



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday 27 June 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 27 June 2023**

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

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

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome everybody here today. I extend a warm welcome to the Chamber to the daughter of the member for Maitland, Jess Aitchison. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Campbelltown, Mrs Pauline James, OAM, and Mr Ray James, OAM and justice of the peace. I welcome guests of the member for Bankstown, Aled Stephens, Aala Abdulwahab, Lyn and Ian Jelley, and Heather and John Friend. I acknowledge the guest of the member for Vacluse, Patrick Hall, who is here from Scotland. He is a former member of staff for a member of the Scottish Parliament. If Patrick was there in the past few years, I am sure it was a very interesting time. I welcome guests of the member for Goulburn, Elizabeth Ryan and Heidi Fagan. I welcome guests of the member for Sydney, Adam Hall and Dustin Halse from the Health Services Union. You are not going to get that every day, Adam. I also acknowledge the presence of Susan and Peter Lammiman, guests of the member for Blue Mountains. Finally, I acknowledge student leaders from Toronto High School, who are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. Welcome to the Chamber.

### *Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise members that media photographers are approved to photograph question time today.

### *Notices*

#### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley will come to order. The member for Port Macquarie will come to order. All members will come to order.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. It is very difficult to hear.

*Later,*

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

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** The time for the giving of notices of motions has expired. Members took the opportunity to chat among themselves, which made it difficult to maintain decorum in the House. That will not happen in future.

### *Governor*

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

### *Question Time*

#### **POLICE TASER USE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In question time on 23 May the Minister said that she was briefed on Wednesday 17 May about the tragic incident in Cooma concerning Mrs Clare Nowland. After that briefing, was the Minister kept up to date about what statements the police had issued and what communications they had had with Mrs Nowland's family?



**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:23):** I have answered all of these questions repeatedly and publicly, and I refer those opposite to those answers. Any allegations of police misconduct arising from this tragic incident are being thoroughly investigated as part of a critical incident investigation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Health will come to order. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question clearly asked about the Minister's state of mind. It has nothing to do with what the police did. It is asking her about her state of mind and what knowledge she had.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Leader of the House rises on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The state of mind of the Minister is not a relevant basis for a point of order, nor is it a basis to ask a question because it is clearly then in breach of Standing Order 128. The ability to seek facts to answer a question is required under Standing Order 128.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard the arguments from both sides. Regardless of the merits of both arguments, the fact is that the Minister was not far enough into her answer to take a point of order regarding relevance.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The conduct of the critical incident investigation is subject to independent oversight by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC], and this oversight was launched almost immediately after the incident. This is all knowledge that the House already has. It is an active investigation and I trust LECC to provide proper oversight. If those opposite have any evidence of any so-called cover-up, then they should provide that to the LECC. If they do not have any evidence, it is disgraceful to continue to direct these baseless slurs against the NSW Police Force in this Parliament. I have answered the question.

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:26):** I address my question to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on how incentives to reward safe driving are changing in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:26):** I can, and I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. He reported to me that he has all 13 points at the moment, so he asks this question without any conflicts of interest at all. I report to the House that more than 1.7 million drivers will be eligible to receive a demerit point back as a result of the Government's program to encourage good driving behaviour in New South Wales. This means that the Government will, from 17 January 2023 to 17 January 2024, provide a snapshot of drivers in New South Wales who have done the right thing over that 12-month period—in other words, kept a clean record and had no driving offences. If a driver keeps that clean record over that 12-month period, they will receive a demerit point back. This was a key election promise from the Opposition, and I am proud to report to the House that we are bringing in this program six months early. The program was meant to run from July 2023 to July 2024, but we are now in a position where we can launch the program from 17 January 2023 to 17 January 2024.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will cease having private conversations. The member for Hornsby will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** In fact, many drivers who have a poor driving record in New South Wales would be aware that ordinarily it takes three years to receive a demerit point back. But in the run-up to the busy and often tragic Christmas driving period, the Government believes it is the right time to launch this important initiative, which is all about incentivising drivers to do the right thing on New South Wales public roads. It is a rebalancing of the Government's initiatives in relation to road safety, away from revenue raising and just exclusively punishing drivers—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

I knew they would say something off the back of that, Mr Speaker.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Instead, we say to the people of New South Wales that if you do the right thing we will make sure you get your demerit point back. The previous Government's record when it came to revenue raising was quite striking. In 2020, 50,000 people received a driving offence—50,000 people—and the Government collected \$9.2 million over a 12-month period. From 2020 to 2021 that figure jumped to 442,956

finest in New South Wales. Revenue increased from \$9 million to \$74 million in just a single calendar year. *[Extension of time]*

In order for this new initiative to be implemented in New South Wales, legislation is required. As has been repeatedly pointed out to me as the Premier of New South Wales, we have a hung Parliament in the Legislative Assembly. It is not only up to the Government to pass this legislation. All members will have to determine whether this is a good initiative for road safety to incentivise good behaviour in New South Wales.

I inform the House that the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads in the other place has already made comments in relation to this. She has said, "The problem with this policy is it doesn't differentiate between dangerous drivers and good drivers." That is despite the fact that we are asking drivers to keep a good record for a 12-month period. She went on to say, "I'm yet to see how this actually benefits drivers and genuinely incentivises good driver behaviour"—other than the fact that you get a point back! In order for this policy to go through, the Government is calling on the New South Wales Opposition to perform a legal U-turn. The Opposition should endorse the policy and allow the legislation to pass the House so that we can incentivise good driving behaviour and not just punish bad driving behaviour in this State.

#### POLICE TASER USE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:31):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Last Friday, the police commissioner said that the critical incident team met Mrs Nowland's family at 3.00 p.m. on Thursday 18 May. Why did it take a further 19 hours after that meeting before a release was issued about the use of a taser?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:31):** The police commissioner has answered this question repeatedly and publicly, as have I.

#### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:32):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how New South Wales is changing the planning process to improve housing and rental affordability?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:32):** I thank the member for Penrith for her question. She knows just how important it is to have good homes, good jobs and great opportunities in all parts of Sydney, but particularly in Penrith. Over the last term of the previous Government, we saw confusion and complexity enter the planning system. Just like we inherited a massive debt—the biggest debt of any incoming New South Wales government—we also inherited a massive housing problem. The previous Government had lost focus. It had lost its way when it came to delivering housing and jobs. There were multiple agencies and multiple decisions that were spread across multiple Ministers. People found it confused and confusing. As a result, there was no clear focus on delivery, and pressures in the housing market grew—not only in Sydney. They spilled to all parts of regional New South Wales.

The incoming Minns Government has already introduced planning reforms that will support communities, support government agencies to deliver homes and support the delivery of more market housing, whether that be for purchase or for rental. Frankly, there has been more real change and lift in delivery in the first 12 weeks of this Government than there was over the past 12 years of the last mob. We have brought agencies back together under the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. We are reforming infrastructure contributions. One of the most frustrating things for communities is to not have the roads, the schools, the health services or the open spaces they need. The Government is reforming contributions so that they are delivered in a more timely manner.

The Government is providing additional support for the assessment of social and affordable housing through access to the State significant development pathway for private developments that include at least 15 per cent affordable housing as part of their proposal. We are looking at how surplus government land can be used for housing. We are expanding the role of Landcom—that great institution that has put thousands and thousands of people into homes—by providing access to self-assessment opportunities for developments that include 100 per cent affordable housing. We have already got Landcom moving on two build-to-rent pilots on the South Coast and the North Coast.

The Government is improving quality so that people can have confidence in the homes that they are getting by establishing the NSW Building Commission. We are making rents fairer. We want to bring more planners into the role of planning. Who would have thought? What a great idea. To do that—to allow planners to do their jobs better, to plan the communities of the future—the Government has introduced a cadetship scheme for councils to attract young planners, so that young people are part and parcel of the planning of their future communities. After all, it is those young people who are going to be living in those communities. This is the start of focusing an

incoming government on project delivery. It is about getting projects started and getting them going again. *[Extension of time]*

The Government has done this because it knows that, more than many other groups, young people and young families and essential workers are paying a high price, both literally and figuratively, for years of neglect. That diminishes their living standards, but it also reduces everyone's productivity. It impacts on all our living standards. The measures the Government has put in place are designed to produce a better and more fair distribution of housing and jobs and the social and economic infrastructure that will positively shape our cities. It will positively shape Sydney and beyond. But while we are working to create well-located, well-designed and well-built communities, others are standing in the way. While we want to build, those opposite want to block.

The Federal Liberals are blocking housing growth in Canberra by not supporting the Housing Affordability Fund. In New South Wales, the NSW Liberals and The Nationals are blocking the building of better communities as well. Despite playing the same song as many predecessors about wanting to lead on housing affordability, when faced with an opportunity—a genuine, bipartisan offer—to work with the Government to address one of the biggest frustrations that communities have with housing growth, the infrastructure needed to support that growth, members opposite voted against the housing and productivity contributions bill. The great irony of this is it is almost the same—although we did it better—as the bill that they took to the election. Members opposite were okay with the bill in March, when they might have been re-elected. But when they lost, they threw the toys out of the cot and said no to communities getting better infrastructure. It is not good enough. Housing needs a fresh start in New South Wales. *[Time expired.]*

#### AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:37):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, representing the Minister for Agriculture. Given the recent historic appointment of the first independent biosecurity commissioner, and the ongoing concerns in regional New South Wales and in my electorate with protecting prime agricultural land and ensuring that the interests of agriculture are appropriately protected, will the Government commit to appointing a full-time independent agriculture commissioner?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:38):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question and note his ongoing interest in promoting the interests of regional communities throughout New South Wales. Agriculture production is a crucial component of the New South Wales economy. In fact, it is the lifeblood of many regional communities right across New South Wales. But our primary industries are facing new and evolving pressures. These pressures include biosecurity challenges and the increasing risks of damage by pests, disease and weeds; increased migration from cities to regional areas, resulting in housing shortages in rural areas; and global challenges such as changing international markets, climate change and global events.

Evolving community needs and aspirations also prompt changes in the use of agricultural land. There is a need to carefully balance the needs of the agriculture sector with broader societal needs such as housing and energy supply. That is why this Government is committed to an independent agriculture commissioner. We need to make sure that we get the balance right to ensure food security and that we have profitable agricultural industries which operate based on best practice. I am advised that the current NSW Agriculture Commissioner has provided the Minister for Agriculture with valuable guidance on how land use conflicts can be mitigated for the agriculture sector.

Two reports were prepared for the previous Government and are in various stages of implementation. The Government is moving ahead with many of the reports' recommendations, including the development of a draft State Significant Agricultural Land map that will identify the most productive areas across the State, making it easier to inform land use planning decisions; facilitating forums that allow councils and other key State agencies to share information about challenges they are facing and how they may be addressed; and conducting a pilot education program to upskill land use planners and councillors. I understand the contract of the current commissioner finishes soon. *[Extension of time]*

The New South Wales Government recognises the value of the advice that the current NSW Agriculture Commissioner has provided. I am informed that the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, is considering the best way forward for the long term. As part of this consideration, the Minister will consider the role and functions of the new NSW Agriculture Commissioner, which is a key election commitment of this Government and a critical way of improving the productivity of our primary producers. I again thank the member for Wagga Wagga for always having such a deep and sincere interest in agriculture in New South Wales. The Government will continue to keep the member up to date in relation to this important matter and his great question.

**STATE BUDGET**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:42):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General in his capacity representing the Minister for Finance. Will the Minister update the House on how budget management has changed in New South Wales?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** It's gotten better.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:43):** The member for Bankstown interjected on my way to the table and said, "It's gotten better." It could not have got any worse. The good member asked me to update the House on how budget management has changed in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Members of the Opposition frontbench will come to order. The member for Hornsby can go outside to chat.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Budget management begins with attitude, and there is a new attitude on this side of the House. This Government's approach will look something like this: The Minns Labor Government will be fiscally responsible, unlike those opposite. It will be truthful when it comes to budgetary matters, unlike those opposite. It will get debt under control, unlike those opposite. It will stop the waste and the blowouts, unlike those opposite. And unlike those opposite, this Government will end the rorts. It will get the budget back under control with no fudging of figures and no accounting tricks, unlike those opposite. It will be a good, old-fashioned, sensible government with the best interests of its citizens in mind. The Government has to concentrate on debt, and quickly. When those opposite came to office in 2011, debt was \$2.5 billion. By the time they left office, debt was \$129 billion.

**Mr Paul Scully:** That's \$100 billion more!

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** But he is right; it is \$100 billion more. Let me put that into a historical context. It is the largest debt that one government has passed onto another in the history of New South Wales. It is the largest debt by far.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Oatley is holding a conversation while walking around.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I know that the Leader of the Opposition likes to deny that there is a black hole. I have seen his powerful interventions on Twitter. Who could have missed them? There are 1,100 nurses unfunded, there is a \$700 million shortfall in funding for kids living in out-of-home care, there is no funding for Cyber Security NSW beyond 30 June 2024 and there is a \$196 million per year cut from TAFE, on top of a decade of neglect. Those opposite have almost destroyed TAFE; this Government will put it back together. I then get to the unfunded voucher programs, and it is more trickiness from those opposite. There is \$136 million per year for Active Kids unfunded.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** There is \$54 million per year for Creative Kids unfunded past 30 June. The regional students' travel card is estimated to cost \$48 million per year, with no provision across the forward estimates and with rules so loose it is possible to buy cigarettes with the funds. [*Extension of time*]

Opposition members like to say that they left the budget on track for a \$328 million surplus in the third year of the forward estimates, but the Leader of the Opposition has admitted that their budgets were as good as worthless. This is a doozy. On 16 June he told ABC's Sarah Macdonald:

A lot of these things are funded year by year. If you're going to fund things for four years, you wouldn't be having annual budgets.

What the hell does that mean? He also said:

Often, these decisions are made year by year, and we were going to make these decisions after the election.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will stop distracting the Attorney General.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** He cannot. His incredulity is on display for all the world to see. This is the clincher. The Leader of the Opposition said:

But we've left the budget returning to surplus in 2024-25.

No, they haven't. Those opposite have left nothing of the sort. I wish someone could move a 30-minute extension of time, because then I could start to talk about the cost blowouts on the Sydney Metro West, which is estimated to cost \$25 billion—an overrun of \$12 billion—and the full cost of building the Sydney Metro City & Southwest,

which has now overrun as well. I know the member for Blue Mountains would love for me to spend 30 minutes talking about rorts, because she was one of the people who uncovered that 96 per cent of bushfire recovery grants went to Coalition-held seats. What could change with the budget? All of that. There is a new, fresh, honest attitude.

#### POLICE TASER USE

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:48):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Before Mrs Nowland's family met the critical incident team, had the aged-care facility or the police already informed Mrs Nowland's family about the use of a taser?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga will remain silent.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:49):** I would like to share with the House some reports from others who have made comments on this—like, for instance, Chris O'Keefe. He said, "Are you disappointed with Mark Speakman, the New South Wales Opposition leader, who did say it was a cover-up?" Kevin Morton, from the Police Association—for those of you who do not know—replied, "Very much so. To be quite honest, do what you have to do in Parliament, but don't use my members as a political football." I have answered these questions repeatedly and publicly.

#### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:49):** I address my question to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how teacher workloads and administrative burdens are changing in New South Wales?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:50):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains for her question. As a former teacher herself, she knows why it is so important that a key priority of any government is making sure that teachers can do what they are trained to do and what they do best. I know that members on this side of the House agree that in front of a classroom is where we need our teachers. We need our teachers teaching our children, not tied up with excessive, endless amounts of paperwork and unnecessary admin.

It took 12 years for those opposite to come to the realisation that maybe teachers should actually be in front of our children teaching, as opposed to working under piles and piles of paper and through endless admin. That is one of the key reasons why we have a teacher shortage crisis in this State. Teachers are quitting in droves, in their thousands. They are burnt out. This is why we came to government: to undertake a line-by-line audit, amongst other things, of every single policy, procedure and piece of admin work that teachers are required to do. That work is underway. I can inform the House that we have uncovered that currently there are 200 separate policy documents for our teachers.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will cease having private conversations. The Nationals Whip was speaking, but most of the noise is coming from Government members. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Oatley will come to order. He is one of the chief protagonists today. All members will stay calm and listen to the Deputy Premier's answer. This is a serious matter.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It is indeed a serious matter. The reason why my colleagues are so exercised about it is that it is one of our key commitments to deliver for the teachers of New South Wales. We uncovered 200 separate policy documents. I inform the House that we have already found out that 78 of those lengthy documents can be cut down, consolidated or scrapped completely. This is absolutely necessary. In doing this very detailed, methodical work, we are going to remove duplication as much as possible. That is easy for us to do as a system. We have dug up the fact that under the Liberal-Nationals Government's mismanagement of the system—take TAFE as an example—the number of resources regarding work health and safety for our teachers, which of course is an important area, is 750. This is an important area, do not get me wrong, but surely we can consolidate and simplify that so our teachers can do their job. [*Extension of time*]

We will go out to everyone to seek input into this process. That consultation is underway. Unlike those opposite when they were in government, we actually listen to the people in the classrooms. Their feedback is crucial. Our aim is to roll out the simplified policies and procedures at the beginning, from day one, term 1 in 2024. We want to make sure that there is minimal disruption for teachers as much as possible. I inform the House of the former Government's claim that it cut admin workloads by 20 per cent. That is news to teachers. We are busy trying to find where that 20 per cent is. We are still looking for it. We would have better luck tracking down certain members of the Hills branch of the Liberal Party.

[*Government members interjected.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will refrain from inciting her own team. That will help me to manage the House.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I am happy to help in any way. We are here to help, in fact. I have to say, those opposite claimed also that they saved our teachers less than one hour a week—well done, guys. Less than one hour a week—that is really going to stem the tide of thousands and thousands of teachers leaving our system. What we have seen change under this Government already is that we are listening to the people who are delivering our world-class education to our children. We are getting rid of administrative paperwork. We are making teachers permanent, not just temporary.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** At the expense of all the other casuals! The other casuals can't be employed because you've made them permanent.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We need casual teachers in our system, for God's sake, but we will listen to teachers to ensure that we can improve the system. [*Time expired.*]

#### POLICE TASER USE

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:56):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In question time on 23 May, when asked about the tragic incident concerning Mrs Clare Nowland, she said:

I let the Premier's office know the same day that I found out about this.

Did the Minister tell the Premier's office about the use of a taser and what the police were going to tell the public about it?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. The Minister will be allowed to answer the question.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (12:56):** Again, I have answered these questions repeatedly and publicly.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** But I can certainly advise the House of what Kevin Morton went on to say. He said, "Well, I'll tell you now, I would have expected better from the two people that I thought should have known better"—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** —"considering that I was briefed over three months ago."

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order. The Minister will come to order and resume her seat.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. These standing orders were changed in the last Parliament, with the support of the crossbench, to get answers that were directly relevant, not tangential. It is an affront to this House and it makes a mockery of question time if this Minister will not answer a simple question about communications with the Premier. It is not about what the Police Association had to say.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I have answered it several times.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The question was will she tell us what she told the Premier's office?

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the standing order. I am inclined to uphold the point of order, but I will not be lectured to by anybody about direct relevance. It is for me to determine what is directly relevant. Unfortunately for my purposes, there is some subjectivity to that. It is difficult, as Opposition members will remember from their time in government. In this case, the Minister moved quite substantially from direct relevance in her opening remarks. I ask the Minister to assist the Chair by trying to be directly relevant to the question.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I will assist the Chair, and I will tell you what Mark Speakman said to Sky on 22 June, "Well, of course the police Minister is not responsible for day-to-day activities in police, so she is not responsible for whatever happened in Cooma. She is not responsible for an additional response. They are operational matters for the police." Those were your words.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House rises on a point of order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. It will cease. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** It is not appropriate for the member for Wahroonga to yell imputations across the House.

**Mr Ray Williams:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What is the point of order?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. Personal reflections and imputations against members are not permitted—and they are not permitted in the form of interjections or the member for Wahroonga yelling across the House at the police Minister or the Premier. Mr Speaker, I ask that you call the member for Wahroonga to order.

**The SPEAKER:** I will do so once more. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. Members will come to order. The level of interjection and general discussion in the House is causing disorder and will cease. For the benefit of the member for Kellyville, there is no requirement for a member to cite the relevant standing order when taking a point of order. Members may take a point of order, but they do not have to provide the standing order.

**Mr Mark Coure:** We're going to check it out.

**The SPEAKER:** Good on you. The member for Oatley may leave the Chamber and do that now if he likes. I call the member for Cabramatta. Government members will settle down and listen to the member in silence.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (13:01):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on how community access to essential services is changing in New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:01):** What a terrific question from the member for Cabramatta. I congratulate him on his inaugural speech. It was a fantastic speech outlining his challenges and how proud he is to be a fantastic advocate for his community. I acknowledge my sister and my two nieces, Lottie and Tallis, from America, and, of course, my mum. She is one of the frequent subscribers to this channel.

**Mr Paul Scully:** A great constituent!

**Mr RYAN PARK:** She is a great constituent of the member's electorate. There is a real sense of difference amongst healthcare workers, families and communities around this Government's change and its focus over the past nearly 100 days when it comes to health care. I outline a few distinct changes that have happened. I say this in light of the fact that we inherited a level of debt the likes of which no other government has experienced. I am administering the part of government with the largest expenditure, which puts a real strain and focus on us and presents a real challenge, but we are up to it and we are already starting to deliver with the men and women across the NSW Health workforce.

Let us talk about elective surgery. When we took government, around 100,000 people were on the elective surgery waiting list. Around 17,000 of those had been waiting beyond clinically recommended time frames. On our first day in office, the Premier and I announced a high-powered Surgical Care Taskforce made up of some of the best surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied healthcare workers across the State, all focused on driving down elective surgery numbers. To date, that number of 17,000 has gone down to 11,000. In the space of a few months, we have dropped the number of people waiting longer than clinically recommended time frames. We are continuing to have a laser-like focus on driving improvements to wait times across emergency departments. I acknowledge all of the emergency departments that I have visited during the weekly unannounced visits that I have undertaken. It has been incredibly enjoyable and informative to me as the Minister, and it has helped us to drive unprecedented change in emergency departments. [*Extension of time*]

We have expanded the virtualKIDS Urgent Care Service. We have expanded the inTouch service in Western Sydney. We have opened an urgent care service in Long Jetty and expanded the opening hours of the Bulli Urgent Care Centre—something that the member for Heathcote and the member for The Entrance were strong advocates for and are very proud of. What has been the result? To date, these virtual pathway initiatives have resulted in a reduction in emergency department presentations of 120 people per day. That makes a difference. In terms of the workforce, we have smashed the wages cap, because we know we cannot afford to lose

workers to our north and to our south. We have to make sure that we are recruiting as fast as we can. That is why we are proud to be rolling out 500 additional paramedics for the bush. That is something that the Health Services Union has been a terrific advocate for.

We are rolling out safe staffing levels across our hospitals. We are providing 1,200 additional nurses and midwives right across New South Wales and changing the way that we will be staffing those. But what we are not doing is making them temporary. We will not do what the member for Hornsby did, which was to make them temporary. We will not do that, because the men and women on this side of the House and those on the crossbench understand the importance of making sure that our frontline workers are first, second and third when it comes to the priorities of this Government. What we know is this: Building more bricks and mortar does not deliver health care. The men and women of NSW Health are the ones in our hospitals and healthcare services who deliver for our communities every single day.

#### MINISTER FOR FINANCE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:06):** My question is directed to the Premier. In question time on 21 June, the Premier referred to a "detailed and comprehensive plan to manage a conflict of interest" for the Minister for Finance, which included "ensuring that any members' meetings she attends with the Insurance Council of Australia or its representatives are also attended by a senior public servant". Did the Minister for Finance comply with that plan when, on 8 June, she attended the Insurance Council of Australia's annual dinner, sat next to the CEO, but had no senior public servant with her?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:07):** I notice that the member excluded from the question a crucial bit of information, and that is that the Minister sat next to her husband at the dinner. Call in ICAC! I mean, they do not have enough on their plate. At the end of the day, in the question today and in the previous week's question, there has been no allegation levied against the Minister. To put it into perspective, the insurance regulations that the Minister is responsible for are completely independent of government. Is there any suggestion from anyone on the Opposition benches that, at any point, the Minister has intervened in a decision or approached the commissioner in relation to a particular decision? Or is there even any quibble with the code of conduct changes and the management of a conflict of interest that the Minister is responsible for? In fact, the member's question today and the preceding question last week both go to a simple but, I think, damaging and cynical allegation that the Minister asked for this portfolio because her husband worked in the insurance industry. But no information has ever been provided as to that.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: It is a really simple question and the Premier has not gone anywhere near it. Did the finance Minister comply with the plan or not?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will be more directly relevant to the question.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga does not set the terms of the answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am not going to call the police because the Minister went to an insurance dinner and sat next to her husband. I am not going to do that. But it is curious that the person leading this so-called exposé is the shadow Treasurer, who himself had a direct pecuniary conflict of interest in the previous Government. Members will remember that he was involved in the decision-making in relation to toll roads in New South Wales and he had toll road shares at the same time. The question for the Leader of the Opposition is whether there is anything else that the shadow Treasurer had a conflict of interest in. Is there more information to be provided to the House? There may well be.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. In that particular case that the Premier is referring to, the Minister stood down. Is the finance Minister going to stand down?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is really funny. This is what the shadow Treasurer said at the time:

I value my own integrity and the integrity of the Government ... something that is not the subject of repeated political attacks.

However, he resigned before we even knew that he had a conflict of interest. At the end of the day, what did the Leader of the Opposition do with someone who had a direct pecuniary conflict of interest in the previous Government? He promoted him. That tells you everything you need to know about the New South Wales Opposition.



**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order—

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

### FERRY SERVICES

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (13:11):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how ferry services are changing in New South Wales and how that compares with the record of the former Government?

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling the Minister, I advise members—particularly Government members, because they are more prone to do it—that I will not accept two-part questions. In seeking reflections on policies, the question from the member for Parramatta has two parts. It must be explicitly one question. However, in this case I will allow it.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (13:12):** I thank the member for Parramatta. It was such a great morning to join the member for Parramatta and the Premier on a short trip on a RiverCat ferry on the Parramatta River just yesterday. Those RiverCat ferries were purpose built for the Parramatta River in 1992. They were manufactured in Cairns. They have served the passengers of Sydney well, but they are nearing the end of their operational life. We are pleased to announce that the New South Wales Government has awarded a contract for seven new ferries to replace the RiverCats and that the new fleet of ferries for the Parramatta River will be Australian made and Australian designed.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We are delivering on a key election commitment within our first 100 days to build the ferries that we need in Australia. We have awarded the contract to build those new ferries to Richardson Devine Marine, which is headquartered in Hobart.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It is one of Australia's most respected shipbuilders. It is an expert in building aluminium catamarans. In fact, a number of its vessels are in operation on Sydney Harbour right now and operated by Captain Cook Cruises. Northern beaches naval architectural firm Incat Crowther has designed those new ferries. The new vessels will meet modern accessibility standards and have better passenger information. Importantly, they will use 40 per cent less diesel than the RiverCats and they will also be futureproofed to convert to hybrid or full electric propulsion in the future. We know that, when we build things in Australia, they are built to last and to be reliable. That is why it is just the start of our Government's commitment to building things here.

I was asked about the approach of others. I appreciate that it was the second part of the question, but I inform the House about what members opposite did when they were in government. The new Parramatta Class ferries will be the sister fleet to the 10 overseas-built River Class ferries that were purchased by the former Government. We have made over 60 changes between the design of the two fleets to not only reflect the crew feedback but also learn from the lessons of the former Government. We on this side of the House understand that you need to work with the operators and the crew through the design stage, manufacturing, testing and operation to get the best possible ferry for passengers and to get good value for the taxpayers of New South Wales. That is the first fundamental difference. We can actually manage and control the delivery of those ferries without the need to travel overseas. Of course, by building the ferries here, we know what we will get.

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

**Ms Donna Davis:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant an extension of two minutes. Members who continue to interject will be placed on calls to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** By building the ferries here we know that they will not come full of asbestos, unlike the ferries ordered by those opposite. We know that the ferries will not come riddled with defects and will not be full of electrical faults, or regularly stall, unlike those that were ordered by those opposite from overseas. We also know we will be able to operate them at night—how amazing! We will not have to take off every windscreen and replace them, unlike the ferries that those opposite ordered from overseas. But my favourite thing about the new Australian-built ferries is that we have learnt from the mistakes of those opposite.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That is very important. We have learnt the lesson of measuring twice and cutting once. The new Australian-built ferries will actually fit under all the bridges on the Parramatta River. That is amazing. I inform members of what those opposite have said about our commitment to build the new ferries in Australia.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The shadow Minister went on ABC radio yesterday afternoon. She was interviewed by Richard Glover. He asked the shadow Minister, "Well, it's Hobart, right? Well, it's Australia." And the shadow Minister replied, "You know, you can effectively say that's overseas built." That might come as a shock to the people of Tasmania.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It might also come as a shock to the Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff, the most senior member of the Australian Liberal Party that the Hon. Natalie Ward decided to unilaterally excise Tasmania from the Federation. Perhaps this is all part of the shadow Minister's yet unsuccessful plan to become the most senior Liberal in the New South Wales Liberal Party. We will have to wait and see. Meanwhile, we will get on with delivering reliable passenger services for the people of New South Wales.

### PROTEST LIVESTREAMING

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:18):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given human rights and civil liberties advocates like Digital Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch and the Council for Civil Liberties have all warned that Labor's plan to team up with Meta to block protest livestreams would further suppress the right to protest in this State, will he heed the experts' concerns and abandon the plan to silence dissent and further crack down on the freedom of expression and peaceful protest in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:18):** No, I will not. It is important that we put in context the reasons why. Those are, at the end of the day, illegal activities. Whether they are for political purposes or otherwise, they are more often than not extremely dangerous. Given Meta and other social media companies in New South Wales block content like copyrighted information, media and social media have every right to block the livestreaming of illegal activities. We have to be really careful about what is being broadcast, particularly considering it is illegal. I do not deny and I do not want to be in a position where the Government does not acknowledge the passion of protesters, or their right to peaceful assembly, or their right to freedom of expression or to protest. But I have a genuine fear—one that must be acknowledged—that they will kill either themselves or someone who is sent in to rescue them. The circumstances around that are serious, and I will explain why.

A 32-year-old person is alleged to have blocked three lanes with a truck on the Harbour Bridge during morning peak-hour traffic on 13 April 2022. An 18-year-old woman is alleged to have scaled a coal loader and glued herself to the railing. A 22-year-old Queensland woman was detected at 7.15 a.m. on Monday 19 June suspended over the freight line at Kariong. Emergency services were called to Rose Point Road in Singleton because there were reports that two people had climbed on top of a train carriage at Singleton railway station. It is a genuine fear that either the people who are conducting these protests, or the New South Wales police, paramedics or ambulance who are sent in to rescue them, may lose their lives in these protests. Given social media companies routinely and regularly take information offline, whether it is illegal or not, I believe it is appropriate in the circumstances. I do not want to see someone killed as a result of these protests.

### WORKERS COMPENSATION

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:20):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister update the House on how the workers compensation system has changed in New South Wales?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:20):** I thank the hardworking member for Prospect for his question and also his interest in this very important public policy matter. I acknowledge the member's support and very loud advocacy in relation to injured workers and I thank him for that work. During our first week in government, I was presented with a choice. That choice was to increase average premiums by 20 per cent or let the State's workplace injury system slide towards financial disaster. Of all the burdens left by the previous Government, this must be one of the harshest for injured workers and small businesses.

Incoming briefs say that the primary driver of these premium increases is inadequate rates put in place between 2014 and 2021. Who was in power then? Last year, the former Government was told that if it did not increase premiums by 15 per cent and do a whole lot of other work, ever higher increases would be required in future years. Were they transparent about this leading into the election? Did they tell the people of New South Wales? What this means is that the Nominal Insurer is so seriously run-down that it will not regain financial sustainability without significant premium increases. That is the reality.

We have had to make some very hard choices. I had to step in to stop small businesses from being hit with an average 20 per cent premium increase, a situation that was left by those opposite. It would have put an enormous burden on businesses, yet that was the plan of those opposite. The 8 per cent average premium increase will still be incredibly tough for small businesses, especially those mum-and-dad small businesses. It is really tough. I was in Lakemba and Earlwood on the weekend, and they are doing it really tough. The truth is that there are no easy answers to the problems that we have inherited. It will take years to fix a decade of decline in the New South Wales workers compensation system and support those injured workers. But the reform has started and I have made it clear that the new Government has different expectations. We have high expectations, and I have asked icare to take immediate steps to reduce the cost. [*Extension of time*]

Part of the problem is that the former Government never set strong expectations from the top. A few weeks ago, the Treasurer had to approve a \$669 million transfer to the Treasury Managed Fund—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** A bailout.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** A bailout to meet the scheme's benchmarked ratio of assets to liabilities. When did the issue first arise? The analysis was completed on 31 December 2022. Who in the former Government informed the public? They knew that whoever formed government would inherit a \$669 million bill. I will tell you what the former Government allowed.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** It allowed the awarding of an \$18 million contract to a Liberal Party donor and printer, using \$700,000 of small business premiums. Small businesses are working so hard, but those opposite did not care about small businesses' premiums and how they were managed. There was a bloke—a Republican guy—who was being paid \$700,000 by icare. A \$140 million IT contract was awarded after a seven-day tender. That is what was allowed. But that is changing under the Minns Labor Government. Change has come. Governance will come—accountability, transparency, looking after injured workers, injured workers at the centre of care, looking after small businesses, and working with small businesses to help them and to help injured workers.

**The SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

#### *Documents*

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 132 (3) of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Denali: Report Pursuant to Section 132 Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016*, dated June 2023, received this day. I order that the report be printed.

### **AUDITOR-GENERAL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 38EC of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *State heritage assets*, dated 27 June 2023, received this day and authorised to be printed.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following ePetition signed by 500 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

#### **Bungendore High School**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to cease construction plans for a high school on and around Bungendore Park and initiate planning for a better school on a more suitable site, received from **Mr Steve Whan**.

### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a paper petition signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Ryan Park—Wagga Wagga and Griffith Cancer Treatment Centres—lodged 23 May 2023  
(Dr Joe McGirr)

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

*Bills*

**CRIMINAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (KNIFE CRIMES) BILL 2023**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 20 June 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:32):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The Opposition will not oppose the bill but does have a few things to say about it. The flip side of making guns more difficult to obtain, which is something we all agree to be desirable from the point of view of criminal law, is that knives and other weapons come into play. That is why in 2022 the Coalition, via the then Attorney General, sent laws about penalties with regard to firearms, knives and other weapons to the NSW Sentencing Council for review. The review has not yet been reported, as far as the Opposition understands. So although the Attorney General says that this bill does not undermine that process of independent review, it is directly within the terms of reference of the review, which was done last year with the support of Labor.

It is undesirable as a matter of process to bring forward legislation about matters that have been reviewed, before that review has come back and been reported. The best criminal laws are formulated by seeing out a process, which the Labor Party supported and allowed to continue when it was in opposition. I say with the greatest of respect that premature legislation within the purview of that review has the effect of undermining it. We know the Government loves reviews—it has sent everything but the kitchen sink to a review. So it is curious that this legislation is being brought before the Parliament before the review has been reported and considered by the Government. I hope that is not an indication of things to come, that proper processes will be followed when an independent review is sought and that the motivation of bringing the bill forward is not to fill some legislative void of the Parliament. That would be unfortunate.

A good example of what I am talking about is that new sections 93IB and 93IC, which would come into the Crimes Act, have their antecedents in sections 11C and 11E of the Summary Offences Act 1988. It is significant that sections 11C and 11E of the Summary Offences Act are part of a suite of measures that includes sections 11D and 11F of the Summary Offences Act. Section 11D deals with penalties for parents who allow children to carry knives, and section 11F deals with penalties for adults who sell knives to children under the age of 16. One would have thought that, if the Government were serious about dealing with knife crime, the penalties and provisions with regard to those matters would be brought into the Crimes Act and dealt with in a comprehensive fashion. I am concerned that the reason why they have not been brought into the Crimes Act in a comprehensive fashion is that the review by the Sentencing Council has not come back. Those are the sorts of matters that would have been dealt with in that review. Certainly, that is an important matter.

Another matter that I have discussed with the Attorney-General—I appreciate the collaboration and the constructive feedback we have been able to provide on this issue—is an anomaly. In the current drafting, new section 93IB, which is about the custody matter, which should be the lesser offence, actually has a higher maximum penalty than new section 93IC, which is about the use or carrying of knives in a public place in a way that would cause a reasonable person to reasonably fear for their safety. The reason for that is that in new section 93IB, the maximum penalty is four years' imprisonment, 40 penalty units or both—therefore, a maximum of four years' imprisonment, plus a penalty of 40 penalty units—whereas the maximum penalty under new section 93IC is 100 penalty units or imprisonment for four years. You cannot put them both together. So the maximum penalty would be four years' imprisonment.

I understand that the Attorney-General will do something about that, but the point is that it feels that the bill has been rushed and that, if the review had come back and dealt with the totality of the Summary Offences Act provisions, sections 11C to 11F inclusive, within the bill, then that may well be a much better way to consider this general territory. The Opposition supports it as being an important area of public policy, but we are keen to get the criminal laws of this State to be in as good shape as we can.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics suggest on one view of them that knife crime has been decreasing but, of course, it is a very serious matter. The Opposition is not cavilling with the intent to try to deter any of that crime, but it is critical that we measure the impact of doubling penalties through this bill on the occurrence of crime. In coming years we will look at that to see whether it is an appropriate legislative measure, but the Opposition certainly will not step in its way. It is too serious an area to be taking risks, so the Opposition

will not oppose this legislation. We should also note that many of these offences in likelihood will be charged summarily and dealt with in the Local Court, which has a maximum jurisdictional limit of two years' imprisonment, which is half of the maximum that will be introduced by this bill.

Unless the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions elect to proceed by indictment in the District Court, which would occur only in the most serious cases, the maximum penalty that will be able to be levied on an individual will be two years' imprisonment if the offence is dealt with in the Local Court, which is probably the most likely course. But having said that, by lifting the maximum penalty, the sentencing magistrates will be required, in accordance with Markarian's case—in which case the High Court spoke about instinctive synthesis sentencing—to take into account the maximum. By increasing the maximum penalty, the same offence with the same seriousness as a consequence should have an increased sentence by reason of this bill being passed by Parliament and increasing the sentences. Those are the observations that I offer as shadow Attorney General on behalf of the Opposition, but I indicate that the Opposition will not oppose the legislation.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (14:41):** I speak in support of the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. I note the presence in the Chamber of the Attorney General. I thank him for bringing this legislation to the House. The bill amends the Crimes Act 1900 to transfer and modernise the offences of having custody of a knife in a public place or school and wielding of a knife in a public place or a school from the Summary Offences Act 1988. It also doubles the current maximum penalties for these offences. The Government is sending a strong message that knife-related crimes are not tolerated in New South Wales. As the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, I know all too well that knife-related violence can lead to the loss of life, severe injury and trauma for the victims, their families and, of course, the broader community. This bill will support our police to continue getting knives off our streets and keeping our communities safe. It builds on the outstanding results of Operation Foil, which last month resulted in the police charging 172 people with 565 offences and seizing a whopping 294 knives.

I now move to the contents of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill will double the maximum penalties available for the offences of having custody of a knife in a public place or school and wielding a knife in a public place or a school. Specifically, the maximum term of imprisonment for those offences will double from two years to four years. The maximum fines will also double. That means that if a person is caught in possession of a knife, they can be fined up to \$4,400, or 40 penalty units. If they are caught wielding a knife, they can be fined up to \$11,000, or 100 penalty units. The offences are currently contained in section 11C and section 11E of the Summary Offences Act 1988. They will be moved to the Crimes Act 1900, recognising that they are now indictable offences rather than summary offences, which are more minor. Other than the changes to penalties, the structure, definitions and defences for those offences will remain largely the same. In response to the recent spate of knife-related crimes in New South Wales and the high rates of reoffending for people convicted of knife possession, this Government is taking swift action to deter people from possessing or using knives in public.

I turn to schedule 2 to the bill, which makes consequential changes to other legislation. It amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to enable these knife-related offences to be tried summarily in the Local Court, unless the prosecution or defence elects otherwise. This is consistent with other indictable offences with similar maximum penalties and promotes the efficiency and allocation of court processes. Schedule 2 also repeals the current offences under the Summary Offences Act 1988 to avoid duplication of offences across various Acts of Parliament. This bill will commence on proclamation so that the new offence for custody of a knife can be inserted into schedule 4 to the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 as a penalty notice offence. This means police officers will have the discretion to issue a penalty infringement notice instead of requiring a person to attend court. This discretion will be available only for someone's first knife-related offence because issuing a penalty notice to someone with previous offences would not reflect the seriousness of their continued behaviour.

Penalty infringement notices are an important and immediate deterrent that police can use to divert offenders away from the courts when appropriate. Under this bill, there will still be options to divert children and young people who commit these offences away from the justice system. Children and young people will still be eligible to receive a caution or referral to a youth justice conference but not warnings, which are available only for summary offences. This strikes the right balance between protecting the people of New South Wales, ensuring that the reforms do not disproportionately impact certain cohorts and efficiently allocating resources in our criminal justice system. In conclusion, the bill sends a strong message that people who carry or wield knives without lawful excuse will be subject to tough penalties—double what they are now. This Government is taking important steps to prevent any more tragic events involving knives that we have seen in New South Wales in recent times. We are supporting the fantastic work being done by our dedicated police officers to target knife-related crime and violent offenders, such as through Operation Foil. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (14:47):** I join in debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023, which I note the Opposition will not oppose. The bill will double the penalty for the offences

of possession of a knife in a public place or school and for wielding a knife in a public place or school. The bill will increase the maximum term of imprisonment for these offences from two years to four years. The maximum fine for possession of a knife will increase from 20 penalty units to 40 penalty units, or \$4,400, and for wielding a knife from 50 penalty units to 100 penalty units, or \$11,000. As these offences will no longer be summary offences, they will be moved from the Summary Offences Act to the Crimes Act.

