on Saturday mornings from September through to March each year. Dedicated to nurturing young athletic talent, the Club is proud to have produced world class athletes and Olympic champions. Northern Suburbs Little Athletics is a valued and appreciated part of our local community, and I can assure the Club of my enthusiastic support. Thanks to Rob Drinkwater and the club leaders for hosting me on the day.

#### **BUSH POETRY AND MUSIC FESTIVAL, HENRY LAWSON CAVE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—In one of our community's novel cultural events, I was pleased to join Willoughby locals for the annual Bush Poetry and Music celebration at the Henry Lawson Cave in Naremburn. The event was a great opportunity for the community to come together and hear the wonderful Australian poetry of Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson, and other famous bush poets in the historic setting of Henry Lawson's Cave. Lawson himself had a connection with my community of Willoughby, having lived in Naremburn for a period and reportedly spent nights in the bushland cave that now bears his name. Located in the beautiful natural surrounds of Flat Rock Gully, Henry Lawson Cave was the ideal spot for locals to savour some Aussie bush poetry. As well as hearing the best of our national folklore performed live by talented readers including Don Swonnell, Peter Carmody and Diana Bates, locals were also treated to a supper of tea and damper by Willoughby City Council. I commend all involved for staging such a terrific and enjoyable event.

#### **KYDS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The mental health of our children and youth is critically important and I would like to commend the work of KYDS - 'Kids Youth Development Service'. An initiative of the Lindfield Rotary Club, KYDS was established in the local community to provide a free, local, and confidential counselling service for children and youth. Since opening its doors in March 2005, KYDS helps young people to understand, and manage, difficult issues in their lives. It does this by providing accessible and personalised counselling and mental health support services, family counselling, and early intervention wellbeing workshops and information events. KYDS helps ensure that issues such as loss, family break down, stress, addictions, mental health and body image do not overwhelm young people. In a world where so many of our young struggle daily, KYDS meets such an important need so I was honoured to join this organisation for its Connect Lunch in the Sydney CBD on Friday 28 April. I particularly salute and thank the outgoing KYDS Chair Namoi Dougall for her 15 years of great service and thank everyone involved in this precious organisation.

#### **THE MAHJONG SILVERTAILS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Every Wednesday the Mahjong Silvertails gather at the Mona Vale Bowling Club. The Silvertails includes hundreds of women from across Pittwater and beyond who converge upon this wonderful venue each week to learn, play and hone their craft in Mahjong. Whilst the game of Mahjong is

not one I fully understand (yet), I do understand the value of the community created by this wonderful group. It has benefits beyond that of just a game – connecting women from across our area and providing a broader support network for so many. You cannot put a price on that kind of initiative. Thank you to Ornella Tamaino, Annie O'Brien, Susie McCarthy, and all the organisers for all your hard work. It means so much to such an amazing group of women. 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. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

#### **RUNNING STARS MONA VALE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Every Sunday morning the Running Stars meet at Winnererremy Bay Park, Mona Vale, to run 2.5km, 5km, or 10km, often followed by coffee and breakfast nearby. Without any disrespect to the Member for Drummoyne, it's a Bay Run of the North, except better. Running Stars – Mona Vale started in May 2021. I understand that this Sunday, 28 May 2023, will be their second anniversary, and it continues to go from strength to strength. Each week, they are seeing a combined total of over 100 participants, with a diverse cross-section of the local community taking part. This is a wonderful initiative which promotes healthy habits, community, and inclusion. I was please to join the recent rainbow run organised by the Running Stars, which promoted diversity and an inclusive community. Well done, Glenn Moore, Paul Rainbow and all your team on running this weekly initiative. 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. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

#### **TREETOPS PRESCHOOL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Nestled amongst the trees of Warriewood is Treetops Preschool. The learning through play approaches and strategies adopted at Treetops were beautiful to observe, as children enjoyed learning about our indigenous culture in a reflection circle, our native plants and wildlife, playing in the outdoor kitchen, growing foods and plants to enjoy, and so much more. The dedication of all staff at Treetops was special to see. Congratulations to all the staff – Lynette, Suzy, Narelle, Lauren, Emilie, Andrena, Lisa, Robyn, Susie, Tegan, Peta, Kathy, Julie. You are amazing and you are setting up these children with every opportunity for fulfilling and fruitful futures. 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, and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

#### **THARAWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Tharawal 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 Tharawal Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Captains Zali Garratt and Lachlan Mayberry and Vice Captains Lara Tsavalis and Byron Farrugia and Prefects Sophia De Kort and Emmett Pasquale. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Gerry O'Brien, 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 Tharawal Public School's motto of 'learning together with respect and responsibility'.

