



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday 28 June 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 28 June 2023**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

#### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

##### *Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 27 June 2023*

**No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2023-047B]**

Page 4, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 7.22. Insert after line 14—

(ba) public housing within the meaning of the Housing Act 2001,

**No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2023-047B]**

Page 5, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 7.25(b), line 22. Insert "that directly conserves or enhances the natural environment and is undertaken" after "measure".

**No. 3 GRNS No. 1 [c2023-051B]**

Page 9, Schedule 1[8]. Insert after line 37—

#### **Subdivision 6 Report by Treasurer**

##### **7.31F Treasurer to give annual report**

- (1) The Treasurer must prepare a report detailing, for each financial year, the payments made into, and from, each of the following—
  - (a) the SBC Fund,
  - (b) the HAP Fund.
- (2) The report must be in the form required by the regulations.
- (3) The Treasurer must provide the report to each House of Parliament within 4 months of the end of the financial year to which the report relates.
- (4) In this section—  
*financial year* means a period of 12 months commencing on 1 July.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (10:17):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

I will address the passage of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contributions) Bill 2023 through the other place and explain some of the amendments that were agreed to by Government and crossbench members. The bill was referred to a committee, and I start by thanking it and the chair, Ms Sue Higginson, for running a short, sharp inquiry that allowed debate on the bill to proceed in this session. I also thank all those who gave their time to make a submission and give evidence to the public hearing.

The committee handed down its report on Monday 26 June, finding no fault with the bill and, importantly, recommending no changes to it.

The debate in the other place saw a number of amendments brought forward by the crossbench. The Opposition continued to oppose the bill, of course, despite the genuine invitation from the Premier to reconsider its inexplicable position on this legislation. Ultimately, three amendments were put forward by The Greens that the Government accepted, with support from other members of the crossbench. They are considered amendments that will improve the administration of the legislation and do not change the key message of delivering the right infrastructure to support homes and jobs.

Reflecting on the diversity of groups and individuals who came together in the other place—notably the Government, The Greens, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, Mr Buckingham and the Animal Justice Party—there is a mix of regional and metropolitan representatives, including the Hon. Mark Banasiak from my own part of the world in the Illawarra. That diversity alone signals the importance of and the need for infrastructure and housing to be more closely aligned.

I turn now to the specifics of the amendments. The amendments that were successfully put forward by The Greens are welcome additions that will improve the operation of the bill. They do not change the underlying policy of the bill or the commitments made by the Government. The first of The Greens amendments is the addition of public housing to the list of things that can be funded by housing and productivity contributions. Although it is not current Government policy to fund social and affordable housing, a future government may take a different view. This change would allow a future government to do that.

The second amendment relates to biodiversity measures that can be funded by housing and productivity contributions. It is a minor change that would limit the measures that could be funded under a Commonwealth scheme to those that directly conserve or enhance the natural environment. The bill remains policy neutral when it comes to biodiversity offsetting. I reassure the House that, even with these amendments, the bill deals only with the new housing and productivity contributions and does not change the way biodiversity conservation laws work. For example, the provision preventing appeals applies to conditions of planning approvals requiring the housing and productivity contributions to be paid by developers. It does not prevent appeals against biodiversity approvals.

The final amendment proposed by The Greens is a requirement for the Treasurer to give an annual report about payments to and from the new funds. This largely replicates existing requirements in the Government Sector Finance Act and independently requires a higher degree of transparency when it comes to the expenditure of both the Housing and Productivity Fund and the Strategic Biodiversity Contributions Fund. I take the opportunity to thank everyone in both the Department of Planning and Environment and in the Treasury who assisted in putting this bill together and who worked with the crossbench cooperatively in the Legislative Assembly, with the member for Wollondilly and the member for Wakehurst, who put forward sensible suggestions. I also thank those in the other place who put forward sensible suggestions. But I single out a couple of people in particular. Jonathan Schipp from the department really lived and breathed elements of this bill and has made an incredible contribution to it. I also acknowledge the team in my office who have contributed to its passage, in particular Gino Mandarino. I commend the amendments and the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:21):** I offer The Greens' support for the amendments and recognise and acknowledge the willingness of the Government to work with The Greens to be able to address and adapt these amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contribution) Bill 2023. I speak specifically in relation to the amendment to put in a reference to public housing in the legislation before us and the amendments we are considering. It is important to state on the record why we believe, even in the context of public housing, it is absolutely critical that we see a commitment to that within this fund. When we are looking at developing infrastructure, and when developing new communities and new areas, we need to recognise that public housing needs to be part of the consideration of the area that we are building.

It is not okay to just say we are going to build a whole new community, or we are going to build private housing and we are going to make sure there is transport infrastructure, roads, green space and community facilities, but then we ignore the fact that we need to build public housing at the start. If we do not build public housing at the start, obviously the price of that area goes up, everyone says the cost of living is too high and then you have the crisis that we are currently facing. In foresight and planning about how we go about building the infrastructure and the needs for any community, for any suburbs and any new area, we need to be factoring in the consideration of how we also factor in low cost and affordable public housing within that scope.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:23):** I speak on behalf of The Greens about the amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contribution) Bill 2023. It was positive that this bill went to a short inquiry so that we were able to hear directly from those who have a clear view of the existing scheme and of the impact that this bill will have. It was pleasing to hear that so many were

strongly supportive of this new system. When a review was conducted by the Productivity Commission into the infrastructure contribution system in 2020, the review found that the current infrastructure contributions system has not been enabling the State, nor councils, to provide sufficient infrastructure to support development, and that due to attempts to reform the system, we have an overly costly and complex system of infrastructure contributions. There is no doubt that there is much need for change in this space.

Whilst the bill goes some way to address the findings of the 2020 review, it is clear that it will not solve all the issues facing New South Wales for both providing vital infrastructure and the connection to the need for more housing. We commend the Government for working to create an infrastructure contributions system that is simpler and that can more easily deliver what is needed. The Greens reiterate the need for the Government to take a serious look at the causes underlying the housing crisis and the concerns that many have about the lack of funding for infrastructure while new homes are being built. I am pleased to see these amendments from my Greens colleagues in the other place coming back here today. The first deals with the dire need for public housing, as touched on by the member for Newtown. It is incredibly important, while we look at the housing and productivity contributions funding, that there is recognition of the need for investment in public housing to ensure that there is a place in new developments for people who do not have the income to be able to afford to buy into new developments, and that there is a guarantee that there will be some sort of mechanism to holistically look at public housing infrastructure.

In relation to the second amendment, there are clear concerns from The Greens about biodiversity. We want to make sure that biodiversity measures are taken into consideration when we look at housing contributions. Only measures that directly conserve or enhance the natural environment and that really provide tangible conservation benefits need to be considered for funding under the biodiversity fund. That is why The Greens moved this amendment in the other place. The Greens are very supportive of this legislation. It was great to see The Greens strengthening the infrastructure contributions in the other place and I thank them for moving these amendments. The Greens commend the amendments.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (10:25):** I thank the Government for introducing this policy. I also thank the member for Newtown for making her contribution to debate short and sharp because every day this is delayed it costs my area, which is getting more houses, more people and less infrastructure. It is really exciting that infrastructure will be supported by housing and productivity contributions. At the moment, as everybody knows, my electorate has very scant infrastructure. We have an area the size of the Sydney metropolitan area with two high schools. I know that while not all the contributions will be coming to my electorate, some of them will hopefully fall into areas where we need infrastructure like the Picton bypass. I know that I say it over and over again, but this will save the lives of people in the Wollondilly electorate. I thank the Government and I thank those who sent the bill to the other House for consideration. I look forward to the legislation being in place.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS VILIFICATION) BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (10:28):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2023. The bill implements the Government's election commitment to make religious vilification unlawful by introducing civil prohibition aligned with the existing vilification provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act. It is important to ensure that people are free from vilification on the basis of their religious belief, affiliation or activity. This bill will fill a gap in the existing vilification protections in the Act by extending them to religion and will provide an important protection for people of faith.

The Government recognises that the Act as a whole is out of date and in need of an overhaul, and has committed to tasking the NSW Law Reform Commission to conduct a comprehensive review. That review is imminent. Under the Act, it is currently unlawful to, by a public act, incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons on four grounds or attributes. Those grounds are race, homosexuality, transgender status and HIV status. The bill will extend the same form of protection from vilification that already exists in the Act in respect of those grounds to vilification on the basis of religion.

The Act's provisions on racial vilification currently apply to vilification on the basis of "ethno-religious origin", because race is defined to include this term. However, this concept has been narrowly interpreted. The amendment in the bill means that religious vilification complaints can be considered through their own separate ground without needing to inquire into whether an ethno-religious origin can be established. The civil prohibition in the bill will complement the existing related criminal offence in the Crimes Act 1900, section 93Z, which applies to religion and prohibits publicly threatening or inciting violence towards a person or group on grounds including religious belief or affiliation. That is a much higher threshold to meet. It is important that the prohibition as a restriction on public expression strikes the right balance between protection from vilification and ensuring appropriate freedom of expression and religion. The bill does this by including appropriate exceptions that make conduct that may otherwise amount to vilification lawful, particularly for good-faith discussions in the public interest.

The provisions in the bill are not intended to prevent people from making statements about the truth of their own religious beliefs, or to prevent people making statements that are critical of a religion or religion in general. The provisions do not protect religion or religious beliefs themselves, and they are not intended to be used to silence criticism or debate. Instead, they give appropriate remedies to people who are subject to incitements of hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule on the basis of religion. Complaints of religious vilification will be able to be made to the president of the Anti-Discrimination Board, who will encourage mediation if possible, and who can otherwise refer a complaint to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The tribunal can then order a range of remedies, including damages or an apology or retraction, if it finds a complaint substantiated. The Government has consulted on the bill with a range of stakeholders, including religious organisations, legal stakeholders and community and advocacy organisations. Most stakeholders were supportive of the bill, particularly religious and faith organisations, who expressed strong support for a prohibition on religious vilification.

I now turn to the detail of the bill in relation to its amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts new part 4BA into the Act. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts new section 49ZE, which makes it unlawful for a person, by a public act, to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on the ground that they have or do not have a religious belief or affiliation, or engage or do not engage in religious activity. Schedule 1 also inserts new section 49ZD, which defines "public act" in a manner consistent with the existing vilification provisions. A public act includes any form of communication to the public, including speaking, writing, printing, broadcasting or screening, as well as non-verbal conduct observable by the public. The definition also includes the distribution or dissemination of matter to the public with knowledge that it promotes or expresses hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on the ground of religious belief or affiliation, or religious activity. The new ground for vilification covered by the bill is holding or not holding religious belief or religious affiliation, or engaging in or not engaging in religious activity.

It is important that people are protected from vilification because of their beliefs, but also because of their connections with faiths or religious organisations as well as the practices or activities that are related to religion. It is also important that people are protected from vilification because they do not hold religious beliefs or affiliations or engage in religious activities. That is because not holding a religious belief is itself a belief about religious matters, which should be protected from vilification. The new protected ground in the amendments has been drafted to be consistent with civil protections against religious vilification in other States and Territories. In Victoria, vilification on the grounds of religious belief or activity, which includes holding or not holding a religious belief, or engaging in or not engaging in religious activity, is unlawful. In the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, vilification on the basis of religious belief, affiliation and activity is unlawful.

New section 49ZE (2), inserted by schedule 1 to the bill, contains three exceptions that prevent conduct that would otherwise amount to religious vilification from being unlawful. The exceptions apply to a fair report of a public act; communication or the distribution or dissemination of any matter on an occasion that would be subject to a defence of absolute privilege under defamation law in proceedings for defamation; and a public act, done reasonably and in good faith, for academic, artistic, scientific, research or religious discussion or instruction purposes, or for other purposes in the public interest, including discussion or debate about and expositions of an act or matter.

The final exception, in new section 49E (2) (c), ensures that legitimate public discussion in the public interest is not made unlawful by the provisions. It also ensures that people can carry on their own religious practices and expression. To make use of the exception in new section 49ZE (2) (c), the public discussion or debate must be done reasonably and in good faith. The concept of reasonableness in this context has been discussed by the courts. The then chief justice of the New South Wales Court of Appeal, Chief Justice Bathurst, stated in *Sunol v Collier (No 2)*, "For the public act to be reasonable ... it must bear a rational relationship to the protected activity and not be disproportionate to what is necessary to carry it out." In addition, *Sunol v Collier*

held that the concept of good faith does not require an objective assessment of intention, but instead that the public act must be "engaged in bona fide and for the protected purpose".

The exception contained in new section 49ZE (2) (c) is important because the prohibition on religious vilification in the bill is about protecting against the incitement of hatred towards a person or group of persons. It is not intended to prohibit criticism of religion or religions themselves, or to prevent statements of religious faith. As the Victorian Court of Appeal has stated in relation to similar Victorian provisions in the *Catch the Fire Ministries Inc v Islamic Council of Victoria Inc* case, vilification "aims to strike a balance between protecting freedom of speech and protecting people from vilification on the grounds of their ... religious belief. It would be inconsistent with this aim to interpret the legislation so as to make it impossible for people to proselytise for their own faith or to criticise the religious beliefs of others." The Act includes a comprehensive set of complaints provisions that will apply to the new vilification ground in the bill.

A person will be able to lodge a complaint with the president of the Anti-Discrimination Board, who will attempt to encourage conciliation, but who may also refer the complaint to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. If the tribunal finds a complaint substantiated, it may order a range of remedies depending on the particular circumstances of the matter, including damages, or orders requiring an apology, a retraction, or to not engage in further unlawful activity. Robust debate and freedom of expression are critical to a healthy democracy. However, it is important that there are reasonable limits on expression to prevent people being the target of hatred. The bill is intended to ensure that people in New South Wales can maintain their religious beliefs and practise their religion without fear of vilification, and to provide a remedy for religious vilification if it occurs. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (ICNSW BOARD) BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Sophie Cotsis, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (10:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Board) Bill 2023 amends the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, known as the SICG Act. The SICG Act establishes icare and sets out the composition of the icare board responsible for setting icare's strategic direction and for oversight of its senior executives and their management of icare's business operations. A high-quality board requires a sophisticated mix of technical skills and industry experience. The Government recognises that the icare board could benefit from more diverse perspectives. A high-performing and successful icare board must, as a matter of course, take account of, and be responsive to, the needs and interests of those they serve—that is, New South Wales businesses and workers. It is critical that these perspectives and viewpoints are taken into account in board deliberations and decision-making.