These reforms recognise the significant risk that is posed by the possession and use of knives by individuals in public places. It also acknowledges the high rates of recidivism for people convicted of knife possession and the risk of harm to the community posed by knife crime. We agree with the Government's position: We want people to leave knives at home, to stop carrying them and to stop using them. People should be able to go to community events, send their kids to school, go to the movies, a concert or the park and feel safe. They should be able to go out at night and not worry about whether one of the youths surrounding them is carrying a knife or whether they might break out into a knife fight at any time.

There has been considerable community concern and media coverage of a number of high-profile events involving the use of knives that have led to tragic outcomes or serious injuries for those involved. The footage of such matters in the media and even on social media has been disturbing, distressing and heartbreaking for the victims and their families and loved ones. People in public places should not be exposed to this kind of behaviour, and a strong message of deterrence must be sent. Police intelligence reveals that, increasingly, some young people are carrying sharp instruments for self-defence. But young people do not fully understand the potentially fatal consequences this can have. When someone has a dangerous weapon in their possession, there is a much greater likelihood of a small-scale incident escalating into a fatal one.

I am thankful for the work of the NSW Police Force in protecting our communities. Police are doing all they can to keep knives out of the hands of offenders. Last month, 294 knives were seized as part of the recent Operation Foil. That means 7,761 knives have been seized by police in the past two years. Operation Foil was conducted to target young people carrying knives in public, as well as other known violent offenders. Police also issued thousands of move-on orders and transport infringements during the operation. Governments need to be absolutely committed to taking all necessary steps to reduce knife-related crime. Members know how important it is that we accomplish this. Despite the efforts of police, there have still been stabbing incidents that have unfortunately resulted in death. That is completely unacceptable to me, and should be completely unacceptable to every member of the House.

Everyone deserves to feel safe on our streets, and those who threaten that safety will face greater consequences. Knife crime can change someone's life in an instant, whether by causing injury or death to innocent people, or, for offenders, by ending up before the courts. The officers involved in Operation Foil have done an incredible job to keep us all safe by engaging with the community and helping prevent knife-related crimes. Operations like this make a real difference to our community, and the New South Wales Government and the Opposition will continue to work closely with police on the best ways to prevent knife and youth-related crime and violence.

Not only do police use intel to identify people involved in youth crime, they also engage with young people who are deemed at risk of committing violent crime. Members will remember the awful stabbing of a teenager at the Sydney Royal Easter Show in April last year. Police arrested three teenagers: a 14-year-old and two 18-year-olds. All three have been charged with murder. This was a shockingly violent incident that played out publicly at one of Sydney's most popular family events. Everyone deserves to feel safe and the Opposition will continue to send a very clear message that this kind of violent behaviour will not be tolerated.

Increased penalties for knife crime can be seen as a deterrent. Increased penalties may deter individuals from carrying and using knives. When the consequences are more severe, potential offenders may think twice before engaging in such criminal activities. This behaviour should not be tolerated; it is unacceptable. Knife crime can have serious consequences, including injuries and loss of life. By imposing stricter penalties, the legal system can provide law enforcement agencies with stronger tools to tackle knife crime. Higher penalties can assist in investigations, prosecutions and convictions, thereby strengthening the criminal justice response to these offences.

I know magistrates will be given this power, but I hope that they will also have the option to send repeat offenders to jail. Repeat offenders should not just receive a little slap on the wrist. Additionally, it is important to consider that addressing the issue of knife crime requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention strategies, education, community engagement and addressing the underlying social factors, which are crucial components in reducing knife-related incidents. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (14:53):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The bill is very important, and those who have carriage of agencies that

see the end results of knife crime—including frontline healthcare workers—would no doubt be supportive of anything that seeks to reduce knife crime in New South Wales. I commend the Attorney General for his work in this area. I have known the member for Maroubra for a very long time, and this State is lucky to have him as its Attorney General and first law officer. I know he is passionate about making sure that our communities are as safe as possible, working in partnership with the police Minister—another fine Minister who is working very hard to ensure that our streets and our communities are as safe as possible.

The object of the bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 and create the offences of, first, having custody of a knife in a public place or a school—that is pretty clear—and, second, using or visibly carrying a knife in a public place or a school. The offences are currently in the Summary Offences Act 1988 and are being transferred to the Crimes Act 1900 with increased maximum penalties. That is very important. Schedule 1 to the bill, the amendment of the Crimes Act gives effect to the object described in the above overview by including in the Crimes Act 1900, offences of having custody of a knife in a public place or a school and of using or visibly carrying a knife in a public place or a school.

These are similar to the offences currently found in the Summary Offences Act 1988, sections 11C and 11E. The proposed offences have double the maximum penalty of the existing offences. The bill will double the penalties for these offences. That is very important. Obviously I will not go into cases that are still before the court because that would be inappropriate, but members are all aware of—have read, been close to, understood, witnessed—terrible incidents of knife crime in our communities. As policymakers and lawmakers, members must keep in front of these issues and ensure that we are doing everything possible to keep our community safe.

No piece of legislation that we pass will prevent every occurrence of a particular offence or issue. As policymakers and lawmakers, we understand that. But we must look at trends in behaviour. Certainly, we are seeing an increase in the prevalence of knife-carrying behaviour. Speaking loosely, that type of behaviour is starting to be normalised. We do not want that to happen. We do not want it to be normal for young people, especially, to feel as though it is appropriate or okay to carry knives out in the community. It is simply not okay. With this legislation—and it is very clear in the bill—we are sending the message that we have a responsibility to get on top of the problem.

I have spoken to many healthcare workers over a number of years—particularly in the past few months, as Minister for Health—and I know that this type of crime can have a devastating impact on a person's wellbeing and life. The injuries can be lifelong and permanent. Members all know of tragic incidents when this has happened. Healthcare workers are at the other end of this criminal behaviour, trying to patch together—repair, care for and treat—a person who has come into an emergency department, most likely in the back of an ambulance with a paramedic, with very severe wounds that are life threatening. Knife-related wounds, by their nature, can be fatal very quickly. We rely on our healthcare workers to try to put people back together and to deliver the dignity of care. As policymakers, we must front-end the issue as best we can and try to intervene before a person ends up in the emergency department as another victim of this senseless crime.

I note that the Opposition will support the bill, and I thank Opposition members for that. This is sensible legislation that will accomplish what we should do as policymakers and lawmakers, which is to reflect as closely as possible the sentiment of the community. I think the vast majority of community members would be supportive of their Parliament and legislators taking responsible and measured action in trying to reduce the number of people who are using knives as weapons. I particularly thank the Attorney for his work in this area. It is an important piece of legislation. The shadow Attorney General wants to see what the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] is going to do in relation to how the legislation will be reported on, evaluated and measured, and that is completely appropriate. BOCSAR does a fantastic job and is independent of government, as it should be—just like the Bureau of Health Information is, as it should be.

It provides real data sets and insights into trends of criminal behaviour and criminality across New South Wales. We want to see a downward trend. The member for Bathurst spoke about the awful incident at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. We must ensure that we are doing everything in our power as legislators to reduce the occurrence of that type of behaviour. We will never stop it completely. I do not think any of us would be so brash as to come in here and say that a piece of legislation is going to stop all criminal activity; that is certainly not the case. As parliamentarians and lawmakers, we need to make sure that we keep pace with changes in criminal behaviour and activity and send a message to those who think it is normal behaviour to carry knives in public places. It simply is not. We need to send a message to those people and their peers that this behaviour will be looked upon and punished severely and swiftly. We all want that.

Those of us with young children probably understand and are more concerned about this than most, because we are seeing more of a prevalence and normalisation of this behaviour in our young people. We must ensure that we do everything possible to address that in the roles that we have been privileged enough to be given as legislators—that is, to make sure the legislation is reflective of those concerns. This legislation does that. I thank

the Attorney General for his ongoing work in this area. I thank the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism for her ongoing work and the way in which those two offices have worked together. Traditionally, those roles have not always worked well together in former governments of all persuasions. They are working together to address community safety and concerns in this space. I congratulate them on that, and I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:02):** I contribute on behalf of The Greens to debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The Greens are in furious agreement with Labor in wanting to see a reduction in knife crime; however, we see differently on the means to achieving that end. It was interesting to hear a National Party member talk about education, resourcing and all of those preventative measures as a footnote. Anyone who is in the business of analysing law and crime knows that there is a raft of measures that contribute to the prevention of crime. Strong penalties and jail time are not the standouts when it comes to crime prevention.

I acknowledge the family of Steven Tougher and his tragic death on 14 April this year. It was absolutely horrendous. I acknowledge all paramedics across the State. The person who committed that crime had been released from a mental health facility one day after saying he would kill somebody. The Greens struggle to see the line between that incident and tougher jail penalties. It is a tale of mental health support and mental health resourcing. The Greens did not jump to increasing penalties and taking the offence of wielding a knife in a public place or school from the Summary Offences Act 1988. However, we are also in the company of the Law Society of New South Wales, which has expressed its opposition to an increase to knife-crime penalties in its submission to the NSW Sentencing Council, indicating that it does not appear necessary.

Legal practitioners, including barrister Felicity Graham, have expressed concern about the increase due to the low rates of knife crime in New South Wales. Sentencing data more broadly shows that, of almost 6,000 cases dealt with in the past three years, only a handful received a penalty near the two-year maximum, so they would not be caught up by this. By far most offenders were dealt with by a fine, and those were mostly nowhere near the maximum fine. Felicity Graham suggests that there is no principled justification for the increase. The Australian Paramedics Association (NSW) has long called for access for paramedics to safe places to take breaks such as rooms adjacent to hospitals, so that they do not have to take breaks in public places. No-one is suggesting that a paramedic who is going into a McDonald's is asking for trouble; however, in the context, we would be remiss not to be looking at what the Australian Paramedics Association (NSW) is calling for in its response to this tragic incident.

The bill is a response to the death of Steven Tougher, but The Greens think that it is a reactionary law rather than an evidence-based law. The new Government, in our view, is looking for a way to pass legislation that is a quick fix without addressing the issues that caused the tragic event to occur. The consultation on the bill was done without the necessary expertise. The previous Government referred sentencing law for firearms, knives and other weapons offences to the NSW Sentencing Council in November last year, which is yet to make a determination. The former Attorney General has indicated that sentencing patterns for knife crimes in New South Wales are moderate compared to other jurisdictions. I am not talking down the horror of someone wielding a knife and causing injury; however, The Greens think it is important to note that the report from the NSW Sentencing Council has not come out. It would have been good to have waited for that to see the actual evidence.

Knife crime in New South Wales is at a 20-year low in absolute numbers, not adjusted for population. This legislation is creating a problem where a problem does not exist. It will serve to increase our prison population and has the potential to disproportionately affect young people by bringing them into contact with the criminal justice system unnecessarily. The Greens oppose the bill because we speak to the need for evidence-based lawmaking and for investment in services that prevent tragic events like this from occurring instead of reverting to a kneejerk legal response. We get why this bill has been introduced, but people who analyse sentencing patterns and recidivism will say that it is only one part of a bigger puzzle. The Greens would like to see the Labor Government move more broadly to truly prevent crime.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:07):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The bill will double the penalty for the offences of possessing a knife in a public place or school and wielding a knife in a public place or school. As the Attorney General outlined when he introduced the bill, the reforms in the bill seek to reduce the risks posed by the possession and use of knives in public places and schools across the State. For offences relating to knife crime, the bill doubles the maximum imprisonment from two years to four years. The maximum fine for possessing a knife will also double to \$4,400, while the penalty for wielding a knife will jump to a maximum fine of \$11,000. As a result of the reforms in the bill, New South Wales will have the largest maximum penalties for knife offences in the country. The bill ensures that the Government is taking real action in response to serious knife-related incidents that have occurred across New South Wales.



The reforms undertaken by the Government reflect the fact that knife offences can have significant and everlasting consequences for victims and their families. Unfortunately, knives can be and have been used to devastating effect in communities across the State. As the Attorney General pointed out, perpetrators of knife crime have very high rates of recidivism, increasing the risks to the community of knife crimes in the future. Deliberate acts of knife-related violence against members of the public are unacceptable. Knife-related violence can lead to tragedy and unacceptable harm to members of the community and their families. It is critical that the penalties for the harm caused by knife-related offences meet community expectations. As the Attorney General explained, the Government does not feel that the current maximum penalties for the use of a knife in a public place are sufficient, and as a result is doubling maximum penalties for these offences.

All of us in this place want members of the community to always feel safe. It is incumbent on us as a Government to make sure that this occurs. People must feel that they can live their lives without fear. Knives do not belong on the street. They make people feel unsafe. Knives also do not belong in schools. Our kids must feel safe and supported to learn and grow at school. Teachers and education staff must also feel safe when performing the vital work of supporting kids' education. They cannot do that in an unsafe environment. Schools must be places of safety and respect, and these principles are paramount to ensure a thriving education sector across the State. It is important also to respect the deeply held religious beliefs of those in the community. That is why I am pleased that the bill makes exceptions for religious purposes.

Understandably, there is considerable angst in the community surrounding recent high-profile tragic events involving knives that have occurred across the State. As a result, the Government has decided to act to prevent an escalation of knife offences and to prevent knife offences across the State. It has been pointed out that the Government is proposing these new measures while the NSW Sentencing Council is undertaking a review of knife offences. However, it is imperative for any government to take any immediate action necessary to keep people safe. The proposed reforms to increase penalties will be complemented by any reforms and recommendations proposed in the Sentencing Council's review when it is complete. Moreover, the bill does not undermine the Sentencing Council's review or seek to influence it in any way.

These reforms also do not target specific vulnerable groups. Rather, they seek to better recognise knife possession and knife-related crime as a problem in society, ensure that people who commit such crimes face appropriate penalties, and make sure that sentencing laws in relation to these crimes remain in line with community expectations. Members on this side of the House acknowledge that tougher criminal sentences have a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in society. That is a risk with any such proposal. That is why police may still issue penalty infringement notices for offences of custody of a knife in a public place or school when the person has not previously been dealt with for a knife-related offence. Penalty notices will ensure that courts are not overwhelmed after the bill comes into effect, and that offenders are not sent to jail for minor or first-time offences.

The Government will ensure that any changes to maximum penalties and sentencing outcomes will be scrutinised intensely to monitor any impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The reforms in the bill send a clear message that the use or carry of knives in a public place or school will not be tolerated. To ensure that young people will not be impacted disproportionately, sentencing courts will still have discretion and the existing principles for sentencing juvenile offenders, which place an emphasis on rehabilitation services rather than deterrence and retribution. Those programs will continue to apply. In addition, the bill makes no changes to the Young Offenders Act 1997, ensuring that people under the age of 18 will continue to be dealt with under the Act for such offences. A person under the age of 18 may still be given a caution or referred to a Youth Justice Conference.

These reforms are necessary. They do not overreach, nor seek to rapidly increase the number of people in prison or other justice services for knife-related offences. Instead, the Government seeks to deter crime, ensuring that people in the community feel safe, no matter where they are. The safeguards in the bill ensure that young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and other vulnerable groups will be protected. The bill does not seek to target them unfairly through tougher sentencing. It provides other avenues for minor and first-time offences. The bill is a crucial step in disincentivising knife crimes across the State after several recent horrific incidents. The Government is taking appropriate steps to ensure tough disincentives for knife offences in New South Wales. The bill ensures that there is a range of avenues in the system to support people who may commit minor offences or are first-time offenders. Support systems are also in place to help young people. Overall, the bill is an appropriate response to a recent spate of offences across the State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:14):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The Opposition has indicated that it is not opposed to the bill. I join other members of the House in concurring with the need to ensure that our community is as safe as possible and that members of our community feel safe. I acknowledge also the comments of the Minister for Health about

frontline workers and their task of dealing with the consequences of knife crimes. As the shadow Attorney General and other members have alluded to, I draw to the attention of the House the need for evidence-based legislation and due process. In his second reading speech on the bill, the Attorney General noted that the Sentencing Council was commissioned to look into knife crime and sentencing. The Attorney General said:

In 2022 the former Attorney General asked the NSW Sentencing Council to review sentencing for firearms, knives and other weapons offences, with a focus on offences involving the use or carrying of firearms, knives and other weapons, and make any recommendations for reform.

The Government indicated that in opposition it supported the former Attorney General, who is now the Leader of the Opposition. The Attorney General said, "The NSW Sentencing Council has received preliminary submissions," and I understand that well over 10 submissions have been received by the Sentencing Council, including from the Law Society of New South Wales, Youth Justice NSW, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW and others. The Attorney General continued:

This bill does not undermine the Sentencing Council's important and independent review or seek to influence the Sentencing Council in any way.

However, I draw attention to the contribution by the shadow Attorney General, who raised a question around ensuring due process. In that regard, in commissioning the Sentencing Council to look into this matter—and it has received submissions already—and in putting legislation before the House, we must follow good principles of design for good legislation.

The second aspect of the legislation I speak to is the increase in penalties as a deterrent for knife-related crime. While increasing those penalties plays a role in deterrence, it is important that the Government considers other options in seeking to drive down those particular crimes. In that regard, I bring to the attention of the House the submission made by Youth Justice NSW to the Sentencing Council. It said:

Literature from UK and USA jurisdictions that have been seeking to respond effectively to youth knife crime arguably for longer than Australia, indicate that knife crime amongst young people is associated with exposure to any violence as a witness, victim or perpetrator.

Further, it stated:

... increasing offenders' access to tailored support regarding housing, education and employment showed an impact in reducing weapon carrying—

And, therefore, crime. Youth Justice NSW concluded its submission by stating:

This would ... suggest that place-based, locally designed, targeted interventions are likely to be effective with respect to young people who are carrying and/or using knives. Youth Justice will pilot Violence Reduction Units in Penrith and Wagga Wagga as an opportunity for appropriate place based early intervention.

I welcome the bill and I thank the Attorney General for bringing it to the House. To conclude, I draw attention to the principles of good evidence-based legislation. The previous Attorney General commissioned a review of firearms, knives and weapons offences by the Sentencing Council, which is the independent body that looks into reform around sentencing. As the then Attorney General said, that was a comprehensive weapons review and the first one since 2004. He also said:

... I want to make sure that sentencing laws relating to possession and use of firearms, knives and other weapons remain in line with community expectations and that law enforcement agencies have access to the tools they need to keep our streets safe.

This is about ensuring that we follow principles of good legislative design in this House. As the Government seeks to increase penalties, which are a deterrent, I welcome the Government's further response to the Sentencing Council to ensure that there is a holistic, comprehensive aspect to tackling knife crime.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:20):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The incidence of knife crime is still too high. As the Attorney General said, "The tougher maximum penalty will send a strong message about the gravity of knife-related crime." The police Minister said:

The Operation Foil results show the determination of the Minns Labor Government and NSW Police Force to get these dangerous weapons off our streets. The operation also sought to engage with young people before they get hold of knives to try to steer them in better directions.

In addition, the Attorney General said:

The government is acting to address understandable community concern given the high-profile tragic events involving knives that we have seen in NSW over the last couple of years.

We want to ensure that people in the community are safe and feel safe.

We believe we have struck the right balance with these reforms, sending an important message to people engaging in criminal behaviour of this kind but also not being overly punitive in its application.

Whilst many of my colleagues have covered or will cover myriad issues, I raise some points that my constituents have brought to me. The bill is the Government's way of leading the charge on reducing knife crime across the State and making New South Wales even safer. A point that was raised with me is that everyone has the right to go to work, to head out into their daily lives and to feel safe. Instances of violent knife crime mean this is not the reality for some.

The news of paramedic Steven Tougher being stabbed to death was beyond devastating. He was a remarkable young man who made an impression on everyone he met. He was a boisterous, happy, lovable guy. He was doing work that he loved. Everyone has a right to go to work and feel safe. As the mother of a paramedic, I want my son to work and be safe. Today I stand with all paramedics and acknowledge their hurt, anger and ongoing shock at the loss of their colleague, and their request for legislative reform. Similarly, when Uati "Pele" Faletolu went to work at the Royal Easter Show last year, he had a right to feel safe in his daily routine and his work. Instead, his life was taken; he was stabbed to death.

Sending our loved ones out into the world will always be fraught with concern, and we will never stop worrying about them, but those boys could have been any of our children. The bill honours their lives and seeks to make society safer for everyone. Furthermore, as someone who has always fought for a woman's right to safety, I believe the bill also stands to further protect women in domestic violence instances. In the past year in New South Wales there were over 450 cases of domestic violence-related assaults with a knife. This legislative amendment will mean New South Wales is leading the way in seeing those numbers decline. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:24):** I am delighted to make a brief contribution relating to the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The aim of the bill is to double the penalty for offences of possession or wielding of a knife in a public place or school. Simply, the maximum term of imprisonment for these offences will be increased from two to four years. The maximum fine for possession of a knife will rise to \$4,400, whilst the maximum for those found guilty of wielding a knife in a public place or a school will increase to \$11,000. To achieve this, an amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 is required, as is the repeal of current offences under the Summary Offences Act in order to avoid duplication across various other Acts. These penalties for knife-related crimes are the toughest in our nation, and with good reason.

The bill makes it crystal clear that the Minns Government does not believe the current penalties for knife crimes are sufficient. There would be many victims of knife-related crime throughout the State, including in my electorate of Heathcote, who would strongly agree. Increased penalties not only punish offenders but also importantly act as a deterrent for potential offenders. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. It is also important to note that police will still be able to issue penalty infringement notices for offences of custody of a knife in a public place or school when the person has not previously been dealt with for a knife-related offence—so for a first offender. The benefits of that are twofold: It puts first-time offenders on notice and reduces the demand being placed on our State's already strained court system.

Persons also under the age of 18 will still be able to be dealt with under the Young Offenders Act 1997. Essentially, this means they can be cautioned or referred to a youth justice conference. Again, this eases the burden on our court system and correctional facilities for young people. Section 11C of the Summary Offences Act provides a number of reasonable excuses for possessing a knife, such as the legal pursuit of a person's occupation, education or training. Possessing a knife at a school for the purposes of causing harm or for self-defence is not a reasonable excuse. Students, teachers and staff at our schools have a lot to deal with already. For students, the pressures of study and being a teenager in general are intense enough. As a mother of two, I know exactly what I am talking about.

For teachers and staff at our school, trying to ensure hundreds of students behave, cooperate and maximise their learning potential is a difficult task at the best of times. They do their best under extremely testing circumstances. I have spoken to countless teachers and staff who were angry and frustrated with the lack of support from the former Liberal-Nationals Government. It was obvious to all that the former Government did not value the welfare of our teachers and staff. The Minns Government, on the other hand, wants to ensure that schools are a safe learning environment, where students, teachers and staff can all thrive. That is why the Minns Government has committed to an additional 10,000 permanent teachers. That is why the Minns Government has committed to reducing the administrative burden on teachers. Ensuring teachers, students and staff are not fearful of being the target of a knife-wielding offender is another step that the Minns Government is taking to ensure our schools are safe spaces for all.

I commend the Attorney General and the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism for their work regarding the bill. This is yet another area of concern that the former Government failed to acknowledge, address and resolve. As a result, the deterrent and penalties for those possessing or wielding a knife in a public place or at a school have been far too lenient. Prior to entering this place, I made a commitment to the residents and business

owners within the Heathcote electorate that I would serve the community, that I would make sure that their concerns were heard loud and clear in this place.

In my opinion, the Heathcote electorate is the most picturesque in the State, bar none. It is imperative that residents and visitors to our community feel safe when they are out and about, enjoying a swim at the beach, walking through the national park, shopping at one of the many wonderful local businesses or using public transport just to get from point A to point B. This bill will make the electorate of Heathcote and every other community throughout our State a lot safer. I thank the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:30):** I speak in support of the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill as the member for Prospect, which includes the police area commands of Parramatta, Cumberland, Blacktown and Fairfield. It is quite a big area, and these are four major police area commands. I contribute also in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, and I thank the Attorney General for putting this bill forward.

This legislation and the concept behind it are nothing new. There has been a significant rise in knife-related youth crime involving children between the ages of 12 and 16. This has caused significant community concern. Members would be aware of the murder of a young man at the Sydney Royal Easter Show last year. During the term of the former Government, the then shadow Minister for Police, the Hon. Walt Secord, raised this piece of legislation. At that time there was some concern across party lines regarding a bill that would simply bring greater penalties, because anyone who has worked in the criminal justice system knows that simply increasing the penalty or the length of incarceration does not stop a criminal from committing a crime—or very rarely.

However, in New South Wales an increased number of children—teenagers, mostly young men—are starting to carry knives. Something has to be done to address that and it needs a whole-of-government approach, not just through legislation. I am pleased to say that the Minns Labor Government understands that and is bringing this piece of legislation forward as part of a greater suite of actions that will target this area. The Minns Labor Government is acting to address rising community concern about knife crime, particularly given the high-profile tragic events involving knives that have occurred in New South Wales in the past couple of years. The Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023 will amend the Crimes Act 1900, the Summary Offences Act 1988 and the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to strengthen the criminal law in response to recent serious incidents involving knife crimes, to better protect the safety of the community and to reflect the seriousness and gravity of harm caused by knife-related crime.

The existing prohibitions relating to the possession and use of knives are contained under part 2, division 2, section 11 of the Summary Offences Act 1988. The offences found under sections 11C and 11E of the Summary Offences Act are the subject of reform under this bill. The bill will transfer and modernise these offences by creating the offences of having custody of a knife, or using or carrying a knife, in a public place or school; doubling the maximum penalty for the offence of custody of a knife in a public place or a school and for the offence of wielding a knife in a public place or a school, which are both currently in the Summary Offences Act; and moving those offences from the Summary Offences Act to the Crimes Act 1900.

The decision to approach this criminal offence through the provision of a maximum penalty over a mandatory sentencing penalty has been determined through several considerations. In New South Wales and throughout Australia, the typical approach to legislating criminal offences is to provide a maximum penalty. A core tenet of the criminal justice system in New South Wales is that sentencing decisions are made at the discretion of judges and magistrates, who are appointed to their role because of their experience, knowledge and qualifications within the legal sector and the criminal justice system. They bring with them, to every case, a thorough and impartial understanding. Mandatory sentences are not recommended as they impede on this core tenet and reduce judicial discretion, reduce the incentive for an early guilty plea, and can have a disproportionate impact on those most vulnerable in our community, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Schedule 1 to the bill will amend the Crimes Act to insert, after division 2, new division 2A, which relates to knives in public places and schools. New section 93IA sets out the division's definitions for a "blade", "knife", "public place" and "school". New section 93IB states that a person must not have in the person's custody a knife in a public place or a school; that doing so will incur a maximum penalty of 40 penalty units or four years' imprisonment, or both; that it is a defence to this offence if the accused person proves the person had a reasonable excuse under the specified reasons in subsection (3) (a); and that it is not a reasonable excuse for a person to have a knife in their custody for self-defence or the defence of another person. Proposed section 93IC states:

- (1) A person must not use a knife, or carry a knife that is visible, if the use or carrying occurs—
  - (a) in the presence of a person, and
  - (b) in a public place or a school, and

- (c) in a way that is likely to cause a reasonable person to reasonably fear for the person's safety.

Doing so will incur a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units or imprisonment for four years, unless the accused person proves they had a reasonable excuse. Schedule 2 to the bill also outlines subsequent amendments to other Acts. Schedule 2.1 will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to include "Schedule 1: Indictable Offences triable summarily". This will insert after table 1, part 3, item 16E, "Knives in public places or schools" are an offence under the Crimes Act 1900, section 931B or 931C.

Schedule 2.2 will amend the Summary Offences Act to omit sections 11C, 11E and 29A, and will amend section 11D, which relates to parents who allow children to carry knives, to omit "section 11C" wherever occurring and insert instead "the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 931B". These offences have been moved into the Crimes Act because increasing the maximum term of imprisonment for the two offences to higher than two years means that the offences will no longer be deemed as summary offences and prosecuted summarily in the Local Court. As the offences are no longer summary offences, it is inappropriate for them to be contained in the Summary Offences Act. However, although the offences are no longer deemed as summary offences, schedule 2.1 to the bill does make them table 1 offences. Therefore, these offences will continue to be prosecuted in the Local Court unless the prosecution or defendant elect otherwise.

This measure is consistent with other indictable offences with similar maximum penalties and is beneficial for the administration of justice in New South Wales. Given the recent incidence of violent crimes involving knives in New South Wales, including the tragic lethal attack on paramedic Steven Tougher, it is of utmost importance that the maximum penalties for knife crime are increased. Such acts of violence on members of our community are unacceptable and those who perpetrate these disgraceful acts of violence should face stringent consequences. Deliberate acts of knife-related violence to members of the public are completely and utterly unacceptable. The harm that this form of violence can inflict is immense. It can lead to loss of life, severe injury and trauma to victims, to their families, and to the wider community. The existing maximum penalties for these offences are not sufficient.

The Minns Labor Government believes that stronger deterrents for knife possession in public places are required and are expected by our community. The new penalties under this reform reflect the seriousness with which the Minns Labor Government regards this type of offending behaviour. We are sending a very strong message to people that this behaviour is unacceptable and that any engagement in it will be met with the most serious penalties. Knife crime will not be tolerated in New South Wales. It is noted that the NSW Sentencing Council is currently undertaking a review into firearms, knives and other weapon offences following a referral from the former Attorney General in November 2022. While there is some overlap between the Sentencing Council's review and increasing the penalties for knife possession and wielding a knife, the bill does not undermine the review. [*Extension of time*]

Rather than undermining the Sentencing Council's review, and considering the recent serious incidents of knife-related violence, the Minns Labor Government considers an immediate response in the form of the bill as absolutely necessary to addressing community concerns. The tougher maximum penalty will send a strong message to the community about the seriousness of knife-related crime and will act as a deterrent against that behaviour. It is also important to establish that the reforms will not in any way target specific vulnerable groups. Rather, they seek to better recognise knife possession and knife-related crime as a problem in society, ensuring that people who commit such crimes face appropriate penalties and that sentencing laws in relation to those crimes remain in line with community expectations.

However, it is acknowledged that there is the risk of a disproportionate impact on some people, especially Aboriginal people, noting that in general expanding criminal offences and increasing penalties exaggerates the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. New South Wales police will still have the powers to issue a penalty infringement notice for an offence of custody of knife in a public place or a school where the person has not previously been dealt with for a knife-related offence. The discretionary measure serves an important role in the justice system, ensuring that, where appropriate, courts are not overwhelmed and offenders, where appropriate, are not sent to jail for more minor and first-time offences.

The purpose of the bill, which seems to have been lost on members on the other side of the House who oppose it, is not finding a teenager or a young adult who has a knife and putting them in prison on a first offence. It is about targeting persons who are caught carrying knives time and again. We have seen an increase in that in New South Wales. It is our biggest concern. Taking a knife and putting it into your jacket and then going out is unacceptable. If you are caught and it is your first time and you have a harsh penalty but are not incarcerated, there is a very set and clear direction to you and your family that it should not happen again. That is what we are trying to break. However, there are those who, regardless of how many times they have been pulled before the police, continue to carry knives. They must be stopped.

The Minns Labor Government remains committed to monitoring the impact of the increased maximum penalties on sentencing outcomes, with specific regard given to any impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Specific regard has also been given towards young offenders in the consideration of the amendments. Sentencing courts will still have discretion, and the existing principles for sentencing juvenile offenders will continue to apply. Those principles place an emphasis on rehabilitation rather than deterrence and retribution. Further, persons under the age of 18 will continue to be dealt with under the Young Offenders Act 1997 for those offences, meaning that, where appropriate, a person will still be able to be given a caution or referred to a youth justice conference.

The Minns Labor Government is committed to sending an important message to people engaging in criminal behaviour of that kind that such behaviour is unacceptable. However, we are also committed to not being overly punitive in its application. Therefore, the Minns Labor Government will monitor the impact of the increased maximum penalties on sentencing outcomes through the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. We are committed to ensuring that our communities feel safe and are safe, and we are committed to increasing maximum penalties for those knife-related offences, which is the most suitable legislative response to those crimes. The legislation is about stopping knife crime in New South Wales; it is not about penalising people who are caught the first time. It is about criminals who are consistently carrying knives and endangering life in doing so. That must be stopped. Police are seeing it throughout not only Western Sydney but also other areas of New South Wales time and again. That mentality has to be broken. The bill is the first step to making that happen. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:44):** I support the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. I thank the Attorney General for introducing the bill to the House within 100 days of the Minns Government's commitment to the people of New South Wales. By amending the Crimes Act to transfer certain offences to the Act, the bill will double the maximum penalties available for certain knife-related crimes. Such crimes will be moved from section 11C and 11E respectively of the Summary Offences Act to the Crimes Act. In doing so, the Minns Government is taking proactive action, acting fast to keep our communities safe.

Currently, those charged with such crimes face a maximum of two years' imprisonment. By doubling the maximum to four years, the New South Wales Government has taken a clear stance. Our communities deserve safety and security, and serious crimes such as these should be dealt with with the seriousness they deserve. It puts more pressure on people making the decision to carry a knife in the community and emphasises that it is not acceptable in New South Wales. Further emphasising the significance of such crimes, the maximum fines available will be increased from \$2,200 to \$4,400 for possession of a knife and \$11,000 for wielding a knife.

It became very clear that we needed intervention when the life of paramedic Steven Tougher was taken earlier this year. The Government needs to make clear the message that knife crime is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in New South Wales. The problem of knife crime across our community was made clear through the brilliant work of our NSW Police Force in May this year in Operation Foil, which was a two-day statewide operation targeting knife-related crime. The operation saw 172 people charged with 565 offences and 294 knives seized. My community knows the impact of knife crimes all too well. With devastating knife crimes taking place in Kariong and Woy Woy in 2022, knife crimes have had a critical impact on the Gosford electorate, as I know they have had in New South Wales.

In January last year the life of a very young man was taken by another young man with a knife in the community of Kariong. It rocked the community like you would not believe. I commend Kariong Mountains High School and the community for wrapping around each other at that very challenging time for the Kariong community. More recently in my community, 41-year-old Nathan "Strudo" Strudwick was killed with a machete, which was horrible. He was a father and a family man. A message on Facebook said, "Our beautiful brother bear, our hearts will never beat the same." It is essential that we do anything we can to deter people from carrying knives in our community.

Importantly, the bill strikes a balance between sending a clear message to perpetrators of knife-related crimes and not implementing punitive conditions. The inclusion of a non-exhaustive list of reasonable excuses highlights that balance, recognising that custody of a knife may be reasonable for certain cases, such as for genuine religious purposes, for the preparation of food or for lawful occupational purposes. I thank those people in the New South Wales Government team who have been talking to the stakeholders whom the legislation impacts. Critically, the conditions of the Young Offenders Act 1997 will continue to apply, recognising the essential need for children and young persons to be eligible to receive a caution or a referral to youth justice where necessary. I thank the Attorney General once again for his immediate action to address our communities' concerns, ensuring our laws and legal system allow courts and police to have the tools they need to keep our community safe. Strong lawmaking should send a clear message and the New South Wales Government is sending a clear message with the introduction of the bill.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (15:48):** I support the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. Many other members have already spoken in this debate. Some really important comments have been made by many of them, not least by the Ministers who have spoken. At least three Ministers have spoken, which shows the importance the Government has placed on getting the balance right between deterring people from carrying knives illegitimately and respecting the rights of people who have legitimate reasons to carry knives. I was particularly moved by the comments of several of the speakers today, including the Minister for Health, who talked about the need to assure many of our essential workers—particularly our paramedics, after the tragic death of Steven Tougher—that we will be doing all we can to provide them with protection from the sort of awful, tragic act that took Steven's life earlier this year. People going to work in those occupations, which are so important to our society, have the right to feel safe.

It is an awful reflection on our society that, for some people, carrying knives and, more importantly, using knives for totally inappropriate reasons are, apparently, seen as a normal part of their day-to-day lives. That is the sort of behaviour we are trying to stamp out with this legislation. We do not want people in the community and, in particular, young people coming through in the community to think that carrying knives for any purposes outside of the legitimate purposes, which are reflected in legislation, is acceptable. That is why it is important to ensure that the penalties in place, particularly for people who are repeat offenders, are so strict. The Minister and many other members said that the increases in penalties, which come in with this legislation, have been considered carefully and that provisions have been put in place to enable police officers to issue much lesser penalties or warnings for people who are not repeat offenders and are not being a danger or a menace to the community but who are inappropriately carrying knives.

I note that the shadow Minister, in his contribution, quite rightly welcomed that we in Australia are not talking about gun violence. We are not here talking about the US-style massacres we see every day in the news. That is a great credit to legislators in Australia over many years, particularly going back to John Howard's Government after the Port Arthur massacre. That is welcome. I think that we are all pleased to not have to deal with that in New South Wales and in Australia, but it is important for us to deal proactively with this issue. While the number of people found guilty and being imprisoned for this has not significantly increased, we are seeing an increase in the number of serious knife-related incidents. Many of the speakers have talked about those already. So I support this legislation.

I have not been back in the Parliament for long, but I have already heard some frightening stories about knives being used and threatening behaviour in the community I am a part of. It is particularly concerning when those have involved juveniles. This legislation is not for juveniles, particularly not for young children, but I hope that it contributes to society starting to have a much stronger view that carrying, using and threatening with a knife is totally unacceptable to everybody in our society. I hope that carries through to all age groups and makes sure that we see far fewer incidents than we are seeing at the moment.

There are, of course, legitimate reasons to carry a knife. There is a healthy Sikh community in the Monaro electorate and in Queanbeyan particularly. That group, for valid religious reasons and as part of its traditions, carries knives and can continue to do that under the provisions in the legislation, which respects legitimate religious reasons and other legitimate reasons, such as cooking. I am confident in the ability of our law enforcement authorities to tell the difference between people carrying knives for legitimate purposes and people who are a danger.

I acknowledge one of the points made by The Greens earlier, about the increasing prison population in New South Wales. I had an interesting meeting with the Justice Reform Initiative the other day. I know that the group has spoken to many other members in this place as well. We must find a balance between being tough and providing strong incentives for people not to carry knives and not to break the law on the one hand, and focusing much more strongly as a society overall on how we can reduce the prison population and the rate of reoffending in New South Wales on the other. Some of the figures are quite frightening and have continued to increase. I remember looking at these while I was a member of a parliamentary committee when I was last in this place. The figure given to me the other day by the Justice Reform Initiative for the cost of keeping a prisoner in jail at the moment is just under \$80,000 per year or \$218.13 per day.

The real shame of that is how many of those people simply are not rehabilitated while they are in prison and how many are in a cycle where they come out, are homeless, disadvantaged and perhaps dealing with mental health issues and end up back in prison. That is something society overall needs to look at. It needs to happen in a cooperative way among governments and oppositions and the media as we are dealing with these problems and trying to work through ways of investing more in the people who are in prisons at the moment, to try to stop them coming back after they leave; investing more in trying to prevent people from getting there in the first place, particularly if they are young people; and working in a more considered way and in a more culturally appropriate way with young Indigenous people to try to help them to avoid getting into custodial situations. Those things will

require a bit of understanding and tolerance and long-term planning and consideration by our whole society. It is not an easy job, but I hope it is one all of us in this place can turn our minds to as we go through.

We will still need to respond to changing situations and to offences that are causing the community great concern. We will still need to increase penalties where appropriate to try to break a cycle—in this case, to try to break the cycle of second-time offenders who are engaging in knife crime and threatening behaviour, and to provide those amazing essential workers in our community, such as paramedics, with the security they need to know that they have in doing their jobs. Those things are essential for any government to do. But we need to balance that with a strong consideration over the coming years as to how we address that we are in a country that has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in the OECD and that we are quite clearly failing to rehabilitate those people and seeing way too many of them going back in and reoffending for various reasons.

I hope that over the next few years we will also be able to see much more work, which will need to be bipartisan, addressing those issues. I support this legislation and certainly hope that it provides a disincentive for people who may be using knives inappropriately and threatening other people and provides some assurance, to those who have had awful encounters with them, that the Government is doing whatever it can to protect those people in the future.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:59):** I support the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to transfer and modernise the offences of having custody of a knife in a public place or school and wielding a knife in a public place or a school from the Summary Offences Act 1988 and to double the maximum penalties for these offences. The bill is important because its aim is to ensure that people can go about their daily business and remain as safe as possible in our community. I commend the Attorney General and the Premier for their work on this bill. Section 11C of the Summary Offences Act provides that a person must not, without reasonable excuse, have in his or her custody a knife in a public place or a school. Currently the maximum penalty for that offence is 20 penalty units, or \$2,200, and/or imprisonment for two years. It is a matter for the defendant to prove that a reasonable excuse for possessing a knife exists.

Section 11E of the Summary Offences Act provides that it is an offence for a person to, without reasonable excuse, use a knife or visibly carry a knife in the presence of any person in a public place or a school in a manner that would be likely to cause a person of reasonable firmness at the scene to fear for his or her personal safety. The maximum penalty for that offence is 50 penalty units, or \$5,500, and/or two years in jail. There have been numerous serious knife-related incidents in New South Wales. In my electorate of the South Coast, Chief Inspector Ray Stynes recently reported to the community that while robberies have dramatically decreased over the past few years, assaults have been trending upwards since 2021. We need to do more to assist our emergency workers to keep themselves and the wider community safe. That is what this bill will help to do.

I want a safe electorate and the best for my community, and we can do more. The police cannot do this on their own. They need our help. This bill will help to address that. The Government is working hard on sending a clear message to people that carrying a knife in a public place is not acceptable and that they will be punished. Everyone has the right to go out and feel safe, and not worry that they may be attacked. The bill will amend the Crimes Act to transfer the offences of having custody of a knife in a public place or school and wielding a knife in a public place or a school to the Crimes Act. The bill will double the penalties for those offences with the maximum term of imprisonment increasing from two to four years and the maximum fine for possession of a knife increasing from 20 penalty points, or \$2,200, to 40 points, or \$4,400, and for wielding a knife increasing to \$11,000.