#### **SYLVANIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Sylvania Heights 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 Sylvania Heights Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Georgio Leris, Olivia Matthews, Harry Matthews, Isabel Dooley, Kai Tagg, Estelle Jones, Jax Wells, Heidi Bont, Xavier Terides, Alannah Lloyd, Jack Shearer and Peyton Shaw. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Clint White, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Sylvania Heights Public School's motto of 'strive to achieve'.

**KAREELA PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Kareela 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 Kareela Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Captains Audrey Taylor and Bailey Nunez and Vice Captains Emily Boyd, Samuel Brunero, Imogen McLean and Toby Davies. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Nicole Arnold, 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 Kareela Public School's motto of 'knowledge, pride, success'.

**GEOFF AND HEATHER BUSH**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise the contributions of Geoff and Heather Bush spanning over multiple decades for Agriculture in New South Wales. Recently Geoff was awarded the Champion of the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) of New South Wales award for cattle. Geoff is an AgShows New South Wales Life Member and has held several positions within the Agricultural Societies Council (ASC) such as Vice-President, President, and Treasurer. Geoff was on the state body for an extraordinary 26 years with a particular focus on participation, particularly trying to involve young people with an aim at increasing longevity for agricultural shows within New South Wales. Geoff has extensive cattle experience and has been involved primarily with judging competitions and heifers and remains a big supporter of the Young Judges and Paraders Competitions to this day. Individuals like Geoff and Heather play a pivotal role in ensuring the success, smooth operation, and viability of Country Shows within NSW. Geoff and Heather are two of the most dedicated and passionate individuals I know. The way they conduct themselves is exemplary and I commend them their efforts over the last three decades.

**WEETHALLE COUNTRY MUSIC MUSTER**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I extend a huge congratulations to the organisers, volunteers and performers at this year's Weethalle Country Music Muster that was held from Tuesday 2 May to Sunday 7 May. The Weethalle Showground was packed for 5 long days with tents, caravans, and swags from the young to the young at heart. The week involved many great activities and hosted appearing artists; Rodney Vincent, Shelly Jones Band, Tom Maxwell, Kylie Castle, Errol Grey, Sharon Benjamin, Grant Luhrs, John and Christine Smith and The Redbak Studio Band. The agenda for the week also included a Country Bingo evening, a Friday night party night and a Sunday poet breakfast. It was also a chance for local musicians to come forward and showcase their talents. Country music is the heart of many small regional communities and allows for the locals and people further afield to come together have a sing and dance and share many great stories from years past. I congratulate all those involved.

**35 YEARS OF GRENFELL PROBUS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Grenfell Probus celebrates 35 years this year and I take this opportunity to recognise members past and present who have contributed to the success of the organisation over this time. Grenfell Probus has recently held their annual meeting and welcomed their committee for 2023, including President Betty Penrose, Vice President Glenice O'Connor, Secretary Mary Corcoran, Gail Smith, Ken Norrie, Sally Norrie, Rosalie White, Pam Holland, Joan Eppelstun, Jenny Wells, Esma Baker. The Grenfell Probus holds monthly meetings for fellowship and social activities, with guest speakers often asked to come along. It is fantastic to see the local group going strong, as part of the broader Probus network which is all about making new friends, learning new skills and hobbies in retirement. In a world where loneliness and isolation are increasingly problematic, it is lovely to have local groups like Grenfell Probus actively getting together and welcoming new members all the time. Well done!