Once enacted, the bill will ensure that both employers and employees are appropriately represented on the icare board through the appointment of two nominee directors, one representing employers, and one appointment for unions representing workers. This change will ensure that the board is more representative of the community. These two directors will be nominated by New South Wales employer bodies and Unions NSW to represent employer and worker interests and perspectives. The inclusion of employer and employee perspectives is intended to deliver some key benefits. Most importantly, employer and employee nominee directors have the potential to contribute diverse perspectives to board decision-making. This can engender more robust discussion at board level and ensure that the board takes into account employer and employee needs and priorities in its decision-making.

Employer and employee perspectives on the icare board can also help drive accountability for those outcomes most vital to scheme participants. For employers, this can mean a focus on premium setting and affordability, and supporting return to work for injured workers. For injured workers, this can translate into a focus on the timely payment and accurate calculation of entitlements, high-quality claims management and treatment to support recovery and return-to-work outcomes. The mandated inclusion of employee perspectives will go some way to making icare, and the way it operates, more accommodating to injured workers by ensuring that their voices are heard at the highest level.

Employer and employee nominee directors will help bring practical, real-life experience and perspective to icare and its operations. These perspectives and experiences extend to the standards icare must meet in the

efficient, transparent and accountable conduct of its operations on a daily basis. The inclusion of employer and employee nominee directors on the icare board, over time, will assist in building confidence amongst New South Wales employers and employees by helping ensure that access to compensation for injured workers is appropriately balanced with scheme affordability, efficiency and viability over the long term.

The bill would change the composition of the icare board, but not its total size. The SICG Act currently provides for a nine-member board composed of eight non-executive directors and the chief executive of icare. Subject to transitional arrangements, the bill provides for two of the existing non-executive director positions on the board to be replaced by the new nominee directors representing employers and workers respectively. An employer body and employee body will have primary responsibility to nominate individuals to represent their perspectives. As the responsible Minister, I will have the ability to appoint nominated individuals who satisfy the requirements of the SICG Act for appropriately qualified directors who possess those skills and expertise relevant to icare in the exercise of its functions.

Where I, as the responsible Minister, am not satisfied that the proposed nominee meets those requirements set out in the SICG Act, I can request the employer or employee body to nominate an alternate candidate. Supplementary guidelines will be developed to provide clarity, transparency and accountability in the selection process to nominating employer and employee bodies, as well as potential nominees. The bill provides for a transition period to support the appointment of the two new nominee employer and employee directors. But, in line with the bill, the nominee directors must be in place within 12 months from the date of commencement.

The purpose of the bill is to have employer and employee perspectives represented on the icare board. I acknowledge the work of Unions NSW and the Injured Workers Campaign Network over the past 10 years in advocating for this reform. The Minister for Finance and I met with the Injured Workers Campaign Network last Friday and heard firsthand about their experiences with icare. Their stories were tough to hear, and their pain and suffering is real. One thing is clear: The system needs reform. The inclusion of more diverse perspectives on the board of icare is the first step of that reform.

A more diverse board is intended to support better quality, more robust and well-considered decision-making that takes into account all stakeholder views, and especially those of injured workers. I also acknowledge Business NSW and other industry and employer groups that have raised concerns about the performance and governance of the Nominal Insurer. I also thank the SafeWork NSW Family and Injured Worker Support Group for its work in this space.

Continued access to the State's workers compensation and care insurance schemes is a key priority for the Government. At the same time, this must be appropriately balanced with scheme affordability, efficiency and viability to ensure that support for injured workers is secured. The Minns Government was elected on a platform to reform icare so that it better serves the people of New South Wales, injured workers and premium payers. That is what this bill is all about. The bill is the first step in fulfilling our election commitments and our mandate to strengthen the regulatory oversight and governance of the State's workers compensation and care insurance schemes and their financial sustainability for the longer term. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ASSAULTS ON RETAIL WORKERS) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:50):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I say from the outset that the bill would benefit from being examined by a parliamentary committee, and the Opposition will seek to facilitate that in the other place. Retail workers are often young females. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they worked in one of the few places that the public could go and, in some cases, were the subject of appalling conduct by the general public that no-one on either side of the House would condone. It is regrettable and particularly undesirable because women and young people often work at those places. However, it seems the bill is a response to a set of circumstances that have now changed somewhat. The Attorney General said in his second reading speech that retail workers work in an industry that is important to the economy. While that is true, it ignores the fact that many occupations and their workers fall within that category, such as bus drivers, teachers, tradies or other people who deal with the public. They are not given unique protections under the criminal law, which is what the bill seeks to do.

When the Opposition was in government, it introduced legislation to put workers such as the police, law enforcement officers, frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers in a special category of victim

under part 3, division 8A of the Crimes Act. However, the Parliament needs to decide whether it is embarking upon a slippery slope by continually adding occupations to that existing confined category. Certainly people who are currently within that category of protection are, by reason of uniform or context of duties, much more obvious and visible than perhaps retail workers, and that is a relevant consideration when creating unique protections under the criminal law.

As an example, this legislation would allow for an assault on a member of the general public on the floor of a large Bunnings Warehouse to be punished differently than an assault on a retail worker within that space, whether they are wearing a uniform or not. When identical circumstances exist in the commission of a crime, we need to be careful that we do not have a system that punishes them differentially. Obviously the prime motivation of the criminal law is to deter criminal acts and to deter people from becoming victims. There is a general principle that we are all equal before the law and that the same conduct should be punished similarly. It may well be that factors such as aggravation, vulnerability of victims and the like that the bill seeks to address would be better dealt with under the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 rather than by continually creating new categories of victims, which could become a never-ending exercise of adding different occupations.

Those sorts of questions require investigation, examination and reflection. It should not be the case that people are treated differently because they have greater access to a strong lobby group to lobby their category of victim over other categories within the general public. Changes of that nature to the criminal law need to be done in a careful manner to ensure that the general principle that we are all equal before the law is adhered to, unless there is a clear case where there should be differential treatment. As with the knife crimes legislation and the increased penalties that we dealt with yesterday, in practice the increase in penalties under the bill will not be as dramatic as suggested by the legislation. The reason for that is that most of those cases will be dealt with in the local court, where the jurisdictional limit of maximum imprisonment is determined to be two years.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Wahroonga will be heard in silence.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** By reason of the principles of sentencing where the available maximum is taken into account, one would assume there will be an uplift in the penalty, under normal sentencing provisions, but it will not be as dramatic as the legislation perhaps suggests. The Opposition will not oppose the bill in this House, but I hope the matters that I have drawn to the attention of the Chamber will be taken into account to make sure that we get the best legislative outcome possible.

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the Chamber to Ben Quinnell, the son of the member for Camden. I also welcome student leaders from Lake Macquarie High School, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome Dr Joe Cordaro, a City of Canada Bay councillor, and his wife, Paula, guests of the member for Drumoyne. I acknowledge a guest of the member for Lismore and the member for Coffs Harbour, Dr Htun Htun Oo.

I acknowledge in the gallery Thomas Ryan. Many of us have worked with him, particularly during the period of the previous Government. Thomas is now moving on. I know all of those who have worked with him wish him all the best in his future career. I thank Tom for all of his assistance over the past four years. I also welcome students from Sydney Technical High School, guests of the Premier, and student leaders from high schools in New South Wales, who are attending the Secondary Schools Leadership Program conducted by the parliamentary education unit. I hope to catch up with them after question time. I welcome everybody to the Legislative Assembly for question time.

#### *Announcements*

#### **MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**The SPEAKER (11:03):** I inform the House that the NSW Ombudsman, Mr Paul Miller, PSM, will deliver an information session for members and staff today at 1.00 p.m. in the Preston Stanley Room. The NSW Ombudsman will discuss the work of his office and the support that his office can provide members. The session is open to both members and staff. Everyone is most welcome to attend, and a light lunch will be provided.

*Members***REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I advise the House that the Minister for Transport will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Health, the Minister for Regional Health, and the Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast.

*Question Time***POLICE TASER USE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Government is blocking access sought in the Legislative Council to documents relating to any involvement by the Premier or the Minister in the lack of disclosure about the tragic tasering of Mrs Clare Nowland. Is there something she is trying to hide?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The question is in breach of Standing Order 128. Firstly, it creates an inference and imputation. Secondly, it asks the Minister to explain something that is occurring in the other place. That is not within her purview as she is accountable to this House, not the other place.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** To the point of order: There is nothing accusatory in the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order while I hear from the Leader of the Opposition on the point of order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The question speaks of "any involvement". It is a matter for the Minister to say whether there is any involvement; it does not assert involvement. It is a matter for the Minister to clear the litany of lack of disclosure and answer the question. It is not based on a premise of involvement or lack of involvement as the question says "any involvement". It is not based on a premise that there is something to hide. The Minister has been given ample opportunity to say there is or is not something to hide. It concerns documents that relate to her portfolio.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House. The Minister will answer the question as posed by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (11:07):** Again I say in this place I have answered these questions repeatedly and publicly. Nothing has changed. Yet again there is no evidence provided by members on Opposition benches to suggest that there was a cover-up.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** What I will talk about are the good things that are going on with the NSW Police Force. We know that those opposite are not interested, but it is very pleasing that we have young people here from schools right across the State. I welcome them to the Parliament. It gives me great pleasure to tell them what wonderful work is happening across our State with the NSW Police Force. They are doing a great job.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. Opposition members, in particular, will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Police find themselves in more dangerous and harrowing situations than any other workforce across this State, and we respect them for that. Recently I had the opportunity to meet the many teams that came together at the tragic crash in Greta. I want student leaders to know—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, you ruled that the question was in order. It concerns the blocking of access to documents showing any involvement by the Minister or the Premier in the lack of disclosure, and she is not answering that question. Is there something that she is trying to hide through blocking that access?

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. There is no point of order. This is a vexed issue. I cannot say that the answer is directly relevant. We have been on this line of questioning for a week. The Minister will answer the question.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It was such a privilege to meet those incredible investigators, working in—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: In breach of Standing Order 73, the Manager of Opposition Business keeps shouting out words that would not be acceptable in debate. If members opposite want to make an accusation, they should do it by way of substantive motion. They could not say it in a question, and they cannot say it in an interjection.



**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired. I note the point of order. I do not think I would have upheld it.

### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:11):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House about the action the Government has been taking to ensure a fair go for regional New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:11):** Absolutely. It has been nearly 100 days that the State of New South Wales has been rescued from the clutches of the National Party, a political party that seemed singularly focused on the professional career of its former leader, John Barilaro, often at the expense of regional New South Wales. But we are getting on with the job for regional New South Wales. We have already committed \$670 million for an emergency road repair fund over the next two years. It is important for the regions and regional communities. That is in addition to \$280 million for the regional pothole program to ensure that there is enough funding for regional roads that might have been devastated as a result of those terrible floods halfway through last year. I must note that the previous Government allocated zero dollars over the next two years for regional road funds.

It gets even better in Health. We have provided 500 additional paramedics, exclusively for regional New South Wales. We have committed \$70 million for three regional helicopter ambulance bases, for quicker and more reactive approaches to natural emergencies, terrible road accidents and whatever happens in regional New South Wales. This was a much-requested and necessary investment in the health system, denied by the previous Government. When it comes to education, regional communities are benefiting from the transition of teachers from temporary positions to permanent jobs in regional schools. We are delivering stage two of Jerrabomberra school, an upgrade of the Yanko Agricultural High School, a new Medowie High School and, of course, a new high school in Googong.

Our decision to repeal the Liberal Government's forever land tax will mean a substantial tax cut for first home buyers, particularly for regional communities. I can report that a person buying an \$850,000 property in Coffs Harbour will save \$27,200. A person buying a \$638,000 property in Orange will save \$23,800. At the end of the day, is it any wonder that the National Party is in such decline and turmoil? I note that the member for Coffs Harbour—whose career is coming along nicely, I have to say—said in the House yesterday:

It is a suburb in Monaro. The member for Monaro has more commitments ... than the entire National Party with their 13 electorates—sorry, 11 electorates.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Mr Speaker, I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lismore seeks additional information. I grant a two-minute extension.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is no wonder that the ABC recently published an article on 29 March 2023 under the heading "Over the past eight years, the NSW Nationals have slowly lost a third of its seats, a path back will be equally fraught." That is what the national broadcaster is saying. But I can report to the House that there is a foolproof plan from the National Party to come back to prominence in politics. It is a motion from the Wagga branch—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour rose first on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock. Government members will come to order. It is hard for the Premier to speak over members' interjections.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. In 2½ minutes the Premier ran out of things to talk about with regard to what they are doing in regional New South Wales. I would ask that he come back to the leave of the question about what they are doing for regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** I would have loved to uphold one of the points of order taken by the member for Coffs Harbour, but not today. There is no point of order. The Premier will continue.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The national broadcaster is saying that over the past eight years the National Party has lost a third of its seats and that a path back will be equally fraught. But the Wagga Wagga branch of the National Party has a foolproof plan to come back to prominence and it is that conference calls for the voting age be increased to 25. They have sorted it out. They are going to cut out a percentage of the electorate—"If you don't want to vote for us, we don't want you." That is fantastic. We are about 100 days into the Dugald experiment. I think it is a bipartisan view that it is not going well. That is the common consensus. Do not take my word for it;

take it from the member for Northern Tablelands. He said in *The Armidale Express* a couple of weeks ago that The Nationals need to get back to work and that they have been embarrassing. The article further noted:

Adam Marshall described his party's infighting at the start of the parliamentary session as embarrassing.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has concluded his answer, so there is no point of order.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** What a surprise. Let me guess, it's the same question that was asked today.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** No, it is actually not.

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

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** Can I just ask my question?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Which recommendations is the Minister prioritising to analyse and deal with from the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission review of police force responses to domestic and family violence?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (11:18):** I thank the member for her question. For the benefit of the House, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] has released a report regarding police handling of domestic and family violence matters in our community. I thank the LECC for its work, which is important. This is an important issue and we will consider the report in full. Sadly, I am informed that domestic and family violence is the most under-reported crime in our community. The member and I have spoken of it. It is also a crime that consumes a significant amount of police resources, with offending and associated harms averaging a call—believe it or not—every four minutes. In the two-and-a-bit months since I have taken on this role, I have learned of some very tragic and heartbreaking domestic violence homicides.