The bill will also make consequential amendments to other legislation, including amending the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that the offences created in the Crimes Act will be table 1 offences. That means they will be tried summarily unless the prosecution or defendant elects otherwise. Amending the Summary Offences Act to repeal sections 11C, 11E and 29A also will help. By repealing section 29A we will remove the ability for a police officer to issue a penalty infringement notice for a first-time offence for having a knife. Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 will be drafted for the Governor's approval to allow a penalty infringement notice to be issued for a first offence of the new Crimes Act custody of a knife offence. The New South Wales Government believes that any person charged with an offence of possessing a knife in a public place or school, who has been dealt with previously for knife-related offences, should be required to go to court and have their matter heard by a magistrate or judge. The reforms will ensure that persons who choose to have custody of a knife, or who carry knives in public place or a school, are subject to higher penalties and will send a clear message that such acts will not be tolerated.

The Minns Labor Government is acting to acknowledge the concerns of the community and emergency services and to address the recent serious incidents involving the use of knives. The bill will modernise the offence of carrying or wielding a knife and does not target in any way specific vulnerable groups. Rather, the bill seeks to



better recognise knife possession and knife-related crime as a problem in society. It seeks to ensure that people who commit such crimes face appropriate penalties and that sentencing laws relating to these crimes remain in line with community expectations.

The New South Wales Government has carefully balanced the potential impact of the reforms on certain cohorts with the need to ensure that the people of New South Wales are protected and that sentences for knife-related crimes remain appropriate and address community concerns. The Government believes that increasing the maximum penalties for those offences is the most suitable legislative response to recent knife-related incidents. I again thank the Attorney General and the Premier for presenting this important legislation to the House in the first 100 days of being in government. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:05):** I support the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023 and I will outline some of the reasons why. I commend the Minns Labor Government, particularly the Attorney General, because in the last session of Parliament, the previous Attorney General introduced a Crimes Amendment (Custody of Knives) Bill 2022, which sought to double the penalty for an offence under section 11C of the Summary Offences Act. The key difference between the two bills is that the Crimes Amendment (Custody of Knives) Bill 2022 did not seek a penalty for wielding a knife.

I will speak a little bit about that. People have asked me why the maximum penalties for knife possession are being increased. They are being increased because of the increased number of deliberate acts of knife-related violence—although I am not sure of the numbers—and the public is feeling it. For example, a deeply concerned person in my electorate has asked me and other members of Parliament to take action because of the perception that those crimes are happening everywhere. We have seen some terrible acts of violence with knives. It is critical that penalties for the harm caused by possession and use of a knife meet community expectations. This bill does that. It is about meeting community expectations within our legal framework.

The possession and use of knives in public can be a precursor to significant harm and trauma, which is unacceptable. The New South Wales Government is determined that a stronger deterrent for knife possession in public places is required. We always have the debate about whether changing the law will deter the crime that we want deterrence for. We do that all the time. We change laws with the expectation that they will act as a deterrent, particularly over time. Recently there has been a spate of violent crimes involving knives. We have seen them because, understandably and appropriately, they are writ large in the media.

Under the current Summary Offences Act it is an offence punishable by 20 penalty units, and/or imprisonment for two years, to have custody of a knife in a public place or a school. Section 11E of the Summary Offences Act makes it an offence punishable by 50 penalty units, and/or imprisonment for two years, to wield a knife in a public place or a school. The New South Wales Government does not consider the current maximum penalties to be sufficient to act as a sufficient deterrent. That is what this bill is about. In order to better deter and punish knife-related crime, the New South Wales Government has considered and determined that the law should be amended to double the maximum penalties for these offences.

In order to do so, the offences have to be moved from the Summary Offences Act to the Crimes Act. The Government has acted swiftly to do this and send a strong message to the community that knife crimes will not be tolerated. The offences will be transferred to the Crimes Act and will no longer be summary offences. Schedule 2 to the bill makes table 1 offences. This means the offences will continue to be prosecuted in the Local Court unless the prosecution or defendant elects otherwise. That is consistent with other indictable offences with similar maximum penalties and is beneficial for the administration of justice. It is important to have consistency.

The bill will also commence swiftly by proclamation rather than assent. This will allow time for the necessary amendments to the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 to be drafted, which will ensure that penalty notices can still be issued for a first offence of custody of a knife. If the bill were to commence on assent prior to amendments being made to the Criminal Procedure Regulation, penalty notices would not be available for a first offence of custody of a knife until those amendments are passed. That would create inequities and inconsistency in sentencing outcomes for the same act, which is not acceptable. Commencing the bill on proclamation will allow for the bill and the regulation amendments to commence at the same time, ensuring that there is no gap. It is important not to have a gap. The reforms will also then be implemented as they are intended.

I add a few more comments about the bill. The NSW Police Force has been consulted on these amendments. Obviously, they will help police to deal with knives in the community. Doubling the maximum penalties for the offences will also have an impact on the community. The increase to 40 penalty units equates to \$4,400, which is a significant amount of money to pay for a fine. The offence of wielding a knife in a public place will be 100 penalty units, which is \$11,000. That is a significant deterrent, as is increasing the penalty from two years to four years for either offence. The bill sends the message to people in the community that the Government hears

them and wants them to feel safer. The Government wants people to get the message that it is just unacceptable to threaten people with knives or to carry knives.

Of course, there is a defence in the Summary Offences Act and in the Crimes Act. Some people have genuine reasons for carrying knives: for occupation or for entertainment or for all sorts of things. That defence will not change. As I understand it, the defence will be still available in the same terms it exists under now. This means upholding the rule of law, because people have the right to a defence. The defence will still be there. I am happy to support this bill and commend it to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:13):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023, including the members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Swansea, Bathurst, Keira, Ballina, Camden, Albury, Blue Mountains, Heathcote, Prospect, Gosford, Monaro and South Coast, as well as my colleague the member for Lismore, from whom we have just heard. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business and shadow Attorney General for the constructive conversation we have had in relation to this bill and other bills that are now before the House. I had a good relationship with the former Attorney General when I was his shadow.

There were no surprises. We approached the Attorney General's portfolio seriously, as one would expect, and with mutual respect. We worked together to achieve some good outcomes for the people of New South Wales. We did not agree on all occasions, but where we disagreed, we made that clear. I look forward to continuing that sort of relationship with the now shadow Attorney General. I have great respect for him. I thank the member for Wahroonga for mentioning in his second reading debate contribution something that we discussed a few days ago. There is a minor drafting error in the bill, and the member for Wahroonga spoke about that. I advise that I will move an amendment to address that minor drafting error at the end of the second reading debate stage. The amendment will clarify that the maximum penalty for new section 93IC will be 100 penalty units or imprisonment for four years, or both.

I note that the member for Wahroonga, the member for Ballina and the member for Albury are all concerned that the bill is premature and could undermine the ongoing work of the Sentencing Council's review. Some members also noted that Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics indicate that knife crime is decreasing, and sentencing remains low. Firstly, Labor's intention from opposition to introduce a bill of this kind pre-dated the review and the referral from the then Attorney General to the Sentencing Council. Secondly, the Government considers that an immediate response to knife crime is necessary—or at least a swift response.

The Government is acting swiftly to make these changes to send a strong message that knife crime will not be tolerated in New South Wales. The bill does not undermine the Sentencing Council review or seek to influence the Sentencing Council in any way. Further possible reforms will be complemented by any recommendations rising out of that review. The member for Wahroonga noted that current sections 11D and 11F of the Summary Offences Act are not included in the suite of proposed reforms inherent in this bill. The focus of this bill is to address the immediate risk of the actual possession of knives by people in public places and in schools.

The member for Ballina stated that the bill could disproportionately affect young people. I stress that these reforms do not and will not in any way target young people. The reforms target knife possession and the high rates of recidivism. Sentencing courts will still have discretion, and the existing principles for sentencing juvenile offenders, which place emphasis on rehabilitation rather than deterrence and retribution, will continue to apply. Where appropriate, a person under the age of 18 can still be given a caution or be referred to a youth justice conference. The bill aims to strengthen the penalty framework of existing knife-related offences. It not only provides a stronger deterrent against deliberate acts of violence but will better meet community standards. I commend the bill to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time. A division has been called. There being only three members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members in the minority be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Noes, 3**

Ms J. Leong  
Ms K. Shetty  
Ms T. Smith

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Daley.**

**Consideration in Detail**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:25):** I move Government amendment No.1 on sheet c2023-046:

No. 1      **Using or carrying knives in public places or schools—maximum penalty**

Page 4, Schedule 1, line 3. Insert ", or both" after "4 years".

As I mentioned in my second reading speech, there is a minor drafting error that needs to be rectified. The amendment will amend the bill to provide, as intended, that the maximum penalty for an offence against new section 93IC will be 100 penalty units or imprisonment for four years, or both. It is an unintended drafting error. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, the shadow Attorney General, for his cooperation.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Governor*

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

**Debate resumed from 22 June 2023.**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:27):** It is a great honour to have been re-elected to represent the people of Granville after first being elected in 2015. It is a great pleasure to return to this Chamber under a new Labor Government. I congratulate the Premier and all of my colleagues on their efforts during the election campaign, including the new Labor members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Leppington, East Hills, Penrith, South Coast, Parramatta, Fairfield, Cabramatta, Camden, Riverstone and the returning member for Monaro. I look forward to playing my part during this term of government as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Parliamentary Secretary for the Arts.

Before the last election, the electorate of Granville underwent a significant redistribution. The electorate now includes South Granville, Guildford West, Woodpark and Yennora as well as Granville, Guildford, Holroyd, Merrylands, Merrylands West and South Wentworthville. The electorate also includes parts of Westmead, Wentworthville and Chester Hill. My contribution focuses on the future of Western Sydney and specifically on Granville, a vibrant and diverse area within a rapidly growing region. The speech by His Excellency the Hon. Andrew Bell, the Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, included reference to many important matters that are of interest to people in my electorate.

They include the following: education reforms as a top priority for the New South Wales Government; reducing teacher attrition and improving educational standards; plans to convert temporary teaching and support staff positions into permanent positions; the establishment of an innovative teacher training fund and education future fund; a commitment to build new and upgraded schools in high growth areas; ensuring access to quality health care as a foundational concern; plans to address nursing staff shortages and to introduce minimum safe staffing levels in hospitals; hiring additional nurses and paramedics, particularly in rural and regional areas; and a commitment to expand health infrastructure, including the delivery of over 600 hospital beds in Western Sydney.

Additionally, there was a focus on the New South Wales Government goal of providing accessible, affordable, reliable and sustainable transport; reviewing tolls and implementing a two-year cap on tolls for Sydney motorists; opposing the privatisation of bus services and public transport; and expanding the State's manufacturing muscle for building future transport options. There was also a focus on housing affordability. This included reference to increasing housing supply, especially in the regions; modernising laws for renters and prioritising build-to-rent; setting a target of 30 per cent for affordable, social and universal housing options on surplus public

land; and abolishing stamp duty for first home buyers up to \$800,000 and offering concessional rates up to \$1 million. These key points demonstrate the new Government's commitment to improving education, health care, transport and housing in Western Sydney and addressing the needs of all residents.

I am proud of several key election commitments made by Labor that are especially important to the Granville electorate. After 12 long years in office, the Liberal Government had become tired and neglectful, particularly when it came to essential health and education services. The former Government worsened cost-of-living pressures by selling off the State's crucial energy assets and motorways to private corporations. During the election campaign, Labor pledged to implement a \$60 weekly toll cap, safeguarding drivers from excessive toll charges in Sydney, which became the most tolled city on earth under those opposite. That measure, coupled with the existing toll rebate and M5 cashback schemes, will provide substantial relief to the thousands of drivers navigating the bustling roads of Sydney and Western Sydney.

The Government is dedicated to alleviating the burdensome toll costs faced by motorists and ensuring that they receive tangible benefits and fair treatment. I emphasise that the toll cap plan will be implemented promptly and effectively. It will be administered by Service NSW, beginning on 1 January 2024. Furthermore, any toll charges exceeding the cap will be promptly refunded on a quarterly basis, ensuring that drivers are not unduly burdened by excessive toll expenses. Recognising the need for comprehensive reform within the tolling system, the Government has appointed the distinguished Professor Allan Fels, former chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, to lead that transformative endeavour.

Under Professor Fels' guidance, the Government will embark on a thorough and meticulous overhaul of the toll network, focusing on negotiating better deals for motorists with tolling operators. Moreover, the review will explore long-term reform options, including potential competition in toll contracts; optimising freight movement during night-time hours; examining the intersection of public transport and toll roads; assessing long-term concessions; and drawing insights from successful toll practices in other jurisdictions. Transparency and public engagement are fundamental pillars of the Government's toll relief package.

The review and recommendations will be made public, allowing for comprehensive scrutiny and input from all stakeholders. The Government will invite submissions from the transport sector and toll-paying public, ensuring that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed. The Government acknowledges that tolls in New South Wales have spiralled out of control due to the secretive contracts and privatisation initiatives pursued by the Liberals. This situation places an unfair burden on families throughout Sydney, effectively functioning as a hidden tax that disproportionately benefits toll companies while placing undue pressure on Sydney drivers, especially in Western Sydney.

Another essential commitment made by NSW Labor was to enhance train services, ensuring that commuters can reach their destinations further, faster and more frequently through the delivery of additional express services. The Minns Labor Government has committed to conducting a comprehensive review of timetables across both the Sydney metropolitan network and the wider NSW Trains network. The review is essential because it will allow us to address the current shortcomings in train services and cater to the evolving needs of our communities. Regrettably, under the Liberals, numerous suburban stations across Sydney, including Granville, Leppington, Campbelltown, Lidcombe and Riverwood experienced reductions in express connections to Parramatta and the CBD. That reduction in services has led to passengers abandoning the train network, causing significant inconvenience to those communities.

In my area, Granville station was targeted by Gladys Berejiklian, with partisan reductions in services, including the removal of express T1 western line services from Granville, and then the removal of the T1 altogether from 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. on weekdays. At the same time, the Liberal Government brought back the toll on the nearby M4 Motorway, and new home owners were buying properties adjacent to the station, with land rezoned for over 5,000 units. The population of Granville doubled while the former Government prevented the T1 western line from stopping there at all.

NSW Labor's plan involves conducting a comprehensive timetable review that will accurately assess the needs of our communities and prioritise the delivery of more efficient train services. The review is especially crucial, as the last assessment of the timetable occurred before the onset of the pandemic in 2019. Moreover, as the New South Wales Government plans for the long term and futureproofs transport services, it must consider the permanent shifts in work patterns and travel habits. The review will examine how to optimise transport infrastructure, flatten peak travel periods and ensure more frequent services throughout the day rather than solely during traditional peaks. In the words of the Premier only a few months ago:

Our trains have become less reliable under the Liberals, people are waiting longer, and travellers are leaving in droves ... Labor will identify and assess the needs of the community to deliver more express services, and under NSW Labor, people will get around the city and the state further, faster, more often.

It is evident that the declining quality of train services has resulted in passengers resorting to other means of transportation, exacerbating congestion on roads. They are not reliable, and they take far too long to get around. Just this morning I caught a train that had announcements that all services in the other direction, to Merrylands and Cabramatta, were suspended for urgent track work. That is not unusual. After my electorate was ignored for years by Premiers O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian, Perrottet and their Cabinets, I am delighted that several Ministers have already recently visited Granville, including the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Paul Scully, and the Minister for Housing, and Minister for Homelessness, Rose Jackson, to announce planning reforms being implemented by the Minns Labor Government to support investment in social and affordable housing.

The Government's focus is on aligning infrastructure and development to create a cohesive strategy that addresses the pressing needs of the State. The reforms will pave the way for a more efficient and effective planning system that supports sustainable growth and ensures the timely delivery of essential infrastructure. I referred earlier to the railway timetable review. The alignment of planning laws with processes such as the railway timetable review means that the Government can create a comprehensive framework that optimises transportation networks and maximises their connectivity to residential and commercial areas. That will lead to improved accessibility and better opportunities for citizens, fostering vibrant communities that thrive.

The reforms grant the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office an expanded State-significant development approval pathway for projects of a substantial scale of 75 homes or more, or with a capital investment exceeding \$30 million, as part of a comprehensive review of the State's overall planning system. It will enable the Government to fast-track the construction of critical infrastructure and address the housing crisis. In addition to those reforms, the Government is also empowering Landcom and giving it access to the same State-significant development pathway if its projects include at least 50 per cent affordable housing. That approach ensures that the planning system aligns with the Government's goals of delivering diverse and inclusive communities.

Last week I was delighted to join Premier Chris Minns and Deputy Premier Prue Car at Merrylands High School to announce a significant milestone in the New South Wales Government's ongoing efforts to address the teacher workforce crisis in our schools. In less than two months, nearly 7,000 teachers and support staff have accepted offers to become permanent employees, showcasing the dedication of the Minns Labor Government to fulfilling its election promise. The Government's commitment was clear: to offer permanent contracts to 16,000 temporary teachers and school-based support staff by the beginning of term 4. That commitment aims to reverse the alarming workforce shortage in New South Wales public schools, which witnessed a record 1,854 resignations last year. That is more than the number of teachers who retired.

The feedback received by the Department of Education indicates that some teachers who were contemplating leaving the profession have now chosen to stay, thanks to this initiative. It is disheartening to note that since 2017 only 63 per cent of the teaching workforce in New South Wales public schools has the security of a permanent position. It is a consequence of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government's under-investment in teachers. Despite the former Government's pledge to convert 10,000 teachers to permanent contracts, which was made on 16 October 2022, it failed to make any progress whatsoever towards achieving that promise prior to the election.

If one considers that in two months the Government has made offers of permanency to almost 7,000 teachers, it is clear that those opposite were not really trying because the demand for permanency by temporary teachers is there. The acceptance of those offers of permanency is a testament to the value that the Labor Government places on our public education system and the individuals who contribute to it. By granting permanent positions in our schools, we provide teachers with the security and peace of mind that is necessary for them to excel in their profession and deliver quality education to our students. Our goal is to establish a stable and secure workforce, which will lead to better educational outcomes in our classrooms.

This milestone represents a vote of confidence in our Government's actions and its commitment to restoring pride in the teaching profession, preventing the further attrition of talented educators. In the words of Premier Chris Minns, "We want more teachers, in front of the classroom, permanently." This development is beneficial not only for our teachers but also for our children and the overall quality of education in New South Wales. I express my deepest gratitude to the almost 7,000 teachers and support staff who accepted offers of permanency. Their dedication and commitment to our education system is commendable, and I am confident that together we will create a brighter future for our students.

I also express my sincere gratitude for the Government's commitment to addressing the pressing educational needs of my electorate. Before the pandemic Westmead Public School was the largest primary school in New South Wales, with around 1,620 students. It is in desperate need of attention. The school's current infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate the growing student population, with over 20 demountable classrooms encroaching on playgrounds and other spaces. Westmead Public School's outstanding reputation

extends beyond our local boundaries. Families from India actively seek residences within the catchment area. The former Liberal Government was aware of that growth for years—I told it so over and over again—but it failed to address the need for a new school, despite making a commitment to doing so in 2018. However, it never even found a site.

Half of Westmead's residents are now excluded from the school's catchment area, and the alternative school requires a challenging two-kilometre walk or 30-minute drive on congested roads. While funding was eventually allocated in the 2022-23 budget—to a grand total of \$819,000—there was no evidence that the former Government made any progress. It kept students, parents and teachers at Westmead in the dark. I am delighted that the Labor Government has committed to building a new school for Westmead. I will work with the Deputy Premier and education Minister, Prue Car, to make the school a reality. It is not only in school education that the Government is making a real difference. The Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education has hit the ground running. He has already visited my electorate and Granville TAFE on several occasions. *[Extension of time]*

Granville TAFE was once the second largest TAFE in New South Wales, second only to Ultimo. Over the past decade the Liberal Government decimated TAFE in this State, and Granville TAFE was seemingly targeted, with the proposed sale of its South Street site. Significant cuts resulted in a decline in teachers, enrolment numbers, apprenticeships and traineeships. Those statistics paint a stark picture of the challenges faced by our vocational education system. It is imperative that we assess the full impact of those cuts and chart a course towards rebuilding TAFE. The Minister has announced a crucial step forward in the Government's commitment to revitalising the vocational education system in New South Wales by launching a comprehensive review of TAFE, aimed at restoring it to its former glory and equipping our State with the necessary skills for the future.

To lead this important review, the Government has assembled a distinguished panel of experts. Dr Michele Bruniges, AM, a seasoned education professional with extensive government experience, will serve as the expert chair. Joining her are esteemed panel members Professor Verity Firth, AM, a renowned advocate for education, and Jason Ardler, PSM, a respected leader from the New South Wales public sector. Their collective knowledge and expertise will guide us in developing robust recommendations. The review will not be conducted in isolation. The Government recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders across the board, including with education providers, industry representatives, students and professional bodies.

Through a series of consultations, which will include a skills summit and roundtable discussions, the Government will gather valuable insights and perspectives to shape the future of vocational education in New South Wales. Now is the time to reflect on what is working and what needs improving. We must seize the opportunity to address the skills shortages in our State and provide equal access to vocational education and training for all. The success of our learners and the future prosperity of New South Wales depend on it. The people of the Granville electorate very much look forward to the Government getting on with the job of addressing the failures of the past decade. Whether it be in education, transport, roads or housing, we have suffered enough. We look forward to seeing the progress that has clearly begun, as we saw with the fantastic results of the recruitment of permanent teachers.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:44):** I contribute to debate on the address-in-reply to the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. As was outlined by the member for Cessnock in his contribution to debate, I too remember coming into this House for the first time in 2011, following a horrible defeat for the Labor Party. I was one of only 20 Labor MPs in this House. Indeed, it was a baptism of fire for me and for my fellow Illawarra MP and good friend the member for Keira. When I entered Parliament in 2011 we were heavily outnumbered, but in hindsight it was a fantastic apprenticeship for those of us who made it through those tough years in opposition. We will not take being in government for granted. We will strive to ensure that the people of New South Wales are rewarded for electing the Minns Labor Government.

In 2011 many people said we would never recover from our defeat, but just 12 years later we are back in government. I thank the people of Shellharbour for their patience and congratulate all the members who were elected for the first time in 2023. Having your local MP stuck in opposition for 12 years is not easy. It can be frustrating. I assure every resident of Shellharbour that I will not waste a moment of the next four years. Being elected to represent the people of Shellharbour for a fourth term is extremely humbling. I am grateful that I have such a supportive family and amazing team behind me. My electorate is located in one of the most beautiful and fastest growing parts of this State. While we are blessed with more than our fair share of natural beauty—with the majestic Lake Illawarra as our centrepiece—our fast population growth means we desperately need our fair share of infrastructure, and I am committed to making sure that we get it.

I am committed to ensuring that the Illawarra community has a world-class women's trauma recovery centre to provide much-needed specialist services for women impacted by domestic and family violence. It is a first not only for New South Wales and Australia but also for the world. As members of the House know, I am extremely passionate about helping victims of domestic and family violence, and this trauma recovery centre will

save lives. Trauma from domestic and family violence impacts every member of a survivor's family, especially their children. The Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre will help to break the pattern of abuse and minimise intergenerational issues related to domestic and family violence. I am committed to ensuring that my community has a world-class hospital at Shellharbour that will grow with our community. Located in Dunmore, the new Shellharbour Hospital will serve the communities of Shellharbour, Kiama and the broader Illawarra for decades to come. I look forward to its opening in a few short years.

I am committed to ensuring that our current stock of social housing is well maintained and that we build more social housing across the Shellharbour electorate to support those in need. The former Government sold off our social housing assets over the past decade. It will take years to fix that mess. I am committed to ensuring fair access to the M1 Princes Motorway for residents of the Dapto area. It is a travesty that the people of Dapto can hear and see the M1 but cannot fairly access it. I am committed to better public schools across the Shellharbour electorate, including by providing a new covered outdoor learning area for Dapto High School. Recent greenfield subdivisions in places like Shell Cove, Flinders, Wongawilli and Horsley are attracting hardworking families from all over New South Wales, and they deserve decent public school infrastructure.

I am excited that after 12 years of inaction, the Minns Labor Government will start planning a new high school in Flinders and public school in West Dapto. I am committed to providing fair funding for community sporting infrastructure across my electorate after years of pork-barrelling by those opposite. We desperately need more funding for sporting fields and amenities buildings. The Government will start by funding upgrades to amenities buildings, fencing and lighting in Horsley, Lake Illawarra, Barrack Heights and Warilla. Whilst those opposite would no doubt like to forget their last term in government and the election defeat in March 2023, it is important to me and my community that the truth is known about just how poorly the people of my electorate were treated by some members opposite.

I say "some members" because I had wonderful dealings with members of the former Government, including with the former health Minister, Brad Hazzard, who put electorate boundaries and margins aside in the interests of the Illawarra community and its new hospital. For others, they never missed an opportunity to take much-needed funding away from my community and redirect it to their own electorates. It was shameful. I will not let these people rewrite history. I will hold them to account. I will ensure that the people of my electorate never, ever forget.

I spent a good amount of my 12 years in opposition fighting, on behalf of my community, against proposals from those opposite. They wanted to build a jail in a brand new housing estate. They wanted to privatise Shellharbour Hospital. They wanted to develop the beautiful Killalea Regional Park. The member for Kiama led the charge on every single one of those projects, and now that he is on the crossbench he is doing his best to rewrite history and distance himself from the decisions that he made when he was a proud member of the former Liberal Government. A couple of examples, both on the M1 Princes Motorway, are the Yallah interchange and the Oak Flats interchange, which bookend the Albion Park Rail bypass. The Yallah interchange was due to be built as part of the Albion Park Rail bypass, until the member for Kiama decided against it and decoupled it.

From 2017 onwards, I implored the government of the day to build this critical access point for the residents of Dapto, but to no avail. The member for Kiama told my community that the bypass was "the Albion Park Rail bypass, not the Dapto bypass". They asked him why he decided that the Yallah interchange was not worthy of funding and he stated that the money would be better spent elsewhere. Do we need to guess where that money was spent? That is right, it was spent in Kiama—what a shock. The member for Kiama did not care what local residents around Dapto thought or wanted. They do not live in his electorate, so why would he worry about them? It is typical of "Gareth from marketing".

Now let us have a look at the Oak Flats interchange. Back in November 2018, when the member for Kiama was still a member of the Liberal Government, he spoke about how good the Oak Flats interchange would be with traffic lights on it. He said the lights would "enhance traffic flow". Now that the traffic lights have not worked out, he wants to blame the bureaucrats and has demanded that I fix up his mess. In April the member for Kiama was on social media telling anyone who would listen that I am now in charge of roads in our region—that must be news to the relevant Ministers—and that the Oak Flats interchange is in my electorate, so it is my problem. In fact, it is part of his pet project, the Albion Park Rail bypass. Things are never his fault. He is the Scott Morrison of the Illawarra. The Oak Flats interchange is squarely in the electorate of Kiama. It is the member's fault. It was his pet project. I cannot wait to fix the mess created by those opposite, but I ask my community to be patient. It will take longer than 12 weeks to fix 12 years of absolute neglect from the former Liberal Government. There is plenty of work to be done and I look forward to the challenge.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:52):** I make a contribution to the address-in-reply to the Lieutenant-Governor's speech at the opening of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament of New South Wales. I start by thanking the Hon. Andrew Bell for his warm welcome to all members. I also extend my warm congratulations to

everyone who has been elected to the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. In particular, I welcome and congratulate the new members of 2023—one of whom sits opposite from me now, the member for Holsworthy. There has been an air of collegiality and collaboration amongst us thus far and I would like to think that will continue for four years; I am probably being a bit hopeful. We will see how that goes, but it has been good to see that representatives from across the political spectrum have been getting on well and chatting. I think it reflects on the election campaign. During the campaign, both leaders took a step up from what we had seen in previous campaigns across all three levels of government over the past few years. I commend the new Premier and the former Premier for that relatively clean campaign.

I particularly call out a bunch of new members from my neck of the woods. The member for Holsworthy, the member for Liverpool and I were on a panel a couple of weeks ago about the Liverpool Innovation Precinct. We were asked what the three of us could do to spur investment in Liverpool. My response to that question was to suggest that perhaps we take a step back and we look at the wider south-western Sydney area. The member for Fairfield is new, the member for Cabramatta is new and the member for Camden was also elected as part of the class of 2023. When you look at that cohort, I think it is fair to say we are all of a similar vintage, we have all lived and worked in the area and we all have a passion for the south-west. I think that bodes well for the area. It is an area that is growing very quickly, especially with the new airport and aerotropolis on the way. Once again, I extend a hand of cooperation to work with those members over the next four years, if not longer. I, of course, was elected as the member for Leppington. I am the first ever member for Leppington.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Long may you reign!

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Long may I reign, indeed. It is important to note that Leppington is a new electorate. It was formed out of six existing electorates and covers three local government areas. Much like the need to pull that community together and create a cohesive community of interest for the electorate of Leppington, there is a lot of work to do within the electorate around building a cohesive community. I am glad to be part of a Minns Labor Government that has an excellent plan to get on with that. I speak about a few of those issues and about how we are going to get on with the job of fixing up 12 years of neglect that came from the previous Government and build what will be an amazing community over the next few decades or so.

First and foremost, we need to address the education system. In the short time that this Parliament has been sitting we have heard about the state of the education system and the actions that the Minns Labor Government has taken to fix things. When I was out knocking on doors, day in, day out, for many, many months in very hot weather, making sure I kept my fluids up, education was probably the biggest issue that came up, especially in the newer suburbs of Austral, Leppington and Denham Court. Despite tens of thousands of houses being built in that area, despite tens of thousands of people moving there—many families looking to get a fresh start in the south-west, many young families—there was not a single public high school in those three suburbs. I think that is a reflection of how much the previous Government neglected not just the education system overall but in particular the education system in my neck of the woods.

I am very pleased that the Minns Labor Government has committed to building a new public high school in Leppington within our first term, and we are already getting on with the job. I have been pleased to chat with School Infrastructure NSW and the Minister about getting things started and getting them done quickly, because people keep asking me, "When is the new school coming?". They have kids who are in primary school or about to enter primary school. It is very difficult now with the increased cost of living to be confronted with a potential 15- to 20-minute drive in the opposite direction from your job just to drop your kids off at high school. It is not how we should be living in 2023, so I am very pleased to see we are getting on with the job there.

When public schools are not built, it creates a knock-on effect in other areas. There is nowhere to go to school in Austral, Leppington and Denham Court, so kids go to school in catchment areas several suburbs over. What happens, of course, is that those schools become overcrowded and there is a knock-on effect down the line. I am pleased that the Minns Labor Government has a plan to address school overcrowding. In particular, during the election campaign, we announced that we would be undertaking upgrades to two public primary schools in my electorate, Dalmeny Public School and Greenway Park Public School. Both of those schools are at almost double their capacity. At one stage Dalmeny Public School had a student population in the 900s; it only has capacity for 550 students. I was pleased to go out and speak with the P&C a couple of weeks ago. They are very pleased to see there is a government in office that will start to tackle overcrowding. The schoolteachers there have already told me that they have been speaking with people from School Infrastructure. They have had architects out there. Again, we are already getting on with the job, which is pleasing to see.

The other issue is our health system. That was another topic during the campaign. Again, it is a very big issue in my electorate of Leppington. If members are keen readers of the Bureau of Health Information statistics every quarter like I am, they will note that, time and again across a whole range of measures, the South Western Sydney Local Health District—and particularly areas around Leppington—has some of the worst health statistics



in the State. That is backed up by anecdotal evidence that I have heard from nurses and voters in my electorate about what happens when they try to engage with the public health system.

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

*Public Interest Debate*

**PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:00):** I move:

That this House supports the removal of the wages cap by the New South Wales Government.

For 12 long years, the former Government neglected the essential workers of New South Wales and suppressed their wages in real terms. Remember when former Premier Berejiklian stood in this Chamber and called out, "We are the party of the workers"? Hypocrites! Yet the former Government did nothing during 12 long years to help the essential workers of New South Wales. In fact, former Premier Perrottet said during the election campaign, in opposition to removing the wages cap, that it would blow a nearly \$9 billion hole in the budget. Yet the former Premier did not tell the people of New South Wales that his Government would leave them with a projected debt of \$187 billion and a \$7 billion black hole in the budget. That is where the black hole in the budget comes from—not from the wages cap. To add insult to injury, the former Treasurer said:

This would be a disaster for the budget, it would destroy the budget, it would destroy the economy ...

**Mr Matt Kean:** That would be me.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** That is him. We will see how he votes today. Mr Perrottet claimed that scrapping the wages cap on public sector wages in a high-inflationary environment would lead to fewer funds for infrastructure expenses. He said that, without the cap, public sector wages would increase at a rate that is not controllable, meaning other areas would need to be cut. The Minns Labor Government was elected with a clear mandate to scrap the wages cap and to sit down for a genuine negotiation with our essential workers. That commitment is essential to our agenda and critical to rebuilding essential services in New South Wales. The Government has offered public sector workers a 4.5 per cent wage increase in the 2023-24 budget, comprising a 4 per cent pay increase and 0.5 per cent superannuation increase. It represents the biggest increase to public sector wages in over a decade. It is also 1.5 percentage points higher than what was on offer under the previous Government.

Unions are lobbying strongly on behalf of their members. That is their job. We would expect nothing less. But this is an important step on the path to fix the recruitment and retention crisis impacting essential services after 12 years of Liberal-Nationals wage suppression. The former Government left workers in New South Wales with lower wages than when it came to office. In fact, real wages for public sector workers in New South Wales have declined by 8.7 per cent since June 2020. The boost to wages under the Minns Government will begin to reverse that decline. Under the Minns Labor Government, the wages boost will impact real frontline essential workers whose wages have been going backwards for so long.

Under this offer, a registered first-year nurse looking after the sick, our children and our vulnerable citizens will receive an additional \$2,694 a year. A qualified firefighter, who puts their life on the line to protect and save property and lives, will get an extra \$3,491 a year. A second-year paramedic—those brave men and women who race into danger to save the people of the State—will receive an additional \$3,189 per year. A second-year correctional officer on the front line in our prison system in dangerous and often volatile conditions will pocket an additional \$2,799. A school support staff member, who helps teachers in classrooms and cares for students with disabilities and behavioural disorders, will end up with an extra \$2,484 a year.

Twelve years of neglect cannot be undone overnight, but the Government is beginning the critical work to get it right. We have announced the establishment of an industrial relations task force to be led by the former deputy president of the Fair Work Commission, Anna Booth, and former president of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission Roger Boland. The task force will bring workers, unions and government agencies together to create a new, cooperative, interest-based approach oversights by the Industrial Relations Commission. Our wage offer will allow for pay rises for most workers from 1 July while the task force implements a modern industrial relations framework to replace the former Government's punitive wages cap.

I take a minute to talk about the former Government. The former Treasurer let the cat out of the bag when he told employers that the wages cap was put in place to stop the Government competing with the private sector on wages. All we are hearing now are contradictions from the Opposition. In the second week of May the former Treasurer claimed that we were taking too long to scrap the wages cap. So what is it? Does the Opposition want it or not? Only days later, the former roads Minister asked why it was Labor's first port of call. Which one is it?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will come to order. He will have an opportunity to contribute to debate.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** Those opposite are hypocrites. They want the wages cap removed. Will they vote for the motion today?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:08):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for that impressive contribution. I acknowledge the member for Mount Druitt, who occupies the safest real estate on the electoral pendulum for Labor. What is his reward for being such an effective local member, getting that bumper vote in his community? Is it to get a ministry? No. It is to open the batting for the Labor Party in today's public interest debate. They said, "Edmond, you can open the batting and lead the public interest debate tonight—so appreciative are we of the work you have done in Mount Druitt." Hasn't he done a fine job tonight talking about the wages cap? It is the only thing the Labor Party has actually done on the wages cap. Let us not forget the member for Mount Druitt.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Point of order: This is a serious motion. I ask that the member address the motion rather than attack the member for Mount Druitt. I hoped that in politics in New South Wales we had moved away from this, but obviously the former Treasurer has not realised that. He still thinks he is in government.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Prospect will resume his seat and allow me to rule.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the point of order. This is a very important topic. It is so important because it was—

**Mr Steve Whan:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Monaro will resume his seat. The member for Hornsby will calm down. I uphold the point of order taken by the member for Prospect. I ask the member for Hornsby to return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** That is an excellent ruling, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I know.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** And an excellent point of order from the member for Smithfield. What I would say is—

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Prospect.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Prospect.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Point of order—

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Will you stop the clock, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** I ask that the member address me with proper terminology. He called me the member for Smithfield.

**The SPEAKER:** He corrected it.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** He might have been here for a long time, but I was not in Parliament when that was an electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby corrected it. We will not debate banal points of order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is a valid point of order from the member for Prospect because this is an important topic and a reminder that this Government was elected on a lie. Government members said that this was their signature policy, their number one policy. What have they done about it after 100 days in office? Have they referred it to a committee to look at? No. Have they drafted legislation to introduce in the House? No. Have they referred it to a consultative committee? No. They have got the member for Mount Druitt to run the public interest debate [PID]. They have done a PID. Good on them! Well done! That is the signature policy. That will keep members of the Health Services Union happy. No wonder union members walked out in the middle of question time.

The reality is that this Government promised to remove the wages cap, but it has done absolutely nothing. Government members have done more to help cage fighting in New South Wales than they have to look after public servants. That is what this Labor Government is about. It is all spin and no substance. If they believed in what they say and cared about public sector workers, they would have done the one thing that they promised,

which was to remove the wages cap. We are here today debating the only thing they have put up about this, and that is a PID from the poor old member for Mount Druitt. It is such an important issue to Government members that they have done absolutely nothing about it.

Let us talk about the wages cap. Government members said that removing the wages cap would create zero cost to the budget. Then, only last week, the Treasurer said there actually will be a \$612 million cost to the budget. It is magic. It is a fairytale. It is extraordinary. We think they have undercooked the books because we said at the time there would be a \$2.6 billion impact on the budget's bottom line. What we are seeing is that this Government will say one thing in public and an entirely different thing in this House. That is just like its promise to keep the budget in surplus. Already we have seen Treasurer Mookhey run the white flag up the flagpole, saying the Government will not deliver a surplus. Government members said they would keep the State's triple-A credit rating. What is the first casualty of Labor's economic vandalism? It is the State's triple-A credit rating.

They have conceded defeat on that one because that is the cost of their wages policy. Even their unions do not like it. I suspect they will find out how much they do not like it at conference in the next couple of weeks. The Labor Party promised to keep the Active Kids rebate to support families with cost-of-living relief. What have we seen? The Government slashed the Creative Kids and Active Kids programs. Where are the energy rebates that were promised? Chris Bowen is writing cheques in Canberra, but the Minns Government has not delivered a single dollar of cost-of-living relief for energy users in New South Wales like he promised. This Government is all spin and no substance. If it cared about the wages cap, it would have done more than a PID.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:13):** It is important that the former Treasurer get a history lesson. Public sector workers had their wages capped in 2011. Initially it was a budget repair measure, but despite the budget returning to surplus a few years later, the wages cap was retained by the O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian and Perrottet governments. During the election, the member for Hornsby and then Treasurer said the quiet part out loud when he revealed that the reason for retaining the wages cap was to drive down wages across the private sector as well as the public sector. In contrast, the Minns Labor Government has offered public sector workers a 4.5 per cent wage increase in 2023-24. That is comprised of a 4 per cent pay rise and a 0.5 per cent superannuation increase. It is the biggest increase to public sector wages in more than a decade. Importantly, it is 1.5 percentage points higher than what was offered by the previous Government. Further, it is an important first step to resolving the State's essential worker crisis of both recruitment and retention after 12 long years of the Liberal-Nationals wage suppression.

Are the unions lobbying strongly on behalf of their members? You bet they are. That is their job and we expect nothing less. But the Minns Government was elected with a clear mandate to scrap the wages cap and to have genuine negotiations with our essential workers. Let us talk about some of them. Our healthcare workers are on the front line every day. They are caring for us at our worst and at our most vulnerable. Members in my community and across south-western Sydney recall them turning up to work every day at the height of a pandemic that kept the rest of us at home. We recall them bearing the brunt of our confusion, our distress and our fear for our family members, neighbours and friends. I particularly recognise the community health workers at Hoxton Park Community Health Centre, whom I and the member for Leppington visited for International Nurses Day. They told me that they were often the only people who could provide support for vulnerable young families, older people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who could not access family or kinship support due to the strict COVID lockdowns in south-western Sydney.

Those workers deserve more than thanks. They deserve to have the arbitrary and punitive cap on their wages and conditions scrapped. Our healthcare workers are feeling the effects of 12 years of a Liberal-Nationals Government. They are feeling it in the city, in regional New South Wales and in Greater Western Sydney, where retention is at crisis level. In 2022 the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association took statewide industrial action on five separate occasions. The association is part of the group of public sector workers whose real wages have declined by 8.7 per cent since June 2020. They were listening when we brought an ambitious suite of health policies to the election, which included our vow to lift the wages cap. Under Labor's policy to deliver fair wages to public sector workers, a 4.5 per cent wage increase means that a first-year registered nurse will receive an additional \$2,694 a year. For some, this could mean that they actually see a future in New South Wales, which is what we want.

The former Government's policy to impose a cap on the wages of essential workers has seen their wages and living standards go backwards. In fact, more than a decade of wage suppression by the former State and Federal governments has been a key driver of the cost-of-living pressures facing so many households today. I was shocked to learn that the rate of part-time workers living in poverty has increased by almost 50 per cent, and people in Greater Western Sydney are feeling the brunt. In fact, 28 per cent of part-time workers in Liverpool are living in poverty. That is unacceptable. The situation will not change unless we start with our clear mandate to scrap the unfair wages cap.