**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.

#### **HOUSING PLUS 6TH ANNUAL WHITE TIE BALL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the Housing Plus White Tie Ball organising committee on their recent fundraising effort in Orange. Held on the 20th May 2023, the annual fundraiser, now in its 6th year, was attended by 320 guests and 30 sponsors, and raised an amazing \$88,000 for The Orchard. The Orchard was the first purpose-built core and cluster domestic violence accommodation in the state. The White Tie Ball helps raise community awareness about the victims of domestic abuse in Orange, which tragically is double the state average. The Orange Orchard was opened in 2020, and since then 61 women and 76 children have stayed at the facility. The Orchard includes onsite counselling services, outdoor areas and flexible options for larger families. The first three annual fundraising events were held to fund the construction and building of the facility. The following events contributed to items for women and children as welcoming packs and other important services. I would like to congratulate Housing Plus on the success of this event and its efforts in raising community awareness of their important services. Well done!

#### **PREMI-BABES ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise the Premi-Babes Association of Orange on 50 years of providing vital support to the Orange Health Service and other local district hospitals. The Association is a local, not for profit organisation of volunteers and was formed by concerned parents who realised that local hospitals needed extra support both financially and communally to look after premature babies and their families. Through the Association's fundraising efforts vital items such as humidicribs, neonatal monitors and portable ultrasound units, and smaller items including breast pumps, bottle warmers, clothing, care packages and weighing scales have been secured for the Orange Health Service and other local hospitals. The group have also donated funds to the hospital to setup private, dedicated rooms for parents away from the Special Care Nursery, supporting family-centred care. Over the past 50 years the Association has not only improved the technology and equipment available for premi-babies. It has also supported midwives and community nurses to attend training courses to better improve support provided to women during pregnancy and when premature babies are born. I congratulate the Association on 50 wonderful years of service and thank them for all they have done for the Orange community.

#### **4 ON THE 4LOOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate the live music initiative 4 on the 4loor on their milestone of 25 years. The monthly showcase was founded by Jon Carter, whose vision was to provide local bands with the opportunity to play original music. The 25th Anniversary was celebrated on 6th May 2023 at the Victorian Hotel in Orange. 4 on the 4loor is held every month. The first show kicked off in 1998, since then there has been over 316 shows and more than 1260 performances. Jon is still the driving force behind the event known for eclectic acts, where anything from folk to metal and beyond can be on stage, sometimes even on the same evening. Jon encourages solo, duos, and bands to come along and showcase their original material. The 4 on the 4loor event enhances access to arts and culture for regional audiences while generating a boost to local economies and entertainment opportunities. I would like to congratulate 4 on the 4loor and Jon on achieving an amazing 25 years of supporting and showcasing live, local original music. Well done.

#### **KEN PAGE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Ken Page is an Automotive Trainer at the Hunter Trade College and has been named as a regional finalist in the NSW Training Awards Trainer of the year category. The Awards honour and reward the achievements of students, teachers, training organisations and employers in Vocational Education and Training. The Hunter Trade College is a senior school and a Registered Training Organisation offering a comprehensive work placement program for young people. The hands-on approach to training, quality facilities, give students the chance to thrive in their chosen trade. Ken is beloved of both staff and students; he has a genuine passion and enthusiasm for his trade and imparting his skills and knowledge to our next generation of tradespeople. Ken demonstrates a high level of integrity in his daily actions and inspires others hold themselves to a higher standard. Ken builds an amazing rapport with the students and is a great role model for young people. I wish Ken all the best at the Regional Awards ceremony on 23rd June.

#### **CANDICE KING**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Candice King was a recent nominee in the Local Woman of the Year Awards for the Maitland area. After the stillbirth of her

first born son, Clyde, in December of 2021, Candice set herself a mission to help other women and families who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss. She became a voice for many women too scared or nervous to speak up about the loss of their children. As her photography business has a huge following, she decided to use it as a platform to help families and get these unspoken voices out there. Candice created the Angel Families project where she brought together families who have experienced loss, and photographed them in a group shoot to honour all our children. She then shared the individual stories with the world, along with their photos. She also set up a local support group for families affected by losses such as these, after realising there was a lack of local specific support for this large community of families. Candice should be incredibly proud of the work she is doing in memory of her beautiful son Clyde.