The NSW Police Force, the domestic and family violence sector and the community more broadly are on a journey together to reduce the rates of domestic and family violence in our community. I commend the domestic and family violence Minister, who has been at the forefront every day. We thank her so much on behalf of the people of this wonderful State. But, importantly, the NSW Police Force plays an important role in protecting victims and holding perpetrators to account. I am very proud of the raft of policy-led initiatives aimed at tackling the worryingly high rates of domestic and family violence in our community. The NSW Police Force is taking the issue very seriously.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Surely not.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** You've just gone to a new low.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is, as the Minister has recognised, a very important issue. The LECC review made 13 recommendations. The Minister should answer the question: Which of those 13 recommendations is the priority?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Government Whip for his assistance, but the Minister has addressed that issue. She was directly relevant at the commencement of her answer, which she is continuing. I have made it clear in the past that, when a Minister has reached the threshold of relevance, they have latitude for the rest of the answer. There is no point of order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The NSW Police Force, as I have said, is taking this issue very seriously. It is one of the commissioner's priorities to tackle this scourge. I am proud of the work that is being done through its domestic and family violence reform strategy of 2022-2023, which captures a range of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery strategies. Of course, most recently Operation Amarok zeroed in on the worst domestic violence perpetrators in our community. Anyone who commits those horrendous crimes should expect the police to come knocking on their door. During the most recent Amarok operation, which was in April, the

NSW Police Force arrested and charged 644 of the State's most dangerous domestic violence perpetrators. [*Time expired.*]

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:22):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's commitment to providing more job security for our hardworking teachers and support staff?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:23):** I thank the member for Shellharbour for her very important question. I reflect on what has changed in the past 100 or so days since Premier Minns and our Government were elected in New South Wales on 25 March. What has changed is that now the people of New South Wales finally have a government that is bringing to an end 12 years of the systematic undermining of our teaching workforce in our public schools. We have spoken many times in this House, and told teachers, support staff and the people of New South Wales, about one of the ways we would do so: by converting 16,000 temporary support staff and teachers to permanent. Last week the Premier and I told the House that just over 5,600 teachers had accepted the offer to be made permanent. In a matter of a week that number has now gone up from 5,600 to 7,000 teachers and support staff.

That tells you everything you need to know about just how desperately it was needed and how teachers and support staff are voting with their feet and taking on the offer of permanency. I know it is no doubt happening in all of the electorates of those opposite. That is why they cannot criticise it. The overwhelming majority of those 7,000 places already accepted have been in rural and regional New South Wales. In areas like Armidale, Tweed and Grafton, over 1,300 permanent positions have been accepted. In Griffith, Orange, Wagga Wagga and Albury, almost 1,200 positions have been accepted. In places like the Hunter, Cessnock and Newcastle, 1,800 permanent positions have been accepted. It truly is work that the Government is very proud of. Every day I am being inundated, as I know members are all around the State, by principals and teachers saying, "This is going to be life changing." The principal of Berry Public School wrote to me:

Today I had the privilege and joyous opportunity to take the offers of permanency to our staff ... There were literally tears of joy and jumping of excitement and disbelief.

I am proud that this Government in a short time—in under 100 days—has taken a workforce that was only 60 per cent permanent to now 70 per cent permanent.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Mr Speaker, given that our school leaders and our fabulous schoolteachers are in the gallery today, I ask for an extension of two minutes for the Deputy Premier to finish her answer.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** They walked out.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I grant an extension of time, I note the comments from Opposition members. References to student leaders leaving or entering the gallery are completely out of order. Of course, students will come and go from the gallery, and they should expect a better level of debate and respect from this Chamber. Opposition members will cease their idle chatter. It is not helpful to the House. I grant a two-minute extension.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It is somewhat childish, and I would hope that we would set a better example for our student leaders in the gallery. We debated a fabulous motion in this House from the member for Gosford, one of our great teachers in this Chamber, about the conversion of teachers from temporary to permanent. I believe only one member from the opposite side of the Chamber had the great task of coming into this place and reading out a speech written by the former education Minister, claiming that the groundwork for this temporary to permanent conversion was laid by the former Government. I tell you what, those opposite did lay the groundwork by making the workforce temporary. That is what they did.

If they want to take credit for putting teachers into casual, insecure work, I will write the press release for them. If they want to boast about that, that is fine—go ahead; go for your life. It was one of the decisions that they will live to regret. We are seeing its impact on our children in our schools. Those opposite are out of touch if they believe that, because it took them 12 years to realise that this was a problem and now suddenly they have seen the light. The Opposition is literally about as out of touch as the member for Wahroonga at a Taylor Swift concert. That is the reality. Did anyone actually get tickets today? We have only just begun. Some 7,000 teachers have accepted permanent work, and that is growing each and every day. The Minns Labor Government is proud of what it is doing for our students and our teachers.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Deputy Premier for invoking Taylor Swift. Shake it off.

## TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:28):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. The Gallop report recommended at least two more hours of release time for both primary and secondary teachers. What steps is the Government taking to meet this important recommendation?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:29):** I thank the member for Ballina for this important question. Considering that the Opposition has not asked one education question, it is nice to get a nice, sensible question about what we can do for students and teachers. Being a former teacher, the member for Ballina knows well what it takes to make sure that our students get the best possible education. The member said—and of course we agree—that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government did nothing to address the chronic teacher shortage and the mass exodus of teachers. In fact, it presided over the worst ever numbers of teachers leaving our system. The truth is that the previous Government simply did not value teachers.

The member for Ballina pointed out that this recommendation about release time was clearly in the Gallop inquiry. Let us call it what it actually is: It is about providing more time for our valued educators to plan and work with colleagues. I acknowledge that there have been calls over many years to address this because the Gallop inquiry, amongst other experts' inquiries, has pointed out that the hours for secondary teachers have not been revised since the 1950s. The hours for primary teachers have not been revised since 1984.

**Mr Paul Scully:** That's nice and contemporary!

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is right. It is not contemporary. As the member for Ballina well knows, teaching has become much more complex in that period, and the range of issues our teachers are having to deal with is greater each day. We want to ensure that teachers have more time to plan and collaborate with their colleagues. I know the member lived and breathed this for many years. I will level with the House. The reality is that the Government cannot do anything about reducing the hours of face-to-face teaching until we tackle the teacher shortage crisis we inherited. It is impossible to do with the chronic teacher shortage. The Opposition does not understand the basic mathematics. We cannot provide release time if we do not have more teachers in our schools. We do not have anywhere near the number of teachers needed to allow this change to teaching hours. As we have informed the House many times—and we are working with the member for Ballina on all of these initiatives—we are getting to the root cause of why we are seeing teachers leave early and retire early. Remember that, upon coming to government, we saw the shocking statistic of— [*Extension of time*]

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** You were a shadow for more than three years.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I was the shadow Minister. I pointed it out numerous times and I am privileged to be the Minister to try to fix it. We are getting to the root cause of why we are seeing that happen. That will then certainly be leading us towards actually looking at the long-overdue reform that is needed in our system. We also acknowledge that the new curriculum, while we all have welcomed the changes, has presented challenges to our teachers. We will be maintaining the additional release time for teachers to engage with the new curriculum. I know that it was welcomed, but in answering this question it must be said that the rushed nature of the curriculum the previous Government engaged with, refusing to listen to all the experts, the fact that teachers needed time to roll out the new curriculum and the syllabus that came with it—

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** Resources.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Resources—another great teacher, the member for Camden, points that out to me. Again, the previous Government failed to listen to all the experts when it came to the education of children. It takes a special kind of thing to get everyone in education on the same page. The Catholics, the independents, the Teachers Federation and everyone else did not want the curriculum rushed. We came in and fixed that. The Opposition's plan actually defied logic. Release time comes with a cost. We know that. We have inherited the biggest debt ever given to us by any former government. We need more teachers in our system. Release time is a perfect example of a reform. We need to get more teachers in front of our children so that we can give teachers the support they need to be the experts we need them to be.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for East Hills, I acknowledge our second group of student leaders who have joined us here in the Legislative Assembly Chamber for question time today. Welcome. Hopefully, I will see you after question time.

## RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:34):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. What has changed in the first 100 days of the Minns Labor Government to improve resilience and reliability across the Sydney train network?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:34):** I thank the member for East Hills for her advocacy for train passengers in her community. I will let her and the House know that the Minns Labor Government is committed to building a public transport system that is safe, reliable and accessible and that works for passengers across our city and our State. Passengers across our State know that for too long our network has been neither reliable nor resilient. Since 2017, when those opposite introduced their new train timetable, we have seen increasing backlogs in maintenance. Equipment that should have been inspected, repaired, refurbished or replaced was not, because crews could not get to the tracks to fix it. That has directly resulted in delays, in cancellations and in passengers left stranded on platforms, unable to get to work on time, unable to get home to their families. So, while I can assure the people that Sydney Trains has continued to maintain a very strong focus on safety and has undertaken the safety-critical maintenance that needs to occur, it is clear that, if we do not act now, our rail network will only continue to be slower and less reliable for passengers.

I was asked what changed in the 100 days since our Government was formed. We refused to sit on our hands and let our over 100-year-old rail network go to rack and ruin. The interim independent report from the Sydney Trains review, led by expert Carolyn Walsh, has made very clear that the maintenance backlog is a major problem and we need to act now. Our Government and Sydney Trains have responded urgently, and we have coordinated the largest program of rail maintenance ever undertaken in this city, to ensure that our global city keeps moving and that we have a system we can rely on. I want to be very clear here that there is no overnight fix. I have a clear message to passengers: There will be disruption and more weekend closures and maintenance across our city. But passengers should know that, when their local train line is temporarily closed, we are maximising the time and doing more work than ever before. I will update the House on what we are doing. We have removed 456 of the 1,916 targeted high-priority defects across the network. I will put that in perspective. For regular maintenance, on average 600 high-priority defects are removed each year. Last week alone we removed 132 high-priority defects. [*Extension of time*]

On top of that, we have completed 54 of the 144 backlogged inspections, we have removed eight of the ageing track circuits and, importantly, we have removed 24 of the temporary speed restrictions across the network. These speed restrictions are go-slow zones because of potholes, effectively, left in our rail network because of the neglect of those opposite. Removing them is great for passengers. It means a faster, more reliable journey. I take this opportunity to thank every one of the workers doing their bit for our network out there. Our rail workers are working weekends and nights to make sure that this disruption occurs outside the peak use of our network. They perform inspections. They are maintaining the tracks, the electrical circuits and the signals. They are making critical repairs. They are workers like Maggie, whom the member for Strathfield and I met at Croydon station recently. She is a highly experienced maintenance operation manager with more than two decades of experience.

Many of our staff are on the front line when there are disruptions for passengers. Marcel Lattouf is a much-loved Central station frontliner who puts funny facts into his announcements and really makes people on the airport platform smile. Those passionate workers are making sure that our rail network is working for passengers each and every day. The fact is that if we do not act now it will get worse. If we continue with business as usual, it will take five years to catch up on the backlog of maintenance that was left by those opposite. If you want to know what has changed in the first 100 days of the Minns Labor Government, we value public transport, we respect the workers who keep our city moving and, above all else, we are putting passengers and people back at the heart of public transport.

## NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (11:39):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. In October last year the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation said that 6,000 homes would be eligible for flood treatment, with 2,000 buybacks. Yesterday the reconstruction authority head said that 2,000 homes in total would be eligible. How does the Minister explain to 4,000 families that they have missed out?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:40):** I thank the member for his question. I note that this is a very similar question to one that the member for Tweed asked last week, and the answer is very similar. The previous Government did not allocate any money for tranche two. Let me make that very clear: The previous Government is referring to a statement of October last year. In October last year, who was in government?

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The Prime Minister and the Premier of the day in October 2022, which was not Premier Minns—I will let others work out who it was—said that the \$700 million Resilient Homes Program would allow around 2,000 homes to be either bought, raised or retrofitted. It was not a buyback of 2,000 homes. I am here defending the previous Premier from attacks by his own side. Let that sink in for a second. What is clear to me is that elements of the buyback program have not been well-communicated to the people of the Northern Rivers from the outset, again by the previous Government. It has come to our attention that under the previous Government—again under the previous Government—a statement was made by a Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation spokesperson that implied a wider buyback that was unfunded. I have asked that that statement be explained.

Under this Government, the program is now finally progressing and the funding allocated will cover around 1,100 homes for buyback, subject to those home owners agreeing to participate. These have been prioritised against new flood mapping identifying where there is the greatest risk to life and homes predicted to experience the most frequent, high and fast floods in the future. They are in the most dangerous position for life and assets. It makes sense to prioritise those who are at most risk. Those at most risk should have priority. A further 340 properties are eligible for home raising or retrofitting.

We are keen to see those buybacks progress. We are also listening to community concerns. The member for Lismore has been in my ear and in the ear of the Minister for Emergency Services so much that we have to go to WorkCover, but, as a first step, buybacks offered need to progress as quickly as possible. We are listening to community concerns about how the program progresses. We have not closed the door to further options and support for home owners, but I make clear that it was not funded under the previous Government.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:43):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General, representing the Minister for Finance. Will the Minister update the House on the growth of senior executive service businesses under the New South Wales Government?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:44):** I thank the member for his question. One of the things that we all know—it is self-evident, in fact—is that for all of us as MPs or as Ministers, whether in our electorate offices or departments, in everything we do, our people are our greatest asset. We know that. But the mob on the other side has never actually seemed to understand that. In fact, some of the ways they treated the public service in their 12 years of government are completely inexplicable. It began when they were newly elected. I remember former Premier O'Farrell declaring war, in his words, on the fat cats in the public service. He sacked 30,000, from memory. The problem was that he got rid of the wrong band of people. He did not touch the senior executive service at all. What he did was denude the senior juniors, if I can call them that—

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** They were the people who did all the work—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Had the ideas.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** They came up with the innovations and ideas. I remember, as the Minister for Roads, some of the best and brightest people came into the Roads and Traffic Authority as cadets. They were experts in their field. They were the ones who produced the Cabinet minutes for Ministers to take into this place. He laid waste to them. That is one of the things that I have been saying to people for well over a decade. It was one of the reasons that they were such a bad government. Members opposite might laugh, but one of the reasons why projects were late, why projects went over budget, over time, and one of the reasons the light rail, for example, was such a complete disaster—

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** It is because they got rid of the people in government at a time when they most needed them. Then, of course, they capped their wages. I will stand to be corrected on this if I am mistaken, but I remember Mike Baird slipping in the wages cap as part of one of the cognate bills on the budget that we did not have time to look at in this place, and it went straight through with no warning.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** They sneakily capped the wages. Then they destroyed the workers compensation system that all workers in New South Wales relied on—still suffering from that ridiculous mistake—and then they started lecturing people on austerity, all the while engaging in their own profligacy, like

employing United States Republican Party operatives in care on \$800,000—or, I am not sure, was it \$900,000?—and handing out millions and millions of dollars to their mates in the big four consultancy firms because they had no talent left in the public service to get the big projects done. Meanwhile, Mr Speaker, while they were lecturing people about austerity and cutting the wages of nurses and teachers and police and ambulance, what were they doing? I will tell you what they were doing. [*Extension of time*]

On Monday, the *State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2022* was tabled. They tried to hide it. It came out in December last year, but they hid it. Like so many other things, they hid it. No wonder they hid it because it revealed that the New South Wales Coalition, when in government recently, oversaw the largest ever increase on record of senior executives in the New South Wales public service. While they were clobbering ordinary workers, the New South Wales Coalition added 379 senior executives in 364 days—a rate of one a day. This was the Coalition's second straight year of skyrocketing senior executive numbers, following a 347-executive jump the year prior.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wahroonga will cease interjecting.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** All of this happened while they were lecturing about austerity, capping the wages and the numbers of police and teachers—it has taken the education Minister to make some of them permanent—and all the while they were racking up the largest debt and deficit ever handed to a government in New South Wales. This is again one of the tough choices that we have been left with and one of the messes that we have to clean up. Nobody likes having their pay cut. We know that. This is not something we want to do. It is not something we want to do to ourselves or to senior executives, but if we do not do it, and other things, we will not be able to clean up the mess, and we are determined to do it in a responsible manner while being transparent with the people of New South Wales, and we do not and will not resile from that.