We are committed to rebuilding essential services in this State. We have been clear: We have said it will take time. We need to get this right. Fixing the 12 years of neglect of our health system and health workers is not an overnight job. Our communities understand. They want us to start by scrapping the wages cap and ensuring that those who serve our community when we are at our most vulnerable are rewarded for their hard work. Our communities want to make sure that the people on the front lines who deliver government services every day are able to stay in this State so they can build a future for themselves and their families. That is what they deserve.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:18):** On behalf of the Greens, I thank the member for Mount Druitt for moving this motion. I always welcome the opportunity to talk about giving workers in New South Wales a pay rise. I hope we see the Minns Labor Government commit to not only negotiating with the unions but also scrapping the wages cap. The right to get fair pay for fair work has been a problem in New South Wales for a long time. I recognise that our public sector workers—our nurses, midwives, health workers, paramedics, teachers, and transport and frontline staff—have all worked tirelessly year after year to keep us safe during a crisis. Now we need to see them remunerated properly. The Greens absolutely support an end to the public sector wages cap. The cap has meant that, as the cost of living rose, as inflation went up and as billionaires and big corporations reaped record profits, public sector wages and conditions went backwards.

We need to remember the history of the wages cap. It was put in place by a former Labor Government. The commitment to scrapping it now should also indicate a commitment to moving on from what was a neoliberal agenda under the last Labor Government that saw a concerning move towards privatisation and a sell-off of public assets. There was a failure to listen to the needs of workers and a failure to protect and support our public sector. I hope the motion and the actions of the incoming Minns Government indicate its willingness to put aside those dark days of the past and move to give workers real wage increases. The Greens absolutely agree that we need to scrap the public sector wages cap to ensure that our teachers, nurses, midwives, paramedics, transport and public sector workers have a fair wage.

But let us be clear: Just scrapping the wages cap is not enough. Public sector workers need a real wage increase to match the rising cost of living. We heard from the former Treasurer earlier. Members now sitting on Opposition benches want to have both sides in the debate, as the member for Mount Druitt pointed out. On the one hand they are saying, "This is scandal! Look how much it is going to cost!" We saw how much money they spent on their corporate mates when they were in government. On the other hand they are saying, "Come on! Where's the action? Why haven't you done more?" The hypocrisy of members of the former Liberal-Nationals Government is beyond belief. It will continue to go on; I feel certain. I am running a bit of a competition as I watch from the crossbench to see how long the Labor Government will blame everything on the former Liberal-Nationals Government and how long are the Liberals and The Nationals will play both sides of the coin.

**Dr Joe McGirr:** Two years.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** Two years? I reckon longer. On the one hand, Opposition members are on the side of the workers, and they want to see some action and change. On the other hand, they are freaking out about how much it will cost. The Greens want to see the public sector wages cap abolished and the delivery of real wage increases for public sector workers. We know that we can pay for it. We can pay for it by making the big polluters pay. We can pay for it by making sure that those who are making huge amounts of money off the property industry pay. We can do it by making sure that in this budget workers are given priority over and above giving tax concessions and benefits to the big end of town.

The Greens stand firm in our support of the public sector workers who have taken to the streets just outside this Chamber and taken strike action to demand better pay and conditions. We support mandated staff-to-patient ratios in hospitals. We know that mums matter and babies count. We back the call for 24/7 patient transport vehicles to keep ambulances free for emergencies. We recognise that there is a need to fix the chronic staff shortages in schools and back the calls for urgent intervention to alleviate the unreasonable workloads that teachers are facing. We back the demands for genuine investment to address the longstanding safety issues burdening our public transport system and to bring the inner west buses and the entire bus network back into public hands. While we are talking about renationalising things, let us bring back Public Works and scrap the public housing maintenance contracts. We are committed to ending the wages cap. We are committed to seeing this reform happen so that we can secure better wages and conditions for the people of New South Wales.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:23):** The Minns Government was elected with a clear mandate to scrap the unfair wages cap and rebuild essential services in New South Wales. Up until 24 March this year, I was an essential worker.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** You still are.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** I am still essential to the people of Camden. But I was a teacher. I was a frontline worker, and I was definitely at the coalface during COVID. We used to make a joke in the staffroom that being at the coalface meant that you were literally frozen. You were frozen in time when it came to wages, and you were frozen out of any negotiations. I discovered when we talked amongst ourselves that many of the teachers who worked with me were unable to live in the area in which they were teaching. In fact, when I was doorknocking during the campaign, I discovered that a large number of people who moved to Camden are teachers, firefighters, paramedics and nurses who all leave the suburb to go to the suburbs they need to work in because they cannot afford to buy there. That has a knock-on effect. It means that those integral members of the community cannot become parts of the areas in which they work. They are not able to volunteer on the weekends.

When I was doorknocking, firefighters from Narellan and Camden told me they were not able to get extra training because it would tip them over the wages cap and that was not able to happen. They were not able to get the training because it would have meant that they would be too qualified to run into a fire on our behalf. These are people who have chosen to serve the community on our behalf. None of them went into their jobs for the express purpose of getting a high wage. They went in to serve us, to serve our community. One of the jokes we often used to make in teaching is that the minute you said that your job was a vocation or you were serving the community it meant the former Government did not want to pay you. We would consistently say that if you wanted to be in the job when you were five years old, chances are you were not going to be able to afford a house when you were in the job as a 40-year-old. During COVID our paramedics and nurses undoubtedly carried the load for us. They were going in and doing jobs that we did not want to do. They were not in it for the money, but they were frozen out of being able to negotiate any future wage rise in any real way.

Under the former Government, real wages declined by 8.7 per cent since June 2020. That compares with a decline of 6.8 per cent for private sector workers over the same period. Let me reiterate that. Under the former Liberal-Nationals Government, New South Wales essential workers were left with lower wages than before it came into office. I think we can all agree that prices went up, but wages did not. That left New South Wales as the only State with a wages cap in place. The effect of frozen wages means that many of our essential workers have moved interstate. In fact, a candidate in a borderline electorate whom I spoke to during the campaign said they were better off working interstate. It was much better for them to do their job interstate but then fight for the real ideas of New South Wales.

A lot of the people I spoke to, particularly firefighters and paramedics, needed to get second or third jobs to afford their mortgage. Without fail, they are leaving their industry. People told me before the election it was not 60 per cent of teachers who were thinking about leaving teaching; it was 100 per cent. I know of six resignations sitting on a principal's desk that had written on a Post-it note on them: "In case of a Liberal Party win". This is the situation that we have come into. It is important that we give the message to essential workers that we support them and respect what they do. We need to bring frontline workers back to New South Wales and into the communities where they work so that they can be active and effective members of our community. We can do that through removing the wages cap.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:29):** Just over three months into government and time and time again we see the proof that this Labor Government cannot manage money. When Labor cannot manage money, Mr Speaker, they come after yours—not yours specifically, but around the State.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** They might come after yours, too. We have had a pay freeze. This Government has barely got their feet under the table and its poor policy decisions are already damaging the State budget and hitting New South Wales families. That is what three months of Labor looks like. Imagine what three years or even four years might look like. Let us be clear: Labor's removal of the wages cap presents the biggest threat to the State's two triple-A credit ratings. Despite the Premier and Treasurer stating time and time again before the election that any rise in public sector wages in excess of the existing wages policy would be fully offset by productivity gains—

**Mr Stephen Bali:** What? You do not trust our public service workers?

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** I do not trust the economic management by those on the Government side.

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

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** We have seen that there are no productivity gains and those statements are simply not true. In fact, in its submission to the Parliamentary Budget Office, Labor said that its wages policy would cost zero dollars over the forward estimates.

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

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** The Government's offer of a 4.5 per cent wage rise for 2023-24 will cost the budget approximately \$618 million and \$2.5 billion over the forward estimates. So \$2.5 billion does not sound like zero dollars—or maybe it does to Labor, maybe that is how Labor guys do their maths. At the time of the election, the Parliamentary Budget Office made it clear that Labor's wage policy posed significant risks to the New South Wales budget and stated:

Achievement of productivity savings will depend in large ... on Government's ability to negotiate these savings with unions.

This Government still has no plans to find productivity savings. The only plan is to slash vital cost-of-living programs for New South Wales families and that is what is happening. We are already seeing this with Labor limiting energy relief for thousands of New South Wales households by cutting energy bill rebates. We are seeing this with Labor's cuts to Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap.

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

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Cutting Active Kids is not a productivity saving. It is just mean. It will mean that families will pay more for their kids' sport.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** It will go to those who cannot afford it.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Labor is taking an axe to Saturday sport to pay for Labor's unfunded promises. I know that the member for Mount Druitt cannot listen to it because it is hard. Another thing that is hard to hear is that it was a former Labor Premier who, in 2008, recognised the need for a wages cap. Mr Rees said in 2008 that the wages cap was, "not only fiscally responsible; it is essential." That is from a Labor Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley is becoming way too excited. I remind him that he is on two calls to order already.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Labor was so beholden to its union paymasters that Labor members did not have the stomach to introduce a wages cap. Labor chose fiscal irresponsibility, and New South Wales suffered as a result. So not even four months into government, once again they are bowing to the unions and dismantling the wages cap. They are once again putting the New South Wales budget at risk. They are once again choosing fiscal irresponsibility. They are once again risking our State's two triple-A credit ratings. Labor is so beholden to the unions that soon 52 Martin Place will not be the offices of the New South Wales Government; it will be the offices of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** You've got the wrong body. That's a national body.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** They are moving in as well. Employee-related expenses are 40 per cent of the New South Wales budget.

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

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** The Coalition had a strong record of economic management that delivered two triple-A credit ratings. At the end of 2018-19, before the once-in-a-lifetime COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented natural disasters, the budget showed a \$4.2 billion surplus and net debt was in the black at \$11.2 billion. Mr Speaker, you cannot trust Labor when it comes to the essentials that New South Wales families rely on—you cannot—and this decision proves that.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:34):** The Labor Government is using the oldest trick in the book: blaming all of its problems on the previous Government. Only, Labor members do not have the receipts to back it up. The myth of the \$7 billion budget black hole has been worked up by the Minns-Mookhey Labor Government as cover for its plans to massively cut services and cost-of-living measures to the people of New South Wales. The reality is that the choices Labor is making and the programs it is cutting are to pay for its unfunded promises. Labor's own election promises are producing a black hole. At the election, Labor submitted a costing to the independent Parliamentary Budget Office—I will come back to that shortly. The wage offer of 4.5 per cent is well below the promised level of increase made to unions and still comes in at a whopping \$618 million in additional cost to New South Wales taxpayers.

Labor's policies present the biggest threat to our State's two triple-A credit ratings. Despite the warnings of the ratings agencies, we have seen the industrial relations Minister cheering about busting the wages cap while the Treasurer lectures on fiscal restraint in the other place. During the election campaign the Labor Party made a promise that any rise in public sector wages in excess of the former wages policy would be fully offset by identified productivity gains and hence have a net zero effect on the budget. We now know that the offer of a 4.5 per cent wage rise for 2023-24—1.5 per cent above what we had offered in government—will cost the budget an unfunded \$618 million in 2023-24 alone, which is approximately \$2.5 billion over the four years to 2026-27.

The member for Mount Druitt spoke a little bit about real wage increases. It is important to note that if we look at the 10 years up until 2021 and do a little bit of research, the wage cap delivered a wage increase that was 3 per cent above inflation over that time. Labor members can talk a big game. The member for Camden also spoke about other States and their wage caps. Other States have retained their wage caps and they include Western Australia and Victoria—great conservative States, apparently, that have kept their wages caps. But let us go to the Parliamentary Budget Office and have a look at some of their statements. Under "Fund Regional Growth Initiatives", zero on the front. On the back we see 17 programs totalling \$43.67 million. How much of that is for Coalition electorates? Is it half? Is it a little bit less than half? Is it eight out of 17? No. Four out of 17 of those are in Coalition electorates. In fact, the member for Queanbeyan has more in his electorate—

**Mr Steve Whan:** Monaro.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Well, Queanbeyan is in Monaro. It is a suburb in Monaro. The member for Monaro has more commitments in his electorate alone out of this fund than the entire National Party with their 13 electorates—sorry, 11 electorates. I went back to the past. Let me have a look at another one, the "Housing Fund".

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

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Over the forward estimates, there was \$10 million for housing—not very ambitious. Under "Lismore Build Back Better", there is zero. There is nothing in the forward estimates. For the "Wages Policy" of the whole Government, it is blank, zero, nothing. I will read from the back of the statement:

Under the assumptions of the policy, there would be no Budget impact in the four years to 2025-26.

We know what the budget impact is. They are cutting Active Kids. They have not even started the university case. They are not even allowing regional universities to apply, and Labor has cut Active Kids by nearly 85 per cent, which is a disgrace. What we will see in the future will be worse health outcomes for younger people in New South Wales because of the policies of this Government. I think Government members should be ashamed of themselves. I move:

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

- (1) Notes Labor's unfunded wages bill is costing the NSW Budget \$2.5 billion.
- (2) Notes Labor is cutting Active Kids, Creative Kids, First Lap and looking to cut other cost of living measures to fund their wages policy black hole.
- (3) Calls on NSW Labor to put families before union bosses.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:39):** By leave: I thank the House for the opportunity to make a brief contribution to debate on public sector wages. During the recent State election campaign, I, and many of my colleagues in this Chamber and the other place, supported lifting the wages cap. It is an important and necessary move and I recognise that it was also an election commitment from NSW Labor. I say that it is important for three reasons: one, it will help people with cost-of-living pressures; two, it will help the regions with their real workforce shortages; and three, it presents, if done right, a real opportunity for the public service to improve outcomes for people in New South Wales.

Clearly, the cost of living is rising. There is no end in sight. The cash rate is 3.85 per cent, with inflation at 6 per cent. Energy costs are at an all-time high. People are feeling the pressure. This is a concrete step so that people feel that they are not going backwards. I once again pay tribute to public sector workers for their support for society during COVID and, in my region, during the fires and in the floods as well. We rely on these services, so I think recognition of that by helping workers with the cost of living is important. Further, I also recognise that there is a severe workforce shortage, especially in health and education, in the regions. We need to better compete with other States so that we stop losing staff to them. We need to keep NSW Health, for example, as an attractive place to work. That will mean desirable conditions and wages.

We cannot afford to keep losing staff to other States. Right now, that is what is happening. It is a hard sell for a junior nurse to work at a regional hospital at a lower rate of pay and with less desirable conditions than their colleagues just across the border, where they would get more money and better conditions. We need to attract and retain staff in New South Wales, especially in the regions, and raising the wage cap is an important, meaningful and real way to achieve that goal. But finally, I believe that the wages cap should be raised for a set period—I would suggest a period of two to three years—and then it should be reviewed and evaluated.

There is an opportunity presented, if we get this right, to improve outcomes for the people of New South Wales. That will mean negotiating genuine productivity improvements. It is true that at the moment the system simply does not allow for that. But when I have spoken to union members who are craving for the Industrial Relations Commission to look at the wages cap, the issue is not just about greater wages. It is about the opportunity

to bring up their ideas for workplace improvement and better outcomes, and to negotiate those in a meaningful way with the Government. That mechanism simply does not exist at the moment. I offer an example from my point of view. My background is in health. One of the issues in health is the rate of handwashing to reduce infections in hospitals. Yet, to this day, ambulance workers and doctors are still below the minimum required standard of 80 per cent in handwashing rates. Why would that not be a negotiated outcome in a productivity settlement?

It is a simple change, and it would result in real health benefits and savings. I accept that there is need to do work in terms of the Industrial Relations Commission, because it is currently not fit for purpose for these productivity negotiations. I hope that the Government will heed the advice and enable the Industrial Relations Commission to do the real work of making real agreements that deliver productivity outcomes. What we do not want to happen is what I have experienced when I worked with the health service previously—that is, that a productivity saving simply got translated into a cut in the service budget. If that happens, then we will not get better productivity.

It is my contention—and I make this contention seriously—that we need a forensic investigation into the capacity for productivity. We need a system that will enable workers and management to come together and genuinely craft real productivity gains that will lead to better outcomes for people in this State. But we need the commitment to be genuine. We do not need a system where a wage rise is given, and a budget is cut, and we walk away from it. I encourage the Government to look at what it can do with its reforms to the Industrial Relations Commission so that at the same time that we are proceeding to lift the wages cap, we develop a system that will deliver real outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:44):** In reply: Government members have made positive contributions to the debate; Opposition members have contributed nothing. Nevertheless, I thank the member for Hornsby, the member for Liverpool, the member for Newtown, the member for Camden, the member for Vacluse, the member for Coffs Harbour and the member for Wagga Wagga. But the most critical thing in this debate has been the hypocrisy of Opposition members. On one hand, they are claiming that the wages cap will destroy the economy. They claim that if we remove the wages cap, the sky is going to fall in; the world or the economy is going to collapse. Yet the former Treasurer said in May—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** I do not believe anyone on this side of the Chamber claimed that. We just claimed that Labor governments are very poor managers of the economy. According to today's statement, we do not need to give a number—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat or leave the Chamber. I will not accept such a point of order at this stage.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** My point is the hypocrisy of members opposite, who do not know what they stand for. On one hand they say that they do not want to remove the wages cap because it is going to destroy the economy. On the other hand, the former Treasurer claims that giving essential workers an increase of 4.5 per cent is not substantial enough. On one hand, we should not remove the wages cap. On the other hand, 4.5 per cent is not going far enough. In his contribution, the member for Hornsby was more interested in the electorate of Mount Druitt than in looking after the workers of New South Wales.

The member for Liverpool made a very important point about why it is important to remove the wages cap to bring equality and address the cost of living. The member for Newtown strongly supports the removal of the public sector wages cap because, as she indicated, workers are entitled to fair pay for a fair day's work. She spoke about the hypocrisy of the former Government. This is an interesting one: The member for Vacluse said that removing the wages cap is poor policy. Does the Opposition not support workers? The member for Coffs Harbour claims that the wages cap has actually increased real wages. Where are Opposition members living? Is it under a rock?

The member for Wagga Wagga made a sensible contribution. He said this is critical for people in the regions. What do members opposite stand for? Do they want to support workers and vote for the motion? By voting against the motion, they are voting against the workers. What do they stand for? [*Time expired.*]

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Mount Druitt has moved a motion, to which the member for Coffs Harbour has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**



Ayes .....34  
 Noes .....54  
 Majority.....20

## AYES

Amon, R  
 Ayyad, T  
 Clancy, J  
 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  
 Williams, L  
 Williams, R  
 Williamson, R  
 Wilson, F

## NOES

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  
 Dib, J  
 Donato, P  
 Doyle, T  
 Finn, J  
 Greenwich, A

Hagarty, N  
 Hannan, J  
 Harris, D  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kamper, S  
 Kirby, W  
 Leong, J  
 Li, J  
 McDermott, H  
 McGirr, J  
 McKeown, K  
 Mehan, D  
 Minns, C  
 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  
 Ward, G  
 Warren, G  
 Washington, K  
 Watson, A  
 Whan, S (teller)  
 Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Cooke, S

Hornery, S

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....54  
 Noes .....34  
 Majority.....20

## AYES

Aitchison, J  
 Atalla, E  
 Bali, S  
 Barr, C  
 Butler, L  
 Butler, R  
 Car, P  
 Catley, Y

Hagarty, N  
 Hannan, J  
 Harris, D  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Kaliyanda, C

Park, R  
 Quinnell, S  
 Regan, M  
 Saffin, J (teller)  
 Saliba, D  
 Scully, P  
 Shetty, K  
 Smith, T

## AYES

Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J  
Greenwich, A

Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M

Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Ward, G  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Whan, S (teller)  
Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Amon, R  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
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  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Hornery, S

Cooke, S

**Motion agreed to.***Community Recognition Statements***PETER AND MAREA GENELLOS**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:01):** Yesterday I had the great honour of presenting a Community Service Award to an amazing man, Peter Genellos. Peter was nominated for this award by his beautiful wife, Marea, who, sadly, passed away less than two months ago. This community recognition statement is dedicated to both Peter and Marea, to acknowledge them as individuals and to pay homage to the incredible union they shared. I believe we all hope to meet that special someone in our lifetime—the person who sees us at our best and at our worst, makes us laugh and makes us cry; the person who inspires us to spread our wings, explore and be curious; but the person who joins us when we want to hide from the outside world, and the person who feels like home. That is what Peter and Marea had. Marea was taken too soon; there is no doubt about that. I know how much you miss her, Peter, and that the loss you feel is immeasurable. This statement today is to remind you of the love and support that surrounds you always. You are a wonderful human being, Peter, and Marea was too.

**MINIMBAH**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:02):** Over the weekend I had the privilege of visiting Minimbah, an extraordinary organisation in Marsfield, to celebrate its fortieth anniversary. Minimbah has been making a positive impact for people living with disability in our community since 1983. The visit allowed me to tour its impressive facilities, witness firsthand the incredible work it does and join in the fortieth anniversary celebrations. From the moment I stepped foot in Minimbah, I was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm by staff and volunteers. Minimbah's commitment to providing exceptional care and support for individuals with disabilities was truly inspiring. The facilities at Minimbah are outstanding. The classrooms and meticulously maintained outdoor areas demonstrated the team's dedication to creating an inclusive and nurturing environment. I was particularly impressed by the innovative programs and activities that were on offer at Minimbah. It is always inspiring to see the profound impact that organisations like Minimbah have on the lives of the people they support. The

unwavering dedication and passion of everyone involved, ably led by chairman David Peachey, is commendable. Having worked in the disability sector, I look forward to continuing to support Minimbah over the next 40 years.

### HEROES WITH ABILITY

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:03):** Earlier this month I had the pleasure of attending the Heroes with Ability Sports Gala at the Michael Clarke Recreation Centre. Heroes with Ability is a local charity that provides an inclusive program to cater for the health and wellbeing of people living with disability. The sports gala day is an annual event where over 100 participants representing seven NRL clubs battle it out for the Afford Heroes with Ability Shield. While I have attended many of these events over the years, this was extra special as it was my first as member for Leppington. Congratulations to this year's winners, the Raiders. I give a big shout-out to Afford for making a difference in so many people's lives and for its vision and mission of disability inclusion and empowerment. Thank you to Marco, George and the team at Heroes with Ability for the event. I thank also special guests and new Heroes with Ability ambassadors Will Penisini from the Parramatta Eels and Jelisa Apps from Channel 10.

### MIRIAM KNEE, OAM

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:04):** I congratulate Hawkesbury resident Miriam Knee, who was named in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours List and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to cricket. Born in Ringwood, Victoria, Mrs Knee is a former test and one-day international captain for Australia. Starting her professional career, Miriam played her debut test match from 17 to 20 March in 1961 against New Zealand at Dunedin. From her debut until her last match in February 1972, Miriam played eight test matches for Australia. In 1973 she played six one-day international matches. During her time representing Australia in women's cricket, Mrs Knee remained a talented all-rounder, batting left-handed, bowling right-handed and fielding exceptionally in the slips. Mrs Knee's commitment to cricket saw her become a selector for Victoria in 1974 and, upon moving to New South Wales, coach for Cricket New South Wales. Miriam was awarded a life membership by Cricket Victoria and the Centenary Medal in 2000. Congratulations to Miriam Knee.

### CUMBERLAND GANG SHOW

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:05):** The Cumberland Gang Show has delighted audiences since 1969. Each year Parramatta's Riverside Theatre hosts the Cumberland Gang Show, a combined performance of Scouts NSW and Girl Guides NSW. With a cast and crew of hundreds, it provides youth members from Western Sydney a platform to explore the performing arts and express their creativity to an audience of thousands. A production of this scale is possible thanks to volunteers dedicating their time to give kids a chance to shine. Chookas to the gang for *Ignite*, including production and management teams Dr Rob Lang, Tristan Hornstra, Linda Apthorpe, David Lang, Rachel Hornstra, Kerrin Alamango, Katherine Sharoff, Adele Lockman, Naomi Azzopardi, Bec Shaw, Lachlan Davies, Jacob Selwood, Toby Stone, Renae Swinkels, Jazzmyn Alamango, TJ Furness, Emma Katen, Meagan Thompson, Matt Thompson, Peter Lee, Mark Fell, Paul Thompson, Michael Apthorpe, Jenny Wardell, Lyndall Lee, Mel Dimmock and the catering team for keeping the gang show cordial tradition alive. I will proudly wear my red scarf to the red scarf opening night in Parramatta on Wednesday 5 July.

### MARIAN STREET THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:06):** The Marian Street Theatre for Young People has been a community treasure for over 50 years, enriching the lives of young people in our area and across Sydney through the transformative power of live performance. Alongside Matt Cross, the newly elected member for Davidson, I had the pleasure of visiting the theatre earlier this year to see years 4 to 6 student performances and youth ensemble class performances. What struck me on my visit was how the students came from across Sydney to learn at this remarkable theatre company, which we are fortunate to have in our community. I was pleased that last year the theatre was able to secure a grant from the Government of over \$50,000 to ensure the continuation of its activities in 2023. I thank chair Cathy Morcom, vice-chair David Newman, executive director Lee Johnston and former artistic director Nathan Gilkes. I wish Nathan the best; he does amazing work. It is a shame the Creative Kids vouchers are being axed. It has had so much support from this young theatre group.

### SEAN VAN HOVEN

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:07):** I take this opportunity to recognise an extraordinary young author from the South Coast electorate, Sean Van Hoven. Sean is all of 14 years old, but his latest book release is not his first. Sean debuted the first book in his fantasy-adventure series last year at the age of 13. When reflecting on the process of his second book in the *Anathox* series, *The Alliance*, Sean told the local newspaper that he feels like he has improved a lot and found the process different to what he expected, and that the transition between book two and book three has been enjoyable. Sean's fantasy-adventure stories are available in paperback or on Kindle and are a great read for eight- to 15-year-olds, or for those who may enjoy an escape from this world and

into Sean's imagination. I commend him on his accomplishment of becoming a published author at such a young age. I wish him a bright and successful future in the literary world and look forward to getting a copy of his book.

#### **BERRY UNITING CHURCH HALL MURAL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:08):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the contribution by renowned Indigenous artists Uncle Noel Wellington and Warwick Keen to a mural that now takes pride of place at the Berry Uniting Church Hall. Unveiled to the community on Sunday 25 June 2023, the mural serves as a legacy piece for the inaugural OpenField Arts Festival, which brightened Berry over the weekend—though there is more to the artwork than simply being a colourful addition to the church hall. The mural backdrop showcases the escarpment, Cullunghutti Mountain and Moeyan Hill, all of which hold immense significance. The contemporary painting gives a nod to local Indigenous history and also to some of Uncle Noel Wellington's prominent works. Uncle Noel Wellington has referenced them in his own contemporary carving works, and the new mural has done the same. The historic pieces have been given a thoroughly modern twist and are embraced by the community. Keen and Wellington were joined by fellow painter Glenn Duffield to help bring the artwork to life. OpenField Arts Festival organisers expressed their gratitude to the artists and to Berry Uniting Church for taking part in the festival.

#### **TAMIL SENIOR CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:09):** Last Saturday, I had the pleasure of being guest of honour at the New South Wales Tamil Senior Citizens' Association's annual Grandchildren's Day celebration. This was a special event where the grandchildren of Tamil seniors members showcased their talents. I was reminded of the strong family ties across the generations present in the Tamil community and their focus on ensuring that Tamil culture and language is passed down to the younger generations. Started in July 1990, the Tamil seniors supports the welfare of Tamil senior citizens and now has over 650 members. The Tamil seniors meet weekly in Homebush and hold regular events and classes. These include physical exercises, indoor games, arts and crafts classes, and community information sessions. A warm thank you to all members of Tamil seniors, especially the president, Saroja Sivasampu; Saroja's husband, Sunther; and the secretary, Ponniah Elango. I also recognise Mr R. Ratnakumar, Mr K. Kunaseelan, Mr M. Mohankumar, Mr Neville Thiru and Mr P. Panchadcharam.

#### **RECONCILIATION BRIDGE WALK**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (18:10):** I recognise the organisers of the thirteenth annual reconciliation bridge walk held by the Armidale Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation [ANTaR]. They staged what was the largest yet walk in Armidale on 28 May. This walk, and others throughout the region, are conducted on the anniversary of National Sorry Day—first held in the year 2000—when around 300,000 people walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of the historic day and of advancing reconciliation and truth-telling in this country. I congratulate ANTaR convenor Diana Eades, Jeff Siegel and all the group members on providing yet another opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in our community to walk together, chat together, listen and sing together. Fantastic entertainment was provided on the day by Bob Blair, with an impressive display of traditional dance and didgeridoo playing. I thank everyone who participated in the occasion. I thank everyone who helped organise it. Hopefully we see more of these events in the future.

#### **DR KIM LOO**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:11):** I congratulate Dr Kim Loo, who practises at Riverstone Family Medical Practice and recently won the Zest award for "Outstanding Project—Climate Change Resilience". The Zest Awards is one of Western Sydney's premier awards nights, bringing together individuals, business and government to recognise outstanding contributions to community spirit. Aside from being a GP in Riverstone, Dr Loo is the chair of the Hills Doctors Association and the chair of the New South Wales Doctors for the Environment, amongst other affiliations. Dr Loo has dedicated her work to advocating for the social and environmental determinants of health and the impacts of climate change on personal wellbeing. Her winning project on health care focused on protecting vulnerable people from urban heat, particularly those with existing medical conditions, those with mental health concerns, the aged, children and renters. I commend Dr Loo for her achievements. She has shown an exemplary commitment to her community. Dr Loo has gone beyond the care usually expected from healthcare professionals, and I extend my congratulations to her on winning this award.

#### **JENNIFER PARRY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:12):** I recognise a truly phenomenal constituent in my community, Jennifer Parry. Jennifer was born blind and has regularly needed to overcome adversity through determination and, notably, through saying yes when others say no, allowing her to achieve in everything she does. Her lifelong passion for music and the arts has developed her into an emerging singer-songwriter, performing solo at the

Sydney Opera House and as part of Endeavour Harmony Chorus in Las Vegas. Recently, Jennifer was selected as an Australian representative in the first blind women's cricket team representing Australia at the International Blind Sports Federation World Games in August this year. Jennifer is a strong advocate for access and inclusion in the electorate. She is chair of the Georges River Council access and inclusion committee, ensuring that those who are blind or vision impaired can feel confident navigating our local public spaces. Jennifer's philosophy is this: Life is to be lived and enjoyed. Time on this earth is so precious and short, so make the most of every moment and experience. That is something we should all live by. I cannot wait to see what Jennifer will achieve next.

### **TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR "JOHN" CROCKETT**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:13):** It is with sadness that I extend my condolences to the family and friends of Arthur "John" Crockett. Arthur, otherwise known as John, was a remarkable man. He was a constituent of mine and a friend. He was a long-time member of the Campbelltown Labor branch and a proud life member of the Australian Labor Party. He was also a veteran, having served our country with honour and distinction. He was born on 5 December 1932 in Maitland, where he was raised and spent a lot of time with his family. John joined the army in 1952 and went on to serve his country in the Korean War in 1954 at the age of 22. He served in the proud "Old Faithful" battalion, the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. He was discharged in 1959. John died on 26 May this year and his survived by his children Maree Anne, David and Glenda Michelle. He will be missed in many ways, by many people, for the varying contributions he made not only to our nation but also to the people of Campbelltown. Vale, John Crockett.

### **MOUNTAIN VIEW SUNFLOWERS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:14):** I recognise Mountain View Sunflowers for its contributions to Myall Lakes. Mountain View Sunflowers offers seasonal weekly sunflower picking on its Hillville farm to raise funds for Mid Coast charities. This picking season Mountain View Sunflowers has collaborated with photographers offering sunflower photo shoots, partnered with local businesses to provide food and beverages for purchase, and welcomed individuals to come and picnic on the farm. It opened up its gardens and offered fun activities for children, all while ensuring the smooth flow of traffic with the assistance of dedicated volunteers from the local Rural Fire Service. This season it donated 50 per cent of its sunflower sales to help Taree Motorcycle Club, Andrea Rowsell Academy of Dance, Can Assist Cancer Assistance Network, Taree Tornadoes, Lifestyle Solutions, Knuckle Up Boxing and young Kira, a resilient four-year-old who is battling cancer. I thank Mountain View Sunflowers for its outstanding efforts in uplifting the community. Its commitment to fostering a sense of togetherness and supporting local initiatives is truly commendable.

### **STAR STRUCK 2023**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (18:15):** All of the Hunter's young musicians, dancers and actors travelled to Newcastle last weekend and took to the stage for Star Struck 2023. This year's theme was "Ignite"—and that they did, lighting a spark in the hearts of all. Star Struck gives over 3,500 public school students, from kindergarten to year 12 a taste of the spotlight or behind the scenes in stage management and design. This includes the VET entertainment students who are working to put on the spectacular lighting and audio show. This opportunity is so impactful for these students. It is a chance for them to make friends, make memories and make dreams come true. Well done to all the students who performed and to the teachers who supported them along the way.

### **CLEARLY MUSIC, ARTS AND WELLNESS FESTIVAL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:16):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Clearly Music, Arts and Wellness Festival, which will debut at Kiama Showground this November, featuring live music performances, art exhibitions, market stalls, amusement rides and more. Headlining the inaugural event across three stages are iconic singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Xavier Rudd, ARIA-nominated surf and garage rock trio Skeggs, and critically acclaimed singer-songwriters Ruby Fields and Gretta Ray. Tickets to the all-ages festival are selling out fast. Co-founder Mr Dom Furber attended school in Gerringong and Kiama, and has always dreamed of delivering a festival of this scale locally. Mr Fred Phillips, co-owner of the Henry Clive Caravan Bar, is also involved. The day before the annual festival will feature a one-day workshop, led by industry leaders, for aspiring musicians, performers, songwriters, rappers, producers and DJs. The conference and collaborative learning experience is designed to create clearer pathways to success in the industry. The event will take place on Saturday 11 November 2023 at Kiama Showground from 12.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### **MARCONI TENNIS ACADEMY**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:17):** The Marconi Tennis Academy celebrated 50 years of service to Fairfield city on Sunday 4 June 2023. The academy is a pillar of community spirit, enabling families to stay fit,

have fun and serve that perfect ace. Sporting venues are foundational to our way of life, enabling people from all backgrounds to come together and build lifelong friendships. I thank the academy for its scholarship program for young players and its coaching program for people with disabilities. I make special mention of head coach and program director Stewart Whicker and his team for their dedication and passion. It is my pleasure to also commend club photographer Eddie Camilleri, former club director Cipriano Tosello, first club president Angelo Bagatella and Romeo Mengazzi, who coached many junior players over the years through to his retirement.

#### **JACK WOODS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:18):** I take this moment to salute an amazing 12-year-old young man in Albury, and that is Jack Woods. All students at his school were tasked to find a project. Jack decided to fundraise for a good friend of his Charlie Smith, a special eight-year-old man who has had a challenging journey and was diagnosed at an early age with lissencephaly, a rare neurological disease. Jack set out with a mission to embark on a school project baking and sell cakes to help raise \$500 to create a sensory garden for his mate. It is a place for Charlie to immerse himself in the sights, smells, sounds and touch of the garden with its colours, herbs, leaves, and its windmills spinning. Jacko set himself a task to raise \$500. Together with his parents, Carly and Brad Woods, he has been instrumental in raising over \$2,000. I congratulate Jack, his parents and the community on this generous result. I wish them all the best. Well done to Jacko. I am very proud of him.

#### **BOB FITZGERALD, OAM**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:19):** I recognise Councillor Bob Fitzgerald, who has been awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List for his work with community organisations and groups supporting the community. Bob, who is a resident of my electorate, is currently serving his first term on Blacktown City Council after being elected in 2021. Bob's community work includes fundraising for charities such as Convoy for Kids Sydney, the Blacktown and Penrith Relay for Life and the Law Enforcement Torch Run for NSW Special Olympics. Bob is also a chief inspector with the NSW Police Force and has served with the force for 38 years. I congratulate Bob on his outstanding achievement, which is well deserved, and commend him for his many years of dedication to the community.

#### **JARROD CROKER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:20):** I recognise the recent achievement of Jarrod Croker: a milestone 300 National Rugby League games with the Canberra Raiders. While no longer a local, Jarrod is a proud export of the Goulburn electorate and is regularly back in town supporting an array of our local sports clubs and community programs. As well as being a talented football player, in the many years that Jarrod has dedicated to the Raiders he has consistently displayed great sportsmanship on and off the field. Jarrod is an excellent role model and a shining example of a professional athlete who represents the various groups he is part of with pride and dedication and who gives back to his team, club and the community. I have no doubt that he will continue to inspire young athletes everywhere. I recognise the hard work that it has taken to meet this milestone and congratulate him on an incredible achievement. I wish Jarrod all the very best for the future.

#### **SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:21):** I congratulate the Sydney Film Festival on its landmark seventieth festival. The Sydney Film Festival is one of the longest running festivals in the world and brings together cinema buffs from all across Sydney and New South Wales to feast on the creativity of filmmakers, documentary makers and animators from Australia and around the world. I congratulate the 2023 winner of the Sydney Film Prize *The Mother of All Lies* directed by Asmae El Moudir. The Documentary Australia Award for Australian Documentary was won by Derik Lynch and Matthew Thorne for *Marungka Tjalatjuni (Dipped in Black)*. The Sustainable Future Award was won by Sarvnik Kaur for *Against the Tide*, and the Yoram Gross Animation Award went to *Teacups*, which was directed by Alec Green and Finbar Watson. One of the films that I saw—*The Last Daughter*—about the story of Brenda Matthews is incredibly moving and I encourage everyone to see that. I was absolutely blown away.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (18:22):** I congratulate various Pittwater local businesses that have been nominated in the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Each year the best business in various categories are nominated by their peers and other businesses and customers to participate as finalists in the 2023—or the relevant year—Northern Beaches Local Awards. This year I congratulate William Hardie of Hardie & Co Plumbing based in Mona Vale, which for 10 years has been a family-based business providing wonderful services to local and Sydney-wide businesses and residents. I congratulate Josie and Heath at Barbert Pizza Co. in Elanora Heights, which makes the best pizza, the cheesiest pizza and the most delicious pizza in all of Pittwater. I congratulate Vee's Doggy Holiday Care in Mona Vale run by Vanessa Howe, who looks after people's dogs

when they cannot. I congratulate Heidi Bryant of HB Aesthetics based out of Newport, who provides wonderful services to the wonderful Newport community. I wish them all the best in the upcoming awards.

#### **ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE AND ST GREGORY'S COLLEGE WIZARD OF OZ MUSICAL SHOW**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:23):** Sometimes we all feel the need to escape our troubles. Last weekend the communities of Camden and Campbelltown had the opportunity to do just that by attending the musical *The Wizard of Oz* performed by students of St Patrick's and St Gregory's colleges. The three performances, held over Friday 16 and Saturday 17 June, were outstanding. Students and teachers managed to create, in just three months, a magical and entertaining journey through Kansas and Oz, with a live orchestra of local musicians and a real Toto. Highlights included the hilarious Scarecrow and Lion played by Cody and Angus; the scary Witch of the West played by the talented CAPA captain, Monique, who was cleverly and somewhat aptly helped by the winged monkeys; and the talented Tin Girl, Ebony, who sang and tap-danced her way into our hearts in order to get her own. But the star of the show—if only in my eyes—was the amazing Grace, who stayed on stage for nearly the entire show and carried off a stunning rendition of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. She made her mum proud. I congratulate the kids.

#### **GEOFF COLEMAN**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:24):** It is an honour and privilege to speak about my good friend Geoff Coleman, who received a meritorious award as part of the King's birthday honours. Geoff has been a paramedic for 35 years. Geoff and his colleagues are the ones we all turn to in times of crisis. Geoff has a calm head and a steady hand and is the perfect type of person to be a paramedic. Geoff actually began his career with St John Ambulance in 1988 as a volunteer. However, that was not the end of his community service as he decided to sign up to be a member of the Great Rural Fire Brigade. Geoff is someone I regularly describe as selfless and who always prioritises the welfare of others over his own. This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 outbreak when Geoff, who is now a clinical training officer, stuck his hand up to assist. In my opinion, the meritorious award received as part of the King's birthday honours was well overdue. I thank Geoff for everything he has done for our community and congratulate him on a tremendous accolade.

#### **LONG JETTY FESTIVAL**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:25):** I congratulate the people of Long Jetty on hosting the resounding success that was the first Long Jetty Festival on 12 March. I congratulate the festival promoters and organisers Steven Sewell, Matt Wise and Liz Hart on their patience and efforts from 2020 onwards for crafting such an amazing experience on the foreshore for residents and tourists alike. The Long Jetty Festival saw 20,000 people fill our lakeshore streets. There was good music, culture, food and community wares, bands, flea markets, dance and art. On behalf of our community, I thank all those involved for showing up and showcasing the growing strength and rich diversity of our local culture. The organisers are already committed to the second Long Jetty Festival for March next year. The community is ready to make the festival a cultural mainstay.

#### **ALAN BEVERIDGE, OAM**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:26):** I congratulate Alan Beveridge from Barrick Heights on being awarded the Medal of Order of Australia in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List, which recognises Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. This honour is certainly applicable to Alan considering his lifelong dedication to Surf Life Saving and his local community. Alan is a life member of the Warilla Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club and has been the club's president since 1996. Alan has also been a patrolling member since 1970, never missing a patrol in over 50 years. Alan has established the Friday Club program to enhance the mental health of retired members by providing opportunities to stay socially connected, active and healthy. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community I thank Alan for his outstanding service to Surf Life Saving and his local community.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **SOUTHERN YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:28):** I take this opportunity to highlight the fantastic work that Southern Youth and Family Services [SYFS] and Illawarra's Rotary clubs have done in raising vital funds for the South Coast community and my Shellharbour electorate. SYFS is a community-based non-for-profit organisation, dedicated to providing compassion and aiding young individuals who are vulnerable, homeless or facing potential disadvantages leading to homelessness. In addition to supporting young individuals, SYFS extends its support to the families associated with those youths, which encompasses parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family members and even foster families. This work provides supported accommodation; community social housing;

health and outreach services; out-of-home care services; family services, including counselling, parenting programs and early intervention; and education, employment and training programs.

Southern Youth and Family Services operated 47 different services through 20 different funding programs in 2021-22, which assisted 22,208 people and families. On 21 May 2023 Ride4Rotary, a community bike ride, took place at the Unanderra Velodrome. The lead-up to this event also allowed people in their own time to ride at home, at the gym or even on their own bike tracks to raise funds. The money raised from the generous support of Ride4Rotary will help fund the ongoing support and delivery of SYFS education, employment and training programs and improve the quality of life and wellbeing of young people and their families. The participants of the event exhibited great courage and determination, and raised an impressive amount of \$55,271. As a token of appreciation for their tireless efforts, the individuals who raised the highest funds were rewarded with prizes—a well-deserved recognition for their hard work.