#### **SHANELLE PESCUD**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Shanelle Pescud was a recent nominee in the Local Woman of the Year Awards for the Maitland area. She has made a considerable contribution and impact to both Maitland and its surrounds by volunteering her time to support community events and organisations that need it most. She regularly participates in local agricultural shows and recently became a director of her local show, to continue her passion for inspiring youth and women in agriculture and to support events at the Maitland Showground. After becoming a Rural Achiever Finalist last year, Shanelle is now also an honorary committee member of the Newcastle Show. Shanelle also volunteers her time for Hunter Volunteer Centre through their companion program, volunteering her time each week at Calvary Mt Carmel in Rutherford to provide social support and friendship to the elderly. She also volunteers at Kookaburra Kids, empowering young people impacted by family mental illness to thrive through activity days, connect and camps and supporting mental health education. Shanelle has a passion for community engagement, and her involvement in the community reiterates this.

#### **MULGOA VALLEY FC**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Today I congratulate and recognise the Mulgoa Valley Football Club for their fierce resilience and ability to overcome adversity. Despite the sustained rains and flooding last season, which prevented the club from opening their home ground for training and games, the Mulgoa Valley Football Club remained a force to be reckoned with in the local Penrith competition. Their under-12's, All Age 4's, and All Age 6's teams won their grand finals, showing incredible skill and determination in the face of difficult circumstances. I commend the club for their unwavering commitment to their sport and their community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers, parents, coaches and kids who make up the Mulgoa Valley Football Club. Your hard work, dedication and perseverance are an inspiration to us all. As the club prepares for another season, I wish them the very best of luck and every success in their upcoming games.

#### **PENRITH PHYSICAL CULTURE CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Today I recognise the outstanding achievements of the Penrith Physical Culture Club, a local physie club with classes in Glenmore Park. Established in 1995 by sisters Karen and Colleen this club has flourished from humble beginnings with just 20 members, to now boasting a remarkable membership of approximately 120 dedicated individuals. Affiliated with the prestigious BJP School of Physie, which holds a remarkable history of 130 years, Penrith Physie continues to nurture and inspire its members through the art of physical culture. Physie combines elements of ballet, hip-hop, stretching and core strength to create captivating routines that foster confidence and empowerment among girls and women. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Penrith Physical Culture Club, its founders Karen and Colleen and all its members. Their remarkable journey serves as an inspiration to us all, highlighting the profound impact that dedicated individuals can make in promoting a healthy and vibrant community.

#### **GLENMORE PARK BRUMBIES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I am thrilled to recognise the Glenmore Park Brumbies on their recent celebration of their 30th anniversary this season. The organisation was established in 1993 with just nine teams. These days they are fielding more than 40 teams, which includes one of the strongest female programs in the local area. The club has helped form the careers of some of today's NRL superstars such as Joseph Suaalii at the Sydney Roosters, Sean O'Sullivan at the Dolphins and Gold Coast Titans Fullback Jayden Campbell. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Glenmore Park Brumbies on their recent milestone and thank them for their dedication to the sport of rugby and the community. Your commitment to excellence and sportsmanship is truly inspiring and has made a significant impact on the lives of countless individuals. Thank you for being a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work, dedication, and a passion for sport.

### PORT MACQUARIE WOMEN CONNECT

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise the volunteer led organisation, Port Macquarie Women Connect who coordinate a women's support group aimed at addressing mental health and loneliness, while fostering valuable connections in the Port Macquarie-Hastings community. Formed in 2020 from the creation of Self Seen, Port Macquarie Women Connect are a community of women who meet on a weekly basis with a casual walk and talk and a monthly dinner. They also host two regular meet ups with a mission to "provide a safe place for women to share, connect and support each other while creating new and long-lasting friendships." Committee members Jules Jamieson, Brooke Demarkis and Simone Cunneen are the 'movers and shakers' behind this influential group which continues to grow with now 3,000 plus social media followers. The group is often spotted relaxing over a beverage and discussing life in general in a confidential space. What I find encouraging is their emphasis on wellbeing, in a non-judgemental environment where there is no expectation to share but support is readily available. Sometimes in life all a person ever needs is a sympathetic ear and I congratulate the ladies for providing this for the women of the Hastings.