### ROAD TOLLS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:49):** My question is directed to the Minister for Multiculturalism. Will he guarantee that multicultural communities in south-western Sydney will not face the removal of the M5 toll cashback?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence. The member for Camden will come to order.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:50):** It is quite a strange question. I think the member for Oatley has directed it to the wrong Minister.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We have made our commitments in relation to tolls and we will fulfill them in due course. But I think the member should have directed the question to the appropriate Minister in the first instance. It is a really stupid question from the member for Oatley. I thought I would be getting something on Active Kids because he was running around with a petition about that. Both his leader and his mate from Wahroonga forgot to tell the member for Oatley that they were not funding it.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We might as well go off the subject because this guy asked the question of the wrong Minister. I just reinforce that he has asked a really, really stupid question.

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

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was to do with the M5 toll cashback, not the Government's cuts to the Active Kids rebate.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order while I ascertain whether the Minister has finalised his answer. The Minister has concluded his answer. Therefore, there is no point of order. I call the member for Terrigal to order for the second time. Members will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

### PLANNING SYSTEM

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:52):** My question is appropriately addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will he please update the House on how the Government is removing duplication and red tape to ensure that we have a more efficient planning system?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:52):** I thank the member for Leppington for his question. He has been a member of this House for less than 100 days. The member for Oatley would do well to listen to how to construct a question appropriately. The previous question was the most ridiculous thing I have heard in this place for the whole time I have been here.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I love nothing more than the opportunity to talk about what we are doing to improve the capability of the planning system to deliver homes, jobs and infrastructure to the people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Members will have heard me say many times that the previous Government lost focus and lost its way when it came to the planning system. As problems emerged, layers and agencies were just added on, and what did we end up with? We ended up with multiple Ministers responsible for multiple agencies. We ended up with a confused and confusing planning system full of overlap and duplication. In less than 100 days, we have set about introducing reforms that will deliver more social housing, more affordable housing and more market housing—all while doing it with better quality. All the while, there will be better quality. In fact, we are doing so much that today's edition of *The Australian Financial Review* quoted one planning expert as saying:

The department will be freaking out. This is going to create a tsunami of applications for the department.

The planner was referring, of course, to the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment. Apparently it will be freaking out because there will be a tsunami of housing applications on their way. That is a huge investment in New South Wales. That is fantastic. A tsunami of applications will help the students in the gallery get into houses. What a great way of addressing a housing crisis: with a tsunami of applications. But, of course, it is one thing to make these changes; it is another to deliver them. As the same article in *The Australian Financial Review* pointed out:

It is unclear whether Scully's department has the resources—

That refers to vetting these projects. Well, it is a happy problem to have because while we want to get on with the task of building, delivery was a foreign concept to the last Government. It could not deliver an envelope. We were lucky pizza deliveries kept going. Thank heavens those opposite were not in the gig economy because we would all be stuffed. That is how hopeless at delivery they were. But we are all about delivery. That is why yesterday the Premier and I announced changes to add resources to planning in New South Wales. Almost 350 staff will be redeployed from the Greater Cities Commission and the Western Parkland City Authority to the Department of Planning and Environment. [*Extension of time*]

This will greatly reduce the overlap and duplication and allow a focus on delivery. What have some of the responses to this been? The chief executive of the Committee for Sydney, Eamon Waterford, said:

There's a clear logic to bringing together the key planning entities across government ...

The chief executive of the Property Council NSW, Katie Stevenson—who will be familiar to members opposite of course—said, "We applaud the Government for following through quickly on this pre-election commitment and look forward to working with them as they tackle the housing supply challenge we face." The Greater Cities Commissioners will continue to assist with metropolitan planning in the Six Cities Region and develop housing targets. The Western Parkland City Authority will continue to set the direction for building the Bradfield city and investment attraction so that we have job creation in and around the airport.

I conclude this answer today by noting that at the end of the week the current Chief Commissioner of the Greater Cities Commission, Geoff Roberts, will conclude his eight-year tenure at the commission. Geoff has been there since day one. I do not think anyone in this place who has dealt with Geoff can doubt his passion or enthusiasm for improving Sydney and, importantly, for harnessing the potential of western and south-western Sydney. I take this opportunity to thank Geoff for his contribution, which has been an important one. The reformed Greater Cities Commission and Western Parkland City Authority have important work to do. The redeployment of staff across the agencies will help the Government to deliver on its desire to see more people in well-located homes in well-designed and well-built communities.

#### OPERATION KEPPEL

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:57):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the ICAC commenced public hearings in Operation Keppel in September 2020 and will finally hand down its report tomorrow, is he willing to sit down with the Opposition and crossbench to try to work out a multi-partisan agreement on how to ensure that in the future ICAC investigates and reports in a timely manner?



**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:58):** I have repeatedly made it clear that I am prepared to work with all parties—minor parties, Independents—on any issue affecting this Parliament. I think that is important and that is a principle my Government has taken into this Parliament from its opening day. In relation to that report, it is released tomorrow and we await those findings.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:58):** My question is addressed to the wonderful Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will he please update the House on the expanded TAFE courses so that all people who are wanting to undertake a course can take advantage of a quality TAFE education?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Swansea will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. The Minister will answer the question.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:59):** I thank the member for Liverpool for her question and for her passion for TAFE and skills in New South Wales. The member has been engaging with me on the importance of skills in her electorate, and I thank her for her considered views on the needs of the people of Liverpool and all the training providers in her electorate, especially TAFE. This Government, working with the Federal Government, is investing heavily in TAFE and new opportunities right across the State. I am pleased to report that 90 per cent of Smart and Skilled places provided in the electorate of Liverpool are fee-free places.

Further, I can report that the most taken-up fee-free course in the electorate is Certificate III in Early Childhood Education, a true sign of the growing needs of our economy and how Liverpool students are contributing. I have been asked about expanded TAFE courses and I am pleased to advise the House of some recent announcements that I have made. I was thrilled to visit the shadow Minister's electorate of Albury a few weeks ago. Together we announced that a Certificate II in Horticulture is now running at Corowa for the first time ever. I know that the shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education is as passionate about rebuilding TAFE after 12 years of cuts as I am, and I thank him for that.

I also travelled to the beautiful electorate of Orange, where I announced, with the wonderful member for Orange, two new fee-free bakery courses: a Certificate II in Baking and a Statement of Attainment in Intermediate Baking. I also visited the hardworking member for Lismore and the hardworking member for Ballina, and saw the hard-hit Lismore TAFE. In my own neck of the woods in Newcastle last week, I confirmed that a Certificate II in Maritime Operations course is being offered for the first time in almost a decade.

From the Murray to the Tweed and from the coast to the west, this Government is expanding TAFE and its training opportunities. I was also asked about how people from all walks of life can take advantage of a good TAFE education. I have been reviewing the list of TAFE course offerings and thinking of just who in New South Wales might be best paired with some reskilling options. A career hiatus with a lot of free time is the perfect time to be doing a little bit of extra training. And who has more spare time than the members opposite, the newly minted shadow frontbench? I thought I might offer some suggestions for some fine TAFE courses.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I am reluctant to accede. If the Minister can remain relevant to the question, I will grant the additional two minutes for further information.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** Members opposite might have cut TAFE, but there is no reason why they cannot benefit from it. The first cab off the rank is for the Leader of the Opposition. It is a simple one: a Graduate Certificate in Leadership might make it a little bit easier for him to find support for a Voice to Parliament. Perhaps the member for Hornsby could take up a Statement of Attainment in Financial Literacy Education. For the dear old member for Wahroonga—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order relates to relevance. Perhaps the Minister could take a certificate II in how to be a Minister and how to be funny.

**The SPEAKER:** Clearly there is no point of order. However, the Minister will be careful in his contribution.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** The member for Wahroonga opened a new TAFE course when he was the Minister. He can now enrol in a Certificate IV in Screen and Media (Radio and Podcasting). The member for Goulburn is still here. It is a good time to reskill. This is not a certificate in holding signs, but the next best thing:

a Certificate III in Water Industry Operations. I have a course for the member for Badgerys Creek, and I think it is one that the Opposition would support. It is a short course: the Statement of Attainment in Medical Terminology. It should help her clear up words like "vaccination" and "disease". I could go on and on, but it is not just reskilling. There are opportunities for members to think of a life beyond this place.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat and will not ignore the Speaker.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** If it was at all funny, it would be bearable. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member is not permitted to make introductory comments. The Minister's time has expired. There is no point of order. Members will come to order.

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:05):** How are you doing today, Mr Speaker? All good?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Sydney and I are having a private conversation. I am pretty good, mate. Thank you. Could you just ask your question?

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given that LGBTQIA+ people in New South Wales have fewer rights and protections than those in other States and Territories, will the Attorney General work with me to fix this?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:05):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question. The short answer is yes. We should all work together in this place to fix problems like these. The fact is that we all need to work together. The question that the member for Sydney has asked, and the problems that he has alluded to, are all about equality and respect. It is as simple as that. I have a lot of respect for the member for Sydney. I do not always agree with everything he says, but I have always treated him with respect and vice versa, and found him to be an honourable person. At the crux of all this, is it not just about live and let live? That is what life should be about in a respectful society.

Yesterday the member for Sydney brought representatives from ACON and Equality Australia to meet with me. We also met with survivors of conversion practices and heard some of their stories. It was harrowing. I learnt a lot in that meeting. We all have a lot to learn if we stop barracking and listen. Humans have existed in recorded history for thousands of years. We still have not learnt the recipe of how to live with each other respectfully—just look at what is happening in Ukraine. But in government, we have a commitment to make sure that we treat all citizens of New South Wales with respect.

One of the things the Government is doing is modernising the Anti-Discrimination Act, which was last reviewed in 1999. It was a groundbreaking piece of Wran Government legislation. I do not know why it has languished without review since that time, but we have referred it to the Law Reform Commission, which is chaired by retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Bathurst. That review will begin soon. Today the Government introduced a bill relating to religious vilification. The Premier made an express promise that we would get that done within 100 days of being elected; today we honour that promise.

The Opposition is also committed—in fact, I hope the whole House is committed—to banning conversion practices which seek to change a person's sexuality. Banning them was an election promise; we will get it done. The member for Sydney has some legislation of his own. We will work out how best to approach that task. Last night I promised the member for Sydney and the survivors of conversion therapy that they could look to our Government and the public servants in the various departments as assets to help them get that done. [*Extension of time*]

The bill of the member for Sydney is being closely considered as part of a joint working group led by the Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Health. They are doing the preliminary work now. The consultation process will attract submissions from people with a range of interests, characteristics and attributes. Without anticipating the outcomes of the review and the legislation that it will recommend this Parliament make, I am sure it will lead to better legislation. It will lead to legislation that embodies "live and let live" principles, as I call them. The review of the Anti-Discrimination Act will also consult with organisations representing people with disabilities on modernising the definition of "disability" in the Act. This would include reviewing use of terminology such as "malfunction, malformation or disfigurement" to reflect the evolving understanding we have of disability.

A wide range of additional protected attributes are covered in other jurisdictions that may warrant consideration for inclusion in New South Wales. For example, subsection to domestic or family violence;

employment activity status; immigration status; irrelevant criminal records; political conviction or opinion; socio-economic status; industrial activity; trade union activity; profession, trade or occupation; lawful sexual activity; accommodation status; physical features; genetic information; and medical records. We have a long way to go. I know the member for Sydney has been at the forefront of discussions like this for many years in this place. We all look forward to working with him and everyone in this place to make a better and more respectful New South Wales.

### REGIONAL YOUTH JUSTICE PROGRAMS

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (12:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Youth Justice. Will the Minister update the House on initiatives the Government is delivering in regional New South Wales to support young people at risk of entering the youth justice system?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:11):** I thank the member for Monaro for his question. I know that he and so many others in this Chamber share an incredible passion for helping young people achieve their very best. This is a really important issue for vulnerable young people and communities in regional New South Wales. As a government we need to continue to sustain the bipartisan political will to listen to evidence and deliver solutions that work. Our approach must be underpinned by a key principle: If we do not succeed at first, try again—and, if that does not work, try again and again. I am not trying to be glib, but our approach is underpinned by making sure we have a system that never gives up on young people. We may need to try many different approaches to find out what works and what can help young people get their lives back on track.

There is not one person who grows up and says, "You know what? I want to be incarcerated." But their life circumstances may take them that way. We have to make changes and take opportunities to give them the very best chance in life. We need to have the courage to think outside the box and to make sure that we can change the trajectory of young people's lives that otherwise will not be changed. That is exactly what we are trying to do through Youth Justice NSW. For example, in regional areas Youth Justice runs a range of programs to divert young people who are at risk of entering youth justice systems and to reduce their risk of reoffending.

This is not about letting people get away with things or letting things slide; this is about making sure that there are consequences for actions. The question that we have to ask is what is our driver: Is our driver to seek revenge, or is our driver to seek a change in behaviour and circumstances and to provide a trajectory that gives somebody a chance to live their best life? I come back to the point that nobody grows up and says, "You know what? I want to go to jail. I want to be in prison." We know that. We all know a redemption story. We all love a redemption story. But we need to talk about not only the dream but also how we can make it happen.