The participants, comprising both physical and virtual riders, were divided into two subgroups: single riders and teams. In the virtual singles group, the top three fundraisers were Zeppelin Ryan, who raised an impressive \$1,454, followed by John Akele with \$707 and Alexander Brown with \$696. Congratulations to the top three virtual singles fundraisers. Among the virtual teams, the top three in fundraising were SYFS Out of Home Care Nowra, which raised a remarkable \$2,346, followed by the EET group with \$2,118 and the Corrimall Rotary Virtual Cruisers with \$1,298. Congratulations to the top three virtual team fundraisers. Those outstanding contributions demonstrate the dedication and commitment of the participants towards supporting this cause.

In the individual rider category, the top three fundraisers were Rowan Huxtable, who raised an impressive \$2,385, followed by Stephen Knightley with \$1,622 and Tim Egan with \$1,132. Their outstanding efforts and generosity will contribute greatly to assist the programs operated by Southern Youth and Family Services. Among the live teams, the Wombats displayed remarkable fundraising skills in raising an impressive total of \$5,242. Following closely were SYFS Out of Home Care Illawarra with \$3,658 and Corrimall Cruisers Rotary with \$2,928. It is exceptional to see the teamwork and dedication of those involved in these groups to raise nearly \$12,000.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of those involved in this event. Thank you to all of those who participated and raised funds for Southern Youth and Family Services. I know that these funds will be greatly appreciated and will assist those youth who are disadvantaged. I further thank the amazing Narelle Clay, CEO of Southern Youth and Family Services; Stephen Knightley, the event coordinator; and SYFS board members Chris Lyon, Courtney Fisher, Daniel Thompson, Jenny Thompson and Kymberleigh Harris. I also congratulate all the staff at SYFS who are unseen but are not unrecognised heroes within the Illawarra community.

### **KURRAJONG COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:33):** I bring the attention of the House to the ninety-fifth anniversary of Kurrajong Country Women's Association in Hawkesbury. The CWA is a voluntary organisation that first formed in New South Wales in 1922 to improve the lives of women and children in regional and rural areas. Today it lobbies on issues relating to domestic and family violence, education, women's health and more. Kurrajong CWA was among one of the eight original branches formed in New South Wales, holding its first meeting on 17 April 1928 in the Parish Hall.

From 1930 to 1939, before World War II, when New South Wales was hit by the Great Depression, unemployment rates increased alongside the need for government dependency. The Kurrajong CWA branch provided a haven for people and families impacted at this time. They made clothes, rugs and camouflage nets, aided those who were sick, elderly and in need, and lobbied the Progress Association about concerns relating to train conditions, public health, village ice deliveries and the need for a resident policeman. Kurrajong CWA also assisted local hospitals by donating linen, eggs, fruit and vegetables.

On Wednesday 12 April this year I had the pleasure of attending Kurrajong CWA's ninety-fifth anniversary lunch at Richmond Golf Club, which current president Jenny Shaw and past presidents Wendy Dunston, Dianne Fenech, Gwen Aspinall and Eileen Reid attended. State president Joy Beames joined the celebration as a guest speaker and she discussed the association's deep values and interest. Today difficulties experienced by the Hawkesbury community are heightened by disasters such as drought and fires and, more recently, floods. It is Kurrajong CWA's purpose to help families affected by advocating on their behalf.

During the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires, Hawkesbury bore the brunt of this devastation from the Gospels Mountain fire. From 2020 to 2022, the Hawkesbury community experienced six floods—a recurring nightmare that saw entire properties go under water. During the anniversary lunch, Mrs Beames also highlighted the effects of such disasters in rural areas. When roads are damaged, Kurrajong CWA lobbies to help families access medical facilities, better internet connection, and equipment and resources for students travelling to school or studying online. The past 95 years have seen the volunteers of Kurrajong CWA work tirelessly to raise the



funds that support their compassionate endeavours. Alongside government grants, fundraising events include quilting shows, book sales and regular market days selling goods made by the volunteers themselves.

Having seen a decline in membership in the 1990s, Kurrajong Country Women's Association remains strong and welcomes the unique ideas and talents of new members, as it continues to improve the lives of women and children in regional and rural areas. Today the Kurrajong Country Women's Association consists of 23 members, two life members and two junior members. It is with thanks to volunteering organisations such as Kurrajong CWA that families and the Hawkesbury community can find comfort during times of distress and hardship. I commend Kurrajong CWA volunteers for their persistence in helping to support our beloved Hawkesbury community since 1928. Congratulations, Kurrajong Country Women's Association on 95 years of service. Your continued dedication to the people and families of the Hawkesbury community is to be applauded.

### NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:36):** The NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer firefighting organisation. This service had humble beginnings, with the first rural firefighting brigade being formally recorded in the State's south in Berrigan in 1900. From 1949 to 1970 we saw the growth of local brigades, moving away from the model of formalised State Government control and handing greater powers to councils in relation to the prevention and control of bushfires. The localisation of the service has been key in many ways. It has been particularly instrumental in creating a firefighting agency that is steeped in compassion, knowledge and connection to community. I also acknowledge the work of building the NSW Rural Fire Service into an empire of sorts by my friend and mentor Mr Phil Koperberg, a former RFS commissioner and former member for the Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains electorate is no stranger to bushfires, with our region being considered one of the most bushfire-prone landscapes in the world. We are familiar with the devastation fires can bring—the loss of life and property, and the destruction of habitat and devastation of species. Disasters such as these can bring communities together, but a prolonged or repeated experience of such things can also erode resilience. Which way that dice rolls is very much influenced by the work of those on the front line. The boots on the ground and the response to disastrous events in the moment and in the days, weeks and months that follow is an imperative element of a community's overall mechanism for coping with trauma.

The Black Summer fires will remain imprinted in our memories forevermore. Our State has seen many horrific fires, but those were the worst ever recorded in New South Wales and the recovery process continues, long after the last flames were extinguished. The emotional impacts felt by affected communities were profound and many are ever changed because of what happened that summer. Even those who watched from afar felt the loss, as is the nature of human empathy. Whether you lived in an area that was being devastated by the bushfires or not, whether you were directly affected or not, it was impossible to watch that blackest of summers unfold without feeling a visceral response to what we were seeing beamed from televisions into our living rooms all day, every day—and then the smell.

Imagine taking things to an even deeper level. Imagine being one of the nearly 65,000 responders who risked their lives for others, 78 per cent of whom were volunteers, showing up day after day, exhausted, as they faced the fury of fires that would impact the lives of so many—the smoke, the smell, the sounds, the trauma and the grief. But they kept showing up and fighting and fighting. After such catastrophic events there is a lot of talk about the work that these immeasurably brave men and women do to protect others, and this is, of course, wholly justified.

Today, however, I remind us all to continue displaying our gratitude and support for these brave volunteers every day. It is important to acknowledge that once the fire front has passed, our RFS volunteers continue to show up, displaying a selfless dedication to the communities they serve. They attend property fires and assist Fire and Rescue. They assist the SES with storm damage, search and rescue, and motor vehicle accidents. They are involved in community education programs and bushfire mitigation. The RFS values of mutual respect, adaptability and resourcefulness, integrity and trust are constantly on display. They live by their mantra of "One team, many players, one purpose", and they foster qualities of friendship and camaraderie, supporting one another through some of the toughest, heart-wrenching and soul-destroying times.

This army of volunteers cares deeply for their communities across the State and the environment. In return, we must care for them. Emergency responders face myriad issues other than what lies directly in front of them in times of crisis. Apart from being on constant high alert, these courageous individuals face prolonged exposure to multiple traumas—and we can only imagine the toll this must take. It is essential that we support those who work within our emergency services in whatever way we can. I have had the great honour, during my time as member for Blue Mountains, to work closely alongside the RFS, attending family days, award ceremonies and annual

general meetings. I have met people from all walks of life who signed up and jump in whenever catastrophe strikes.

To every RFS brigade across the Blue Mountains, today and every day, we thank you. To Bell, Blaxland, Bullaburra, Faulconbridge, Glenbrook and Lapstone, Hazelbrook, Katoomba and Leura, Lawson, Linden and Medlow Bath, Megalong Valley, Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Mount Riverview, Mount Tomah, Shipley, Valley Heights, Warrimoo, Wentworth Falls, Winmalee, Woodford, Yellow Rock, South Katoomba, Blackheath and Mount Victoria, our community acknowledges you and we are grateful for everything you do for us. I could not address the Blue Mountains bushfire brigades without acknowledging Superintendent Nick Medianik, Inspector Rob Vinzenz and all at the Blue Mountains district office. To our mighty Rural Fire Service brigades, thank you for protecting us.

### REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (18:42):** This evening I speak about something that is very important to seniors in my community. The regional seniors travel card program has helped literally thousands of seniors in the Clarence electorate stay connected. In fact, it has helped 4,292 eligible seniors in the Richmond Valley and 10,699 eligible seniors in the Clarence Valley—a grand total of 14,989 people. We in the bush simply do not always have the luxury of jumping on the next ferry, train or tram to stay connected and move around. It is a little more difficult if you are in the bush. In fact, if you get a train or two a day, you are lucky. If you get a bus or two a week in regional areas, you put that down as a win. Moving around the bush is simply not the same as moving around the city. But the regional seniors travel card helps, big time, those who can least afford it.

In 2019 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government introduced the regional seniors travel card. The card offered a \$250 pre-paid Visa card to use on fuel, taxis, electric charging stations, pre-booked NSW TrainLink regional services and coaches. The government of the day introduced the card to acknowledge that seniors in the regions have greater distances to travel and that sometimes accessing public transport is not possible. We do have that luxury in the city, however. We in the Clarence electorate very much value the transport on offer, and are thankful for it. In my electorate I am lucky enough to have a number of XPT services to Sydney and one to Brisbane every day, with coach travel connecting my electorate to areas like Moree and the Northern Tablelands.

Moving around is difficult. The humble car remains one of the most popular forms of transport in the bush. But it is expensive. Cost-of-living pressures mean that seniors are now paying more than ever and, of course, we all know what the cost of fuel is like. In my electorate, the regional seniors travel card not only helps connect people but also helps people get to things like doctor's appointments. It helps with taxis to go shopping or just to get around to see the grandkids. This is real for people who receive the \$250 card. But it seems that we are in for a bit of a fight with regard to the regional seniors travel card. Yesterday I met Margaret and Ray, who use their card simply to put fuel in the car. I am the first to admit that \$250 probably would not keep me going for long, but it does keep them on the road for longer.

That story is repeated time and time again throughout the electorate. Since 2020 more than one million cards have been issued, helping seniors maintain their independence and helping with the cost of travel. In my electorate some \$3.7 million was injected through this program last year. To be eligible, seniors must have reached pension age, live outside the areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and receive support from Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Another challenge was the 2022 rollout of contactless cards, which helped with payment efficiencies and COVID safety precautions. In my electorate the take-up has been above 80 per cent. Yesterday I was proud to launch, with The Nationals' leader Dugald Saunders, my colleagues and some seniors, a petition to save the regional seniors travel card. I will be encouraging all seniors, not only in my electorate but also throughout New South Wales regional areas, to sign the petition. The New South Wales Nationals introduced the card to help those in the bush, and will be once again fighting for regional New South Wales should the regional seniors travel card be axed.

### WAGE THEFT

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:46):** As people enter challenging times when it comes to managing their household budgets, they are more likely than ever to examine their weekly or fortnightly pay packets to make sure they are being paid properly and that their superannuation entitlements are also being paid. Working men and women need to be confident that they are being paid in accordance with the relevant award or agreement and that they are being paid correctly. Missing out on some of your salary diminishes your capacity to take care of your family today and also to take care of yourself in later life. That is why some of the wage theft cases in Wollongong have been of interest to so many people of late. Sadly, once again, some Wollongong businesses have been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons—because employers have been ripping off their workers.

In a university town filled with both domestic and international students, sadly there have been too many stories of employers taking a shortcut to higher profits by ripping off their workers. I refer to the recent case in the Federal Court involving two Wollongong restaurant workers. In recent years the hospitality sector in Wollongong has been rife with reports of employers who are all too willing to boost their profits on the backs of their workers. A recent, very public example was the case of Midhun Basi and Syed Haider, who were the victims in a case that Federal Court Justice John Halley called a series of "egregious and flagrant" breaches of the Fair Work Act. This case would not have come to light without the work of the Illawarra union movement and the South Coast Labour Council. I thank them for pursuing it. Sadly, it is not the first case they have been involved in in recent years, and it probably will not be the last.

In 2019 inspectors audited 97 businesses and found that only 38 per cent—fewer than two in five—were complying with workplace laws. There were even recent reports of a well-known fast food chain franchise putting young staff on multiple unpaid shift breaks during less busy times. While most employers in the region's hospitality sector are not trying to build their businesses on the back of ripping off workers, some are. Many of the hospitality businesses I deal with are paying their staff well. They went out of their way to look after them during COVID and are taking time out of their businesses to give back to the community and to international students, who often bear the brunt of the poor behaviour by some employers.

Poor employer behaviour is not unique to the hospitality sector. There are unscrupulous employers in the construction industry in the Illawarra treating their workers poorly. Recently, the international shipping industry was subject to closer inspection. We are an island nation with active trade with all parts of the world. Shipping is important to our economy, our society and to delivering our standard of living. In Port Kembla and the Illawarra, we have enjoyed the benefits of trade over many years, from the expansion of goods available to us to the jobs it provides and the interactions with people from all parts of the world, which we enjoy. However, those benefits should not be paid for by the theft of wages from working seafarers.

During COVID, I worked with the local health district, my local Labor colleagues in the area, the university, unions, The Mission to Seafarers, NSW Ports and the Port Authority of New South Wales to support workers who were stuck on the *Ruby Princess* in Port Kembla for a period of time, but also to establish a vaccination program, run out of Port Kembla harbour, for international seafarers. Many of those seafarers had largely been forgotten in the global vaccination efforts and there were regular reports of seafarers being forced to stay on board vessels for up to 18 months at a time. The vaccination program helped them get off their ship and return to their families.

Over recent weeks, International Transport Workers' Federation [ITF] inspectors have been conducting spot inspections on ships docking at Port Kembla. They have been checking to see if the ships are meeting the standards expected of them and that they are paying their seafarers properly. Why? It is because last year the ITF discovered \$3 million in wages had been stolen from seafarers calling into Port Kembla over the past decade. This did not come from an inspection of every single ship that docked in our port but rather from the ones that were able to be inspected. On that basis, one can only conclude that the real situation is much worse. In one case alone, inspectors found the workers were owed tens of thousands of dollars in outstanding wages and suffered through wretched conditions including no lighting, no air conditioning and no power for refrigerators. Anyone in that position has every right to feel aggrieved and angry.

I understand that over recent weeks the ITF has been conducting similar inspections in Sydney and Newcastle. All workers benefit when workplace standards are maintained because other employers are not tempted to boost their competitive position by taking advantage of working men and women. NSW Labor is working to modernise New South Wales laws to cater for increasingly precarious employment, whether it be through the gig economy or other means. While work and workplaces might have changed, the need for working men and women to be confident that they are being paid fairly and correctly has not and should not. I thank the local labour movement in the Illawarra for their efforts to try to stamp out wage theft. I encourage anyone who believes that they have not been paid correctly or that their employer is not meeting the terms of their agreement to talk to their union.

### SNOWY VALLEYS COUNCIL DEMERGER

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:52):** In 2016 the Baird Government took away the democratic rights of communities by forcing council amalgamations across the State. Since that time, the majority of the amalgamated councils in New South Wales, especially in the regions, have failed to deliver the promised savings and efficiencies. One of the worst examples is the merger of Tumbarumba and Tumut councils into the Snowy Valleys Council, an issue I have been campaigning on since 2018. What were the reasons for the amalgamation? A report released in January 2016, apparently based on modelling from KPMG, promised a total financial benefit of \$20 million over a 20-year period, reduced reliance on rate increases, greater capacity to reduce infrastructure

backlog, better strategic planning and economic development, more effective representation, and a more effective voice for the region's interests.

What happened to those promises? The \$20 million financial benefit needed a \$15 million investment over 20 years. There is no sign of the benefit. Who would invest \$15 million at that rate of return in local government? Rates have gone up, the community is riven by dissent, and the courageous council has been faced with enormous challenges in planning and service delivery. Professor Joseph Drew was commissioned by the Snowy Valleys Council to develop an evidence brief for demerger. He said:

Sophisticated peer-reviewed empirical work has ... demonstrated that the amalgamation program ... failed to achieve its stated intent in terms of both efficiency and financial sustainability.

Therefore, I congratulate the Snowy Valleys Council on taking the decision at last Thursday's council meeting to formally pursue the demerger process. Sensibly, the council has decided to seek further advice on the current New South Wales Government report for the demerger process. I call on the Government to support the Snowy Valleys Council in their demerger work. When in opposition, the Labor Party were critical of the mergers that took place and led the community to believe that they would support them in demerging. The Labor policy platform, *Better Local Governance 1.1108*, reads:

NSW Labor will not support the forced merger of local councils, nor will it support any forced demerger. NSW Labor does not oppose the merger or demerger of councils, but insists that this must be done voluntarily with the clear support of local residents as confirmed through a local plebiscite. NSW Labor will legislate to put in place independent mechanisms to enable this to occur.

The Labor Party also introduced to Parliament in March 2021 changes to the Local Government Act 1993 to provide a clearly defined pathway for councils to demerge and be supported by the government of the day. In my view, that support includes funding the cost of the demerger process. I believe it would be a breach of faith with the voters of New South Wales and the Snowy Valleys Council area to not fund the demerger process. It was implied by NSW Labor, as the legislation clearly indicates. I, with members of the crossbench and the Labor Opposition, attended the 2021 launch of the Demerger Alliance at the Tree of Knowledge. I was pleased by the statements made by the then shadow Minister, the member for Campbelltown, which included, "Communities like all of you and right across the State should not have to pay the price for a lazy, out-of-touch government and their poor policies. It is grossly unfair." The member for The Entrance said the following of the failed merger of the Central Coast Council:

It is not acceptable for the community to foot the bill for ideological folly of a failed council amalgamation process which the Liberals persisted with in spite of significant public opposition.

I agree. I believe that the communities of the Snowy Valleys Council formed the view that Labor would support them if they choose to demerge. It is my view and expectation that the Government should support councils to go through that process and, crucially, that means funding the demerger process. It means supporting Snowy Valleys Council and Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, a neighbouring council to my region.

I am not saying the Government should write a blank cheque indefinitely and I do not believe it should support unviable councils. I understand that the policy of the Government is to have plebiscites, with the community fully informed. But the Government should be working with councils that want to demerge to help them to achieve it, to map a pathway forward out of the quagmire of merger madness, to right the wrongs of the failed amalgamation policy, and to respect the will of the people and help communities to once again take control of their futures.

### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:57):** If we were to ask a business if they would like a 318 per cent increase in customers, we would most likely get a resounding yes. But if we point out that they have to service the increase in demand with exactly the same resources they currently have, we would probably get a different reaction. That is the situation facing the Riverstone electorate. We have suburbs already stretched to breaking point by the growth they have experienced over the past 10 years, and according to ABS data the town of Riverstone is expected to grow by a whopping 318 per cent over the next decade. Astonishingly, the previous State Government made no provision to fund any major road or rail infrastructure projects to cope with the burgeoning population. Furthermore, the previous Government left a \$187 billion debt, a \$7 million black hole, an \$11 billion deficit. This Government has inherited the worst books in the history of New South Wales.

Despite that, the Riverstone electorate is expecting an additional 318 per cent growth in population without the infrastructure that is needed to support it. Let me put that into perspective. Imagine inviting 100 people to a party at a local venue, which includes only two courses without drinks because too much money has already been spent on your credit card and it is well beyond its limit. Then all of the guests decide to bring a couple of friends—a few even decide to bring their kids. Instead of catering for 100, there are now well over 300 hungry mouths to feed and only 100 table settings. The kitchen might be able to pull together a few more meals, the wait staff might

be able to find a few extra tables, but then it has to be paid for. Ultimately, a 318 per cent increase in people changes this hypothetical situation from being a good night out to chaos. When it comes to a 318 per cent increase in the population in an area that is already struggling without the necessary infrastructure, it will turn a family's dream into a suburban nightmare. It is hard to comprehend how much impact this kind of growth will have on the community, especially when there is no infrastructure funded to support the incoming tsunami of new residents.

Riverstone is already drowning in traffic and bursting at the seams. Congestion is also impacting surrounding areas. But traffic is just one issue. We cannot park 318 per cent more cars. We do not have schools for 318 per cent more children. We do not have the healthcare facilities for 318 per cent more patients. There is not adequate social support for 318 per cent more aged-care facilities for disabled clients. Critically, we do not have 318 per cent more jobs. Already, commuter car parks are full by 7.00 a.m. and the streets are lined with vehicles. Already, we have the largest number of school-aged children in any electorate and all of our schools are overpopulated. Already, we have the largest number of young families of any electorate and we do not have a hospital. Already, we are seeing the need for social support and aged care outstrip population growth. Already, there are not enough jobs.

Local businesses in the Riverstone electorate are as desperate to support infrastructure as the residents they serve. Adding another 318 per cent to an already struggling system would further turn opportunity into chaos. But it is not all doom and gloom. Chaos can still become opportunity. This is an exciting time for the area. If done well, the coming changes that will bring 318 per cent more people could revitalise the region, improving the lives of everyone. Finally, there is a beacon of hope in the form of this new Government and its plans to introduce a simpler, more transparent, consistent infrastructure contribution system that will provide funds to deliver State infrastructure. Three years ago, the NSW Productivity Commission undertook a review of the New South Wales infrastructure contribution system.

The review made 29 recommendations for reforms to support housing supply and economic productivity, yet the previous Government did nothing to implement any of the findings. In less than three months, the new planning Minister formulated a simple and equitable process to provide for the community as it grows. We still have time, but we need to engage now. Riverstone needs a plan. Riverstone needs investment. Most importantly, Riverstone needs the Minns Government—a government determined to put people first. I congratulate the Premier and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces on their efforts to ensure that future growth is supported by investment in infrastructure.

#### FIONA FAN

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (19:01):** I pay tribute to a remarkable individual, Mrs Fiona Fan, the director-general of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. In that role, Fiona has been a tireless advocate for and facilitator of bilateral relations between New South Wales and Taiwan. Many members in both this House and in the other place will agree with my assessment that as she concludes her posting she leaves behind a distinguished legacy, and she will be sorely missed. When Fiona first arrived in Sydney in 2020, she brought with her not only a strong sense of determination and a tireless work ethic but also over 20 years of diplomatic experience, having worked on the personal staff of the foreign affairs Minister and as a director at the National Security Council, and having undertaken a posting to Singapore and a prior posting in Australia.

It is a testament to our close relationship with Taiwan that such an experienced pair of hands was put to task in Sydney, and under her leadership this relationship has only grown stronger. As the chairman of the Parliamentary Friends of Taiwan, it has been my pleasure to work side by side with Fiona throughout her tenure to help promote Taiwan's pivotal position both geopolitically and economically, and to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation on supply chain resilience. The past three years have presented an endless list of challenges for the Taiwanese people but, as we have come to learn, the story of Taiwan is one of resilience. It is a country that upholds liberal and democratic values despite constant existential challenges from those regional players who would threaten the freedom of the Taiwanese people.

Taiwan shines brightly as a beacon of prosperity, strength and stability despite these challenges. Australia recognises the importance of Taiwan as an important geopolitical partner and remains steadfast in its support for the nation. Through recent joint statements with the United States and the United Kingdom, we have reaffirmed our support for Taiwan's position. Only recently, we held our continuation meeting for the Parliamentary Friends of Taiwan, where we had some 27 members of this Parliament sign up for membership—27 members from the Government, Opposition and crossbench all reaffirming their support for Taiwan and its important position in the region. Taiwan is not only a likeminded liberal democracy but also an economic partner of ever-increasing importance. Last year, bilateral trade between Taiwan and Australia reached a record high of \$41.5 billion, a number I am sure we will continue to build on.

The blossoming trade relationship has come about in no small part thanks to Fiona's support for the participation of New South Wales in the global semiconductor market. During her tenure, Fiona has hosted numerous delegations to Taiwan to help facilitate industry and academic connectivity so that New South Wales can take advantage of the wealth of industry knowledge in Taiwan. However, there is still room to strengthen this trade partnership. Taiwan currently stands as the only nation from among our 10 largest trading partners with which we have no current free trade agreement.

Fiona has constantly agitated for this issue throughout her tenure, as it is a situation which, if remedied, would only help to facilitate more trade. Whilst a free trade agreement was not to be realised during Fiona's tenure, she has taken some incredible steps towards making it a reality. I thank Fiona once again for the enormous contribution she has made to the advancement of Taiwanese-Australian relations. I am lucky to count Fiona and her son Dean as friends. They will be sorely missed. I wish her all the best for her new role in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and I have already begun looking for an excuse to visit. Fiona leaves behind a remarkable legacy and large shoes to fill.

### **BLACKTOWN YOUTH COLLEGE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:05):** I recognise the achievements of a highly esteemed school at the heart of the Mount Druitt electorate in the centrally located suburb of Hebersham. Blacktown Youth College is an independent, non-fee-paying secondary school that caters for students who have struggled in mainstream settings. I note that its continued achievements have enabled students to complete their high school education, which is an important step in their journey towards a prosperous and successful future. Blacktown Youth College offers an alternative pathway to achieve educational outcomes that students who struggle to achieve their potential in mainstream schooling often miss out on. This is particularly vital when students may face obstacles brought about by onerous factors such as socio-economic status.

The head of school at Blacktown Youth College, Ms Carol Everard, is especially deserving of recognition for her astute leadership in directing the efforts of the staff in educating and guiding the students so that they can fulfil the school's motto "Believe, Belong, Become". Ms Everard was a 2023 nominee for the NSW Woman of Excellence Award and was awarded the Mount Druitt Woman of the Year award. Ms Everard grew up in the Mount Druitt and Blacktown areas and her upbringing gave her a unique insight into the challenges that may be experienced by students who attend Blacktown Youth College. Through her profound insight, she continues to inform staff about the methods of instruction and motivation that are necessary to ensure that each student reaches their highest potential. Her work has seen the development of the college with its two campuses at Hebersham and Lawson, advancing the campuses from their initial state as basic learning centres for youths of 14 to 16 years of age into registered secondary campuses for students from years 7 to 12. That is an outstanding success story that warrants a mention in this Chamber.

My words echo the celebrations at the school assemblies, during which the triumphs of the students are celebrated in the presence of a growing audience of family members and representatives of all levels of government, local businesses, police and other community service organisations. One notable community initiative is the partnership with Foodbank to provide a breakfast program for students at the college. It provides the students with extracurricular activities that enhance their welfare, which offers a strong example of how applying effort in one's community can be learned in a practical setting. This, in essence, is a story of our youth energetically surmounting adversity, a lack of self-esteem or general disadvantage. It is the admirable result of quality education delivered by stable and committed staff, together with an exceptionally attuned teaching and administrative framework.

I commend Blacktown Youth College for its resounding accomplishments. It gives me immense gratification to honour the achievements of the school in this Chamber. In doing so, I wish all the best to all involved in ensuring its ongoing success, be it the head of school, Ms Everard, or the dedicated staff, students, the students' supportive families or the surrounding community. The students have a clear and secure path towards their greatest possible future. Minister Dib, who is in the Chamber, had the opportunity to visit the school in his capacity as the former shadow Minister. Both the Minister and I saw the success of the school. Its story—that students' lives can be turned around from being lost in society to having a successful future—makes us all proud.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:09):** It is a good fortune that I am sitting in the Chamber. As the good member for Mount Druitt mentioned, a while back I visited the Blacktown Youth College with him. It was a stand-out day. It is amazing what days you remember in your career. It was bright and early. We managed to spend a fair bit of time at the school. I love that it gives young people an opportunity to work and think outside the box. Sometimes we try to put young people in very constrained circumstances. In doing that, we actually drive them away from an educational setting. I met the young people, the teachers and the principal—I congratulate Ms Everard—who were duly committed to one thing and one thing alone, and that is giving kids

every opportunity to succeed. We sometimes measure success in academic results too much; we need to start looking at measuring success in life results. "Belong, Believe, Become" is a beautiful motto. A school like this saves young people's lives over and over again. I commend the member and the teachers at that school.

### WALCHA FIRE STATION

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:11):** At the March election the electorate of Northern Tablelands once again expanded to include the wonderful, rural community of Walcha, which not only has held its own but is also growing. When communities grow, it often puts pressure on essential services in that community. A fortnight ago I had the absolute pleasure of taking up a very kind invitation from the Walcha Fire and Rescue captain Peter Dunn, AFSN. Peter has been a servant of the community and Fire and Rescue NSW for 46 years, and is showing no signs of putting down the tools anytime soon. Peter and his team—Charmaine, Paul and Commander Inspector Wayne Zikan—showed me the very small and cramped Walcha fire station.

It was built in 1966, and interestingly there have been no upgrades, extensions or improvements to that station in the 57 years since. Indeed, you can actually see the holes in the fibro wall at the back of the engine bay that have been repaired over the years because, as the pumpers have got bigger, the space has not changed and you have to back the pumper in so delicately that a number of people have backed straight through the wall trying to get the engine to fit so they can shut the front door. To wash the engine down, they have to put it out on the street because the station is so close to the front kerb. There is one shower and one toilet. There are no separate change facilities at all.

All of the firefighters' helmets, boots and protective equipment hang on a wall in the same space that the fire pumper occupies in the engine bay. I had to turn sideways to squeeze between the pumper and the wall where all the gear was hung because there was barely enough room. They have a very small kitchen area that doubles as their only training space. For a time leading into winter they had no hot water. But, thankfully, one of their crew doubles as a plumber. They were able to jimmy up a solution so that they could have hot water for their showers again at the station. It is a classic example of fire stations across regional areas, where over the years so much money has been literally pumped—excuse the pun—into improving firefighters' appliances, hardware, helmets and protective equipment, which is without doubt world class, that it often comes at the expense of upgrading the physical stations.

The facilities have not kept pace with not only the changing nature of firefighting but also the composition of our local firefighting brigades. I am talking specifically about the fact that, when the station was built at Walcha in 1966, it was an all-male fire crew. Fast forward 57 years, not only do we have many more women in Fire and Rescue NSW but we are also actively trying to recruit more. At Walcha six new recruits are coming through the final stage of their training, which will only exacerbate the space strain on that very small station. I have had a look at the block. It is a very skinny but deep block of land. There is ample room, according to Fire and Rescue NSW, to build a new station on the existing site, so we do not need a new block of land, which is terrific. Ideally, we will set it back further from the street so that they can wash the engine down in front of the station and do their open days without having to expose residents to the danger of having the engine physically sitting on the road.

I note that the Minister for Emergency Services is in the Chamber listening to my contribution. I have written to him on behalf of those hardworking members of the Walcha Fire and Rescue station to see if something can be done to give those officers and on-call firefighters a station that not only befits the importance of the service they provide to the community but also allows space for the brigade to continue to expand as the task that it is responding to continues to grow. I commend Peter and his team. They do a terrific job. They do not complain. They did not once complain to me once when I was there. But it is very obvious that they have been operating for a very long time in substandard conditions. That is not a reflection on the Minister but a reflection on the fact that we need to do a lot more to build a new station for Walcha.

### WESTERN SYDNEY CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:16):** Western Sydney is a distinct and important region of Australia. No doubt the member for Bankstown, the member for Liverpool and the member for Parramatta, who are sitting in the Chamber, would agree with me on that point. The think pieces will often tell you the headline figures: 6,000-odd square kilometres, 2½ million people and Australia's third largest economy. Governments have sporadically recognised and addressed its importance in different ways. The establishment of Western Sydney University and the Western Sydney City Deal are two of the most transformative and obvious examples.

We know too that the former State Government was not ignorant of the region's importance and distinct character. In 2018 the Greater Cities Commission—may it rest in peace—published the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*. It declared the future of Sydney was "A Metropolis of Three Cities", one being the Western Parkland City, with the emerging Bradfield aerotropolis as its focal point, supported by the major centres of Liverpool,

Campbelltown and Penrith. While the plan informs the bureaucrats in planning, it appears to have played no discernible role in other policy areas like education, transport, health or the arts. And it is the arts in Western Sydney that I speak on today. A recent report from the Centre for Western Sydney, aptly named *State of the Arts in Western Sydney*, found that:

1. Western Sydney represents 10% of Australians today, yet only attracted 3.4% of federal funds between 2015 and 2023. This starkly contrasts with eastern Sydney, which received 23.5% of federal funds.

In relation to the Creative Economy Support Package, the report also found that:

... Despite Western Sydney being hit hardest by COVID-19 lockdowns, Western Sydney businesses only received \$3.4 million (1.7%) of the \$200 million federal Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Funding allocated to economic recovery following the pandemic. In contrast, organisations in eastern Sydney received \$49.7 million (24.8%).

On the State level, sadly it is no better. In the past eight years cultural infrastructure funding in Western Sydney, not including the Powerhouse Parramatta development, accounted for just 3.5 per cent of the total allocated to Sydney. I could go on and on. WestInvest, Destination NSW and Create NSW funding all show a disparity in the creative industries and arts funding in Western Sydney.

The report suggests ways to arrest that gap, and I call out a few: commit to minimum per capita funding for arts and culture in Western Sydney based on population distribution; develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to high-quality research into all aspects of arts and culture in Western Sydney; and develop cultural precincts and creative industry clusters around the Western Sydney airport and the aerotropolis. I call those recommendations out in particular because they would essentially be neutral to revenue by taking existing funding measures that are already accounted for. But, importantly, they ringfence them for arts and culture in Western Sydney.

In relation to the recommendation on the aerotropolis, the website of Western Parkland City Authority—may it rest in peace—states that Bradfield is intended to be a high-quality lifestyle choice with an active and vibrant culture that leverages its diversity and dynamic demographics. One way to achieve that is to ensure that plans for the new city include cultural infrastructure of State and national significance. The population of Bradfield is projected to rival Adelaide's by 2036. Adelaide's CBD has an art gallery, a natural history museum, an Indigenous museum, a festival centre, a science museum, a migration museum and an Australian space discovery centre. So too should Bradfield City. This cultural infrastructure will cater not only for the future residents of Bradfield; millions of tourists and travellers who come through the arrival gates of the Western Sydney airport will benefit, as will residents of the eight surrounding local government areas.

Of course, those LGAs all have their own incredible cultural institutions that would gain from this investment, including those local to Leppington, such as the amazing Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and the Campbelltown Arts Centre. There is a certain arrogance and snobbery when it comes to the arts. They are more than opera, ballet and symphony orchestras. It is vitally important that all of us, regardless of where we live, be able to tell our stories and express ourselves through creative pursuits we are comfortable with. As one of the most diverse regions, if not the most diverse region, of New South Wales, Western Sydney is best placed to showcase the diversity of the arts, in all of their forms: dance, theatre, music and visual arts. We have the opportunity to make this happen. Let us get on with it.

### WESTERN NSW BUSINESS AWARDS

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:21):** Local businesses are the backbone of our communities. They provide essential goods and services, are large employers overall and in turn are vital contributors to our local economy. Their success supports the growth and prosperity of our regional towns. They also underpin local sport and charitable organisations through sponsorship. Many businesses work hard to succeed, and establishment can involve significant financial risk. I am sure there have been and continue to be many business owners who endure anxiety and sleeplessness over their businesses. With very few exceptions, businesses require determined and committed people who work hard and often long hours to succeed. In addition to the ever-present challenges our local businesses face, over the past few years they have had to navigate COVID-19, cost-of-living pressures, inflation, rising interest rates and workforce challenges. Then there are those businesses whose premises were struck by floodwater.

Those are just a few reasons why it is important to recognise, celebrate and promote our local businesses, along with the hardworking, talented and passionate people who own, manage and staff them. Last Friday night I had the honour of attending the Western NSW Business Awards, hosted in Orange by Business NSW. In bringing the business community together, it provided opportunity for people to connect, network and collaborate. I recognise Vicki Seccombe, the western New South Wales regional director for Business NSW, for coordinating and hosting this important annual awards event. Vicki works tirelessly to support businesses across the western region of the State, providing an invaluable resource. The night was a huge success.



Among a huge field of represented businesses, the following businesses from the Orange electorate were awarded the following awards. Clever Cookie Academy in Orange won the Excellence in Small Business award and the Excellence in Innovation award and was named western New South Wales Business of the Year. Clever Cookie was founded in a shed in 2019 with one teacher and has now grown to 15 employees serving 425-plus students, offering K-12 educational support. It offers also statewide teacher training and mentoring and delivers in-school bootcamps. Clever Cookie Academy takes the struggle out of school, providing students with one-to-one tutoring assistance that purposefully differs from a traditional schooling environment. The team atmosphere it fosters has created an environment where learning is cool and to be celebrated.

Housing Plus in Orange won the Outstanding Community Organisation award. Housing Plus is a trusted not-for-profit service provider of affordable homes and high-quality support services. It delivers sustainable long-term outcomes for our diverse communities throughout New South Wales. Housing Plus believes that safe, secure housing is the foundation for improving the quality of an individual's life and creating vibrant communities, and remains committed to offering an integrated service model of community housing and community services. Topsoil Organics in Forbes won the Excellence in Sustainability award. Topsoil Organics is unique within the waste industry because it is a family owned and operated small business, established in a regional location, competing against key industry corporations in metropolitan areas. Since opening, it has diverted over 50,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill and used it to create high-quality organic compost, ideal for application in broadacre farming.

Leatherwood Bespoke Rosin in Canobolas won the Excellence in International Business award. Leatherwood Bespoke Rosin is Australia's only manufacturer of rosin for orchestral stringed instruments. It handcrafts bespoke rosin for players of stringed instruments, such as violins, violas and cellos, all over the world. Leatherwood exports 90 per cent of its rosin to the US, Asia and Europe, and over the past 12 months has grown by 34 per cent. The Remington hotel in Orange won the Outstanding Visitor Experience award. The Remington is a 4.5-star modern contemporary hotel, offering 82 spacious rooms and suites, event spaces, a restaurant and a bar. It is focused on providing exceptional customer service, along with building a portfolio of tourism packages that involve a range of local businesses, to assist with the engagement of domestic and international wholesalers and inbound tour operators to increase visitation to Orange.

Cauldron Molecules in Borenore won the Outstanding Startup award. Cauldron helps technology inventors take their scientific ideas from the research lab to the factory. Cauldron is currently expanding its operations to conduct large-scale precision fermentation, a technique that uses genetically engineered yeasts and other micro-organisms to custom-make a wide range of molecules for a new generation of food, feed and fibre. It has just raised \$10.5 million from venture capital and is working with key players in Australia, including CSIRO, universities and other startups. Finally, Pamela Johnson of SpiritAbility in Orange was named the outstanding young business leader. Pamela is the managing director of SpiritAbility. She has a fierce passion for supporting people living with disability and has dedicated her career to giving vulnerable people a voice. She is charged with steering the organisation's growth and success, whilst remaining focused on the heart of the organisation. I congratulate all the award winners and thank them for the inspiration and motivation they provide the business community.

## STOCKTON BEACH

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:26):** Madam Temporary Speaker, it is wonderful to see you in the chair, running the show tonight. I am proud to say that, not even three months after forming government, Labor is making real progress to address the devastating erosion at Stockton Beach. It is finally happening. Stockton Beach is important as a popular holiday location not only to the locals but also to many people. People come from far and wide to enjoy the laid-back area and the beautiful beach. But now it is a sorry sight. The iconic golden sand is no more. That is not only scary for the people of Stockton, whose very lifestyle is threatened as their suburb literally washes away, but also sad for everyone who has ever visited the beach and has fond memories of sunbaking by the water, catching waves or playing in the sand.

Getting sand back on this beach has been a long time coming. As long as I have been in this place, since my election in 2014, I have been fighting for the people of Stockton. Unfortunately, under the former Government, Stockton Beach did not receive the recognition or priority it deserved. I fought tooth and nail to get Ministers from the former Government to take action. I have stood in this Chamber and begged for action. I have brought to the House the Stockton community, who begged for action. I presented a petition of over 10,000 signatures and begged for action. All we got were half-done jobs and a blasé reception. For a while we did have some hope. The Stockton Beach Taskforce, established under former Deputy Premier John Barilaro, set about to do the necessary research and exploration, which started to inform the next steps.

Then the progress slowed down, until the Federal Labor Government awarded a grant to fund, along with the City of Newcastle, an initial nourishment of 300,000 cubic metres. Then the progress slowed down again, as a dispute over who would actually do the work erupted. I can say that the Minns Labor Government will do the work. My colleague from the other place the Minister for Regional New South Wales has taken the reins of the task force and ensured that we fulfilled a commitment I made to the people of Stockton: that the Stockton Beach Taskforce will meet regularly. Until we met a fortnight ago, under the former Government the task force had not met since June last year. Despite my numerous—and they were certainly numerous—requests to get the task force together, the former Government simply refused.

We will now meet every three months, updating the Stockton community each and every time. Under a new government with a new Minister at the fore, we are getting even closer to having sand on the beach. With the pleasant surprise that we will be able to dredge the first 100,000 cubic metres of sand under approvals already held by the Port of Newcastle, we have now advertised the tenders for this to happen. The contract is expected to be awarded in September. Under Minister Moriarty's leadership, the Department of Regional NSW has taken charge, coordinating the contributing agencies and stakeholders to ensure that everyone is working together, with NSW Public Works managing this first sand nourishment project. Things are happening. I need to thank Premier Chris Minns, who made the trip to Stockton last year, saw the devastation and said "Yes, a government I lead will do something about this." The Minister for Regional New South Wales has done a fantastic job in a very short amount of time. I am so glad that the task force has a chair who recognises the importance of getting sand back on this beach.