### TEN YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO THE B2B PATHWAY COMMITTEE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise Mary and Peter Laing of Dunbogan and thank them for their 10-year dedication as volunteers and members of the Beach-to-beach Pathway Committee. Peter and Mary were part of the initial gathering of locals who met in 2013 to investigate the possibility of continuing a shared pathway between North Haven and Pilot beaches, a total length of eleven kilometres. Mary became Treasurer of Beach to Beach Incorporated, a role she still holds today. Mary has not only managed the B2b Committee finances but has been instrumental in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the project. She took on the responsibility for fundraising events including organising two sensational B2b Galas, a Halloween River cruise, premiere movie nights, auctions, and a host of barbeques. Peter has been at the forefront of every hands-on component of the B2b project. From preparing the ground, forming up and laying concrete, to creating the alternative B2b nature trail along Gogley's Inlet, to preparing the amenity blocks for the installation of murals for Art Along the Path. Thank you dynamic Laing duo.

### HOLMES DECORATIVE PLASTER

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**— I acknowledge Winifred Holmes from the Camden Haven who was part of the team that designed the decorations which sit atop of King Charles III Coronation carriages. Talented and gifted is certainly an understatement to describe the masterful craftsmanship affixed on the Kings Coronation carriages, which millions of Australians watched in awe from the comfort of their homes on 6 May 2023. These magnificent decorations were created by the late John Holmes and his wife Winifred (Win) Holmes to sit atop of the Australian State Coach for Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II as an official gift from the Australian people for the Bicentenary in 1988. John and Win owned Holmes Decorative Plaster from 1969 to 2004 in Western Sydney before retiring to the Camden Haven. Back then, the architect Jim Frecklington who designed two carriages for the Royal Family approached John and Win to decorate the Australian State Coach - an honour and duty they proudly accepted. Now 84, Win watched nostalgically as the State Coach transported the Prince and Princess of Wales and their family from the Coronation. Other royal accomplishments included decorations on the Diamond Jubilee and Gold State Coaches.

### ANTONY CHARLES DEAKIN OAM - ARMIDALE KEYS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of architect and former Armidale City Mayor, Antony (Tony) Deakin OAM who has been awarded the Keys to the City by the Armidale Regional Council in recognition of his connection to the city and the outstanding contribution he made to its architectural landscape. I congratulate Tony on his 52 years as an architect and 32 years steering his firm, Magoffin & Deakin, overseeing work on over 2000 projects in the district from his first, the Guyra Bowling Club in 1969 to the more notable Armidale Mall, New England Regional Art Museum, the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place, and the beautiful Hanna's Arcade. I commend Tony for his contribution to the community through his involvement with the Armidale Rotary Club, in particular the repairs and renovations of the hospital on Tanna Island in Vanuatu and his heritage work detailing the design of the bell frames and reconstruction on the stairs in St Peters Cathedral Bell Tower. Mr Deakin was awarded the medal of the Order of Australian General Division for Services to the Community particularly in the field of Architecture in 2000.

### CAMDEN FIRE STATION OPEN DAY

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On Monday 13 May it was my privilege to attend the Camden fire station open day, which joined together the officers of Camden and Narellan fire stations. The open day was a wonderful opportunity to see what it's like inside the station and gain a greater understanding of the important work that the brave firefighters do for the local community. Exploring some of the equipment that firefighters use

when responding to emergencies was fantastic. Our fire stations offer a truly lifesaving service to the whole community and we will always be grateful for the emergency work they do, as well as the fire safety and prevention services they provide. Along with opening up the station, the officers also put on a delicious barbecue which raised money for the burn's unit. Attending the Camden fire station open day was a truly inspiring experience that opened my eyes even more to the great work firefighters do for our community and for that I extend a huge thank you to all the firefighters in my electorate of Camden for the work that they do, every single day.

#### **U15'S MACARTHUR SOUTH-WEST HOCKEY TEAM**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—Last weekend, on Saturday 20 May, the Macarthur South-West Under 15s hockey team held a cake stall at the New South Wales Under 18 girls state championship held in Narellan. The stall was held to raise the much needed funds required to get the whole team to the state championships which will be held in Grafton over the weekend of Friday 16 June to Sunday 18 June 2023. Making it to the state championships is testament to the hard work of the whole team and a truly wonderful achievement. I would like to recognise the dedication of the work that goes on behind the scenes, from the coaches to the parents doing drop off and pick up and providing morning and afternoon tea, as well as the referees and organisers of the games and tournaments more broadly. The Macarthur hockey teams could not function without this vital work. I know that Macarthur South-West Under 15's girls hockey team will do their best and make the whole community proud at the state championships. The whole community is behind you, good luck.