We know that youth justice programs have to engage young people and communities in different ways. Over the weekend I had the pleasure of going to Wagga Wagga. One part of my trip involved visiting the Wollundry Dreaming Youth Hub for First Nations people where I met Uncle James, Aunty Cheryl and so many others who are working on a program to look at what to do when young people are on remand. The program is about making sure that we connect First Nations young people with different opportunities. It is about them reconnecting with culture, reconnecting with community, regaining a sense of pride and learning about who they are. They shared a story with me about two siblings. [*Extension of time*]

They told me a story about their work with two young girls, an 8-year-old and 11-year-old, who unfortunately come from a home that has a lot of family and domestic violence as well as incarceration issues. What they are doing outside the box is making sure they go back to first principles, such as getting those young girls to go to school. That does not just mean saying, "Get to school." It means driving them to school, making sure they are fed, making sure they have homework assistance and making sure someone is checking on their uniform. Wraparound services do not end by telling people what to do; they are about making sure we help them achieve their path. We can set an aspiration, but unless we build a ladder for that aspiration all we are doing is filling young people's heads with dreams. We have to go beyond dreams and make them a reality.

That program is one of many in First Nations communities, just as there are other programs in other cultural communities. I quickly mention two other things that are really impressive and inspiring. This week the Riverina Youth Justice Centre is having a Try a Trade day. The initiative is about trying to make sure that young people who are incarcerated are given an opportunity to learn a trade or skill so that, when they leave prison, we can help them get into a job, get a start, get accommodation and build confidence, because there is pride in a job. There is a great sense of achievement in getting a job.

Only this week, a young person started a plumbing career as an apprentice as a result of doing the Try a Trade program at Cobham Youth Justice Centre a little while ago. Another young man now has a scholarship at the University of New South Wales as a result of some programs. These are the things we need to keep us

motivated. We understand that there are difficulties, but it is our collective responsibility to get people on the right track, to make sure that we help them and to make sure that we build a better society. People do not make the choice to be where they are, but we can give them a better start in life. We can keep our communities safe, build a better community and make sure we stand for togetherness so that every single person can meet their best outcome and live their very best life.

### *Bills*

## **CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ASSAULTS ON RETAIL WORKERS) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

#### **Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:18):** I speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. Firstly, I thank the Attorney General for his preparation of the bill and for working closely with the Minister for Industrial Relations to put the bill together. The Labor Party, while in opposition, gave a commitment that if it took government, within the first 100 days it would legislate to protect retail workers in New South Wales from attacks, assaults, violence and verbal abuse. That is exactly what the Minns Government is doing by amending the Crimes Act 1900.

The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 is an important piece of legislation that aims to strengthen the criminal law in New South Wales to better protect retail workers from assaults and other acts of violence. That will be achieved by introducing three new offences that recognise that acts of violence against retail workers warrant higher penalties than the general assault provisions in the Crimes Act 1900. The new offences will address gaps in the existing law relating to the adequate criminalisation of, and sufficient protection from, assaults against retail workers and will mean that acts of assault and other offences of violence committed against retail workers will be subject to greater penalties.

Every day retail workers face abuse and, at times, physical assault in the workplace, which has dramatically increased during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of this bill is an important step to ensure that retail workers are supported and kept safe at work. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 will amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create new offences relating to assaults on, and other actions in relation to, retail workers, and will amend the Criminal Procedures Act 1986 to provide for certain new offences to be tried summarily before a court. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Crimes Act 1900 and inserts new division 8C into part 3, creating three new standalone offences for assaults on, and other actions in relation to, retail workers during the retail workers' duty. The offences are specified under new section 60G, which relates to assaults and other actions against retail workers.

The definition as prescribed under new section 60F provides that offences relating to retail workers will capture assaults against persons "whose duties primarily involve working in an area of a shop open to the public". Further, a "shop" is defined as "the whole or a part of a building, place, stall, structure, tent, vehicle or yard in which goods are sold, or offered or exposed for sale, by retail, including by auction". New section 60G (1) will make it an offence to assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate a retail worker in the course of the retail worker's duty, although no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker. The offence will carry a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment. New section 60G (2) will make it an offence to assault a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and, in doing so, cause actual bodily harm to the worker. The offence will have a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment.

New section 60G (3) will make it an offence if a person wounds or causes grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and is reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person. The offence will have a maximum penalty of 11 years' imprisonment. New section 60G (4) makes clear that the offences are not limited to conduct that occurs in shops. Instead, the section provides that an action is taken to be carried out in relation to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if the worker is not on duty at the time, if the action is carried out as a consequence of or in retaliation for actions undertaken by the retail worker in the course of the worker's duty.

Schedule 2 to the bill will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that certain new offences will be tried summarily in the local court, unless a specific election is made to have the matter tried on indictment before a higher court. That reflects the status of existing offences on which the new proposed offences are based and will ensure that the criminal justice system operates efficiently. The new offences are modelled on existing offences in the Crimes Act 1900 for assaults and other actions against police, law enforcement officers, frontline workers and frontline emergency workers, but they are tailored to be appropriate for retail workers. Although the structure of the offences is modelled on existing offences, the maximum penalties for the offence provisions reflect the different nature and level of risk faced specifically by retail workers. That means the maximum penalties for

the offences against retail workers under new section 60G are slightly lower than those for model existing offences but higher than those for the general assault offences that apply to all members of the community.

The higher maximum penalties reflect the higher risks that retail workers face and the need to treat assaults against these types of workers separately from other types of assault. With this law reform and policy position, the Minns Labor Government is sending a strong, clear message that deliberate acts of violence against retail workers are unacceptable. The Government believes that a stronger deterrent for assaults and acts of violence against retail workers is required. Perpetrators who engage in this type of behaviour will be subject to serious penalties. Assaults and other acts of violence on retail workers can cause immense suffering and can lead to severe injury, fear and trauma for victims, their families and the broader community. The maximum penalties reflect the seriousness with which the Minns Labor Government regards this offending behaviour.

Too many retail workers face assault and violence at work. That includes swearing, spitting, threats and physical violence. A survey conducted by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA], which is the union that protects and represents retail workers, identified a significant epidemic of abuse against retail workers. The SDA's survey received an overwhelming response. More than 85 per cent of respondents indicated that they had been subjected to verbal abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey being conducted.

The figures in the survey are truly disturbing: Some 24.35 per cent of retail workers have been subjected to verbal abuse every week; 14.49 per cent have experienced physical violence from a customer; 33.54 per cent have felt threatened; 11.62 per cent have reported incidents of abuse or violence by a customer that was sexual in nature; and 4 per cent said that customer abuse had even been directed at them online. Shockingly, more than 50 per cent of respondents said that they had received no support and that no action had been taken after they reported an incident. Sadly, these circumstances have only increased due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data collected by the McKell Institute from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, verbal abuse, threats and violence involving retail and wholesale premises have intensified by almost 80 per cent across Sydney. This recent increase is an acceleration of a 10-year trend prior to the pandemic. [*Extension of time*]

Enough is enough. No kind of abuse is acceptable, and everyone has the right to a safe work environment. The Minns Labor Government is proud to have worked in collaboration with the SDA to deliver action for its members' long-held safety concerns. I acknowledge the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, MP, for her hard work and consultation with the SDA to achieve this outcome. I also acknowledge the Attorney General, Michael Daley, MP, and the Department of Communities and Justice that also supported and assisted in this reform to the Crimes Act 1900.

Retail workers are essential to the functioning of our economy and society. Deliberate acts of violence against retail workers in the course of their duties are completely unacceptable. The Minns Labor Government is proud to be a government that provides support to retail workers. We have listened to their firsthand experiences. Acts of violence on retail workers are unacceptable and a disgrace. Those who perpetrate these offences will face stringent consequences. The Minns Labor Government is committed to protecting retail workers and providing a strong deterrent to offending behaviour, to meet community standards. That is why we have proposed these amendments to create standalone offences with higher maximum penalties for assaulting retail workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (12:30):** I contribute to the debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. As stated by the Manager of Opposition Business, the Opposition will not be opposing the bill. I am pleased that this bill is attempting to provide more safeguards for the men and women who serve our communities as retail workers. The bill serves as a step towards ensuring their safety and wellbeing, protecting them from the distressing and all too common occurrences of assault or grievous bodily harm. It is imperative that we acknowledge the vital role that retail workers play in our society, and today I wish to shed light on two particular groups that require our special attention: women and young people.

First and foremost, I acknowledge the Government's attempt to provide stronger protections for essential workers in this bill. Retail workers make up part of the backbone of our economy. They are the friendly faces who greet us during our shopping trips and the pillars of local communities, especially those who own and run their own small businesses, and they are the decades-long employees who provide continuous service to their local communities. They tirelessly contribute to the growth and prosperity of our State, and it is our duty in this place to do whatever we can to enhance their safety while they perform their roles.

My electorate office is located in a small shopping centre that includes one of Australia's large grocery stores. It has given a start to many young people's careers and provided opportunities for people to join the workforce for the very first time. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge them in this place today. It is crucial to recognise that a significant number of retail workers are women. Those women often face unique challenges and vulnerabilities in the workplace, and we must take steps to address those concerns. By supporting

the bill, we send a clear message that violence and aggression against women in any context will not be tolerated, and we reaffirm our commitment to do all that is humanly possible to create a safe environment for all women, including those who serve in the retail sector.

It is also appropriate to acknowledge that many young people work in the retail industry, taking their first steps towards financial independence and personal growth, and yet, sadly, they are faced with threats of assault or have experienced assault during their time in the retail workforce. They deserve our utmost protection while contributing to our economy. By endorsing this bill, we recognise the need to safeguard their wellbeing. The bill will ensure that they are shielded from harm and that their future prospects are not compromised by unnecessary risks or violence.

While the bill proposes penalties for assault and grievous bodily harm that are higher than those outlined in the existing Crimes Act 1900, there is an aspect that merits closer examination. In the pursuit of safeguarding our retail workers, it is essential that we do not lose sight of the need for broader protection within the retail environment. While the focus of this bill is rightly on retail workers themselves, we in this place must extend our concern to encompass the safety of customers and other individuals who find themselves in the retail setting. All individuals present within retail establishments should be afforded the same protections. That will create a level playing field and secure environment for everyone.

I acknowledge the Government's efforts in introducing this bill, but we must critically examine its provisions to determine if they go far enough. It is incumbent upon us, as representatives of our communities, to question whether the measures proposed truly afford the necessary protections to all stakeholders within the retail environment. As we endeavour to create a safe and secure space for retail workers, customers and other personnel, we must ensure that the legislation encompasses a comprehensive range of safeguards. Members would have seen videos on TikTok or YouTube from time to time highlighting the poor behaviour of individuals who have completely lost their temper and self-control in retail settings over minor, even miniscule, issues. They are colloquially known as the Karens or the Kevins of this world. Such incidents have certainly been increasing in regularity since COVID, and it is necessary that we take action to clamp down on those unacceptable behaviours.

I reiterate my support for the bill, which seeks to protect our invaluable retail workers from the scourge of assault and grievous bodily harm. However, I implore the Government to consider expanding the scope of the legislation to encompass comprehensive protections for all individuals present within a retail environment, including customers and other personnel entering these premises—delivery workers delivering stock to shops, postal workers who deliver the mail within shopping centres, and the maintenance and administrative staff of a retail complex. Our commitment to their safety should be unwavering, leaving no-one vulnerable to harm or violence in retail settings. Let us stand united in our support of retail workers, women, young people and all stakeholders who contribute to the vitality of our communities. By enacting this legislation with an expanded perspective, we will send a powerful message that violence and harm have no place in our society or towards anyone. Together, we can create a safe environment that protects the wellbeing of our retail workers and everyone who engages within this industry. I thank the House.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:36):** I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assault on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. In an ideal world, there would be no need for such a bill. However, we know that is simply not the case. In my electorate of Heathcote, a number of residents work in the retail sector. A number of retail businesses also contribute significantly to the local economy. Whilst the vast majority of the retail shops are small businesses, there are also two major shopping centres—Wollongong Central and Westfield Miranda—that are major employers of residents who live within the boundaries of the Heathcote electorate.

The statistics regarding assaults on retail workers are alarming. The McKell Institute has revealed that 85 per cent of workers report having been subjected to some form of verbal or physical abuse whilst at work. That is never acceptable. No-one should ever be made to feel unsafe in their workplace. This bill will do two things: It will ensure that retail workers feel safer whilst in the workplace and it will also act as a deterrent to potential offenders. It will ensure that offences including assaulting a retail worker, throwing items as missiles at a retail worker, or stalking, harassing and intimidating a retail worker are added to the Crimes Act. What does that mean in terms of punishment?

Those convicted of assaulting, throwing items as missiles, stalking, harassing or intimidating a retail worker in the course of the worker's duties, even if no actual bodily harm is caused, will face a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment. Those convicted of assaulting a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, causing actual bodily harm to a worker, will face a maximum six years' imprisonment. Those convicted of wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person, will face up to 11 years' imprisonment.

The maximum sentences not only ensure that offenders are adequately and appropriately punished but also act as a deterrent to other potential offenders. Make no mistake, attacks in the workplace do not only impact the workers; the trauma and injuries they suffer also impact their family and friends. I certainly sympathise and empathise with the challenges faced by retail workers. My first job was in the retail industry as an employee at Engadine Woolworths. It was a job I thoroughly enjoyed but I remember I experienced challenging customers at times. The retail industry was certainly one of the industries severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The nature of lockdowns meant that it was physically impossible for customers to visit many retail shops in person. As a result, many retail workers were laid off, be it temporarily or permanently, due to the downturn in trade.

Unfortunately, those circumstances were unavoidable as we fought to contain the outbreak of COVID-19. However, assaulting, intimidating, harassing and stalking retail workers certainly can and must cease. There is no excuse for engaging in activities intimidating retail workers, regardless of the circumstances. The bill sends a loud and clear message as to why its measures are so important. The Minns Government has clearly identified that those activities have not ceased—hence the need for the bill. Prior to the election on 25 March, NSW Labor made a commitment to provide greater safeguards for retail workers. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering on such commitments.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge every retail worker throughout the State, including in my electorate of Heathcote. They all make an incredible contribution to our State's economy and our lives in general. I have their backs and members on this side of the Chamber have their backs. The Minns Government is incredibly grateful for everything they have done and continue to do. We take workplace health and safety very seriously. I also acknowledge and commend the Attorney General for his great work in this space and for ensuring that retail workers have greater protections. Retail workers in the Heathcote electorate are grateful for the Attorney General's commitment and dedication to the issue. I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association union for its continued great work representing and protecting its members. I thank the House.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (12:42):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 and I thank all of my colleagues for their contributions so far. The bill is an important one to me and to this Government. It highlights not only that the Minns Government is already delivering on its commitment to protect retail workers within the first 100 days of forming government but also the critical importance of protecting our retail workers from violence and abuse and enabling them to be safe in their workplace. We have seen appalling examples of retail workers being assaulted on the job. The bill will ensure criminal accountability for those responsible for those assaults.