Our task force members continue to work constructively towards a solution. They include community representatives Barbara Whitcher, Ron Boyd and Callum Nickerson; Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes and other representatives from the City of Newcastle; the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council; the Department of Planning and Environment; the Department of Regional NSW; the Port of Newcastle; and the NSW Coastal Council. The Stockton Community Group, led by Alison Rigby and Melanie Taggart, has continued to push for action while the Stockton community at large has hung in there. Thank you for not giving up. We know that this initial sand nourishment is just the start. The Minns Labor Government is in this for the long run and will continue to work to get sand back on Stockton Beach.

#### **WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:31):** This evening I address the House on the local bus service in Willoughby, a service that has faced significant challenges since our emergence as a State from the COVID-19 pandemic last year. Ensuring a level of service from our buses that commuters expect and deserve has been one of my key priorities. Commuters standing in queues at bus stops across Willoughby as full buses sail past do not want excuses. They do not want a blame game or politicking from their Government; they just want their bus services fixed. They want to have the confidence that when they turn up to a bus stop in the morning their bus will get them to work on time and in the evening bring them home. In short, they want a reliable service that they do not need to worry about. I thank Willoughby commuters for their understanding and feedback as I have stood at bus stops and street corners to listen and act for local residents.

I have worked tirelessly with local bus operators and the previous Government to deliver meaningful and feasible improvements to the service. A range of measures was already underway including sign-on bonuses, recruitment days and streamlined processes to get more bus drivers. There was more to do, but lots of work had been put in and it was making a real improvement on the ground. With my strong advocacy, the previous Government announced a four-point plan to address the root cause of the disruption: post-COVID bus driver shortages. This included, first, making public transport free to and from work for all bus drivers across Sydney; second, establishing a task force to attract skilled bus drivers from overseas; third, waiving of the bus driver authority fee and subsidising training course fees; and, fourth, inviting the community to have their say on improvements across the bus network, including routes and timetables.

Now we have a new Government that has promised to act on the bus driver shortage. It has announced another review, a review that will hand down its findings in 12 months, which is a whole year away. But we already know what the issues are and we know what is needed to address them, so I encourage the Government to get on with it, to implement the plan that has already been developed and, indeed, to deliver real practical outcomes and improvements. Let us be clear: There were no quick fixes here. The Government should be straight about the causes of the disruptions and of the driver shortage. A once-in-a-lifetime pandemic uprooted lives and careers and caused lasting shifts in behaviour, including travel. The bus driver shortage is being felt across Australia and indeed the world. Despite what some would have us believe, this is not a problem unique to regions 7 and 8 of Sydney's bus network. New Zealand, for example, recently recruited 350 drivers from the Philippines to address its bus driver shortage.

Australia's emergence from the pandemic over the course of the last year has exposed large workforce shortages impacting across many industries throughout Australia and indeed the world. This is not about franchising nor privatisation, as members opposite would have us believe. Indeed, bus franchising was a policy of the previous Labor Government. Most routes in Sydney were already franchised by the time the Liberals came to Government in 2011. They did not cause labour shortages then and are not the cause now. We have already seen the Government's bus task force recycling the former Government's solutions, such as streamlining training processes and reducing red tape. I welcome this if it means we get our buses fixed faster, but this Government should proceed to give the drivers the Opal cards we promised to attract skilled drivers from overseas, as the previous Coalition Government committed to.

I welcome the community consultation on routes and timetables, something that was already announced by the previous Government. We need routes to be optimal and working for commuters and our communities. Beyond the driver shortages, I have worked tirelessly to improve the broader bus service and its delivery. The Chatswood to Royal North Shore Hospital service, route 113, commenced last year. Three route 120 services have been added to each morning and evening peak. The Liberal's Zero Emission Bus Transition Strategy is delivering the electrification of the Willoughby bus depot: 120 electric buses will be delivered to the Willoughby and Neutral Bay depots, with 35 of them serving the Willoughby electorate next year.

I have heard the community's view and I am working to restore the 257 service to Balmoral. I am also advocating for point-to-point bus services in Willoughby, as exist, effectively, on the northern beaches. The previous Government committed to an \$8 million feasibility study to move the needle forward to provide options for the much-needed upgrade of the Willoughby bus interchange. This is a vital and necessary investment. This Government needs to deliver on it now. The Liberals have a strong track record in public transport, delivering record investments and reversing the 16 years of neglect that preceded it. I am proud of our transformational public transport projects, including in Willoughby. On local buses, I will, and we on this side of the House will, continue to take real action—much more than mere reviews that take 12 months—and we will always stand up for the Willoughby community and our local transport needs.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:36):** Once again, we get to hear five minutes of amnesia from members of the former Government, who seem to have forgotten that for 12 years they were actually in charge. It is quite interesting that they forget about it. They acknowledge some of the good things that the excellent Minister for Transport, Jo Haylen, is doing. I was not going to say anything until I heard the last part of the member for Willoughby's speech, which was about the previous Government's record on public transport.

**Mr Tim James:** Oh, metros!

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Their record on public transport includes metros that are well and truly overblown, ferries that we cannot fit under bridges, public transport that they could not run and buses that run late. We on this side are quite happy to make changes where we need to. We certainly agree that public transport is the very best thing, but one of the things that I really do feel sorry for regarding those opposite is the fact that they have an amnesia issue. They forget that for 12 years they did very little. It seems that now they think that everything can be solved in three months. I will tell members one thing: I would back in our Minister for Transport any day over their former Ministers.

**Mr Tim James:** Point of order: It is unparliamentary to attribute a serious medical condition to Opposition members to score political points. I ask the Minister to withdraw that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I thank the member for Willoughby. I will allow the Minister to respond and withdraw.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** It is a spurious point of order, but if it makes the member for Willoughby feel better, I am happy to withdraw it. But, seriously, that is clutching at straws.

### SCHOOL CROSSINGS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:38):** I wish to speak on the importance of school crossings, an issue that a number of my constituents have raised with me since my election in March and beforehand. The safety of our children should always be our top priority. School crossings play a pivotal role in making sure that our children get to school and home safe. School crossings serve as vital intersections where children navigate their way to and from school. They are designed to provide a safe passage for students, allowing them to cross roads without being exposed to the dangers of traffic. However, the sad reality is that many of these crossings either do not exist or suffer from insufficient infrastructure and inadequate funding due to the previous Government's complete oversight of the people of Camden, which puts our kids' safety at risk.

One of the particularly concerning risks of underfunding road safety infrastructure around schools is the increased likelihood of accidents and injuries. Without proper signage, well-maintained crosswalks and effective traffic-calming measures like speed bumps, drivers may fail to recognise school zones or underestimate the presence of young pedestrians. This lack of awareness can lead to devastating consequences, as even a momentary lapse in attention can result in a tragic accident.

Consider Spring Farm Public School or Camden South Public School. For years, parents had been crying out for the former Liberal-Nationals Government to fund much-needed crossings at those schools. And where were they? Why is it that it took an election for the former Government to make piecemeal commitments to provide safe crossings at those schools? The people of Camden knew that they were only being paid lip service by the Liberal-Nationals Government and that they needed a change. The gross underfunding of critical road safety infrastructure can hinder the implementation of essential safety measures, such as traffic lights, speed bumps or crossing guards. Those measures are crucial in providing a safe environment for children as they travel to and from school. Without them, students as young as four years of age may end up crossing busy roads, with distracted drivers exposing them to unnecessary risks.

Furthermore, the absence of adequate road safety infrastructure can have a detrimental impact on the overall community. When parents and caregivers perceive a lack of safety around school crossings, they may choose alternative transportation methods, such as driving their children to school. That not only contributes to increased traffic congestion, further raising the risk for a horrible accident, but also diminishes physical activity among children because walking or cycling to school becomes less viable. The long-term consequences of reduced physical activity in our younger generation in the age of Netflix and iPads cannot be underestimated.

To address those risks, it is imperative that we prioritise allocating funds and resources to road safety infrastructure around schools. That investment should encompass various aspects already discussed, including enhanced signage, well-marked crosswalks, traffic-calming measures and the presence of trained crossing guards. That is why, at the first opportunity possible, the Government will ensure that \$1.5 million goes towards school crossings in Camden. I need to be honest with the people of Camden and let them know that it will take some time to get those crossings built and ready to go, but I promise that the money will be there for that. The people of Camden needed the former Government to step up and take the safety and wellbeing of kids seriously. We did not need big announcements or to see local schools on TV; we just needed our kids to get to and from school in one piece. That is what a Minns Labor Government will deliver for the people of Camden.

#### **LIZ CAMPBELL, OAM**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (19:41):** Ms Temporary Speaker, I congratulate you on being selected to sit in the chair. I congratulate and acknowledge Kempsey Shire ex-councillor and friend Liz Campbell, who was recently awarded an Order of Australia for her services to local government administration. When Liz decided to step away from local government in 2022, the community lamented. The council chambers had lost a very special lady. Liz's vitality, vision, political savvy, collaborative style, sound leadership and stylish presence will not be forgotten.

Liz was elected to Kempsey Shire Council in 2008. In her 14-year tenure, Liz served two years as deputy mayor and was elected mayor in 2011. In 2012, Liz was the first popularly elected mayor in the Macleay Valley and was re-elected as mayor in 2016 for a second four-year term that was extended to December last year due to the pandemic. Liz's dedication and work ethic throughout the term has been exceptional. Her loyalty and commitment to the Kempsey Shire community are steadfast, and she has worked tirelessly 24/7 to improve the quality of life for people in the community across all facets of the shire.

Having been born and raised in Kempsey, living in her family home and instilled with a strong community service ethic by her parents, Liz not only served on council but also volunteered her time and energy to many service organisations within the Macleay Valley. She held executive positions over many years with the Macleay Valley Business Chamber, and her dedication to Rotary saw her awarded the Paul Harris Fellow medal. Liz was elected to the Country Mayors Association executive in 2017, and her longstanding support for the Macleay Valley Mustangs and Macleay River Historical Society saw both invite her to be their patron. Until recently, she was Chair of the Australia Day Committee and Chair of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation.

Liz was fierce in her defence of the Macleay Valley and strove to build a community that was inclusive, where everyone, regardless of their background, wealth, race, culture, religion or age, could feel that they belonged. Liz built relationships with people across all walks of life, and her ability behind the scenes with all levels of government, business, community groups and public service organisations delivered tangible improvements to services and facilities for the community. Her travel and tourism expertise and business acumen helped shape plans for the Macleay Valley to become a prime tourism destination, and she actively promoted the

natural beauty and positive attractions of the Macleay Valley at every opportunity to help grow the local economy, with initiatives such as the Macleay Valley Food Bowl.

It was Liz who started the Mayoral Community Fund, which has donated funds to many students, clubs and community groups over her years as mayor. She started the fund with moneys that were not used in her mayoral position, using her own vehicle instead of taking a council-allocated car and she paid her own way many times. Her leadership in times of bushfire, flood and drought was exemplary. She tirelessly lobbied State and Federal governments to help rebuild homes and community infrastructure destroyed and damaged in those disasters. From its inception, Liz has been a steadfast supporter of the Macleay Vocational College. The council gifted the land in Reginald Ward Street to the college so that it could continue its vital work to support kids who have had a rough start in life.

Liz is proud to hold the first position of Chair of the Country Universities Centre. Another initiative that meant a lot to Liz was helping to organise a visit by Father Chris Riley, founder of Youth Off The Streets, to address around 1,000 secondary students at the Kempsey Golf Club. Overseeing the delivery of the Kempsey Bypass Masterplan to revitalise the CBD into a destination of choice, once Kempsey was no longer a highway town, involved years of planning and extreme hard work. Under her leadership, the council took the difficult but necessary step in 2017 of undertaking an external review of the organisation's structure and culture. This initiated a period of significant change, transformation and growth that has continued over the past four years.

I believe the working relationship between Liz and General Manager Craig Milburn has seen the Kempsey Shire Council rise and rise and rise. Liz has been the main advocate for Kempsey's second traffic bridge. Her life in council was not always easy. While dealing with bullying and disrespect from others, she kept her head up and never took her focus off delivering the best for the community. I congratulate and thank Liz. Her legacy in the community will not be forgotten.

#### **HARDING MILLER EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:46):** I speak on an issue of great interest to me and to many in my community. Economic disadvantage is a destructive force. It erodes mental and physical health, it hampers children's wellbeing and developmental outcomes, and it can mean the difference between a comfortable old age or a harsh and uncertain one. It can also have intergenerational impacts on families and communities. Children who grow up in persistent economic disadvantage are three times more likely not to finish high school compared with children who have never been poor, with significant long-term impacts on physical and mental health, employment prospects and lifetime earnings.

Research conducted by the NSW Council for Social Service [NCOSS] shows that, unfortunately, children still have the highest rate of poverty, State-wide, of any age bracket, and they make up one-quarter of all those living in poverty in New South Wales. Despite an overall reduction in child poverty since 2016, the most recent *NCOSS Mapping Economic Disadvantage in NSW Report* showed that a number of areas saw a significant increase in child poverty rates. The vast majority of those are in western and south-western Sydney. Areas such as Bonnyrigg Heights and Mount Pritchard both saw an increase of eight percentage points.

It is a general rule, education is the way to boost social mobility and make communities more equal. An African proverb states, "When you educate a woman, you educate a community." The Harding Miller Education Foundation is built on this principle and the understanding that educating girls would change not only their lives but also the lives of their families and community. The foundation supports academically talented young girls who are in low socio-economic circumstances. The Harding Miller Education Foundation scholarship program provides the tools, resources and support that the girls need to reach their potential, starting from year 9.

This year the foundation celebrates awarding over 1,000 scholarships. Last night I was very pleased to attend the 2023 Awards Night to celebrate this year's scholarship recipients, as well as acknowledge the achievements of the graduating year 12 scholarship cohort, who were denied their awards night due to the COVID lockdowns and restrictions. I had the opportunity to present awards to Aishwarya Soorajkumar and Alisa Truong, who are both in year 9 at Miller Technology High School. Aishwarya is also a JP Morrison scholar. It was wonderful to see them both supported by Principal Dr Ken Edge, their teachers and their parents. It was obvious to all just how much the award means to the girls, their school community and their families. I know that they will make a difference. I also acknowledge fellow scholarship winners Babylonia Kanno and Mallak Alsabahi, who are both year 9 students at Liverpool Girls High School. I wish each of these girls every success in utilising the scholarship program to its fullest advantage.

Last night we heard from previous scholarship winner Tara Mahshar. She described her journey from being a shy year 7 student who was in her shell to being a bold, funny, highly intelligent and resilient young woman who is keen to be a future leader. We are in good hands if our future leaders are of Tara's calibre. I wish Tara the

very best in utilising her experiences to impact her family and community. The Harding Miller Education Foundation is the brainchild of Kim Harding, an experienced and highly lauded businessperson, and Irene Miller, a former public school teacher and staunch advocate of public education. They understood the barriers, including technological ones, that some face in accessing education. Some families struggle to put food on the table, let alone purchase a computer. Others would know that the digital divide is still a huge issue in many of our communities, including mine, and access to the internet or other necessary digital resources is constrained.

Others may face the barrier of a lack of mentorship or role modelling. For girls from environments in which they may be the first to attend university or aspire to higher education, there is a lack of the wisdom, advice and knowledge that is often shared informally within family or social networks. The work that the Harding Miller Education Foundation does is part of a community-focused strategy to work towards the success of three of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Education is a necessary building block on the path to greater wellbeing for all people and communities. I acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Youth Justice who, in his role as a former teacher and school principal, has made a huge difference to his community.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Thanks.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** You're very welcome. I acknowledge and thank the board of the Harding Miller Education Foundation, including the executive director, Cara Varian, as well as the donors and supporters, especially the coaches, who give their time, wisdom and energy to support these wonderful young women.

### HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:51):** Most of us have made a visit to a public hospital at some point, whether it be to the emergency department for a serious injury or illness, or to a ward for a scheduled surgery. It is always a daunting experience when health issues are involved. I have spoken to countless people in the Heathcote electorate who unfortunately have had harrowing experiences at a public hospital. Let me be clear: None of those issues have concerned the level of compassion, dedication or effort from nurses, doctors and other allied health staff. They are all doing their best. However, the standard of the public health system declined significantly under the former New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. That is a fact.

The Bureau of Health Information's last quarterly report, for January to March of this year, highlighted the dire state of the hospitals serving the southern and northern ends of the Heathcote electorate. For instance, just 41.8 per cent of patients presenting to the Wollongong Hospital emergency department left within the four-hour benchmark. Just over two-thirds of patients presenting to the ED during that same period actually started treatment on time. Make no mistake, those statistics are not a reflection of the incredibly hardworking staff at the hospital. They are doing their best under extremely testing circumstances. The former Government failed dismally to adequately support or resource our public healthcare system, and those results in Wollongong are a reflection of that failure. Further north, during that same period just 50.4 per cent and 50.5 per cent of patients who presented to Sutherland and St George hospitals respectively left the department within the desired four-hour period.

Again, that is a reflection of the former New South Wales Government's incompetence to efficiently support and resource our public hospitals; it is in no way indicative of the hardworking hospital staff. Those statistics should also greatly concern the member for Miranda and the Leader of the Opposition, who is also the member for Cronulla. During my inaugural speech in this place, I highlighted the plight faced by my friend and nurse Collette Duff. Collette was one of the many nurses on the front line who sacrificed her own welfare and health during the outbreak of COVID-19. How did the former Government thank her and the thousands of others on the front line? It made them beg for more colleagues and basic personal protective equipment. That is a disgraceful and disgusting way to treat those brave and selfless frontline workers.

We know beds in hospitals are precious, which is why it defies belief that so many are being taken up by patients due to issues within other systems. My friend Kym Flowers is the perfect example. Kym, who has complex health issues, was forced to spend seven months in Sutherland Hospital occupying a bed due to the privatisation of group homes under the former Government. I understand that care, support and services for those who are disabled is primarily a function of the Commonwealth Government. However, Kym's case highlights how an issue at the Federal level can have flow-on effects for the State. Kym's fight with the disability sector is far from over, and I am continually inspired by her resolve and the resolve of her mother, Penny. They have both suffered so many setbacks, but that has not stopped them from fighting another system in desperate need of repair.

I have stood side by side Kym and Penny for years, and I will continue to do so until they receive the respect and support they deserve. Recently, there were six beds in Sutherland Hospital that were taken up by patients who were medically cleared but unable to be discharged, just like Kym. Four of those patients were unable to be discharged due to NDIS reasons. I am buoyed by the fact that my good friend and member for Keira, Ryan

Park, is now the Minister for Health. There is no doubt that he is the perfect person to not only identify the many shortfalls of our system but also fix them. Our health system's primary focus should be on servicing patients. That is a notion that those opposite were never able to understand or appreciate during their 12 disastrous years in government.

To ensure that the needs of patients is the primary focus, staff need to know that our Government has their back. They need to know that our Government will support them through thick and thin, just like they have supported the State. I have spoken to countless nurses, doctors and allied health workers since being elected as the member for Heathcote, and I know they have the utmost confidence in the Minns Government and the Minister for Health to heal the State's broken health system. Recently I was pleased to stand by the side of the Minister for Health to announce that the opening hours of the Bulli Hospital Urgent Care Centre are being extended. It is outcomes like this that will make a positive difference to the health system. Those on the other side of the House should take note. I thank the House.

### ENDEAVOUR SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:57):** I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation to the chair, Madam Temporary Speaker. Sport is at the heart of who we are in the Sutherland shire, and this evening I recognise Endeavour Sports High School, which has been designated an Australian Olympic Pathway School by the Australian Olympic Committee. Endeavour Sports High School already has a rich history of producing Olympic athletes and includes five amongst its alumni. They are Sophie Hunt in speed skating, Kaarle McCulloch in cycling, Stacey McManus in softball, and Craig Stevens and Carl Wilson in swimming.

For those in this place who are unfamiliar with the program, the Australian Olympic Pathway School status is available to schools that have an established athlete development program that includes Olympic sports. I was pleased to join with representatives of the Australian Olympic Committee, including school Olympian alumni Stacey McManus, Craig Stevens and Carl Wilson, along with Australian Youth Olympics team member Tay-Leiha Clark, to formally celebrate the school's designation on 31 May 2023. The existing programs in place at Endeavour Sports High School, along with the support that the partnership with the Australian Olympic Committee provides, will set students up for success and greatly assist those striving to compete at Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

Since its designation as a sports high school in 1997, Endeavour Sports High School has done a tremendous job fostering the next generation of sporting superstars. The school, which is a proud member of the NSW Combined High Schools Sports Association, is ably led by Principal James Kozlowski and Deputy Principals Lenore Blades, Nagla Jebeile and Jocelyn Gooch, who work tirelessly with the teachers, coaches and support staff to create holistic students who succeed and thrive. Outside of the Olympic sphere, Endeavour has also provided us with other household sporting names. They include rugby league stars Bronson Xerri, Beau Champion, Damien Cook and Alex Johnston; Sydney FC's Jake Girdwood-Reich; Waratahs and Wallaroos lock Sera Naiqama; Sydney Sixers star Moises Henriques; and champion boxer George Kambosos Jr—just to name a few.

Today it is through its targeted sports programs that Endeavour Sports High School offers in a wide range of sports such as athletics that the school is developing the next generation of sporting talent. This continued development of talent was on clear display at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships on the Gold Coast in April. I take this opportunity to commend Endeavour's athletics coaching staff consisting of Jacinta Doyle, Teri Fragiadakis and Gary Toohey and mentors Alec Jones and Jesse Richardson for helping students achieve these exceptional results.

Amongst the students competing was Telaya Blacksmith, who came away with two gold medals after competing in the Para Athletes 100 metres and 200 metres for under 17s, in the latter of which she broke her own Australian Open record, crossing the line in 26.13 seconds. Likewise, Rhiannon Bellette came away with a gold medal in the Para Athletes under-17 shot-put and a bronze in the discus. Additionally, Jasynta Lampret won a gold medal in the 4 x 100 metre New South Wales relay team, a silver in the 200 metres and another silver in the 100-metre hurdles, which she ran in a Commonwealth Youth Games qualifying time. Meanwhile Tammin Lampret won gold in both the 90-metre and 200-metre hurdles and two silver medals in the 4 x 100 metre and 4 x 200 metre New South Wales relay teams.

Also putting in a stellar performance was year 8 student Cameron Badger, who won a gold medal in the 100-metre hurdles and a silver in the 200 metres. Finally, I recognise Jade Strahl for her bronze medal in the under-13 high jump, Mathilda Delfs for her silver medal in the under-16 400 metres and Neve Jenkins for her three silver medals across the 90-metre hurdles, the 200-metre hurdles and the 4 x 200 metre New South Wales relay team. These amazing students are some examples of the exceptional talent that is nurtured and developed at Endeavour Sports High School. I congratulate these students on their achievements at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships and wish them every success as they continue their sporting journey at Endeavour Sports

High School. I hope to see these athletes, as well as the stars from other disciplines, on the Olympic podium for Australia one day.

### SELWYN SNOW RESORT

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (20:01):** As many people know, Monaro is the home to the ski industry in New South Wales. I am pleased that right now Thredbo, Perisher and Charlotte Pass are attracting people to our region and to skiing. This year I welcome a renewed addition to the ski fields, which is the reopening of Mount Selwyn. Selwyn Snow Resort was burnt out in the Black Summer bushfires in January 2020. It was a devastating blow for the owners of the resort as well as the many people who enjoyed going there. Selwyn is a resort very well suited to skiers, particularly at beginner levels, and it now has the biggest toboggan area of a New South Wales ski field. It is where my children and I first learnt to ski. It is a very valuable resort for the region, and it has been a long three years to see it reopened. The owners Selwyn Snow Resorts Pty Ltd and the Blyton Group of companies have made a big investment in new facilities, new infrastructure—including some new snow making machines—and a new sewerage plant and works.

The ski industry is an important part of the Monaro electorate. The Selwyn resort is located not far away from where skiing started in Australia, at Kiandra goldfields in the 1860. Three Norwegians who went to Kiandra to mine built skis, which they then called snowshoes, out of local wood and taught the locals how to ski. That was where, very interestingly, the world's oldest ski club was founded. It is an important area. Kiandra does not have any residents anymore, but fortunately we have skiing in many other locations. Skiing developed from Kiandra and went through to Kosciuszko with the Kosciuszko Hotel, which is now where Sponars is, as people would see on the drive to Perisher. One hundred years ago or more people in the area got up to the ski fields through often heavy snow, because it apparently snowed a lot more then than it does right now.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Climate change.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It is climate change. They were able to ski and enjoy the snow at Sponars, which you would very rarely find now with skiable snow. The resorts that we have are a huge boost to the income our community gets from tourism and investment in our region. The big resorts like Perisher, Thredbo and Charlotte Pass are all welcoming many visitors. It is great to have the Selwyn resort back in action. It has been a long three years. One reason it is so important is that it is towards the north of the Kosciuszko park. It is close to the western border of the Monaro electorate and important for towns like Adaminaby, which at the moment is doing pretty well.

Accommodation is tight because of the Snowy 2.0 project, but its long-term economic driver, particularly in winter, is Selwyn. It has been a difficult time for some of the businesses in the area, when they have been closed for the past three years. It is very welcome that they are reopening again. Another thing in Adaminaby that is attractive to people is trout fishing in Lake Eucumbene and the rivers in the area. For those who are historically minded, Adaminaby was the town that was moved over the Great Dividing Range when the Snowy scheme was first built. It was on the banks of the river.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** It has the big fish.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I acknowledge the Minister's input. It has the Big Trout, which is about to be renovated and given some tender loving care by being repainted and made attractive again for the tourists who stop by. It also has the Snowy Scheme Museum, which is a terrific place for people to visit to see some of the machinery that was used in the original Snowy scheme, see the way people lived and learn a bit about the workforce there as well. Adaminaby is a great little town to visit, as are the other fabulous tourist centres like Jindabyne and the Snowy Mountains where you can ski in the winter and mountain bike in the summer—both of which I enjoy. Those are some of the reasons why it is great to be the member for Monaro. The important thing that I acknowledge today is the reopening of Selwyn. I congratulate Kevin Blyton and his companies on having the faith to invest the \$30 million that was needed to rebuild from the ashes of the Black Summer bushfires. I congratulate them and all the staff who will be working there and welcome them back to the tourism scene in the Snowy Mountains.

### EID-UL-ADHA

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:06):** Tomorrow is a very important day for people of the Islamic faith. It is Eid-ul-Adha. Myself and my colleague on the opposite side the member for Holsworthy will both be celebrating Eid with our families. The member for Drummoyne and other colleagues, like the member for Parramatta, will join us at Lakemba mosque for a 7.00 a.m. start tomorrow morning—so no sleeping in. I hear that it is going to be a balmy seven degrees with a slight westerly breeze, so we might need some scarves.



Eid-ul-Adha is the second Eid in the Islamic calendar. Most people are familiar with Eid at the end of Ramadan, which is called Eid-ul-Fitr. Ironically, Eid-ul-Adha is the more significant of the two. It goes back to the Abrahamic times and is recognised in the Jewish faith, the Christian faith and the Islamic faith. It comes down to an issue around sacrifices. As a result, it is often known as the Feast of Sacrifice and it is also the time when people of the Muslim faith who can do so go to Saudi Arabia for a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. It is one of the five pillars of Islam that people of the Muslim faith are meant to do. In contemporary times, if you cannot make it there, the day is generally spent reflecting on how lucky we are. We think about the sacrifices that we make but then consider how small they are, given the difficulty of other people's lives. It is expected that on the day you have made a donation, which comes in the form of money and also in the form of food for other people. Many times people will pay for a lamb, for example, or buy a cow with a few families and make sure it goes to somebody who is less fortunate.

But it is also a day of fun. It is a day that I think speaks to our Australia as it is. I am no stranger to talking about harmony and what we can do to make the best Australia that we can create. The best Australia that we can create is one where everybody respects and understands one another, and it is one where everybody knows that together we combine to make this most incredible society that nowhere else in the world can replicate. Whether it is a celebration of religion, culture or community, that is what makes this great State and nation. We put aside everything to celebrate. All too often people look at the negatives and say, "These are the things that divide us." The truth is that there is so much more that unites us; there is so much more humanity that brings us together. That is why I acknowledge the people who tomorrow will be celebrating alongside those of the Islamic faith. It means a great deal.

In the same way that I would say "Merry Christmas" to a Christian friend or "All the best for Hanukkah" to the Leader of the House, it means a lot for somebody to wish me "Eid Mubarak", because we are meeting on level terms; we meet as accepted members of society. There are some fun things happening during Eid, and it is fun day for kids. Eid will start tomorrow. Members will see me wearing a brand-new suit because we are meant to buy new clothes for Eid, even for children if we can. So I will wear brand-new clothes tomorrow, but I did not have a chance to get a haircut. They will be cutting hair in Punchbowl until 11 o'clock tonight, but I just cannot do it. I will try to give myself a home haircut—I will look like the member for Cessnock. He does the special number two with his blades.

Eid is a special time for kids. We give gifts and, of course, it is all about family, friends and loved ones. I look forward to spending time with my family, friends and loved ones on this really special holy day. Of course, we wish everyone Eid Mubarak. During Eid I really struggle with a Lebanese sweet called maamool. The mistake I make is that I show a lack of self-discipline. By about 11 o'clock in the morning I will be suffering really terrible heartburn. If anyone sees me with some Rennie or Gaviscon tomorrow during question time, they will know why that is. Again, to those brothers and sisters of the Islamic faith, I wish you all Eid Mubarak. I hope all of your sacrifices are accepted, and I hope that you are blessed always. To those who are not of the Islamic faith, thank you very much for your love, support and understanding. To everybody in the nation, regardless of faith, culture or heritage, when we all respect, understand and care for one another, we create an even better society, and we continue to make this the very best country in the world.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I wish the Minister Eid Mubarak, and recognise that tomorrow is a special day for him, the member for Holsworthy and others in the Islamic community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:12 until  
Wednesday 28 June at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**SPENCER HAWKINS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise an exceptional young man – Spencer Hawkins. 23-year-old Spencer is currently on a one-month deployment to Canada fighting fires as part of a NSW contingent of RFS volunteers sent in to help with the unprecedented wildfires. At the age of 16, Spencer volunteered for the RFS. By the age of 21, Spencer had attained the rank of Deputy Captain and volunteered in the North Orange and Canobolas brigades. At the age of 21 he received a NSW Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation to recognise his contribution fighting the devastating bushfires of 2019/2020 throughout the state, as well as the fires raging through Mount Canobolas, just a few kilometres from his home. With a particular interest in studying weather patterns, Spencer used that experience as he gained his fixed-wing pilot's licence two years ago. He then went on to attain his helicopter pilot's licence in 2022. Since training as a RFS volunteer firefighter, Spencer has been

deployed to fight fires all over the state. Spencer Hawkins is a wonderful role model to other young men. He is highly motivated, committed to the RFS and his aviation career, and has a strong sense of family. Well done, Spencer.

#### **CUDAL BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate Cudal Bowling Club on its recent and well-deserved recognition through ClubsNSW's Clubs and Community Awards. The devastating 2022 floods across the Central West is well documented, less so is the amazing work done by community organisations on the evening and in the days after floodwaters hit Cudal before making its way to Eugowra. One of those organisations was the Cudal Bowling Club, which opened its doors on the night of the disaster to shelter affected residents and providing safety and food for around 80 people who lost their homes and belongings. Club staff, with board chairman Greg Wiltshire and club members, rallied almost immediately to provide a makeshift evacuation centre. The club purchased \$2,500 on cleaning products and tools from Orange to be distributed to residents while it also supplied food and temporary accommodation with four staff and members working long hours to provide for their community. After exhausting its own funds of around \$20,000, the Club was grateful for the support of Dooley's Lidcombe Catholic Club, which made a \$50,000 donation which enabled its bills to be paid. I congratulate Cudal Bowling Club and its chair Greg Wiltshire on receiving this award.

#### **JUDD AND TRACEY MCKENNA**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise the contribution of Judd and Tracey McKenna to their community of Eugowra, which was devastated by floodwaters late last year. Despite a record-level flood which swept through their businesses – The Escort Rock Café and the Fat Parcel food van, through an active social media campaign they became a beacon for Eugowra residents. With a borrowed food truck and cool room, The Fat Parcel set-up immediately post-flood calling on locals to come down, talk over their problems and begin the healing process. It was here too that volunteers and service organisations gathered to offer what help and support they could. Through their own generosity and tenacity, Judd and Tracey served 8,000 free hot beverages and 3,000 free meals in the weeks following the flood. They co-ordinated donations which transferred into the preparation of free meals for locals. Their food van and surrounding grounds became the official gathering point at any time of the day for exhausted volunteers wanting a break, and for residents who had nowhere else to go, to just sit and share their stories or shed a tear. Judd and Tracey embody the true spirit of those who put their community first.

#### **NSWFCLS ANNUAL GALA**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I rise to acknowledge the recent Annual Gala Dinner for the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools, held at Bankstown Sports Club. The NSW Federation of Community Language Schools is the peak body for the after-hours community languages schools' sector of NSW, teaching 72 languages and servicing over 220 member schools representing 26000 students and 2500 teachers. Celebrating its 45th year, the federation celebrated the achievements of students and the contributions of teachers and principals to language education in NSW. The event also highlighted the importance of language education in sustaining our vibrant multicultural communities. Along with other guests, the event was attended by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Prue Car, who I thank for using the event as an opportunity to announce that governments commitment to increased funding for languages. I congratulate all the award recipients at Saturday's Gala on their achievements and contributions, and I look forward to supporting and celebrating community language schools in the future.

#### **AMY CHESSARI**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to acknowledge Amy Chessari, a former student of Gilroy Catholic College in my electorate of Castle Hill. Amy gained a scholarship deal with the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club in November of 2022. This year, Western Sydney Wanderers confirmed the re-signing of the Liberty A-League midfielder until the end of the 2024/25 season. Amy played in 10 matches in her first season of the A-Leagues following a breakout season in the local competition with FNSW Institute. In year 12, Amy was selected to attend a training camp for the Young Matildas Under 20's National Team selection for soccer. Her dedication and passion is displayed clearly in her commitment to training, attending training sessions at 5am before school five days a week. Amy Chessari is a wonderful example of hard work, commitment, and enthusiasm. My congratulations to Amy for being re-signed with the Western Sydney Wanderers, and good luck with the 2024/25 season.

#### **TRISHAN RAJ**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Last week, Jasper Road Public School hosted the local final for the Arts Unit Multicultural Public Speaking Competition. This is an event which allows primary school students to explore ideas of multiculturalism and practise their skills in public speaking. Twenty-two students were in

attendance at the competition, each representing their schools from The Hills area. The students delivered speeches from 3-5 minutes long on diverse topics such as 'Sport is a game-changer' and 'Everyday racism'. The local final also included a 60-90 second impromptu speech, where students only had 5 minutes to prepare! Each competitor spoke passionately and persuasively, making it very difficult for the adjudicator, Taylor Donovan from the Arts Unit, to judge. Jasper Road Public school representative Trishan Raj from Year 4 was declared winner of the Stage 2 competition, having spoken on the topic 'When does a migrant become an Australian?' and the impromptu topic 'Surprise!'. He will continue onto the next stage of competition, where he will compete in the regional finals at The Arts Unit in Lewisham. Congratulations to all students who competed and a special congratulations and good luck to Trishan Raj for the regional finals.

#### **BAULKHAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, WESTERN SYDNEY MODEL UNITED NATIONS COMPETITION**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Congratulations to Chloe Djajakusli (Yr 10), Tanishkaa Ramesh (Yr 10) and Naina Ram (Yr 11) from Baulkham Hills High School who represented Iceland over the weekend on 28 – 29 May 2023 at the Western Sydney Model United Nations Competition. The competition is a debating competition. The Baulkham Hills High School students placed 1st out of the 35 teams in the competition. The students will join Pragya Gupta (Yr 11), Rishi Jaiswal (Yr 11) & Ketharan Partheepan (Yr 11) who qualified for Nationals a fortnight ago by coming first in the Northern Sydney Model United Nations competition. The students will be travelling to Canberra to debate in Old Parliament House against the best teams from across the nation. The students will have the opportunity to visit the Embassy and Ambassador of the country they are representing in the National Competition. Also worthy of praise is Jonathan Hur (Y12) who was awarded "Best Speaker" of the 110 students who competed. Thank you to Mr O'Shea for tireless efforts in supporting BHHS Model UN students. Congratulations and best of luck to our local students in the upcoming competition.

#### **NSW FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS – ANNUAL GALA DINNER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was a pleasure to attend 2023 NSW Federation of Community Language Schools [NSWFCLS] – Annual Gala Dinner, on Saturday, 17th June. NSWFCLS is the peak representative body for the after-hours community language schools which service over 220 member schools with 26,000 students and over 2500 teachers, in 515 locations and teaching 72 languages, across NSW. The Annual Gala Dinner was a wonderful opportunity to join members and volunteers of our community language schools, and celebrate their achievements, diversity, and hard work. Community language schools play a vital role in building a stronger and more enriched society and ensures that these languages are promoted for future generations. They are an essential resource for our diverse society, particularly in Western Sydney and the Electorate of Prospect which I am proud to represent. Thank you to Lucia Johns, President, and Michael Christodoulou AM, CEO of NSWFCLS, for your leadership of this important Federation which now operates in its 40th year. I also thank all the volunteers, staff, teachers and administrators of our community language schools, for their dedication towards this rich part of our community.

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE STATE CRIME COMMAND EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARD – DETECTIVE SERGEANT MICHAEL EGAN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Detective Sergeant Michael Egan on receiving a NSW Police Force State Crime Command Excellence in Policing Award on Tuesday 16th May 2023, presented by the Rotary Club of Holroyd. Detective Sergeant Egan has 24 years of service with the NSW Police Force, with 12 of those years attached to the State Crime Command. He is currently serving with the Sex Crimes Squad and was nominated for his investigations under SF SCS-CPIT-2023 where he was tasked with coordinating teams to locate several convicted child sex offenders. As a result, these offenders were arrested and charged. Detective Sergeant Egan was also nominated for his investigation under SF EDITS, where he and his team executed a search warrant at Cessnock Correctional Centre which revealed a network of paedophiles in NSW prisons. This investigation is ongoing and continues to identify offences relating to child abuse material and unknown links with convicted child sex offenders. Thank you, Detective Sergeant Egan, for your commitment to preventing and responding to crime and for helping to keep our community safe. Congratulations again on your receipt of this Award.

#### **KATRINA DAWSON AWARD MAY 2023 – RACHEL THAMPAPILLAI**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Rachel Thampapillai, recipient of the Katrina Dawson Award for May 2023, awarded by the NSW Bar Association. Ms Thampapillai was admitted as a solicitor in 2016, after graduating from the Australian National University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Law and Arts, as well as completing a Master of Laws at the University of California Berkeley in 2017. Since 2020, Ms Thampapillai has practiced as a solicitor at the Aboriginal Legal Service, and more recently as practiced within the Children's Court as the Youth Koori Court Solicitor. She has extensive experience and contributes significantly

to sentencing outcomes, appeals, and the facilitation of rehabilitation outcomes for young Indigenous people. As the daughter of Sri Lankan Tamil parents who fled the Civil War in 1983, Rachel is a shining example of how her own experiences have shaped her own leadership and service to those most vulnerable in our community. The Katrina Dawson Award recognises the leadership and academic efforts of women in the legal profession who have passed the NSW Bar exam and demonstrate commitment to enrolling in a Bar Practice Course. Congratulations again, Rachel, for your receipt of this prestigious Award.

#### **SIENNA SMITH**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Sienna Smith, from Corpus Christi High School, Oak Flats, who participated in the NSW All Schools AFL Trials as part of the NSWCCC AFL team on 28 and 29 May 2023. This was a great experience for Sienna to play against some of the best girls in the State. The NSWCCC team won the competition. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Sienna and wish you well in your future sporting endeavours.

#### **ERYN TESTA**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Eryn Testa, from Shellharbour, who announced she wanted to become a tattoo artist at the age of 14, and four years later, at 18, she is one of the country's youngest tattooists, having recently obtained her tattoo licence. Her artist name is 'Little e' and she's secured an apprenticeship at Tattoo Saloon in Oak Flats. A lot of people start their tattoo apprenticeship later on in life, after they've had other careers, so it is a testament to her determination that she has achieved this at such a young age. Eryn tattooed three little birds on her Mum's arm, above her wrist, which represents her three children. It was her Mother's first tattoo and Eryn's first on human skin, so it's very special and very sentimental to her. Lance Daly and Rebecca Caruana took 'Little e' under their wing and she commenced her five-year apprenticeship on 6 November 2022, just before graduating from St Mary Star of the Sea College. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Eryn and wish you well in your future artistic endeavours.

#### **JORDAN BARLOW**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Jordan Barlow, from Warilla High School, who represented the Combined High Schools at the NSW All Schools Touch Football tournament in Sydney on 3 and 4 June 2023. Jordan was voted Most Valuable Player and was selected in the second NSW U15 All Schools team to compete in Darwin in August. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Jordan and I wish you well in this upcoming event and with your future sporting endeavours.

#### **ANTOINETTE NADER**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of lifelong volunteer Ms Antoinette Nader. Ms Nader is the founder of One Meal Kingsgrove which provides fresh, hot and nutritious homemade meals and snack packs to the most vulnerable members of our local community. The community organisation began in 2020 and has worked tirelessly since, even continuing operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. One Meal Kingsgrove relies entirely on St Ursula's College and Our Lady of Fatima primary school volunteers to carry out its vital work. Currently, One Meal Kingsgrove is operated by 12 teams of 10 to 12 volunteers from St Ursula's College staff and students that run the service each Wednesday. The remarkable fact that One Meal Kingsgrove has not missed a single service since they were established is a testament to the dedication, devotion and generosity of Antoinette and her team of volunteers. I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Ms Nader for the wonderful work she does in ensuring everyone in our local community is properly fed.