#### **PARRAMATTA CITY SWIM CLUB**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The annual Royal Life Saving Aqua Awards recognise excellence in swimming clubs. I wish to congratulate the Parramatta City Swim Club for winning the 'Excellence in Swimming' award. Since 1951 the Parramatta City Swim Club has delivered quality swim training to our local community. In 2022 the club introduced surf lifesaving training in Parramatta to make our community safer. I want to thank the Parramatta City Swim Club membership, especially the leadership team and volunteers who contribute to the Club's success including President Theo Kitsos, Secretary Debbie Cooke and Chief Instructor Bruce Horlyck. I look forward to the Club's continued success serving our Parramatta and surrounding communities at the Granville Swim Centre.

#### **HEALTHWISE MEMORY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM CELEBRATES 20 YEARS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the New England North West health organisation HealthWISE, and the work they do in our communities through their Memory Assessment Program (MAP) supporting locals living with dementia. I congratulate HealthWISE Allied Health team leader Alicia Pratt and her team as they celebrate 20 years of providing early assessment and diagnosis for people with mild to moderate cognitive impairment and linking GPs and their patients with dementia specialised medical, neuropsychological and dementia support services. I commend all members of the MAP team for their work in Glen Innes, Armidale, Inverell, Tenterfield and Uralla assisting people and their families affected by the disease. They go above and beyond in the care and energy they devote to the program and their clients.

#### **CHRIS EDWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Congratulations to Chris Edwards on accepting Honorary Life Membership of the Dubbo Show Society at the 150th Dubbo Show! Chris has had an impressive involvement with the Dubbo Show Society, serving as its President from 2015 to 2020. His dedication to the show movement began when he lived in Nevertire and was asked to look after the dog show by someone on the committee. Chris' association with the Dubbo Show Society dates back to the days when the society ran the trotting, with his initial involvement being in Harness Racing. Upon receiving the award, Chris expressed his gratitude for the unexpected honour, particularly in light of the significance of it being the 150th Dubbo Show. It's important to recognise that Chris is just one of the many volunteers who tirelessly work throughout the year to ensure the success of the show. Their collective efforts are instrumental in making the Dubbo Show possible. Once again, congratulations to Chris Edwards on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **ERIFILI DAVIS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to acknowledge Dubbo's own director and producer, Erifili Davis. Erifili has caught the attention of the international film community with her outstanding short film, *Fell Purpose*, which was selected to be showcased at the prestigious International Mobile Film Festival (IMFF) in San Diego. This achievement is a testament to Erifili's unwavering dedication, artistic vision, and exceptional storytelling abilities. *Fell Purpose* stands as a dark fantasy adaption of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with women at the centre and in control, both in terms of the story and the production. The film was shot entirely on smartphones, specifically the iPhone 11 Pro Max, and the iPhone 13 Pro Max. IMFF is the premiere mobile film festival in the



world, and the first to feature only films shot on mobile phones since 2009. Growing up in Wollongong in a migrant family, Erifili fell in love with the black and white sound and pictures on their first television. She watched everything the limited programming had to offer, from Sesame Street, to old musicals starring Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Fell Purpose competed against 18 other short films from around the world at the festival. Well done Erifili!

#### **KRYSTAL DALLINGER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the achievement of Dubbo's own Krystal Dallinger. A proud Gamilaroi woman, Krystal's journey from being a promising netballer to discovering her passion for art is inspiring. Suffering an ankle injury during her time playing netball at Newcastle's Hunter Academy, Krystal was forced to take time away from netball and it was during this time that her love for art grew and was recognised. In 2018 Krystal was asked to design the GIANTS First Nations Round dress and has done so since. Netball Australia have recognised Krystal's talent and now she has created the design for the Suncorp Super Netball First Nations round dress, a remarkable accomplishment. Her artwork, titled "Gather as One", reflects the importance of acknowledging the past while embracing the promise of the future. Through her designs, Krystal is not only expressing her artistic talent, but also paving the way for indigenous athletes and contributing to the recognition of their heritage in sports. Krystal's dedication and talent is undoubtedly making a positive impact, and she deserves congratulations for her outstanding work.