The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association's [SDA] "No One Deserves A Serve" campaign hits to the core of what we are debating today. We all have a friend, a relative, a child or a neighbour who is a retail worker. In fact, many of us in this Chamber have been retail workers. I have been and my children currently are and have been as well. I know that they have experienced some of the behaviour that is addressed in the bill. I am sure we all agree that retail workers are entitled to feel safe and free from harassment or abuse in their workplaces. When the SDA officially launched its incredible "No One Deserves A Serve" campaign, it produced a survey that showed alarming results. Some 88 per cent of respondents had experienced verbal abuse in the workplace in the previous 12 months, and almost half of those said it occurred weekly or monthly.

Some 71 per cent of respondents said the experience of customer abuse and/or violence had impacted their physical or mental health. Those statistics are confronting and that is why we are acting. It is clear that customer violence and abuse remains a serious health and safety issue for workers in the retail and fast-food industries. The situation is not acceptable and those people participating in the abuse should be held to account for their actions. It defies all common sense and decency that people who are feeling stressed in their own lives somehow think it is okay to take out their issues on a retail worker who has done nothing wrong other than come into work and do their job. Premier Minns said it perfectly:

Everyone should be treated with decency and respect while at work. There is no excuse for assaulting anyone, particularly not someone who is doing their job.

That is why the Government is moving to ensure not only that such behaviour is called out in public campaigns like the SDA's but also that those who cannot behave with basic human decency and respect towards retail workers and are abusive or violent are punishable by law.

The bill reflects the Government's commitment to support our essential workers and ensure their safety in the workplace. It sends a strong message to the community about what is expected and what behaviour is unacceptable. The SDA has shared with us an incredible and horrific story of a pregnant retail worker who was grabbed by the throat and dragged over a counter because of a refund dispute. That consumer felt they were

entitled to violently assault a staff member who was simply doing their job. The passing of the bill will send a message to the community that this abuse and behaviour stops now. It is not acceptable; it has never been acceptable. Now we are making it abundantly clear.

I thank the enormous number of retail workers who live in the Port Stephens electorate. I want them to know that our Government has their back and respects their right to turn up to work every day and to be safe. I acknowledge the tireless work of the SDA's Newcastle and Northern branch in advocating for the reforms for a long time, including branch secretary Barbara Nebart, assistant secretary David Bliss, and organisers Deb Dunning, Belinda Urquhart, Lyn Wiebe and Sue Sneesby. I also acknowledge the hard work and determination of the SDA NSW and ACT Branch, in particular secretary Bernie Smith, in pursuing these important reforms. I acknowledge the work of my colleague and good friend the Minister for Industrial Relations, Sophie Cotsis, who has played a critical role in negotiating and securing the reforms contained in the bill, as well as the Attorney General, Michael Daley, who introduced the bill to Parliament. Every worker in New South Wales deserves to feel safe at work. They deserve to go to work and be safe. Our Government is getting on with the job of making that happen. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (12:47):** I contribute to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 introduced by the Government. The Opposition supports the bill, acknowledging its potentially important impact on keeping our retail workers safe and protecting their wellbeing. The purpose of the bill is to increase the penalties for assaults against retail workers to make them similar to the protections already in place for our frontline health workers and police officers. And why should they not feel safe as well? I believe that increasing the prison terms for those offences will be a powerful deterrent and ultimately lower occurrences of this type of crime in the community.

Communities like my electorate of Oxley have an over-representation of crime. It is important that we focus on curbing issues at a local level. In one recent case in the Oxley electorate, a Kempsey retail worker faced verbal threats of violence to not just themselves but also their family at home after watching a customer steal a product. That is not okay. The bill should also help to curb intimidatory behaviour in our community. While the debate is on the penalty, I use this opportunity to also talk about the importance of our local police and the role they play in keeping our retail workers safe. Oxley just received an additional two police officers. While that is very welcome, I still believe that we, as a regional community with larger distances between our townships, are under-resourced and that there is more to do.

Imagine being a retail worker in a town like Stuarts Point and being assaulted and put in this type of situation. The police and first responders would need to drive more than 30 minutes minimum from the station or from patrol in a nearby town to arrive at the site—and that is if they are free and waiting at the station or able to respond. I understand that some of the policing issues are around workforce shortages, but how do we bring more police officers to regional areas like my community in Oxley? The bill is an important first step towards deterring crime against retail workers, but we need to take a holistic view of community safety. We need to look at how we support our Police Force to uphold the law and how we create meaningful outcomes to protect our community, especially regional communities.

As previously spoken about, the important aspect is to make a law that helps our retail workers feel safe. I acknowledge all of our retail workers throughout Oxley who provide services to locals and tourists from further afield. It is not okay to abuse our retail workers. We must do all we can to uphold the safety and wellbeing of all of our workers, including those in the retail sector. I acknowledge that the bill is a good first step in improving safety for them. However, we must also do more to improve police numbers and enforcement levels in regional communities like my electorate. I will continue to work with the current Government to improve worker safety in regional and rural New South Wales. I thank the Attorney General for his work on the bill, and I look forward to working with him and the new Government to achieve strong outcomes in this area.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:50):** Today I address a crucial issue that affects the retail workforce in Greater Sydney. I start by thanking the Attorney General for acting quickly and decisively to deliver yet another Labor Government promise through the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 to better protect retail workers. With an impressive number of around 200,000 making up the retail workforce across Greater Sydney, it is our responsibility to prioritise their safety and wellbeing. Among them, 22,100 retail workers are employed within the Blacktown city local government area and, despite the delay in local retail development, there are over 7,000 in the electorate of Riverstone. It is important to recognise that a significant proportion of those workers fall within the younger age group, with approximately 54,000 individuals aged between 15 and 24 employed across Greater Sydney.

Retail workers play a vital role in our economy and society, and it is our duty to protect them from violence and abuse as they carry out their duties. Recent research conducted by the McKell Institute has revealed a distressing statistic: An astonishing 85 per cent of retail workers have experienced abuse or assault while on the



job. This only intensified during the pandemic, with incidents of mistreatment reaching alarming levels. In response to this concerning trend, certain supermarkets and stores have taken the initiative to release public statements urging customers to treat retail staff with respect. While the pandemic highlighted some of the challenges, this is not a new concept. In fact, in my first job working in a pizza shop, it was a regular occurrence to have customers throw food around the store and threaten workers. More recently, a friend of mine spoke to me about her daughter who was working in a large retail chain during the pandemic and had a slushie thrown at her.

Unfortunately, existing laws in New South Wales do not offer specific protection for retail workers against abuse or assault. We seek to change this with the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023, which aims to introduce three new offences specifically aimed at protecting retail workers. The bill is a clear demonstration of the Government's unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of retail workers. By strengthening the current criminal law, we aim to provide better protection for retail workers against assaults and other acts of violence.

The three new offences outlined in the bill are as follows. Firstly, it will be an offence to commit an assault, throw a missile, stalk, harass or intimidate a retail worker in the course of their duty, even if no actual bodily harm is caused. This offence will carry a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment. Secondly, assaulting a retail worker in the course of their duty and causing actual bodily harm will be considered a separate offence with a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment. Lastly, wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a retail worker during their duty, whether recklessly or with disregard for potential harm to a worker or another individual, will result in a maximum penalty of 11 years' imprisonment. I note the addition of "another individual" in that final change to the legislation.

The new offences signify our firm stance against violence directed at retail workers. By enacting these measures, we send a clear message that such behaviour is totally unacceptable and will be met with severe consequences under the law. Our aim is to protect the wellbeing and safety of those who contribute significantly to our retail sector. It is important to note that the scope of the bill extends beyond incidents occurring solely within shops. It covers individuals whose primary duties involve working in the public area of a shop and encompasses actions taken against retail workers even when they are off duty, if those actions are as a consequence of or in retaliation for their actions performed in the course of their duties. The term "shop" also includes a store held in tents, cars, yard spaces—anywhere where retail activity takes place.

The bill exemplifies the Government's unwavering dedication to supporting our workers and ensuring their safety. There is no justification for assaulting anyone, especially individuals who are simply carrying out their responsibilities. Every person has the right to feel secure in their workplace, including retail workers who are vital contributors to our economy and society. They should not be subjected to violence, abuse or threats. The Government recognises the need for a stronger deterrent against assaults and acts of violence against retail workers. Deliberate acts of violence towards these workers are unacceptable, and we must take a stand to protect them. The maximum penalties associated with the proposed new offences are intended to reflect the seriousness with which the Government regards these offensive behaviours. We firmly believe that stronger penalties will serve as a deterrent and reinforce the message that assaulting retail workers will not be tolerated.

It is important to note that if a retail worker is assaulted during a large-scale public disorder, the existing general assault provisions under section 59A of the Crimes Act 1900 will continue to apply. All New South Wales citizens remain protected by the general assault provisions in the Crimes Act 1900. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that retail workers who are assaulted in the course of their duties, including when they are fulfilling their statutory obligation such as conducting an ID check, will be covered by the proposed new offences. The proposed new offences in the bill will not criminalise conduct that is not already criminalised. Instead, the new offences will address gaps in the law in relation to adequate criminalisation of, or sufficient protection from, assaults against retail workers. That means that where assaults and other offences of violence are committed against retail workers, those acts will be subject to higher penalties. It underlines how much the Government values all workers. It is an extension of the Government's focus on putting people first in New South Wales.

The bill seeks to better recognise assaults against retail workers as a problem in society, ensure that people who commit such crimes face appropriate penalties and that maximum penalties in relation to these crimes remain in line with community expectations. We are a government committed to standing up for our communities. Mental health diversions will still be available as relevant to cases. Under mental health forensic provisions, this may include diversion into treatment or to a responsible person where the matter is heard in the Local Court, a special hearing where the matter is heard on indictment and the person is found unfit to be tried, or a finding by the court of the person being not criminally responsible due to mental health impairment or cognitive impairment. It is a balance between making sure workers are protected and not penalising those who are struggling with mental health issues.

The new offences carry more severe penalties than the general assault provisions and serve as a strong deterrent against such behaviour. It is crucial to acknowledge that assaults on shop workers not only distress the workers themselves but also impact their families and the broader community, leaving lasting emotional scars. We must stand united in support for the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 and send a resounding message that the safety and wellbeing of retail workers matter and that we will not tolerate any form of violence or abuse directed at them. We must protect those who play a vital role in our society and ensure that they can perform their duties without fear. We must send a message, particularly to our young people, who are the overwhelming majority of workers in the sector, that we value them. We value the work that they perform and their contribution to our economy. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** It being 1.00 p.m., I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:32):** It gives me great pleasure to make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023, a signature piece of legislation from the Labor Government. I commend the Ministers who drafted it. The legislation enacts an election commitment made by Labor in opposition in response to representations by the peak body representing retail workers in this nation, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA]—"the shoppies" for short. I acknowledge the work of the branch that serves the Central Coast and my electorate, the Newcastle and Northern branch of the SDA, under the leadership of Barbara Nebart and David Bliss.

The bill will amend the Crimes Act to create new offences relating to assaults and other actions on retail workers. The bill will also amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide for certain new offences to be triable summarily. It is an important piece of legislation. It recognises that retail workers are faced with serious and unique threats in the workplace because their workplaces face the public. As a consequence, the risks that many of our public-facing public servants are faced with are also faced by retail workers. In this country, because of how we have organised our society, the majority of retail workers are young people. That is why they deserve our special protection. If we organise society in such a way so that most of the retail workforce is comprised of young people, the least we can do is provide them with protections. We do that through health and safety law—and I will speak a little bit about that—and through legislating, as we will do with the bill, to properly recognise that threats to retail workers, mostly young workers serving us in shops throughout New South Wales, are serious offences that deserve serious responses from the State.

The bill will amend the Crimes Act to add part 3, division 8C, which will define what a "retail worker" is. Essentially, a retail worker will be any worker who works in a shop open to the public, and a "shop" will be broadly defined to be any building, place et cetera where goods are offered, sold or exposed for sale by retail. That will cover pretty much the whole retail sector as well as the hospitality sector facing the public in this State.

Offences against retail workers are described as follows. The first offence will be an offence by a person who assaults, throws a missile at, stalks, harasses or intimidates a worker in the course of the worker's duties although no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker. That is an offence for which imprisonment of four years is the maximum penalty. In addition, it will be an offence to assault a retail worker and by such assault cause bodily harm. Six years will be the maximum penalty for that offence. It will be an offence also for a person to, by any means whatsoever, wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duties and to be reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person. For that last offence, the maximum penalty is 11 years. Importantly, the bill also covers offences committed against retail workers when retail workers are not necessarily at their workplaces, as long as the offence relates to the workplace.

The bill is important for my constituents because recently there was a situation at the Lisarow shopping centre in my electorate. Around 7.00 p.m. on 22 February, a chap entered pretty much all the retail premises that were open at that time of night. All the staff members in all of those premises were young people. The chap went behind the counter. He dropped his pants. He made himself a sandwich in the Subway shop. He offered to sell drugs to shop workers at various locations. He was not necessarily violent, but his behaviour was threatening to the extent that those workers who could shut their shops did so, but many were not able to due to the behaviour of the gentleman in their premises.

One of those shops was Liquorland. That night only one worker was in that Liquorland shop, which is right next to the Coles supermarket. There is no connection between the two, even though they are owned by the same corporation. The worker there was particularly threatened. Only after a member of the public detained the chap, who had been making threats and an aggravated nuisance of himself and the police were called—and the officers took a little time to get there—was he apprehended and dealt with by the law. I wrote to Coles about it and received what I would regard as a fairly superficial response. I have not been given assurances that workers working alone for Coles Supermarkets Australia at Lisarow have any particular protection.

I got a response from the then Minister's head of SafeWork NSW which indicated that the incidents that I had described—and I had given details of the police, the union and the people involved—were considered to be work-related violence, but SafeWork did not undertake to investigate the incidents. They provided some details that my constituents were invited to pursue themselves. I do not think that is good enough and I will be pursuing that matter further with the new Minister. It is not good enough that my constituents and their families—the young people who are my constituents as well—go to work and are not being properly protected.