#### **BONNIE GREENTREE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the wonderful work of volunteer Ms Bonnie Greentree. Bonnie has been graciously giving up her time and effort to volunteer at the Probus Club of Kogarah for the past seven years. The Probus Club of Kogarah provides retirees with the opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and explore new interests. Probus Club offers a range of activities including trips and outings for members to enjoy, with the aim of improving wellbeing and social interaction. Her work over the last seven years has been fundamental to the club's growth and outreach into the Kogarah seniors' community. Bonnie is responsible for the organisation of letter box drops and appearances on community radio promoting upcoming activities. During the COVID-19 isolation periods, Bonnie strived to maintain a spirit of community and belonging as she regularly contacted members by phone and email to maintain morale and social contact. Her unwavering spirit is an inspiration to us all and I want to thank Bonnie for her dedication and commitment to improving the wellbeing and lifestyle of our community of seniors.

### MOTHERS' COMMITTEE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I am deeply moved to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary efforts of the St George Girls High School Mothers' Committee. Led by President, Ms Mon Zin, Secretaries, Ms Hui Hoh and Ms Patricia Pang-Politis, Vice Presidents, Ms Nadisa Milo and Ms Naga Thommandru and Treasurers, Ms Kim Le and Ms Patty Youngnark and supported by a team of dedicated volunteers including Ms Grace Kim, Ms Jennifer Liu, Ms Matilda De Vocht, Ms Rene Nguyen, Ms Sharon Khan and many others, the Committee has made a profound impact on the school community. Ms Zin and her team of volunteers selflessly manage the uniform shop, organise fundraising events and support school programs as part of their aim to foster a strong sense of community. Their meticulous planning of the annual Mother-Daughter gala dinner promotes engagement and supports local businesses. The committee's financial responsibility is evident through their careful budgeting and ensuring all profits from the school uniform shop and fundraising events are directed back to the school. Through countless hours of volunteering, the Mothers Committee enriches the lives of students, parents, and staff, providing invaluable resources, exceptional opportunities and transformative improvements to the school community.

### DUFFYS FOREST RFS

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I pay tribute to the volunteer firefighters of Duffys Forest Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade and thank them for their service over the past 12 months. Duffys has had a big 12 months, with the recent completion of their new station facility! It was a pleasure to join the Brigade volunteers, local residents, and Deputy Commissioner Kyle Stewart for official opening on 25 June. Sincere thanks to President, Trevor Cain, on your efforts leading the building project over recent years, and to Chris Dedman as Captain, leading the Brigade's operations in challenging times whilst the station build was ongoing – these are not easy tasks in any organisation, let alone a volunteer one. Congratulations to Jessica Holmes on her election as Captain – the first female to hold that office in the Duffys Forest Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade. I know you will do a wonderful job. Thank you all for your service, and I am pleased that these words of thanks and recognition will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country.

### NARRABEEN SPORTS HIGH – P & C

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I thank the President of the Narrabeen Sports High School P&C Association, James Wiggins, and Honorary Secretary, Dr Peter McDonald, for their advocacy on behalf of their school. For many years, James has advocated for the upgrade of Narrabeen Sports High. The project has faced various challenges and those are matters which I am committed to working through with James and the school community over the period ahead. I also thank Principal, Heidi Currie, for her leadership of the school community over the past 18 months. Heidi has persevered and show immense patience in recent times. Thank you to all staff of Narrabeen Sports High, who are the glue which hold your school and community together. Thank you all for your efforts and I am proud that these words are preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament in this country as a very small token of thanks and recognition.

### ROTARY UPPER NORTHERN BEACHES – CHANGEOVER

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I pay tribute to all Rotarians of the Upper Northern Beaches Rotary Club. It was a privilege to attend their annual changeover dinner on 26 June 2023 and share an exceptionally fun evening together. Congratulations to Brett Clapham and your team on a wonderful 2022/23, jam-packed with fundraising events, from, carols, Christmas trees, Beach2Beach and so much more. Thank you to all Upper Northern Beaches Rotarians for continuing to raise valuable funds for more than worthy causes and, in the process, serving our community and faithfully serving other volunteer organisations and charitable causes in the process. Rotary is in safe hands with new President, Michaela Visser, at the helm. Well done, Michaela! I was humbled to be inducted as an honorary member of Rotary – thank you all! Congratulations all Upper Northern Beaches Rotarians on a wonderful year and I look forward to seeing you all soon. I am proud that these words are now preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament in this country, as a small recognition of your service.

### KRYSTAL DALLINGER

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—When the Super Netball League continued its First Nations round on the first weekend in June, it was with artwork designed by Charlestown local and proud Gamilaroi woman Krystal Dallinger. Krystal designed the league's artwork, known as "Gather as One", which featured an emu, goanna and kangaroo to represent past Elders, and present and emerging leaders, showcased with a custom match ball, umpire uniforms and centre circle design. To pursue her beloved netball, Krystal moved to Newcastle with her mum in 2017. Supported by Home in Place's Grow a Star scholarship, Krystal's sporting prowess was soon identified by the Hunter Academy of Sport and then retired netballing superstar Sam Poolman's

Aspire Netball program. Krystal suffered a bad ankle injury, and while recovering in a moon boot, turned her hand to painting. Sam Poolman kept her in the Aspire program during her recovery and, thankful for the opportunity, Krystal designed and painted a hat as a thank you gift. Krystal's talent is absolutely inspiring, and it's wonderful to see our First Nations supported and celebrated in sport. Congratulations to Krystal for achievements, both sporting and artistic, and thanks to Sam for supporting young sportswomen.

#### **MADE @ THE PLACE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—"Made @ The Place" is an art program for youth aged 12 and above, hosted at The Place Charlestown. The program is holding workshops from Wednesday 7 June until this Wednesday 28 June. Eleebana Art Studio has been running the program with a focus on everything Upcycled! Taking scraps of fabric, loose buttons and random household items and turning them into amazing works of art, the program has inspired plenty of Charlestown electorate youth to turn a creative eye towards items we might otherwise ignore. Inspiring creativity is always a worthy goal, and I thank Eleebana Art Studio's Natalie Anderson for getting involved with this program. Natalie has a background in both art and education, making her a perfect fit for encouraging young people to engage with their own artistry. I want to thank the Place once again for their commitment to bringing the Charlestown community together by hosting this program and the many other services they provide to our local community. I'm sure some fabulous creations came out of the workshops!

#### **OZHARVEST AND ROTARY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It's always a pleasure to catch up with the hardworking hands at Charlestown Rotary Club! I recently met with Charlestown Rotarians Ben Chard, Ted Aitchison and Dennis Hancock to discuss their ongoing partnership with OzHarvest and hear about the exciting success of their youth opportunity program Life Kitchen - Life Skills. My thanks to Ben, Ted, Dennis and Charlestown Rotary for all the work they do. The hours of work put in by the volunteers at Rotary are making a big difference in our community. It's especially fantastic to see the fruits of their partnership with OzHarvest, given that both organisations are such an important part of our local community. On Friday 23 June, I attended a ceremony recognising the achievements of the latest round of participants in the OzHarvest Nourish Program. The program trains and mentors young locals through a Certificate II in Kitchen Operations at PCYC Lake Macquarie. I'm pleased to report that the results are absolutely delicious, and I would like to congratulate the trainees on their hard work. I hope your new found cooking skills are put to very good use in the future!

#### **UNIFORM 4 KIDS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my appreciation to the dedicated members of Uniform 4 Kids Albury – a group which includes Chief Inspector Scott Russell, Orana Community Centre (Springdale Heights) co-ordinator Amanda Skrypczak, local sewing groups and all the local volunteers -- for their remarkable commitment to sustainability and their dedication to helping children in need. Uniform 4 Kids has a vision to repurpose and upcycle preloved police uniforms into remarkable clothing, toys, bags and scrunchies for children in need. The versatile program addresses the environmental concerns of diverting unwanted clothing away from landfill, while bringing members of the community and police together in such a positive and crafty way. I commend all the volunteers for their generosity and time, skills to sew, iron, unpick, remove buttons and cut patterns. This is the true fabric of our society on the border.

#### **INNER WHEEL AUSTRALIA CORD BLOOD RESEARCH PROJECT MOVIE NIGHT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my congratulations to the Inner Wheel Club of Corowa, President Chris Kent, members, organisers and guests who attended the movie and pizza fundraising night, held on Mother's Day weekend. Through your support and generosity, \$1,441 was raised for the Inner Wheel Australia Cord Blood Research Project. Under this initiative, the funds will further assist in research as well as help in raising awareness about the benefits and potential of cord blood treatment in various diseases and conditions. I am grateful to all those who attended the Corowa Golf Club for a memorable evening and special screening of "Mafia Mama". My appreciation goes to all the staff at the club for preparing delicious pizzas for those who attended. The contributions from so many people will support the advancement of medical research.

#### **WORLD RED CROSS DAY - LOCAL AWARD RECIPIENT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my congratulations to the Albury Red Cross Migration Support Team for their well-deserved 'State Team Award', received during the global celebration of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, on May 8. This year's theme -- 'Everything they do truly comes #FromTheHeart' – is a real indication of what drives our community volunteers. World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day are special occasions to honour the spirit of humanitarianism and acknowledge individuals who make a difference in their

community. I am proud to say the Albury team has shown exemplary leadership, cultural sensitivity whilst demonstrating commitment and outstanding work. In particular, with this award, the focus is on their exceptional work with our migrants and working with highly vulnerable women during their settlement in regional Australia. This has earned the team respect and trust. I extend my appreciation to the Albury Red Cross Migration Support Team for their outstanding dedication and service and their commitment in helping others.

#### **JODY GEOSITS – PAUL HARRIS FELLOW**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise former Program Facilitator for Port Macquarie Solider On Jody Geosits on receiving Rotary International's highest accolade, a Paul Harris Fellow. A Paul Harris Fellow is awarded to an individual "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world." Jody formed the local Soldier On branch nearly six years ago aiming to support our local veterans and their families living with the scars which often accompanies active military service. She did this solely on her own, with the support of her employer Solider On Australia and her local Rotary Club. Kickstarting a campaign to bring together our veterans, Jody introduced exercise programs, family picnics and interactions, community engagements and a weekly coffee catch-up which is still ongoing and cherished by the members. Most importantly, Jody focussed her services on healing through building connections and simply checking in and showing them that someone cares. Still a First Responder with Fortem Australia, Jody's unwavering service to her community continues to help our most vulnerable and for that we are all extremely grateful. Congratulations Jody!

#### **2023 TRAVELLERS' CHOICE BEST OF THE BEST HOTEL AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I am excited to share with the House that the winner of the 2023 Travellers' Choice Best of the Best Hotel Awards is our very own Pinetrees Lodge on Lord Howe Island recognising them as the highest-rated hospitality property on Tripadvisor. For the second time, the Pinetrees Lodge has secured one of the highest accolades in the hospitality industry after taking out the title of 'Top Hotel in Australia' and 'Top Hotel in the South Pacific' Awards on 24th May 2023. The Pinetrees Lodge is now a sixth-generation, family-owned hotel positioned on the beautiful backdrop of the Lord Howe Island lagoon. On the Island, tourists are treated to world-class snorkelling, fishing, diving, surfing, kayaking and golfing. Dani Rourke and Luke Hanson now own and manage the Pinetrees Lodge, a family business with a rich history dating back to 1895. Dani and Luke were recognised for achieving more than seven hundred 5/5 reviews on Tripadvisor, acknowledging the exceptional service, food and entertainment offered to all their guests. Now in its 21st year, the Best of the Best awards name the highest-rated accommodation venues from guest reviews. A wonderful achievement – congratulations!

#### **TRACIE WOOD – 2023 NSW NTH COAST VOCATIONAL STUDENT OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the inspiring achievements of Tracie Wood. There is no age limit to learning and Tracie is a shining example of this. Through commitment and dedication to her studies, whilst juggling a busy work life too, Tracie has been recognised as the 2023 NSW North Coast Region, Vocational Student of the Year. Managing a full-time job, while raising four teenage boys, taking on additional study and excelling is an impressive achievement. Following her sister's suicide, Tracie became an advocate for people experiencing trauma and challenging times in their lives. Tracie developed an interest in justice studies and accepted a role with Corrective Services NSW as a Service and Programs Officer. Tracie's role involved delivering therapeutic group programs to all inmates within the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre. After completing a Diploma in Project Management, Tracie now holds the position of Senior Project Officer, developing new digital resources that enable offenders to rehearse and practise the skills they learn in their programs. Tracie embraces the opportunity to be an ambassador for NSW Training, committed to sharing her knowledge and experience with high school students. Well done Tracie!

#### **JOSHUA WINTER**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Moving from Lithgow to Melbourne to take up an apprenticeship was a huge decision for Joshua Winter. However, it proved to be a winning decision after making the finals of the NSW Training Awards (Western Region) for 2023 in the category of Apprentice of the Year. Joshua has always had an interest in firearms and was drawn to the industry, getting his big break when Thales Australia offered him an apprenticeship with the company. The on-the-job training helped Joshua through his four-year apprenticeship as well as emerging with a Certificate IV in Engineering. He now prides himself on being an Apprentice Training Mentor, looking after Apprentices from school-based students right through to third years. And following the completion of his apprenticeship, Joshua is going back to TAFE to complete his Tool Making qualification. Best of all, Joshua has some great advice to others: "Go after what you want, research, take all the steps required to understand all options and then work hard to start your journey. Being paid to learn instead of paying to learn is the best. Apprenticeships are challenging and rewarding. Mentoring and coaching others is the biggest reward".

**NOAH KERNAGHAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Noah Kernaghan from Rylstone is determined to forge a career in the health sector and has taken a huge step to achieving this after being a finalist in the recent Western NSW Training Awards for 2023. The Kandos High School student featured in the School Based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year division of the awards. He has completed a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance with his host employer, the Western NSW Health District, showing initiative and enthusiasm whilst working alongside the Divisional Therapists at the Rylstone MPS. The qualifications will help Noah in his career with aspirations to help others overcome their health and mental health barriers which he feels are his main purpose in life as a member of the health industry. The benefits of Noah's achievements in completing the traineeship have prepared him for what will happen after school as he now understands how to work in teams, what to expect in the workplace and how to respectfully ask for assistance in the workplace environment. Noah's story shows that taking on an apprenticeship like this is a great way to gain a qualification while also getting paid to learn.

**CAROLINE MORRIS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—What a magnificent effort from Bathurst's Caroline Morris who has been crowned the winner of the NSW Training Awards (Western Region) 2023 Apprentice of the Year. Caroline comes from an agricultural background and already has a Certificate IV in Agriculture, but wanted to continue working with her hands, stay living regionally and develop a future-proof career. An apprenticeship was a pathway to achieving all three goals, so she decided to apply to be a fitter machinist at Cadia Valley Operations. Well, the rest is history and Caroline is now the first female apprentice to have successfully completed a Fitter Machinist on site at Cadia in more than 20 years, proving herself to be hard working, resilient, committed and a well-respected member of the company's team. She has also proven herself to be a champion for women in trades and trade ambassador, who deserves to be recognised for her contributions and achievements. But she really does get a kick out of loving seeing the surprise on the faces of people who aren't expecting a female to pop out from working underneath a machine.

**JASYNTA LAMPRET**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Jasynta Lampret on her selection in the Australian athletics team for the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Games to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in August. Jasynta has been named to represent the green and gold in the women's 100 metres hurdles after setting a qualifying time of 13.49 seconds at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships in Brisbane in April. Along the way to the games, she broke school, regional, combined high schools and state records. Port Hacking Little Athletics and Endeavour Sports High School are very proud of Jasynta's achievements. Port Hacking Little Athletics says Jasynta is an example of how hard work, commitment and determination can lead to success. I commend Jasynta on her dedication to training and outstanding results on the track and wish her every success as she runs for Australia at the Commonwealth Youth Games.

**OUR BIG KITCHEN**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was honoured to visit Our Big Kitchen in Bondi on Friday 9 June 2023. For over 15 years, it is a wonderful organisation run by volunteers across the community who come together and prepared meals for those doing it tough. Each year, over 250,000 meals are prepared and distributed with the support by over 30 charities seeking to make a difference. Such work not only addresses the immediate impact of hunger among the most vulnerable in our communities, but also helps restore a sense of dignity and hope to individuals facing challenging circumstances. Additionally, Our Big Kitchen fosters a sense of community spirit and empathy, bringing people together to support a common cause and inspiring a positive ripple effect in society. It was great to be joined by my parliamentary colleagues the Member for Vaucluse Kellie Sloane, and Legislative Councillors Hon. Chris Rath MLC and Hon. Jacqui Munro MLC. Finally, I pay tribute to Rabbi Dovid Slavin and Laya Slavin for their tireless efforts at Our Big Kitchen and the work they continue to do for the community.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS KU-RING-GAI CHASE FUN RUN**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was thrilled to join our community for the annual Special Olympics Ku-ring-gai Chase Fun Run and Barry Easy walk on Sunday 18 June 2023 in Wahroonga. It's an inclusive family event that suits people of all ages and abilities to compete in the 2.5 - or 10-kilometre races.

Alongside my parliamentary colleagues Paul Fletcher MP and Alister Henskens SC MP. All proceeds are donated to Special Olympics Australia to allow them to pursue their mission of providing sports training and athletic competition opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Upon receiving my medal, the back was engraved with an inspirational quote, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." I acknowledge the late Barry Easy OAM, who made a significant contribution to the establishment of the Special Olympics movement in Australia and was one of the co-founders of Ku-ring-gai Chase. It is only



fitting that one of the races be named after him. I congratulate Martin Smellie, Gary Mullins, and Eosan Ma for taking out first place in each of their respective events. I look forward to participating in this event in the future.

#### **SCOUTS NSW SYDNEY NORTH REGION**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 18 June, I was delighted to attend the Annual Report Presentation for Scouts NSW Sydney North Region. The highlight of the event was hearing from special guest speaker Dr. Gareth Andrews of the Andrews and Stephenson 2023 Antarctica Expedition. The Scouts NSW Sydney North Region Annual Report details the many challenges and obstacles that the Scouts regularly tackle, such as abseiling, canyoning, rock climbing, white-water rafting, and bush-bashing through difficult terrain. With their strong sense of community and dedication to service, the Scouts contribute positively to the Davidson community and the people of NSW, leaving a lasting impact. In particular, I congratulate them on their significance contribution to environmental education and protection initiatives that teach the young members of Scouts NSW to respect and preserve the natural world for those who come after them. I acknowledge the efforts of Scouts NSW Sydney North Region President, Dr Neil Mattes OAM, and Regional Commissioner, Mr Kerry Griffin. I look forward to continuing to support and engaging with Scouts NSW.

#### **AUSTRALIAN UKULELE ORCHESTRA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to commend the Australian Ukulele Orchestra for its valuable contribution to the culture, community and people of my community of Willoughby and beyond. Attracting talented ukulele players, the Orchestra provides a niche outlet for ukulele musicians to perform and showcase both their own music and the rendition of other well-known pieces. The orchestra has members from Sydney, Newcastle and further north and has recently performed to sell-out audiences. At the Newcastle Fringe Festival in March this year, the Orchestra performed some Mozart classics and other favourites from contemporary pop and rock. The Australian Ukulele Orchestra has made an exceptional contribution to Australian art and culture since 2017. I am grateful to the Australian Ukulele Orchestra for the entertainment and pleasure it has brings to so many in our community.

#### **WILLOUGHBY RESIDENTS RECOGNISED IN KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate the six women in my electorate of Willoughby recognised in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours. Dr Diana Robinson of Castlecrag was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her significant service to sports medicine as a physician and for her contribution to anti-doping regulation. Mrs Catherine Crouch of Northbridge was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for her service to education administration. The four other OAM recipients included Ms Sophie Scott of Cammeray for her service to the broadcast media, and to community health. Mrs Vola Young of Northbridge for her service to the performing arts. Ms Wendy Lindgren of Chatswood for her service to the community through a range of organisations and finally; Mrs Juliet Ponder of Chatswood for her service to education and to the community. I am delighted that the outstanding achievements of these women and their tireless work for the community have been recognised at the highest level. I thank each one of them for their distinguished contribution to our community.

#### **CHATSWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Chatswood Chamber of Commerce plays an integral part in the commercial life of the Willoughby community and I was pleased to attend two recent events hosted by the Chamber. On Wednesday 26 April, I attended their networking morning tea which was a great opportunity to catch up with the representatives of some of the local businesses to hear how they were faring and how I could advocate for their interests. The following month, I returned to the Chamber to attend their Federal Budget Breakfast Briefing at the Chatswood Club on 18 May. Sponsored by Judo Bank, the Breakfast Briefing featured the Chief Economic Adviser of Judo Bank, Warren Hogan, as guest speaker. Warren provided an insightful presentation of the underlying trends behind the budget and how businesses could make the most of the economic conditions in 2023 and 2024. Once again, it was a great opportunity for me to meet with local business leaders and other key stakeholders. I am grateful for the contribution the Chatswood Chamber of Commerce makes to the business life of Willoughby.

#### **JONO PRICE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Jono Price for his performance at the 2023 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Scarborough and Trig Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. The Aussies is an annual event where members from the country's 314 surf clubs unite to participate in almost 500 beach and ocean events that mimic surf lifesaving activities. Members of Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes Surf Life Saving Clubs made the trek over to Western Australia for this nine-day event, with their competitors taking part in the Juniors, Masters and Opens

competitions. Jono from Redhead Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Master's Competition, taking out a silver medal in the both the 2km beach run and board relay. Congratulations to Jono on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **KATIE REES AND KALEAH KINGSTON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Katie Rees and Kaleah Kingston for their performance at the 2023 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Scarboro and Trig Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. The Aussies is an annual event where members from the country's 314 surf clubs unite to participate in almost 500 beach and ocean events that mimic surf lifesaving activities. Members of Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes Surf Life Saving Clubs made the trek over to Western Australia for this nine-day event, with their competitors taking part in the Juniors, Masters and Opens competitions. Katie and Kaleah from the Swansea - Belmont Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Juniors Competition, taking out the gold medal in the Under 14/15's beach relay. Congratulations to Katie and Kaleah on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **MARK AYRE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Mark Ayre for his performance at the 2023 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Scarboro and Trig Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. The Aussies is an annual event where members from the country's 314 surf clubs unite to participate in almost 500 beach and ocean events that mimic surf lifesaving activities. Members of Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes Surf Life Saving Clubs made the trek over to Western Australia for this nine-day event, with their competitors taking part in the Juniors, Masters and Opens competitions. Mark from Redhead Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Master's Competition, taking out a bronze medal in the both the board race and board rescue. Along with a silver in the board relay. Congratulations to Mark on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **DAVID MEYNIN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise David Meynin. David is a Year 11 student from Moss Vale High School, who recently competed in the NSW State Championships Autumn Cup in the eighty-nine kilograms + Gi and No Gi Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, taking out first place in both events. David also competed in the Adult open weight Gi, adult No Gi ninety-one kilograms and adult Gi one hundred kilograms +, at the invitational competition and proudly took out first place in each event. Brazilian Jiu-jitsu is a self-defence martial art and combat sport which encompasses grappling and ground fighting. I take this time to acknowledge the ongoing training and discipline required to participate at this level, which undoubtedly requires a well-balanced schedule to incorporate senior studies and other commitments at this age. I congratulate David on his tremendous success and wish him well for his future training and competition undertakings. Well done, David!

#### **JESS PLUMB**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Jess Plumb. A Gumbaynggirr woman, proud of her culture and heritage introduced to painting through an Aboriginal Woman's Group hosted by the Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council [Pejar LALC]. Jess has described her experience with the group as embarking her into a journey of creativity, which embodied a very "natural and therapeutic" sense of being, hence the continuation of her painting artistry. With a sense of delight Jess, completed her first commissioned artwork for another family from Crookwell, where Jess also resides with her young family. Jess has also presented Acknowledgement To Country workshops, teaching Aboriginal culture and history, whilst also assisting students to make Aboriginal art through her role with the Pejar LALC. Jess also recently participated in designing the Southern Tablelands Arts car, which saw a car basically wrapped in Aboriginal art, called "Travelling Arts". As a First Nation woman, Jess has resoundingly taken a leadership role in educating and providing an environment for students within the local schools and preschools to learn about the traditional owners of the land, whilst also encouraging and inviting them to participate in uncovering their own creative selves. Thank you, Jess, for your amazing contribution.

#### **VICKI CHILKO**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Vicki Chilko. Vicki embarked on her journey into the education system, initially alongside her three children who attended Sts Peter and Paul's at Goulburn, volunteering to assist with reading and story time. Through sheer enjoyment of experiencing the learning and development of the children, Vicki was inspired to commence her teaching studies, commencing as a learning support teacher at the Verner Street campus. Recognising the importance of providing children with an optimal learning environment and always encouraging children who may be experiencing learning difficulties, Vicki's innate passion to assist and inspire them was pivotal to her teaching style. Vicki aware of her own need to

continue to learn and develop and remaining cognisant of the need to remain abreast of technological and curricula advances to be well equipped in her role to support students. After twenty-nine years Vicki has retired from Sts Peter and Paul's Primary School, with celebrations marking the occasion, which saw an inundation of warm hugs, admiration and even a song from the children. I thank and recognise Vicki for her many years of service and undoubtedly her passion to create a learning environment, celebrated by the entire school community.

#### CHRIS STONE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for Chris Stone, the outgoing NSW Liberal Party State Director. Chris has played a pivotal role in the electoral success of many in this place, and I congratulate him on his many achievements in such a challenging role. Throughout his tenure, Chris has demonstrated exceptional leadership and organisation, ensuring that our campaigns ran smoothly and efficiently. His deep knowledge of political strategy, campaign management, and grassroots engagement has been invaluable. Chris's commitment to the Liberal Party and his passion for public service have been evident in every aspect of his work. Under Chris's guidance, we were able to develop a comprehensive campaign strategy, and effectively communicate our message to voters - a significant challenge given the broad range of communities across our state. Chris's departure from the position of NSW Liberal State Director will undoubtedly be felt deeply within the party, but none more so than in Ryde and Bennelong, where he has a longstanding connection. His dedication, professionalism, and strong work ethic have left an indelible mark on our Party. I am immensely grateful for his contributions and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

#### IRANIAN COMMUNITY GATHERING

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I recently joined a gathering of Iranian community members, STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) and Refugee Advice & Casework Service [RACS] in West Ryde, who created a forum for our local Iranian community to come together, celebrate our diversity and declare solidarity with the movement of women, life, freedom in Iran. Our community has not been immune from the challenges facing Iran, and I congratulate STARTTS, RACS, NSW Health and the Australian Federal Police for their vital work in supporting individuals who have endured devastating trauma in recent times. By organising gatherings like the Iranian Gathering, they demonstrate their unwavering commitment to providing a sense of belonging and support for specific cultural communities. This event not only provided an opportunity for community members to socialise but also served as a platform for sharing experiences, stories, and cultural traditions unique to Iran and our Persian speaking residents. I thank Jasmina Bajraktarevic-Hayward, Community Services Coordinator at STARTTS for the invitation, and congratulate poet, Baran, for sharing her incredibly powerful prose. Together, they are playing a crucial role in creating a more inclusive society for all. It was an honour to be present.

#### NGARALA PUBLIC SCHOOL VISIT

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Last week, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit the newly established Ngarala Public School in Epping, alongside former Premier and member for Epping, Dominic Perrottet MP. It was a privilege to witness the school's state-of-the-art facilities and meet the enthusiastic students who are fortunate enough to call Ngarala Public School their educational home. Ngarala Public School, with its modern infrastructure and innovative learning spaces, stands as a testament to our community's commitment to providing quality education to young people in Ryde. From the moment I stepped onto the campus, I was greeted with a vibrant atmosphere buzzing with curiosity and excitement. During my visit, I had the privilege of speaking with many of the students who impressed me with their knowledge, creativity, and eagerness to learn. Their passion for education was palpable, and it was evident that the dedicated staff at Ngarala Public School, ably led by Principal Bek Zadow, have cultivated an environment that nurtures and encourages their growth. Ngarala Public School is a true beacon of educational excellence. This institution will undoubtedly continue to make a positive impact on the lives of its students for generations to come.

#### AFIFI FAKHOURI

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I met Ms Afifi Fakhouri more than 20 years ago at Belmore Boys' High School where I worked as the English head teacher, and she worked as a Community Liaison Officer. Afifi is a longstanding and well-respected member of Punchbowl Public School and other public schools. Afifi continues to put the needs of the community ahead of her own and makes a positive difference in the lives of others, particularly supporting refugee families. She has worked with generations of families providing support to parents of non-English speaking backgrounds through interpreting during school-based interviews and offering emotional support. She has a strong connection with inter-agencies and uses all available resources to support families in need. Afifi works hard to break down barriers and encourages parents to participate in school external programs to gain employment and better living opportunities. She goes above and beyond to make herself

available to support families, often taking calls outside of her scheduled work hours. Afifi has a caring nature and looked after me by offering me food because she said I was too skinny! Afifi works from the heart and expects nothing in return. I wish her well in future endeavours.

### **BANKSTOWN SLAM POETRY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Bankstown Poetry Slam on their big win at last week's NSW Premier's Literacy Awards. Bankstown Poetry Slam is the first ever organisation to win the award for "their contribution to the literary life of Australia", an admirable achievement. Bankstown Poetry Slam is a community platform that empowers individuals to express themselves through spoken word. With a monthly attendance of over 300 people, it has become a renowned gathering place for local and international artists. I am proud to serve such an extraordinary organisation in my electorate. In addition to its monthly events, Bankstown Poetry Slam organizes workshops, performances, and programs in high schools and other venues. These initiatives provide opportunities for individuals, particularly young people, to explore their creativity and develop their skills in poetry. This organisation plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to find their voice and connect with others through the transformative power of the spoken word. I particularly want to acknowledge Bankstown Poetry Slam Co-founder Sara Mansour, Bilal Hafda who runs the monthly slam events, and the program officer Yasmin Lewis. Their initiative in running and facilitating poetry slam events is what keeps this organisation at its best.

### **OPENING OF SEASWEET PATISSERIE GREENACRE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am thrilled to extend my warmest congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to the team at Seasweet Patisserie on the momentous occasion of their grand opening in Greenacre. This exceptional establishment is not merely a delightful addition to our neighbourhood, but a testament to the vibrant spirit and entrepreneurial drive that defines our community. Seasweet Patisserie represents the culmination of dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to the art of Lebanese pastry. The visionary team behind this venture has poured their heart and soul into creating a haven of indulgence. From Baklava to Znood el sett, Halawet el Jebn to Maamoul, I can only imagine the amazing aromas. I can't miss out on their iconic Knafeh cheese bun which is a must-have at Seasweet. Beyond the delectable treats that will undoubtedly delight our taste buds, Seasweet Patisserie stands as a symbol of community spirit and collaboration. May this establishment become a cherished gathering place, a hub of creativity, and a catalyst for fostering connections among neighbors and friends. Again, I want to extend our warmest wishes to Peter Bader and the Seasweet Patisserie Greenacre family for their successful launch and prosperous future.

### **MENTORING MEN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise the outstanding work of the Mentoring Men organisation across our local community. On average, nine people in Australia take their own lives, seven of whom are men. One in eight men are likely to experience depression in their lifetime, one in five are likely to experience anxiety in their lifetime, and 45 per cent of men will experience mental health challenges. Mentoring Men runs programs focused on men's mental health to making a lasting impact that will reduce the numbers of these statistics. The Mentoring Men Program has successfully reached over 1,400 men across Australia and now, thanks to funding by the Sydney North Health Network, the service will be expanded across northern Sydney. This expansion will bring the availability of approximately 130 mentors and three mentor peer support groups to help men in the local area. Mentoring Men aims to prevent crises by matching at-risk men with trained mentors for six to twelve months, and volunteer mentors receive extensive training in suicide prevention to provide non-judgmental support and proactive prevention strategies. I congratulate Mentoring Men for all their incredible work ensuring that men who are experiencing challenges or changes have someone listening.

### **MOSMAN LEADS ELECTRIC CHARGING**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Mosman Council's electric vehicle public fast charging network has achieved a significant milestone of reducing over 100,000kg of carbon dioxide emissions since its installation. Mosman Council has three fast charging locations at Mosman Square and Raglan Street West Carparks, that have recorded an average of 170 sessions a week, translating to over 2,800kg of carbon dioxide emissions. I also want to acknowledge that Mosman Council will be mandating that any future significant development works on multi-unit dwellings must include fitting the site to be equipped with electric vehicle charging points. As more and more locals across our community make the switch to electric vehicles, Mosman's electric vehicle charging network will continue to play a crucial role in promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact. I congratulate Mosman Council for leading the charge on reducing our carbon emission footprint in our local community.

### TARONGA ZOO WELCOMES BABY CHIMPANZEE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Taronga Zoo Sydney recently welcomed a brand new member of the Taronga Zoo family, a healthy baby chimpanzee. Lisa the 43 year old chimpanzee gave birth to the female baby at the end of May, and the zoo's keepers have observed Lisa introducing the newborn to the larger chimpanzee community, which now consists of 21 individuals. Chimpanzee's are considered endangered, facing threats such as habitat loss, illegal wildlife trafficking, and hunting. I want to congratulate the Taronga Conservation Society for their collaboration with the Jane Goodall Institute, supporting conservation initiatives in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Primate Supervisor Richard Buzas is happy to report that Lisa is bonding well with the newborn holding her close and nursing her regularly. Congratulations to Lisa the Chimpanzee, and to Taronga Zoo and Taronga Conservation Society for all their efforts here in Australia and across the world for your continued devotion to conservation.

### NOVA EMPLOYMENT

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—I wish to recognise NOVA Employment which is an amazing community based, non-profit organisation that assists people who have a disability (or permanent medical condition) to find and develop a career in an environment with the same working conditions as people who do not have a disability. I congratulate NOVA Employment's staff, who have found jobs for thousands of job seekers in just about every type of work you can think of – and I encourage all Members of Parliament to raise their hand to support services like NOVA who are helping these motivated and keen future employees to find a job that is suited to their skills. For many years I have provided work experience for NOVA students who were interested in learning various office administrative duties. Not only do they learn new skills, but by working with my team it helps build their confidence and get them ready to enter an office environment. It is incredibly rewarding to see students who are now out in the workforce, being independent, earning their own money and living their life equally to everyone else. And locally we have NOVA to thank for making this happen. Well done.

### JESAJAH CREEK

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I rise to acknowledge and congratulate Jesaiah Creek, a year-10 student at St George Christian School who recently won Apple's Swift Student Challenge for his achievements in coding. Whilst only 15 years of age, Jesaiah single-handedly developed the 'PocketSax' App, giving users a chance to play the Saxophone without having to first purchase one – something that many people cannot afford to do. Jesaiah also designed noise control functionality into PocketSax. This means that the App supports those with a disability or hearing impairment, allowing them to get involved. As a part of his prize, Jesaiah received a year-long subscription to Apple's highly prestigious Developer Program, which will further develop his skills as a keen young coder. He has since launched a lunch time group to help other students with their coding journeys. STEM programs continue to form a vital part of the New South Wales economy, and I could not be prouder of the work that students like Jesaiah are doing across the State. Congratulations Jesaiah! I look forward to watching you continue to develop your skills in coding over the coming years, and I wish you the best of luck!

### MACEDONIAN SCHOOL COUNCIL OF NSW - AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I rise to thank the Macedonian School Council of New South Wales, who recently hosted me at their Award Presentation Ceremony. The awards ceremony was held in honour of the founders of the Macedonian alphabet, St Kiril and St Metodij. Language schools throughout our State strive incredibly hard to preserve language, heritage, and values. The Macedonian School Council plays an important part in connecting the Macedonian community to their cultural roots. As Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I believe in the importance of teaching our younger generations how to live, work and thrive in diverse societies. We are fortunate that New South Wales is a place where those from different backgrounds can grow together in harmony and understanding. I'd like to thank President Zakalina Mihajlova, as well as the rest of the hardworking executive team at the Macedonian School Council of New South Wales. The work you do for the Macedonian Community is second to none, and you should be incredibly proud. I look forward to working closely with the Macedonian community over the next few years.

### MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL SETTE GIUGNO

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I would like to thank the Maltese Community Council of NSW for hosting me at the 2023 Sette Giugno Commemoration Service. Sette Giugno commemorates the Maltese victims of the uprising against the British on the 7th of June, 1919. It is a time to slow down and reflect, to remember the importance of justice and to celebrate both Malta and Australia as free and democratic nations. Our Maltese Community have a strong presence in New South Wales. I am so proud that the Maltese Community Council continues to represent this the aspirations of the Maltese community, as they have done so with due diligence since 1967. The Maltese Community Council also represents several other affiliated Maltese organisations, all of

which have continued to promote and lobby for the interests of Maltese people throughout New South Wales. I'd like to thank Ms Miriam Friggieri, President of the Maltese Community Council of New South Wales, as well as the rest of the team for putting together a memorable service. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I look forward to working closely alongside the Maltese Community Council of NSW into the future.

#### **RILEY DODSON**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to congratulate Riley Dodson from Toronto High School after being selected to take part in the Young Endeavour Scheme. 17-year-old Riley is currently sailing from Newcastle to Brisbane aboard the STS Young Endeavour on an 11-day journey, that will help him to develop leadership, resilience, teamwork and initiative skills. Riley's voyage was made possible after he secured a scholarship from Lake Macquarie City Council, after impressing a panel of judges with his honesty passion and enthusiasm. Riley is looking forward to pushing himself in a challenging environment and the Young Endeavour Scheme will certainly provide that opportunity. Participants in the internationally recognised youth development program are taught how to become a better team player, a more effective communicator and a leader while also manning a square-rigged tall ship. I wish Riley all the best with his journey.

#### **JENNA WOODLAND - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Jenna Woodland of Griffith, who has worked alongside me in the community for years. Jenna has spent twenty-two years of her life as a teacher, respected and admired by her students and colleagues. Jenna has been the President of the Griffith Teacher's Association for four years, fighting for better work conditions and taking the issue of teacher shortages to the government. She worked with the Minister for Education on the remodelling of the Griffith High Schools and improving education, with student and teacher's best interests at the forefront. Jenna was the President of Save Griffith Base Hospital Committee and organised a community rally to stop the stripping away of services. Her efforts resulted in the government overturning their decision to remove radiology services and receiving millions more in funding for the upgrade of the hospital. Jenna is a counsellor and has helped many people in Griffith, Leeton and Narrandera, often free of charge, and a volunteer for the Suicide Prevention Hotline for ten years. Jenna, I commend you for advocating for your community's health and education.

#### **ANTONINA PENNISI - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognize Antonina Pennisi of Griffith for her exceptional efforts in raising funds for Leukaemia Support Queensland. Antonina's dedication and the overwhelming support from the community have made a significant impact on her cause. Within a remarkable three months, Antonina achieved her fundraising goal of \$10,000, well ahead of her initial target of ten months. This incredible accomplishment has earned her a feature on the esteemed Channel 7 program, 'Adventure All-Stars', highlighting her inspiring journey. Despite achieving her fundraising goal, Antonina remains committed to the cause. She plans to host events at local high schools and organise a raffle with Brisbane Broncos merchandise donated by the Leukaemia Support Foundation. Antonina, your dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment to raising funds for Leukaemia Support Queensland are truly commendable. The community is grateful for your efforts in making a positive difference in the lives of those affected by this disease. Your achievements serve as an inspiration to us all, and we stand with you in support of your ongoing endeavours.

#### **CENTRAL COAST HARVEST FESTIVAL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to recognise the Central Coast's Harvest Festival, which took place on June 10 and June 11. The Harvest Festival is a great community event that happens every year, in which the hinterland farming communities of the Central Coast open their gates wide for all of the Central Coast to explore. There are plenty of activities throughout the day for everybody to enjoy, including fruit picking, flower picking and arranging, guided tours of our local farms, flower workshops, Macadamia picking and even Alpaca meet and greets! As part of Harvest Festival, there is also the Glenworth Grazing Food & Wine Festival which welcomes the community to enjoy live music as well as try many of the Coast's delicious treats. Mister Speaker, while I could not attend this year's Harvest Festival, I would like to recognise the many people that make this event possible including the many farming businesses, volunteers and the wider community for helping this year's event success.

#### **EMPIRE BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to recognise the Empire Bay Progress Association who will be celebrating their 100th birthday this year. The Progress Association will be running various events during the year to recognise the 100 years of serving the Empire Bay community and to pay respect and gratitude to the founding pioneers. The Empire Bay Progress Association has a long history of supporting the local area through the organisation of the local ANZAC Ceremony which is attended by hundreds, maintenance and upkeep of the

historic Memorial Hall, as well as upkeep of a piece of community history being the Empire Bay War Memorial. Mister Speaker, I was also pleased to see that the Progress Association was successful in their plight for funding to restore the war memorial, money which will go towards restoration and cleaning of the War Memorial. I wish to express my congratulations to President Ken Shaw as well as the numerous community volunteers who have supported the organisation over the years.

#### **NATALIA DROBOT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I want to recognise an outstanding individual within my electorate, 18-year-old Natalia Drobot. Natalia is an outstanding young athlete and has recently achieved gold in the U19 Female Single Ski Australian Surf Life Saving Championships in Perth. Natalia also teamed up with Avoca Beach clubmate and fellow Australian kayaker Ella Beereto winning gold in the Open Female Double Ski. In 2022, as a 16-year-old, Natalia was the youngest of 10 athletes selected as recipients of a tier 2 scholarship from Sport Australia Hall of Fame Scholarship Program. As one of only six paddling athletes to receive a SAHOF scholarship, it is a very prestigious award and testament to her commitment to the sport. I have no doubt with Natalia's recent results and her sheer determination and passion will be a recipe for success in the future.

Congratulations Natalia.

#### **LINDA RILEY AWARDED AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDAL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Mungindi Rural Fire Service Senior Deputy Captain Linda Riley, who has been awarded an Australian Fire Service medal at the King's Birthday Honours Celebration on Sunday 11 June 2023. I congratulate Mrs Riley on the many roles she has undertaken in her 21 years of voluntary service. Better known as Lindy, she joined the Mungindi Rural Fire Brigade in 1992 and in 2001 assumed the role of Senior Deputy Captain. In addition to Lindy's long-standing commitment to operational activities and senior leadership roles, she has contributed more broadly to the work of RFS in her roles as Permit Officer, Brigade Treasurer, Secretary and as Training Officer. I commend Mrs Riley and her fellow Mungindi Brigade members, who were awarded a RFS Commissioner's Unit Citation, for their response to the Main Street fire in September 2020. The fire destroyed many integral businesses, including the Supermarket, Butcher and a Homewares store. Lindy's commitment to the community is demonstrated through her professionalism, leadership, and long-standing years spent with the Fire Service.