#### **BALMORAL BURN CELEBRATES 21ST ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—This Sunday the annual Balmoral Burn will mark twenty-one years of running up Sydney's steepest hill to raise money for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. Over the last twenty-one years this event has truly grown and is now a much-loved fixture on the Mosman calendar, with thousands entering each year. This event takes place on Awaba Street in Mosman and is open to anyone who can take on the gruelling four-hundred and twenty metre run to the top. You definitely feel the burn running up this hill, but it is all for a good cause. The Humpty Dumpty Foundation has been providing medical equipment to paediatric wards, neonatal units, maternity and emergency departments more than five hundred hospitals across every state and territory in Australia. I look forward to joining with all of the competitors, organisers, sponsors, and spectators this weekend to watch some of the races and help raise these much-needed funds for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. Good luck to everyone who will feel the burn this Sunday.

#### **NEUTRAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL COLOUR FUN RUN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Of all the ways for a local primary school to fundraise a colour fun run for the whole school community has to be one of the best. I was fortunate enough to join the Neutral Bay Public school community for their colour fun run and it is safe to say that by the end I was covered head to toe with an array of colours. I have to say I wasn't as unfortunate as Mr Tan the vice principal who much to the delight of the students was covered in green slime. I particularly want to acknowledge Liz Henry and Rachel Thompson from the Neutral Bay Public P&C for all their efforts in organising this year's event. Thanks to the incredible spirit of the local community they were able to raise over seventy-seven thousand dollars for the school. The Colour Run is a great day for the school community to gather, raise money and have fun together. Thank you to the members of the P&C, d teachers, parents, and all participating students for bringing so much joy, energy, and excitement to this event. I look forward to joining you all next time.

#### **LIVING SEAWALLS BOULDERS IN LAVENDER BAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Last week I had the pleasure of officially opening the new Living Seawalls Boulders installation in Lavender Bay. This project was the brainchild of the terrific Sydney Institute of Marine Science and local business Sydney By Kayak. Living Seawalls mimic natural habitats like rockpools and the root structure of mangroves, converting the flat surface of manmade seawalls into habitats for marine life. Sydney By Kayak's co-founder Laura Stone in partnership with the Sydney Institute of Marine and North Sydney Council came together to fund a new project of Living Seawall Boulders. These Living Seawall Boulders will increase the Sydney Harbour's biodiversity while filtering harmful pollutants. I enjoyed the opportunity to test my kayaking skills and joined Laura and the team from the Sydney Institute of Marine Science inspecting the progress of these boulders that have been installed. I acknowledge the terrific work that Laura is undertaking in our local community to protect and preserve marine conservation, and the incredible ongoing work that the Sydney Institute of Marine Science do in marine research and collaboration.

#### **LOCAL LONGBOTTOM FAMILY CONTINUES THEIR SURFING TRADITION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Ross, Dylan, Darren and Summa Longbottom for their contribution to the world of surfing. The Longbottom family is now in its third generation of exceptional surfers and board designers. 70 years ago Ross Longbottom fell in love with

surfing and judged some of the first professional surf competitions. He established his own board factory in the Sutherland Shire, inspiring his sons Darren and Dylan to pursue their own careers in the surf industry. Dylan has made a career as a big wave rider and stunt performer, while Darren runs two local surf shops in Kiama. Dylan's daughter Summa has continued in the family tradition, becoming a notable big wave surfer herself. At just 20 years old, she recently surfed the best wave of the day among the world's best big wave surfers in Victoria. She has already conquered a number of the world's biggest breaks in her young career, including Tahiti's infamous Teahupoo, as well as Nazare in Portugal. I wish to thank the whole Longbottom family for their commitment they have made to our region and to their passion and their sport.