The bill properly identifies that offences against retail workers and those young people in my electorate are taken seriously enough to require the full force of the law. I am looking forward to this bill being part of a community response that says that sort of behaviour towards our young people, our retail workers, is not good enough. We all need to be aware of that and change the way that we behave when we are dealing with retail workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:41):** I support the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I acknowledge and thank the Attorney General, Mr Michael Daley, his department and staff for their work on this bill. I appreciate the time that the Attorney General has taken to ensure that retail workers are protected by the crimes legislation and the time given to listening to the many workers who have been affected. I also acknowledge Premier Minns, who has been a very strong advocate for retail workers. During the pandemic, in particular, he was confronted by many retail workers who spoke to him with respect to attacks and abuse because they were on the front line. I thank the Premier and the Attorney General.

It is very important that the bill passes in our first 100 days in office to ensure that retail workers are protected. It is a legacy of Labor governments to promote and fight for the rights of workers to be safe at work. This Government is no different. We were elected on a platform to make New South Wales a safer place for workers. All workers have the right to a safe workplace but, despite this being the object of our laws, we can always do more. The Minns Government will always do more. Just like the Government is standing up for the public sector workers in this State after a decade of neglect, we are also proudly standing up for our retail workers. It is a sad reality that retail workers are frequently confronted with the prospect of being assaulted and abused at work. No-one deserves a serve, to be abused or assaulted, intimidated or stalked, when they are simply trying to earn an income to support themselves and their families.

Prior to the election, Labor committed to introducing criminal penalties for the abuse and assault of retail workers. In early March of this year, just before the election, the leader of the Labor Party, now the Premier, spoke to more than 500 retail delegates at Sydney Town Hall. The then Premier, Mr Dominic Perrottet, was invited to attend as well. The leader of the Labor Party made a commitment to support retail workers. The 500 delegates from across New South Wales, who represent thousands of retail workers from various outlets, were very enthused and excited listening to the leader of the Labor Party talk about and advocate for what he would do in government. This bill has flowed from that Sydney Town Hall meeting. Labor is committed to enacting its promise because we listen to the voices of working people. We understand that retail workers are confronted with abuse and assault at high rates.

Consumers in New South Wales all too often witness retail workers being abused when they visit our supermarkets and shops. After Victoria, New South Wales is the worst place in the country for assaults on retail workers. That is a terrible position to be in. If the bill is passed, it will be an important deterrent; it will also send a very strong message that customers who abuse, assault or intimidate retail workers will have tougher penalties imposed on them. Research from the McKell Institute commissioned by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA]—the shoppies union, which is the union for retail workers—has confirmed this. The research has found a staggering 85 per cent of retail workers have been abused or assaulted at work. During the pandemic, retail workers were seen as essential workers. They were at the front line and they stepped up to serve our community. While thousands of workers were working from home, retail workers turned up to work every day, despite the risk to their own health and to the health of their family.

In that trying time, most of our community greatly appreciated the service and dedication that our retail workers showed. It must not have been easy. Disappointingly, however, in a survey of 6,000 retail workers conducted by the SDA in 2022, 70 per cent of respondents said that abuse and violence became more frequent during COVID-19. One in five workers said they were spat at or coughed on.

**Mrs Sally Quinell:** Awful.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Yes, terrible. In the same survey, almost 8 per cent of respondents said they had been the victim of physical violence from a customer in the previous 12 months. Female workers were also more likely than male workers to have experienced verbal abuse from a customer, with 89 per cent affected compared to 83 per cent for men. This is a sad reflection on the mantra "the customer is always right" when it is taken to the

extreme. To really understand what this is all about, I will share with the House a story about retail worker Christine Smith.

I met Christine last week when the Premier, the Attorney General and I met retail workers on the front line who have been advocating for this change. SDA New South Wales Branch Secretary Bernie Smith and SDA Newcastle and Northern New South Wales Branch Secretary Barbara Nebart were present. After that meeting, I invited Christine, her colleagues and officials to come to my office, along with David Harding, Executive Director, Business NSW, where we listened as Christine shared her story. She also shared her story at the press conference with the Premier and the Attorney General. Christine was an absolute pro, but it was very difficult for many there to see a photograph of her with two black eyes. Christine was strong and courageous. She stood up and was punched while working at a check-out.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** What?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Terrible, yes. She held up a picture of her face with two swollen, black eyes and an injured jaw following the incident. She talked about the emotional and psychological toll that getting assaulted at work took on her. That is what this bill is all about: protecting workers like Christine. As members will recall, the Parliament enacted new laws, which we all supported, that increased penalties for assaulting frontline workers. Those laws targeted increasing assaults of firefighters, paramedics, hospital medical staff, NSW State Emergency Service workers, surf lifesavers and Marine Rescue NSW volunteers. Labor strongly supported those laws in opposition because we recognised that essential workers are more prone to assaults than any other types of workers.

During the pandemic we called retail workers essential. It is now time we turn those words into action and provide the protections at work that retail workers need and deserve. Currently, those who commit assaults against retail workers can be charged under the general assault provisions in the Crimes Act. The general assault offences have lower maximum penalties than equivalent offences against police, other law enforcement officers and frontline health and emergency workers. The current treatment of assault against retail workers under the Crimes Act has been insufficient to protect our retail workers. This bill seeks to create specific offences for assaults against retail workers, which will in effect extend similar protections offered to other essential workers using a graduated scale of maximum penalties. The maximum penalties for these new offences will be four, six or 11 years' imprisonment. This is increased from the general assault provisions that currently apply, which are two, five, seven or 10 years' imprisonment.

I acknowledge that other jurisdictions recently introduced protections for retail workers similar to those that this Government is now proposing. This includes South Australia, which in September last year introduced similar penalties for the assault of retail workers. I am encouraged by the wide support in the community for this bill, including support from workers represented by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, and from retail and business groups. The support amongst business for this change in law has been phenomenal. I acknowledge the Woolworths Group, which represents more than 50,000 hardworking retail team members and which has had close to 600 serious incidents across its stores in New South Wales. The group said it commends this Government for working quickly and decisively. Coles also supports the bill and acknowledges the collaboration with the Australian Retailers Association and the union. We received acknowledgements from Dan Harding of Business NSW and Paul Nicolau of Business Sydney, as well as JB Hi-Fi, McDonald's, IKEA and many other retailers such as Bunnings. We still have a long way to go, but I urge members to support this bill.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:51):** My contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 will be brief. The bill proposes to make very modest changes to the penalties for assaulting retail workers and is similar to legislation introduced by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government relating to assaults on frontline emergency services personnel. I will not oppose the bill; after all, we all have a right to live our lives in peace, and that includes frontline workers such as emergency services personnel or retail workers. But the way that this bill is drafted is an admission that penalties for assaults currently are not strong enough across the board. I am disappointed that Labor blocked attempts to look at this bill in more detail through a Legislative Council committee. The committee could have looked more broadly at penalties for assaults.

If Labor Party members believe that penalties for assaults on retail workers are too low—and I agree with them on that part—then why will they not look at penalties for assault at a more holistic level? When making legislation, we should be ensuring that the legislation is as fair and equitable in our society as it can possibly be. I reiterate that I am supporting the increase in penalties for assaults on retail workers, but it is my belief that the Parliament should also look at increasing penalties for assaults against anyone and everyone in New South Wales. An upper House committee could have examined the issue more deeply and looked at this problem from multiple angles. The committee could have sought advice from the justice system, the police, the legal system, victims' groups and other stakeholders to ensure that victims of assault, regardless of their profession, are afforded justice.

Retail workers certainly did have it tough during the COVID period. I note Minister Cotsis, in her contribution to debate, spoke about the experiences of retail workers during that time. My office is right next to a Woolworths and I saw firsthand the tough time that staff went through during that period. I know that they copped a lot of abuse, mostly verbal, but we all know that physical assaults were also too common. I note that the other States the Minister mentioned have similar provisions in their legislation, but is that not just an admission nationwide that our society has become too soft on crime? We all have a right to live our lives in peace, and that includes frontline workers. While I applaud Labor for increasing the penalties for assault, I lament the lost opportunity for real reform, real action and a more effective justice system.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:54):** I support the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. The objectives of this bill are, first, to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create new offences in relation to assaults on, and other actions in relation to, retail workers; and, second, to amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide for certain of the new offences to be triable summarily. The Attorney General spoke in this Chamber and explained the circumstances that have caused this bill to become necessary. He pointed out that staff who work in retail environments have suffered utterly unacceptable instances of abuse or even violence in their workplace, and this bill goes some way to forming a strong deterrent against that sort of abhorrent misconduct. He also made note of the important collaborative work with the Minister for Industrial Relations and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] to progress such an important bill. I acknowledge the advocacy by the SDA secretary, Mr Bernie Smith, on behalf of all retail workers.

Retail workers are vital for the ongoing operation of a large segment of our economy. They are the people we rely upon so that the essential needs of our households are readily accessible. The importance of retail workers became especially apparent during the challenging period of the global health emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact that much of our retail workforce is in public-facing roles means they often unfairly bear the brunt of disgruntled customers. This was especially evident during the pandemic. Shortages of certain household goods at retailers caused numerous incidents of violence among a general population going through a period of overwhelming uncertainty and duress. I digress for a moment to say I witnessed such incidents at a major shopping centre when there was a shortage of toilet paper. A limit was put in place and customers could take a certain number of rolls. One customer filled his trolley above the limit. When he was confronted by the retail worker, he became abusive and almost violent. Security had to be called in to take this person out of the shop. It was a difficult period during the pandemic. People became desperate and took their revenge on retail workers, who were just doing their normal job.

Regrettably, our retail workforce was frequently caught in the middle of these incidents or placed in situations of heightened risk or even actual harm, despite the circumstances being well beyond their control. It is a virtue of the era of modern communication, with near omnipresent closed-circuit television and smartphones that are capable of recording video footage, that we have abundant evidence for this bill being necessary. The bill is being introduced after the officially designated period of the global health emergency. However, it should be noted that it addresses unacceptable behaviours that unfortunately have always existed but that became especially apparent as we lived through the once-in-a-century pandemic.

The SDA, which has the important task of advocating for the benefit of retail and fast food workers, has had a long-running campaign for years—since well before the pandemic—to bring about legislation of this sort. No worker should ever have to experience the types of violence, abuse, threats and assaults that this bill seeks to deter. Such acts are unacceptable in any situation. But bolstering deterrence with this bill will go some way to protect workers carrying out their duties and ensure that they will no longer be the subject of such harm in the course of their employment and related activities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (14:59):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I support the bill. Unprovoked assault on anyone is unacceptable. Assaults on retail workers just doing their jobs, trying to make a living and provide for themselves and their families—workers and small business owners—are just not acceptable. It appals me. The fact that this bill is before the House is indicative of the fact that the community has had enough as well.

Members have often spoken about the great roles played by various frontline workers such as teachers, emergency services workers, police and health workers—and, after the pandemic, so we should. But there are other frontline workers. Retail workers and small business owners have been forgotten, yet they were critical in the midst of the pandemic. I remember a time when health workers were quite distressed about donning protective gear and not knowing what they would face in hospitals—and likewise with teachers. At the same time, we asked our shop workers to provide essential services because of course we had to eat. We had to survive. Although they were not in a hospital setting, nevertheless they were out in the community and exposed to harm.

It was not just the virus they were exposed to. As it turns out, they were exposed to the anxieties of the community. Unfortunately, that resulted in assaults. It seems to me that one result has been almost a greater

acceptance of that sort of behaviour in a retail setting. I think this legislation sends an important signal. I understand that the COVID pandemic was an extremely difficult time for everybody. We endured strange, unusual changes in our lives. The fear of infection was always present. As I said, in the retail sector not only was there the fear of infection, but workers were also dealing with customers who had restrictions placed on them. In some parts of Sydney, those restrictions were quite severe, such as in the west and south-west during the second part of the pandemic. One can only imagine the anxiety that created. Unfortunately, it spilled over into aggression, and we must call that out.

Sadly, a 2023 analysis of New South Wales crime data by the McKell Institute found that intimidation, stalking and harassment incidents at retail and wholesale premises had increased by 22 per cent since before the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2018-19 to 2020-21. The recent increase represents an acceleration of a 10-year trend that saw incidents increase by 66 per cent in 2020-21. Some 65 per cent of local government areas, including 20 of the mostly smaller, regional local government areas, experienced an increase in incidents. I represent a regional community where, sadly, such incidents definitely occurred.

Some incidents that I have been made aware of come to mind. A hardware store worker was being abused by a customer. The manager intervened and was beaten up while escorting the customer out of the store. A supermarket worker was assaulted and had death threats made against her. A security guard was hired for a week and there were no consequences for the offender. A discount department store worker was checking bags at the door. While asking to check a bag, she was headbutted by a customer. Employees now suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and have been out of work for extended periods. These are incidents from my electorate.

I give a shout-out to our retail workers and small business owners, and recognise what they have done. I also acknowledge the work of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] in advocating for retail workers. I was a member of the SDA for a number of years—too many years ago for anyone to bring to mind—and it looked after me very well in the early parts of my career. I acknowledge the role the SDA plays.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Were you a check-out chick?

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I was—in the hardware section. I thank the member for Canterbury.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** I was a check-out chick too.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Yes, you were much better looking than I was. We joke, but it is a serious issue. Tougher penalties are an important part of the solution, but they are only a part. We know that tougher penalties do not always provide the answer. In fact, education, modelling behaviour and cultural change are much more important. But I think the bill sends a signal—that is the thing. It sends a signal that we value retail workers, and it sends a signal to our society that we will not accept bad behaviour towards them. I think that is incredibly important. I congratulate the Government on introducing the bill, and of course I support the work of the SDA. I thank the House for allowing me to say a few words in support of the bill.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:05):** I contribute to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I start by saying that during 12 years in government, members opposite continually had a go at the then Labor Opposition for being supportive of the union movement in New South Wales. It is only the unions that protect workers. History has shown us this time and again. Unions have been fighting these problems for over 100 years. I congratulate the union movement as a whole, but particularly the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association and Bernie Smith on his amazing work and that of his SDA team.

Today years 11 and 12 school leaders and their teachers visited Parliament House. Some members were lucky enough to speak with them. They had just been to Government House to have a photo with the Governor, which is lovely. They came here and we also took a photograph. I had a conversation with the students, who wanted to know what we were doing next in the New South Wales Parliament—what was the next agenda item on our business paper. I explained that we would be talking about assaults on retail workers. Not 10 minutes ago, two students from Dapto High School told me that they had been assaulted, one at KFC and another at McDonald's. It made them feel worthless. They were deflated and are still dealing with the ramifications of what happened to them. Those two school students just happened to be here today while we are debating this bill. So members can imagine how widespread the problem is. We have all seen it ourselves, and those poor kids have suffered as a result.