#### **NEW ENGLAND BREWING COMPANY, URALLA**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of the New England Brewing Company, located at Uralla on the win at the Australian International Awards in May. At this event the company won three gold awards for their craft beers of: Grandad Brown, Pale Ale and Smalltown Hazy. I congratulate the company's owners Ben Rylands and Mirela Suciuc on this outstanding achievement. The Brewery started in Uralla in April 2013 and over the last 10 years the owners and their team have grown a successful craft brewery, with their beers found on tap across the State and beyond. They are indeed a favourite of the locals and for travellers alike. I commend the New England Brewing Company for winning these awards in the highly competitive field of brewing and craft brewing specifically. New England Brewing is kicking goals and grabbing golds!

#### **RECOGNITION OF STEVEN SKINNER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Armidale local Steven Skinner, who will be stepping down from being Chief of the Agricultural Business Research Institute and the Manager of the International Beef Recording Scheme, being roles he has served in over the past 30 years. I congratulate Mr Skinner for his leadership and enormous contribution to the Australian and International Beef Seedstock industries and to Australian Agriculture. Mr Skinner started as a breed-plan processor and progressed to the position of CEO at the Institute, providing industry specific products and services to clients globally. I commend Mr Skinner and his colleagues at the Institute for your contribution, innovation and success in your given field and for finding solutions to problems facing the Agricultural industry. We wish Mr Skinner all the best in his retirement in August this year.

#### **STACEY THORPE**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Stacey Thorpe from JN Straney and Son has been awarded the Real Estate Agent of the year award for Condobolin. This award recognises trusted real estate agents, agencies, property managers and mortgage brokers who provide quality client service. Stacey was named the number one agent in Condobolin as the suburb winner, based on reviews from each property sale with an average rating of 5 stars. I congratulate Stacey on receiving this award and providing great customer service to your community.

### **LIONS CLUB BROKEN HILL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—I would like to congratulate the Lions Club of Broken Hill on their recent fund-raising efforts to provide a substantial donation of \$9,284 for Broken Hill Palliative Care. The Lions Club busies itself throughout the year raising funds through a range of activities such as barbecues, pamphlet deliveries and the club's annual Christmas Car Raffle. Every year the Club's President's Project chooses a recipient for the funds raised and this year they choose the Palliative Care service in Broken Hill as a very worthy cause to receive their hard-earned funds. The money will go toward buying a portable bladder scanner, that can be used in the patients' homes. This equipment will make a significant improvement to patient care and will allow Palliative Care Staff to effectively manage the patient's pain and discomfort while eliminating the need for the patient to attend the emergency department for a bladder scan. I commend the Lions Club of Broken Hill for their community spirit, their fund-raising efforts and their support of regional health care.

### **ST CLAIR MEN'S SHED – 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I would like to express my sincere congratulations and gratitude to the members of St Clair and District Men's Shed on reaching such a milestone of their 10th anniversary. As patron of the men's shed, since the early days I have seen significant and positive contributions made to our community. The shed provides a safe and welcoming space for men of all backgrounds to come together, socialise, learn new skills and give back to the community. The members have been involved in a wide range of community projects, such as building furniture for local schools and raising much need funds and donating to the Westmead Children's hospital. In addition to their community involvement, they also provide services to the mental and physical health of its members. The shed's welcoming and supportive environment helps men to connect with each other, build their self-esteem and reduce stress. I am proud the St Clair and District Men's Shed are part of my community and wish to thank the members for their hard work, dedication. I look forward to seeing more positive contributions they make in the years to come.

### **DANIYA SYED**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Congratulations to Oran Park local, Daniya Syed on her incredible achievements. Daniya was named the winner of the 2023 Western Sydney University Academic Achievement Award as part of the 7News Young Achiever Awards for NSW and the ACT. Over the past six years, Daniya has showcased her incredible talent and dedication in the field of Robotics by actively participating in regional, national, and international championships as a proud member of STEMCells. In a remarkable achievement, she served as the captain of Team Australia at the 2022 Robotics Olympics, where they proudly secured a silver medal! Beyond her exceptional achievements in the realm of robotics, Daniya is also making a positive impact as the Youth Ambassador for the Shahid Afridi Foundation. She actively contributes to raising funds for underprivileged girls in Pakistan. I wish Daniya every continued success in her academic and philanthropic endeavours.

### **JESS TOMKINS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I want to recognise and celebrate the remarkable talent of young singer-songwriter Jess Tomkins from Glenmore Park High School. At just 16 years old, Jess has captivated audiences with her exceptional voice and song writing abilities, earning her the opportunity to represent Australia at the World Championships of Performing Arts [WCOPA] in the United States. Through a fortunate encounter on social media, Jess's journey to WCOPA unfolded. Her mother submitted a video of Jess performing Taylor Swift's hit song 'Cardigan' at a school assembly, leading to her selection as Australia's sole singing representative. Representing her country on an international stage is an extraordinary achievement and Jess should be immensely proud of herself as she leaves her mark on the global stage. I applaud Jess for her dedication, perseverance and hard work to reach this stage. Her passion for music is evident and her pursuit of her dreams serves as an inspiration to young artists in our community. I wish Jess the very best in this prestigious competition and her journey toward a successful music career.

### **ANDREW VEIGEL – WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to give a big shout-out to an incredible local who is doing his part to raise awareness for a great cause. Congratulations to Andrew Veigel of Coolamon who has participated in the World Transplant Games held in Perth from April 15 to April 21, 2023. The World Transplant Games were hosted over six days with 17 sports on offer for those who have been recipients of heart, liver, lung, kidney, pancreas, and bone marrow transplants. Andrew, a kidney transplant recipient, was a member of the Australian Team. Andrew won a bronze medal in darts and a silver medal in lawn bowling. Andrew also competed in tenpin bowling where he came 9th in the world. The games were a wonderful opportunity for transplant recipients like Andrew to celebrate, connect with fellow transplant recipients, and show the World how important



it is to think about organ and tissue donation. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Andrew before the games, hearing about his fundraising endeavours and plans for the future. Congratulations once again to Andrew on this remarkable achievement.

### **FUEL TO FIGHT BACK?**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise the efforts of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, the Cootamundra RSL Sub-Branch, and local historians for their interpretation of Cootamundra's heritage listed World War II Fuel Depot. The booklet 'Fuel to Fight Back?' details the history of the 'AMPOL' fuel tanks located on the Olympic Highway at Cootamundra. During August of 1940, the Australian Government announced its preparation for potential coastal assaults on 'tank farms' by the Imperial Japanese Navy. On 16 January 1941, the Royal Australian Air Force and Army nominated Cootamundra as the preferred bulk storage point for the Wagga Wagga area. In total, there are five fuel tanks at the site which were built between 1941-1942, two of the five tanks were constructed and concealed underground in the form of hillside bunkers. At capacity, these tanks could store up to 880,000 gallons of fuel, equivalent to eighty-eight modern day service stations that hold approximately 10,000 gallons. 'Fuel To Fight Back?' was formally launched on 19 June and is available to visitors and interested persons at the Cootamundra Visitor Information Centre or by public sale. Congratulations to all involved, this is a marvellous piece of history.

### **COWBOY HATS FOR KATE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—A horse charity team yarding and sorting event was held at Illabo over the June long weekend to honour the life of local Junee Reefs wife and mother of four Kate Day. After falling from a horse in 2017, it was discovered Kate had terminal brain cancer. For four years, Kate fought bravely but sadly lost her battle in February 2022. The event raised over \$23,000 for cancer research from the charity stock muster and auctions held along with merchandise from 'Cowboy Hats for Kate'. The 'Cowboy Hats for Kate' charity was set up to assist other families who are battling this terrible disease. Funds raised are dedicated to The Brain Cancer Centre to assist with research to aid the treatment of this cancer. Last year the charity raised a massive \$64,000. Well done to everyone involved in such a wonderful initiative to support others.

### **HELEN BROWN, OAM**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Helen Brown of Yamba on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the King's Birthday Honour list for her long-serving commitment and dedication to improving the lives of Indigenous communities across the Clarence Valley. Helen is currently a Director of the Northern Region Aboriginal Legal Service, a community representative and member of the Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, a volunteer for the Justice Advocacy Service - Intellectual Disability Rights Service, a member of the Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council and La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, a volunteer and advocate for various Aboriginal community programs including the Police Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Clarence Valley Community Drug Action Team. Between 1980-2017 she was an Aboriginal Carer and Kinship Carer for approximately 30 children. Helen is a compassionate community leader and strong advocate who has always strived to improve, re-shape and rebuild the lives of her People. She is much loved and respected for her selfless spirit and unwavering determination in implementing positive change. I congratulate Helen on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her tireless and selfless service to her community.

### **JACQUELYN TAFFS – EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge Marine Rescue NSW volunteer, Jacqueline Taffs, who was recently recognised with an Emergency Services Medal in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours list. Mrs Taffs has been a volunteer with Marine Rescue Wooli Unit in NSW for more than 20 years and is a dedicated individual who offers support with leadership, mentoring and training whilst performing key roles within her own unit such as Base Operations Officer, Watch officer and Radio Operator. Mrs Taffs is often the first point of contact for boaters in need of rescue and assistance and who are often in high levels of stress. Jackie remains calm while keeping constant communications with the boater, she is responsible for incident activations and the tactical response for distress and urgency calls. Mrs Taffs has contributed in a most distinguished manner to the safety of the NSW boating community serving with distinction and commitment to the highest standards of service and saving lives on the water, and I would like to thank her for such dedication.

### **CLARENCE VALLEY RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to the organisers and participants of Clarence Valley Relay for Life recently held at Jabour Park in South Grafton to help raise vital funds for cancer research, prevention and support services to lessen the burden for people affected by cancer. It was wonderful to see a large turnout – 400 participants made up of 25 teams - following a long hiatus due to COVID. Over the past 20 years,

the event has raised an incredible \$880,000 in the Clarence Valley. This year's event alone raised over \$46,000, easily surpassing the fundraising target of \$40,000. McAuley Catholic College in Grafton took out the highest fundraising team raising \$5619 followed closely by Maclean High School. Highlights of the day included a survivor's and carers morning tea, an array of kid's activities and an incredible line up of performers to keep spirits high. I congratulate Committee Chair Meghan Nelson and her fellow Committee members Michelle Call, Sam Hall, Di Rose, Louisa Rose, Sharon Powell, Lynne Blundell, Ashleigh Killmore, Bianca Claydon, Cortney Blanch and Anne Briggs from Cancer Council NSW along with each and every one of the volunteers, sponsors and vendors that contributed to such a successful event.

#### **PENRITH CITY NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It was an honour to once again join the Penrith City National Servicemen's Association of Australia [NASHOS] for their annual memorial service at Victoria Park, St Marys last month. The service was a moving tribute to the service of the 15,000 NASHOS in the Vietnam War, this year being particularly special as we gathered to mark 50 years since Australia's participation in the Vietnam War ended. The service provided an opportunity to reflect on the 1,200 people injured and 200 people who never returned home from their service. It was inspiring to see so many young attendees from our local community including the Ropes Crossing Girl Guides participating in the service, keeping the memories and stories alive for future generations. Thank you to President Harry May and Honorary Secretary Graham Larkham and their team from the Penrith City NASHO's for putting together and hosting a wonderful service to thank and remember those who have served our great nation.

#### **JAMES PRICE BUSINESS SEMINAR**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—James Price, a business specialist from JPAbusiness hosted a free business health check seminar at the St Marys Band Club. A range of business owners from St Marys and surrounding areas attended this seminar to better their business operations. James Price provided advice on business health factors, business plan points, strategies, and improving other vital aspects of businesses. This seminar significantly helped local businesses improve their work and operations, with many local business owners, who voiced their satisfaction with the seminar. I would like to thank the St Marys Band Club and James Price for hosting, and providing local businesses with advice and helpful information, so these businesses can continue to support and serve the community.

#### **ST MARYS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB & CAMBRIDGE GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—St Marys Rugby Leagues Club has recently donated \$5,000 to Cambridge Gardens Public School to help them install two multipurpose goal posts. Ensuring our children keep active and maintain a balance between learning and play is vital to their health and development of skills. Sports including rugby league and soccer are popular to play amongst our younger generations. The St Marys Rugby League Club has helped fund the students' interest in these team sports and has positively contributed to the children's physical and mental wellbeing. I would like to thank the Leagues Club for their generous donation and selfless actions to the community, the club is an asset to our community and epitomises what community is all about.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN PERSONAL SERVICES - ADVANCED SCHOOL OF BEAUTY THERAPY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the team at the Advanced School of Beauty Therapy who were awarded the Personal Services Excellence Award at the recent Hunter Region Business Hub Excellence Awards. The event was held at the Cessnock Leagues Club late last month and I was thrilled to be there to share in the celebrations. Advanced School of Beauty Therapy is a leading provider of beauty and hairdressing education in the Hunter Region. They offer a wide range of courses, from introductory to advanced levels, and their graduates are highly sought-after by employers in the industry. The school offers nationally recognised beauty courses in beauty therapy and beauty services in Newcastle and Maitland and have operated for more than 30 years with the best educators in beauty. Training covers a wide range of beauty treatments, including skincare, nail technology, cosmetics, and make-up application. These courses are conducted in person by industry professionals on campus and once a week, we all get the opportunity to benefit while the students gain hands-on experience by visiting their training salon. Congratulations to the whole team on their award.

### **HUNTER REGION BUSINESS AWARDS - EXCELLENCE IN NOT-FOR-PROFIT – THE MAI-WEL GROUP**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the team from Mai-Wei Group for winning the Excellence in Not-for-Profit award at the recent Hunter Region Business Hub Excellence Awards. Mai-Wel Group's unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the community is truly inspiring. This prestigious recognition is a testament to their tireless efforts and the significant difference they have made in the lives of so many. Hats off to The Mai-Wel Group for their remarkable contribution to society! In November 1960 a number of Maitland-based families met and shared their concerns about the lack of recognition of the needs of their children with disability for an education and opportunities for life, this event marked the formation of Mai-Wel. The challenge to remove the discrimination experienced by people with a disability and their carers is as strong a motivation today as has been throughout the past 60 years. The service now operates in Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Port Stephens, Kurri Kurri and Singleton, providing quality disability services and employment solutions to individuals and local organisations always putting people at the centre of everything they do. Congratulations to all involved with the Mai-Wel group on this award.

### **HUNTER REGION BUSINESS HUB EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – GREEN INK DESIGN STUDIO**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the team at Green Ink Design Studio who were awarded the Professional Services excellence awards at the recent Hunter Region Business Hub Excellence Awards. Green Ink Design Studio was established in 2010 when Rebecca Forrester saw the need for a high standard of residential drafting. Most of Green Ink's work is obtained through referrals, largely due to Rebecca's ability to understand client requirements for their dream home and translate this into her designs. Green Ink Design Studio's dedication to delivering exceptional design solutions and outstanding client service has truly set them apart in the industry. Green Ink's commitment to excellence is evident in every project they undertake, and this is well-deserved recognition of their hard work and talent. Rebecca is a wife, a mother to two school aged children and lives and breathes architecture. Over the last 20 years, Rebecca, has seen first-hand how homes can improve or negatively impact our lifestyles. She recognises that home is important; it is where people are their most vulnerable and therefore should reflect you and your family and make your life easier. Congratulations Rebecca on your award.

### **KERRY GEALE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—In May this year, Wagga Wagga farewelled a well-respected community member following his 14-year battle with prostate cancer. Kerry Geale was a Wagga Citizen of the Year, city councillor and radio personality who died aged 73. His battle with cancer was prolonged, however his diagnosis never curbed his generous spirit and he continued to give back to the community until his final days. Kerry was heavily involved in the Wagga Prostate Cancer Support Group as its President, and worked to have a support nurse located in the city while also driving the group's fundraising efforts. In the week before Kerry passed away, it was National Palliative Care Week. During this week of awareness raising, Kerry spoke out boldly and frankly about his own experience receiving palliative care. We often shy away from conversations surrounding death, yet Kerry reminded us that palliative care is often a beginning that prolongs life and can help people live the best life they can for the time they may have left. I would like to pay tribute to Kerry Geale for all he contributed to the Wagga Wagga community and acknowledge the commendable work delivered by staff across palliative care wards.

### **OUTGOING BATLOW CIDERFEST COMMITTEE MEMBERS - COL AGATE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to thank and recognise the efforts of outgoing and long-time Batlow Ciderfest Committee Member Col Agate. The Committee is made up of hardworking volunteers who freely give their time, their effort and their passion to putting on Batlow Ciderfest every year in May. Ciderfest is one of the largest tourism events in the Snowy Valleys and brings many thousands of locals and tourists together to enjoy crisp local apple cider towards the end of the harvest season. Importantly, some 10 per cent of the Batlow population is involved in the organisation of Ciderfest in some way. Although a little wet and cold this year, my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed the festival and I commend the great work the Ciderfest Committee does. For eleven years Col has served on the Committee with ten of those years as the General Stallholder Coordinator. Col was recently honoured with a lunch provided by the Batlow Men's Shed and thanked by the President of the Committee Richard Breward. I thank Col for his work for the community in many areas and congratulate the committee and the Batlow community.

**STEPHEN KIRSOP**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—In a country as bushfire-prone as Australia, our firefighters do a critically important task to protect our communities. One of Wallsend's firefighters, Stephen Kirsop, has finally decided to hang up the gear after 24 years and enjoy a well-deserved retirement from the force. Over his long service, Stephen attended thousands of calls within the Wallsend community. He was there for the 2007 June floods and the 2019/2020 bushfires – truly, both ends of Australia's sometimes extreme weather. A celebration of his service was held at Wallsend Fire Station, where Stephen was gifted a framed display of his service and a Certificate of Service on behalf of the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue. Friends, family, and colleagues of Fire and Rescue attended the celebration to make sure their gratitude was known. On behalf of the Wallsend community, I would like to congratulate Stephen and thank him for his service. While you will no doubt be sorely missed at the station, I think we can all agree that you have more than earned a rest!

**CALLAGHAN COLLEGE JESMOND'S OPEN BOYS RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Sports and physical activity are an important part of childhood development and school sports competitions are an excellent way of fostering that development. This is especially true for events like the University Shield, which sees schools from all over the Hunter compete against each other in what may well be NSW's favourite sport – rugby league. This year, Callaghan College Jesmond's Open Boys Rugby League team participated in the University Shield with outstanding results. On Tuesday 2nd May the team played in the Under 18s University Shield round robin where they went undefeated with some very convincing wins against some competitive teams. Despite the Callaghan side being very young, they did not look at all out of place in the competition. They progressed to the grand final against the other undefeated team, Singleton High School. While they unfortunately lost the grand final to a coordinated and concerted Singleton team, they put up a good fight and more importantly played to the best of their ability. I would like to congratulate the Jesmond campus' Open Boys Rugby Team on their competitive spirit, on their effort, and on reaching the grand final. Well done!

**HEATON PUBLIC SCHOOL HARMONY DAY**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—I am proud of the Wallsend electorate community's multiculturalism. People from all over the world have made their homes in Wallsend, and Harmony Day is a chance to celebrate our bonds together. A congratulations to the students, parents and staff at Heaton Public School for the amazing time had at Harmony Day. This was a fantastic opportunity for the parents to visit their child's classrooms and for all to gather at the community assembly in the playground together to acknowledge National Sorry Day. It was a wonderful opportunity during the picnic for the families to share in the important cultural or special songs that are meaningful to them and experience the diverse cultural heritage. In addition to this, Mrs Ishimwe's Dance Group performance were booked to perform for the community. A great thank you to the parents for their efforts for the students to wear orange or their traditional dress. In addition, a further thanks are extended to the parents for preparing and cooking delicious food that was fully enjoyed by all attendees. Despite the weather, it was a great time for the community to celebrate Harmony Day!

**MARINE RESCUE NSW**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—Late last year I was delighted to be asked to tour one of Marine Rescue NSW's fast rescue boats that was visiting the Muddy Creek precinct at Kyeemagh in my electorate. The occasion was the announcement that a new fast rescue boat was to be permanently stationed at Muddy Creek, to enhance the marine rescue capability in the Botany Bay region. The new 10-metre-long boat, capable of speeds of up to 75 km/h, cost \$616 000 and is ideally positioned for rapid response to emergencies on Botany Bay, the Cooks River and lower Georges River, and on the open ocean outside the heads. It was an honour while touring the boat to be introduced to the crew by Botany Port Hacking Unit Commander Greg Inglis. Greg and the wonderful volunteers give their time and energy at any time of the day or night, and sometimes at considerable risk to themselves, to keep our boating, fishing and sailing communities safe. On behalf of my electorate, thank you to all the fine members of Marine Rescue NSW for your hard work, commitment and service to our community.

**DR CHARLES ROGER BADHAM OAM**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—Rain, hail or shine – nothing could stop Dr Charles Roger Badham from going to work. That's because he is a meteorologist. The Wombara resident has forged an extremely interesting career over the past five decades as a meteorologist. And in June 2023 he was recognised for his various contributions and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal as part of the 2023 King's Birthday honours. Dr Badham OAM has worked as a weather forecaster for: the Ferrari Formula One Team since 2008; Emirates

New Zealand Team since 2000; 18 footer championships since 1977; and various sailing events such as the Invictus Games Australia. He has also worked for a number of media organisations again as a weather forecaster including: Channel 7; Channel 10; and Radio 2UE. Dr Badham OAM has worked as a weather consultant on 40 Sydney to Hobart races, 10 America's Cups, 10 Olympic Games and eight Admiral Cups. His Order of Australia Medal is the latest in an impressive list of accolades that includes: a Churchill Fellow (1981); and an Anzac Fellow (1985). Congratulations again Dr Charles Roger Badham on your 2023 Order of Australian Medal.

### **ILLAWONG MENAI CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the Illawong Menai Cricket Club who are the successful recipients of \$3,000 from the NSW Government's 2023 Local Sport Grant Program. Founded in 1977, the Illawong Menai Cricket Club has a proud history of developing successful athletes, including Australian cricketers Steve Smith and Jason Gillespie who played 11 seasons and one season with the club respectively. This funding will allow the club to purchase and install a shipping container next to the existing cricket nets to store heavy equipment, making the equipment more accessible and encouraging more frequent use. Of course, none of this is possible without the hard work and dedication of the Illawong Menai Cricket Club Executive Committee. I acknowledge Mark Sterbic, Evan Watson, Brad Elkin and Tim Mattison for their efforts. I thank the members of the Illawong Menai Cricket Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and look forward to seeing the positive impact it makes for our community.

### **GEORGE COTIS OAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate George Cotis of Gympsea on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his nearly 40 years of service to conservation and the environment. Mr Cotis' story is quite unique. He has been helping protect Port Hacking and its catchment from environmental damage since 1984 when he co-wrote the plans of management. He previously served as a community representative on Sutherland Shire Council's Port Hacking Management Advisory Committee until the committee was abolished and subsequently joined the Port Hacking Management Sub-Committee. Furthermore, Mr Cotis has also co-authored three publications on the physical history, the processes, understanding and preservation of Port Hacking and its catchment. He also worked collaboratively with the University of New South Wales honours and doctorate marine science students in field tutorials and researched heavy metal contamination. I commend Mr Cotis for his highly deserving receipt of the Medal of the Order of Australia and extend my best wishes for the future.

### **PARRAMATTA'S WARAMI FESTIVAL 2023**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Warami is the Dharug word for 'good to see you' and as we enter a new parliamentary sitting week, I say 'warami' to you all. Warami is also the name of an annual festival held in the heart of Parramatta from May to July 2023 that celebrates and commemorates First Nations culture. Amalgamating National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and Burramatta NAIDOC Day, the festival highlights First Nations culture, art and music. The festival 'Warami' provides an opportunity for our broader Australian community to interact with our diverse and unique First Nations culture. The festival brings together the vibrant communities of Parramatta through storytelling, film and panel discussions, educating the community on the history and timelessness of the rich First Nations culture. It is the fourth year, the Warami festival is held in the Parramatta electorate. The success of Warami is thanks to the commitment of organisers and stakeholders, especially in sharing and connecting the world's oldest continuous living culture to both my electorate and its people. I encourage everyone to head to the festival and immerse yourself in the deep history that makes Parramatta so unique.

### **PRIME MINISTER MODI VISIT TO PARRAMATTA**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Sydney Olympic Park hosted not one but two Prime Ministers with the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi accompanied by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. It was a privilege to welcome these leaders, our Premier Chris Minns, federal, state and local government representatives along with close to 20,000 spectators to the Parramatta Electorate for a showcase of Indian cultural performances and an erudite and captivating speech by Prime Minister Modi. Both Prime Ministers acknowledged the precinct of Harris Park, colloquially referred to as "Little India", confirming the significance of Little India as a destination and cultural precinct within the City of Parramatta. With over 30,000 people of Indian descent calling Parramatta home, it is not surprising that Parramatta is considered the epicentre of our Indian community in Australia. I welcome Prime Minister Albanese's announcement, in the presence of Prime Minister Modi, that the headquarters of the new Centre for Australia-India Relations will be established in Parramatta. I thank those who have been advocating to achieve this and we look forward to reaping the enormous social, economic and cultural benefits this will bring to Parramatta and New South Wales.

### KOKODA TRACK FOUNDATION

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Kokoda Track Foundation [KFT], an international NGO operating across Papua New Guinea that has its headquarters in Balmain. KTF assists remote and rural communities in the PNG with access to elementary and primary education, improving the accessibility of quality healthcare, protecting the safety of women and fostering the next generation of leaders. I recently had the pleasure of meeting the students participating in KTF's Archer Leadership Program, which enables students from PNG to participate in an exchange program to understand how different organisations tackle complex social challenges. It was inspiring to meet this next generation of dedicated, passionate leaders and I want to thank the CEO of KTF Mike Nelson and all the staff and volunteers that make its important work possible.

### FINDING FREEDOM

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the 'Finding Freedom' concert which I had the pleasure of attending last weekend at Leichhardt Town Hall. This community celebration was organised for Refugee Week by the Refugee Action Coalition to bring together individuals and groups working to find freedom and permanent visas for all refugees and asylum seekers. I want to thank all the groups and individuals involved for their contributions to advocating for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers – Mark Goudkamp and Ian Rintoul from the Refugee Action Coalition, Dulce Muñoz from Mums for Refugees, Danielle Townsend from Asylum Seekers Centre, Renuga Impakumar from the Tamil Refugee Council, Michael Dudley, Ngareta Rossell, Hani Abdile, as well as the musicians who contributed on the night – Cosmogenic, Banda Politika, Sandy Evans, Mohsen Naderloo, Amir Karami and Mohsen Soltany Zand.

### ROTARY CLUB OF GERRINGONG SUNRISE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise who held their 20th annual changeover event on Saturday 24th June 2023 at the Mercure Gerringong resort. I was very pleased to attend this great event and I would like to firstly acknowledge the office bearers – President Sue McGilvray, President Elect Robert Miller, Secretary John Green and Treasurer Christa Wood. Thank you for your ongoing dedication, commitment and hard work. I would also like to mention the Directors Astrid Quinn, Jeff Quine, Sue Thomas, Jennie Hanna, Pauline Thwaites and Pam Daniel. The District Governor is Andrea Grosvenor. Members and friends of Gerringong Rotary acknowledged as Paul Harris Fellows as of June 2023 include: Ray Cox, Patricia Crowhurst-Sapphire, Mark Cuthbertson, Val Cuthbertson, Robyn Dalley-Sapphire, Pam Daniels, Margaret Hyslop, Tony Jefferson, Tim Lawrance, Sandra McCarthy, Vonne Mathie, Andrejs Medenis-Sapphire, Neil Miller, Judy O'Sullivan, Kevin O'Sullivan, Russell Pearson, Jeff Quine, Judy Quine, Astrid Quinn, Graham St Clair, Mike Thomas, Sue Thomas, Pauline Thwaites-Sapphire, Bob Waite-Sapphire, Brian Warren and Heather Williams.

### INDIGENOUS ARTWORK NOWRA BRIDGE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Nowra's new bridge over the Shoalhaven River which will tell the story of our region's Indigenous culture and perspective under a new initiative organised by Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW has invited members of Bomaderry TAFE's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts class to create concept artworks that will potentially feature on interpretative panels on the bridge and surrounds. The students have worked with Bidjigal elder Uncle Sonny Simms and the Djiriba Waagura group to inspect the site, learn the area's stories and decide how to bring them to life in art. I acknowledge TAFE teacher Warwick Keen, student Anne-Marie McIntosh who has prepared indigenous art as part of the class. Student Anne-Marie McIntosh, a Wiradjuri woman, said she was proud to be part of a group telling stories that are important to local Aboriginal people and the wider community. I also acknowledge another indigenous student Jenayah Ingrey of Wreck Bay. Artefact Heritage Services is working with Transport for NSW on the project, and the organisation's Alexandra Gaffkin said the concept designs were beautiful images celebrating the stories of local knowledge holders.

### KIAMA TABLE TENNIS CLUB

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Kiama Table Tennis Club which is inviting players of all skill and ability levels to join now that it has secured a new table tennis table for wheelchair players. The purchase was made thanks to a grant from Table Tennis Australia, bringing the Kiama club's total to nine tables. The new table allows wheelchair users to push much further under the table to reach shorter shots than a standard table. The Club has one wheelchair player, Joy Boyd, an Order of Australia Medal recipient, and Commonwealth Games Bronze Medallist, who founded the club in 2003. The Club is keen to have more players with disabilities join. Players meet twice a week at the Kiama Leisure Centre on Mondays and Thursdays between 12pm – 3pm. Players are provided with bats, balls and afternoon tea for \$7.

Kiama Table Tennis Club mostly caters to senior players, but is open to players of all ages, with more than 70 registered members on the books. The Club's oldest player, Ken White, a local legend, recently turned 90. He's a gun player and the club is looking for many more.

#### **PHILLIP ELWIN**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Phillip Erwin of Burraneer on being named a Heart Foundation 2023 Golden Shoe Award winner as one of a select group of walk organisers who help support new and seasoned walkers in the community. Phillip leads the Sydney Walk Eat and Talk [SWEAT] walkers, which includes 260 men and women across two groups. He has been a walk organiser for 10 years and is known to make people feel welcome and for being an expert in leading safe walks to interesting places. Phillip uses his knowledge of plants and experience of 30 years as a teacher in the New Guinea Highlands to add extra interest to walks. He is known to go the extra mile with his research to make each walk a great experience for everyone. His leadership has seen the SWEAT groups flourish with membership increasing and he has also encouraged others to become walk leaders. The Heart Foundation says Phillip and his fellow award winners have been recognised for their untiring service to the community and I recognise him for his leadership that has helped keep people active and connected.

#### **PETER RENDELL - PCYC**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise Dubbo local Peter Rendell for his significant impact on Dubbo PCYC. For more than a decade, Peter has been volunteering his time to operate the PCYC Dubbo food truck. Peter's tireless efforts in fundraising have been nothing short of remarkable. Recognising the pressing need for financial support to keep the club thriving, he took it upon himself to lead the charge. Week after week, Peter and his team sacrifice their precious time, giving up countless weekends to operate the food van, and organise various events in Dubbo. But Peter's contributions don't end there. Recently he stepped up to the plate and became an integral part of PCYC's Friday Night Unite program. This initiative focuses on providing nutritious meals for disadvantaged youth, ensuring they receive nourishment and care in a supportive environment. Peter exemplifies the true spirit of community service, and his contributions have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals. Well done Peter!

#### **STEVEN HANSON - MOTORCYCLE APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate young Dubbo local Steven Hanson on his recent achievement of being awarded the National Motorcycle Apprentice of the Year. The Motorcycle Apprentice of the Year is a tough competition to win, with independent adjudicators testing the nominee's knowledge of motorcycle service, repair and diagnosis as well as interviewing their teachers or employers, meaning not only does the winner need to be great at their job, but have been successful in their TAFE course and demonstrate that to an independent assessor! Now fully qualified, Steven is loving working in the mechanical industry and is now considering even further automotive study. It is skilled tradespeople like Steven in our communities that quite literally keep the wheels turning and for that we are all very appreciative. Congratulations again Steven on your outstanding achievement and I wish you all the best moving forward in your career.

#### **LETITIA SMITH**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate former Wellington resident and artist Letitia Smith, whose stunning artwork has begun adorning the boots of some of the NRL's biggest players. Originally painting just one pair for her cousin Reimis Smith, who currently plays for the Melbourne Storm, Letitia was then contacted about painting several more pairs, and joining forces with 'Boots for Brighter Futures', a program founded by Roosters player Conner Watson, where players wear artistically embellished boots for a match, and they are then auctioned off with the proceeds helping raise awareness and support the prevention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicide. Having painted another two sets for the Broncos and three for the Warriors, Letitia's work is gaining traction – even landing her a mention on Willie Mason's podcast! Letitia, who is passionate about working with children and helping unlock their creativity, is also using her art to teach about her culture and pass on her knowledge. To be able to do something you love and give back to a great cause is such a wonderful outcome. Congratulations again Letitia, I can't wait to see where your next creative adventure takes you.

#### **DIBCHIDIAC**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I wish to congratulate DibChidiac on winning the Inner West Local Business Awards in the Real Estate Agent category. DibChidiac is a local independent realty company, selling and managing property services to clients throughout the Drummoyne electorate and the Inner West. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Dib Chidiac, his wife Stephanie and indeed the entire team

of hardworking staff. Congratulations once again to the team from DibChidiac on this wonderful recognition and I wish this small business all the very best.

#### **QUATRE CAFE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise today to sincerely congratulate Quatre Café on winning the Inner West Local Business Award in the Café Category. Having opened in July 2022, Bridget Sakr and her team have created a local hotspot for good food, with great customer service and a welcoming and comforting atmosphere. I wish to congratulate Bridget Sakr, and acknowledge that after the extremely difficult years she has endured, she has created a beautiful community within her café and the work her and her staff do is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to Bridget, her family and the Quatre Café team on this recognition of their service. I sincerely wish them all the very best for the future.

#### **S2P CONNECT**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise today to congratulate a local business in North Strathfield, S2P Connect who has won the Inner West Local Business Awards Education Service category. S2P Connect helps students unlock their potential and instils in them confidence, healthy study habits and skills so they can improve marks and excel in English. I wish to commend S2P Connect and their staff on continuing to be role models for local students in our community, and for creating a unique way to helping students navigate their studies. The S2P team work hard to provide a safe and secure environment for students to express themselves and help to make studying enjoyable. They create great mentor relationships with these students and hold workshops designed specifically for HSC students. Congratulations to the S2P Connect team on this wonderful recognition.

#### **AUSTRALIAN SOUTH EAST ASIAN NETWORK**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I would like to recognise the Australian South East Asian Network [ASEAN] and their work organising members of Southeast Asian diaspora communities to advocate for human rights abroad and in Australia. Founded in February 2022 by Sawathey Ek OAM, who arrived in Australia as a refugee from Cambodia in 1983, ASEAN brings together community members from a diverse range of backgrounds. The group's membership includes individuals from the Myanmar, Vietnamese, Filipino, Malaysian, Hong Kong, Indian, Indonesian, Korean, and Cambodian diasporas. ASEAN members draw on their experience as migrants, former refugees, and people forced by oppressive regimes to leave their home countries to speak out against international human rights violations and urge state and federal Australian governments to take action. Since its establishment, the group has been an important progressive voice within the multicultural landscape of NSW. As ASEAN celebrates its first year, I commend and congratulate the group on their work to date in supporting democracy in our region and look forward to continuing to work with them to support human rights locally and globally.

#### **ELIZABETH GRIST OAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Congratulations to Elizabeth Grist who has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to community health, and to nursing and midwifery in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours. Ms Grist has given nearly 30 years of service to Hunter New England Local Health District across various hospitals and is now the Executive Director, Clinical Services, Nursing and Midwifery. During her time in this role, Ms Grist led the Hunter New England Local Health District through the Covid-19 pandemic, guiding all our local nurses and midwives through a scary and stressful period. Ms Grist spreads her knowledge and expertise to future medical professionals as a Conjoint Lecturer at the Faculty of Health at The University of Newcastle until 2019. Ms Grist represents the high calibre of medical professionals that Newcastle is producing, and her work deserves to be acknowledged. Congratulations Elizabeth.

#### **DEFENCE OF SYDNEY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I rise today to inform the house of the amazing work of the Australia Remembers Northern Beaches and North Shore Committee for the recent Defence of Sydney Service at North Head in my electorate of Manly. Under the leadership of COL John Platt, CSC, (Retd) together with representatives from local RSL Sub-Branches, HMAS Penguin and others, the Committee has held this service for the past 27 years. I have been proud to host this service which commemorated the 81st year when war came to Sydney Harbour when three Japanese midget submarines entered the harbour in the dead of night on the 31st May 1942 and sunk the HMAS Kuttabul. Guest Speaker for the service this year was Commodore Ray Leggett AM CSC, RAN Deputy Fleet Commander who spoke eloquently on the attack which resulted in the loss of 19 Australian and two British soldiers. Amongst the dignitaries laying wreaths was the Consul General of Japan, Mr Shuichi Tokuda as well as representatives from 18 schools.



### COMMUNITY HAIR PROJECT

**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)**—It was great to catch up with local resident Christine from the Community Hair Project with their Mobile Salon that has travelled around Australia, visiting 170 locations each month providing free haircuts from qualified hairdressers and barbers who donate their time. Christine's project has been successful in brightening the lives of hundreds since the initiative started in 2017, visiting homeless shelters, women's refuges, community centres and expos. Recently the project has been working on the Indigenous Hair Workshops travelling to an indigenous community in a small town called Gulargambone. Each Indigenous Hair Workshop participant received their own starter kit package. A haircut may be a very basic thing, but it can make a world of difference to someone's self-esteem.

### JESSICA WARNELL

**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)**—Congratulations to Jessica Warnell from Kids Academy Warnervale for being nominated for the NSW State Training Awards. The awards are conducted annually by Training Services NSW within the NSW Department of Education to recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector. The fully funded training program gives employees access to internal professional development programs as well as the opportunity to complete nationally recognised qualifications in early childhood education and business via registered training organisations. Jessica has been in the early childhood industry for the past 16 years and loves being able to make a difference in young children's lives, nurturing and providing them with the best start to their education. Jessica has been supported with training by Affinity Learning Academy, one of the best learning resources available throughout her diploma traineeship. The hard work paid off with positive results and experiences through Jessica's working journey. I wish you the very best in your career.

### TOUKLEY CAR PARK BUTCHERY

**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)**—Toukley Car Park Butchery will be saying goodbye to the community as owners Paul and Jo are passing the business on to the new owner Graham. Over the last 20 years the butcher provided quality meat and new produce, lately preparing the two popular products Sticky Garlic Chicken with bacon and garlic glaze and Satay Chicken Pocket chicken breast with stuffed satay wrapped in bacon. The local business has been involved with the community by supporting School Mufti Days, Ary Toukley for 19 Years, Greater Toukley Vision Town Centre for 20 years and other local events. Also sponsored local sporting groups supporting the Toukley Gorokan Gunners, Toukley Hawks RLFC, Cricket Club, Women in Waves, Boardriders and the list goes on. The butcher has received outstanding results over the years winning awards from the Hit101.3 Central Coast's Best Butcher, Sausage King and NSW Smallgoods Competition. Friday 30th June will be last trading day for Toukley Car Park Butchery with owners Paul and Jo. Thank you for being an amazing asset to our local community especially providing delicious quality meat.

### MANNING VALLEY ANGLICAN COLLAGE

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Manning Valley Anglican Collage as they celebrate their 20th Anniversary. MVAC opened its doors 2 decades ago to just 67 students. Today, over 700 students enjoy a balanced education of academic, cultural, and sporting opportunities at the College. In addition to the remarkable milestone of their 20-year anniversary, I applaud the commitment of school Chaplain, Greg Anderson, who has been an integral part of MVAC since its inception, celebrating his own 20-year anniversary alongside the college. MVAC has organised a number of special events to celebrate its anniversary. Including a service of thanksgiving, an open day, Foundation Day assemblies and awards and a fun day of activities is scheduled for the last day of term, where all students will receive a 20-year celebratory badge. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to the principal, Darren Parks and the founders of Manning Valley Anglican College, whose vision and dedication have shaped it into the exceptional educational institution it is today. Their commitment to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for students to thrive is truly commendable. Congratulations, Manning Valley Anglican College!

### SHANE CHALKER

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise Shane Chalker. Shane is a national and international award-winning photographer with a passion for capturing the moods of the ocean and the animals that live within it. His work involves shooting most styles of photography including commercial, portraits,

weddings, and real estate. Shane has been invited to judge entries in this year's Pix from the Stix annual photography competition in Gloucester. Pix from the Stix celebrates the talents of budding and experienced photographers and is open to all levels of skill, from amateur to professional with a range of categories in the senior section, as well as a junior section. I congratulate Shane on his achievements and success as a photographer and thank him for sharing his knowledge and insights with other aspiring photographers.

#### **WHARF ST. DISTILLERY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Jesse Roche, Time Cooke and the team at Wharf St. Distillery in Forster. Wharf St. won five medals in this years San Francisco World Spirits Competition. This competition is one of the world's most prestigious spirit competitions, with a panel of expert judges blind-tasting thousands of spirits. A total of 33 gins won the coveted Double Gold medal with Wharf St. claiming two, one for their Citrus Gin and another for their Pigface Gin. Silver medals went to their Navy, Oyster Shell and Barrel Aged gins. Wharf St. were selected as one of three finalists for the Best In Class and Best Overall Gin awards, which were announced at the Top Shelf Awards Gala & Grand Tasting in Las Vegas on the 16th & 17th of June. While they didn't take out the win, this achievement was astounding given they have only been distilling gin for just over a year. I congratulate the team at Wharf St. on their well-deserved accomplishment and thank them for putting Forster on the map in the realm of best spirits.

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