### ACROMAZING CONTINUES TO SHINE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—I would like to praise the ongoing success of Albion Park's Acromazing on winning Australia's got talent in November 2022. Since winning the competition 6 months ago, the acrobatic gymnast team has been busier than ever, competing in the Acro Cup Invitational in Las Vegas and representing NSW at the National Competition in May. I commend the commitment of head coach Kim Lacey, who is incredibly proud of the success of her team. Four gold, four silver, one bronze, three in fourth place were handed out to their "trio" and "pairs" competitors in Vegas, and collectively they won a Level 10 Team trophy. Back in Albion Park, the club continues to grow rapidly and perform in their local community, training out of the "Old Cow Shed" attached to the Albion Park Showground. The impact that community sport has on young people is significant and I am extremely pleased to see women and girls' participation in sport growing in our community and doing so well. The willingness of leaders like Kim to mentor and coach our youth is an invaluable asset to our vibrant community.

### BOMADERRY LOCALS CHIP IN TO RAISE FUNDS FOR TURKIYE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Bomaderry residents Susi Sager and Elva Kielly for their efforts raising funds for earthquake relief in Turkiye. The duo has put their knitting needles to good use, creating a bespoke blanket that has fetched \$350 for the cause. Generous locals bought into the lottery, as extra donations came in from the charitable community. Louise Brown was the lucky winner, thrilled with the blanket and the money going to a good cause. Ms Sager and Ms Kielly were inspired by Bomaderry Shopkeeper Auhan Kaya's efforts raising relief money through his Kebab shop. I also note that Saltwater Cafe next to my electorate office who also conducted a very successful fundraiser. Ms Sager said the pair had a conversation at the shops at Bomaderry when they saw Mr Kaya's fundraiser and decided to put their own skills to work to help the cause. Fundraising for the pair is far from over, as they plan a charity garage sale.

### BEACHCOMBER HOTEL

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Congratulations to the Beachcomber Hotel and Resort at Toukley for receiving Hotel of the Year 2022 in the Ascend Hotel Collection category. The award Hotel of the Year is based on exceeding excellent customer service and amazing guest experiences. This was a team effort from staff members, and everyone involved. The Resort is located by the water with nearly 100m of lake frontage and its own private pier. The stunning style influences Hamptons-inspired ambience, boutique-style accommodation, an exclusive pool-club and multiple eateries and bars, it's the perfect place to gear into holiday mode. Three Victorian hotels won the Clarion, Quality and Econo Lodge sections and a Mackay hotel won the Comfort category. The five winning hotels will go into the pool of global properties competing for the Best of Choice Awards and celebrate at the Choice Hotels International Convention in Las Vegas.

### DI SALMON

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Di and Paul Salmon will be making the move from Yarramalong Valley after many years of hard work and dedication to the community and the local hall. The couple will be residing on the Central Coast though they will be sorely missed by Yarramalong Valley community. Di joined the committee in 2000 as secretary and later becoming booking officer until 2022. Di's husband Paul has a very special connection to the 109-year-old Wyong Creek Hall on Yarramalong Rd as his grandfather, Frederick, donated the land to the community to build the hall. Over the years it has been the venue for local dances, weddings, card nights, birthdays, plays, concerts, art shows, stage shows, wakes and school presentation nights. Together Di and Paul created the well-known annual Scarecrow competition where locals show their creative, crazy, funny characters scattered throughout Yarramalong Valley. It is wonderful to see community spirit in my electorate, especially through family. I wish Di all the best on her new adventure. She has left a footprint in Yarramalong Valley amongst the locals.

**COHAN SZYPICA**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—** I would like to congratulate Cohan Szypica from Toukley for being selected as the youngest athlete in the senior men's basketball team to represent Australia at the 2023 World Dwarf Games in Germany, held every 4 years. The 14-year-old Mackillop College student was born with Hypochondroplasia which is a form of short-limbed dwarfism. Cohan has overcome many challenges in his life so far and continues to play the sport he loves. Cohan has shown to work hard on and off the sports field, dedication to training and commitment to the team. This is a great achievement for a young athlete to represent not only the local community but Australia. These Games are expected to be the largest sporting event in history exclusively for athletes with dwarfism, with more than 500 elite athletes from all corners of the globe set to compete. I wish Cohan and the team the best of luck!

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