For 12 years, members opposite did absolutely nothing about this issue. They did not lift a finger to bring a bill to this place to stop incidents in the workplace. I bet London to a brick that their children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other family members or friends have suffered in exactly the same way. Yet they tell Government members that we are the friends of the union movement. I am happy to stand in this place and say that I am a proud friend of the union movement in New South Wales and its work. That is why I am speaking in favour of

the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I thank the Attorney General for bringing this important bill to the House, and I thank the Premier for delivering on his election commitment.

The bill will deliver on the promise to make retail workers so much safer at work. No-one wants to see their kids go to their part-time job and return home in distress. As the member for Wagga Wagga said, all members know how important retail workers were during the COVID pandemic. They turned up to work every single day so we could buy essential items, go to the chemist and get vaccines. They kept the shops open so we could buy food to sustain us through difficult times. Unfortunately, during the height of the pandemic we also saw some disgusting behaviour towards retail workers who were just doing their jobs in extremely stressful circumstances. I have been in stores and seen it, as I am sure all members have.

Whether it be at Aldi in Warilla, McDonald's in Dapto—where the underpayment of wages is a whole other story—or the Shellharbour City Newsagency in the square, all retail workers deserve to be able to go to work and come home without suffering from psychological or physical harm. That is important for each and every one of us as parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. The majority of retail workers are on minimum wage and should not have to put up with customers screaming at them, threatening them with violence or throwing food at them. Under no circumstances should a retail worker be assaulted or physically harmed while they are at work. Retail workers deserve our protection. They are the people that Labor will always stand up for, and Labor has a proud history of doing just that.

Some people think that they can abuse a retail worker because an item is out of stock or because that worker is busy serving another customer. I have news for those people: This legislation will go a long way to preventing any further assaults. Nobody should have to go home from work shaking and feeling distressed because some moron—and they are morons—thinks it is appropriate to take their frustration out on frontline retail workers. Our lives are stressful enough, and being scared to go to work because of aggressive customers is just not on. If retail workers are treated poorly by one or two customers a day, they will simply not show up to work anymore because they cannot suffer more of that treatment. We cannot let that happen.

As the member for Wagga Wagga said, the bill sends a clear message to those who unfairly vent their frustrations at frontline workers for situations caused by understaffing, poor training or other issues beyond the control of retail staff. I thank Bernie Smith and the SDA for highlighting the need for this bill. The union strives to protect our often vulnerable and exploited retail workers, and its amazing advocacy on this matter makes me proud to be a trade unionist. Those opposite may scoff at this support for unions, as they always do, but many of their children start their careers in retail—perhaps while they attend university—and enjoy the benefits that the union movement has secured over the past century. Yet those opposite sat there for 12 years and did nothing.

It is unfortunate that many people who are exposed to angry and often unhinged customers are so poorly paid. The bill is the least that this Labor Government can do to show those people that it cares—and this Labor Government does care. It will not tolerate abuse or threats of harm directed towards our wonderful retail workers. The bill demonstrates to all retail workers that they are valued and that their Labor Government cares. I fully support the bill. It will make a real difference for retail workers across Shellharbour and the entire State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:12):** I speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. When a reasonable person is in a shop and there is a long queue, a technology problem or an item out of stock, they accept the situation and move on. Not everyone is reasonable, though. There are people who think that they can take their frustration out on the person on the shop floor. The person behind the till has not created the queue; they are working to clear it. The person doing fill has not made the computer system fail; they are trying to help customers the old-fashioned way. The person working on the floor is not responsible for the supply chain; they are trying to offer the customer the most appropriate product that they have. Yet there are some out there who think it is fine to raise their voice, swear or name-call when something does not go their way. Even worse, there are some who think it is okay to spit at a retail worker, to threaten physical violence or even act on that threat.

Many retail workers live in fear that they might be abused on any given working day. They have heard horror stories from their co-workers and their peers. Over 85 per cent of retail workers have been abused in their workplace. That is a shameful statistic. The COVID-19 pandemic brought out the best and worst in people. We recognised how important our retail workers are, and their valour was on full display as they continued facing thousands of customers each day and risked their health to keep bellies full, shelves stocked and medications available. But we also saw an increase in violent behaviours, with panic-buying, stock shortages, social distancing and mask rules in place.

The pandemic brought forward the need to protect retail workers from aggressive customers. It saddens me that it has taken this long to have this bill introduced. We want all workers to report any assault made against them. Whether it resulted in physical harm does not matter; abusive behaviour is unacceptable. However, of the workers who reported assaults, less than 50 per cent felt that there was any action taken to improve their working conditions or remedy their trauma. How can we encourage workers to report assaults if they do not feel that action will be taken? The bill will ensure that action is taken.

Making assaults—including stalking and harassment, even if no bodily harm is caused—an offence with a penalty of up to four years' imprisonment will incentivise retail workers to report all assault incidents. It warns everyone in New South Wales that if they think they can abuse a retail worker, if they let their frustrations get the better of them or if they cannot control their temper, they will be punished. If you physically harm a retail worker, you will be punished. If you say that you will physically harm a retail worker, you will be punished. If you do anything to intimidate a retail worker—if you harass them, swear at them or yell at them—you will be punished. This behaviour will no longer be ignored or overlooked. It is unacceptable. With a maximum penalty of 11 years' imprisonment, offenders will receive a serious punishment for a serious offence under this bill. The Newcastle branch of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] has been fighting for every worker's right to a safe workplace. I thank the branch secretary, Barbara Nebart, for being a tireless advocate for retail workers in the region and always keeping me up to date with the concerns of my constituents.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Hear, hear!

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP:** The member for Swansea knows of Barbara's hard work in our region. The branch has been running the No One Deserves A Serve campaign in our region for years, through the pandemic and through many busy Christmas periods. The campaign has gained over 2,500 supporters. The SDA has put badges on workers in local supermarkets and run ads on TV. It has done everything it can to stop assaults on retail workers. Members of the SDA have inspired me to get up and speak today. They have inspired retail workers across Newcastle to report incidents of assault, and their work inspired the Government to introduce this amending bill and crack down on retail worker abuse. I thank them for their work. The bill is a great step towards improving workplace conditions for retail workers. It sends a strong message to everyone in New South Wales that poor behaviour will not be accepted, and it sends a strong message to retail workers that this Government has their backs.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (15:17):** I speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. This Government made an election commitment to better protect retail workers from abuse and violence, and this bill delivers directly on that promise. As the pandemic showed, retail workers are essential workers. Sadly, the pandemic also showed us numerous examples of those workers being assaulted while trying to do their jobs. My thoughts go out to those critical frontline workers. My own daughters have all worked in retail. It is the first job that the children of many members in this place and parents across the State will have. I thank everyone in the retail industry for giving our kids the opportunity to earn a few bucks while they are studying or doing whatever it is they choose to do in their life. The mistreatment of retail workers is simply unacceptable. In response, the bill will introduce three new offences into the Crimes Act 1900 to provide more severe penalties for assaulting retail workers.

The offences act to protect workers, whether they are subjected to verbal abuse and harassment, physical assault or grievous bodily harm. The bill introduces a new offence, being to assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate a retail worker in the course of their duty, even if no actual bodily harm is caused. This will attract a maximum of four years' imprisonment. It will also introduce an offence to assault a retail worker in the course of their duty and cause actual bodily harm, attracting a maximum of six years' imprisonment. A third new offence, which will attract a maximum of 11 years' imprisonment, will be to wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of their duty, being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person.

Like others, and following on from the member for Newcastle, I acknowledge the work of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] Newcastle and Northern branch in advocating for stronger protections of retail workers right across our region. In particular, I acknowledge branch secretary Barbara Nebart, branch assistant secretary David Bliss and all of their team, because I know how hard they have been working, alongside the Government, to better protect workers. In the lead-up to the Christmas period the union ran the No One Deserves A Serve campaign to highlight the mistreatment of retail workers and to promote respectful interactions with them. I echo the sentiments of the Attorney General in thanking the SDA for engaging with the Government both in opposition and since being elected to government. The SDA has engaged with members to bring forward their long-held concerns and to support evidence and testimony from workers.

I know the SDA welcomes this legislative change. I can assure all workers and our friends in the union movement that the Government takes workers' rights seriously, and it will work hard to defend and enhance those



rights. Our track record proves this. Not only have we introduced this bill, but we have also put forward a 4½ per cent pay rise for public sector workers. The Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety, has already foreshadowed that the Government will bring legislation to begin the major repair job of fixing our workers compensation scheme, which was run into the ground by members opposite. I acknowledge the work of the Attorney General and the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety, in bringing the bill to the House.

Everyone deserves to feel safe at work. The bill will strengthen protections for retail workers and ensure that those who commit acts of violence against retail workers are subject to appropriate penalties. Every worker deserves to be respected. Every worker deserves to have the best conditions possible. Every worker deserves an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. The Government supports workers across New South Wales. Retail workers can have confidence that we take them seriously and we applaud them for the work they do. They are essential workers. I am delighted to commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:23):** I speak on the important Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023, which will amend crimes legislation to better protect and deliver justice for retail workers who face assault, threats and abuse in the workplace. Approximately 11 per cent of people in the Liverpool electorate are employed in the retail sector, which is the sixth highest proportion of retail workers of all electorates in New South Wales. Many of those workers are young, many are women, and many are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I highlight those factors because often those groups are less likely to feel empowered to defend themselves against poor behaviour by others and are therefore more vulnerable to various forms of abuse and its after-effects.

People from historically under-represented or marginalised groups are also less likely, for a range of reasons, to seek justice via the formal pathways available. I understand this deeply. At the age of 16, I commenced my first formal job at Woolworths Liverpool in the Westfield shopping centre. The job taught me a lot. It taught me about hard work, time management and working under pressure. It also taught me that people can behave in different ways along a spectrum. As a young worker, I observed customers verbally assaulting my colleagues. It was behaviour that sometimes escalated.

Unfortunately, a survey conducted by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] found that 85 per cent of retail employees had been subjected to verbal abuse in the previous 12 months. A whopping one in four respondents was subjected to verbal abuse every week. I understand that heightened tensions and anxiety around the global pandemic have exacerbated the situation for retail workers in the past few years. It is no excuse, but it is the sad reality for retail workers in this State. Some 70 per cent of survey respondents reported that the level of abuse and violence increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Disgustingly, more than one in five respondents said they had been coughed on or spat on during the pandemic. Let that sink in for a moment. There are people in the community who think that is an appropriate way to respond to a situation. It is unacceptable, and I am pleased that there is multi-partisan agreement in sending that message loud and clear to the broader community.

I commend the Government and the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety, for taking leadership by sending a message to all those who would perpetrate violence and abuse against retail workers. The message also goes out to any retail workers who have experienced abuse or violence from customers in their workplace, as well as to their colleagues and loved ones. The Government is sending a message that it values retail workers and stands with those workers. We have their backs. During the pandemic, we said to retail workers that they are essential and that the work they do is vital to the functioning of our society—and it is. But we must also show retail workers that we value them. The bill goes to the heart of that. It shows retail workers that we care about their safety at work and that we are drawing a line in the sand on expectations of community behaviour.

The bill shows retail workers that we will not allow them to be verbal or physical punching bags for others. It is frightening that one in three respondents to the SDA survey said that they had felt threatened by a customer one or two times in the previous 12 months, with almost 5 per cent reporting that customer abuse was directed to them online. That is why it is so important that the bill seeks to expand protections for retail workers to include stalking, harassing or intimidating a retail worker in the course of their duty, even when no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker. Unfortunately, there are many examples of retail workers who experience psychological harm from intimidation and threats perpetrated by customers.

As a 17-year-old, I often worked the evening closing shift, finishing up after 9.00 p.m. or 10.00 p.m. When I finished, the shopping centre was largely deserted and the parking lot was quiet. After an incident that made me fear for my safety, my father started escorting me home. He would arrive 15 minutes before I finished my shift to ensure that I made it home safely. But that cannot be the ultimate solution for everyone. The legal protections afforded by this amending bill, and the increase in penalties, are steps towards ensuring that our retail workers

can travel to work, do their work and return home safely, as they rightly should be able to. I echo the sentiments of members who have spoken previously in wanting to ensure that all retail workers feel safe at work. It is a basic right, and one that we all expect to enjoy.

Social media has created a platform for the general public to better appreciate and understand the lived experience of retail workers. We now see, thanks to video evidence, the shocking depths of harmful and entitled behaviour by customers. But social media is a double-edged sword. It is deeply disturbing that sometimes horrific and traumatic incidents are shared for public commentary and ridicule. There is an old adage that says, "The customer is always right." There is a fine balance between giving customers great customer service, maybe bending the rules a little bit to make sure that customers are happy, but some requests are unreasonable. Treating customers with kid gloves has led to a growing sense of entitlement and a power imbalance that is giving rise to situations such as verbal and physical abuse, particularly of female retail workers.

Unfortunately, we have seen that customers can also be wrong, nasty and dangerous. In March of this year, a 20-year-old retail worker in Darwin was fatally stabbed after denying service to a customer in the bottle shop where he worked, shortly before it was due to close. Just a few weeks before this, young Declan Lavery had been threatened with a screwdriver at work. Under the amendments proposed by this bill, the perpetrator would have faced a maximum penalty of four years in prison. I send my deepest condolences to Mr Lavery's family, his loved ones and his traumatised colleagues. I hope and pray that no family or workplace experiences such a horrific incident. I believe we should do our part to act proactively and get the balance right.

A recent survey of 1,200 members of the SDA in Queensland at the end of 2022 found that 88 per cent of respondents experienced mental health problems as a result of events in their workplaces. It is not just verbal and physical instances of harassment that are captured in the proposed amendments to the Crimes Act. Researchers at Sydney University and the Australian National University concluded that sexual harassment and abuse was rife in the retail sector, after surveying 1,160 employees and conducting in-depth interviews. More than half of the retail workers surveyed considered customer abuse to be a problem. Women are bearing the brunt of customer-perpetrated abuse and harassment.

Female employees are more likely to be on the receiving end of stalking, harassment and intimidation. Other speakers have described the extensive campaign run by the SDA and the hard work of the union's membership to raise awareness of this issue and push for change. I acknowledge their voice and their advocacy. I entered politics to make the world a better place, especially for those in my community. It is precisely legislative change like this that makes a difference. I think of the difference that it would have made for the 16-year-old me. I commend the bill to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Before I call the member for Tweed, I extend my thanks to each and every retail worker in the Wallsend electorate and to the SDA for its advocacy. It is about time we had this fantastic legislation. I call the member for Tweed.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:32):** I make a brief contribution on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. The definition in the bill of a "retail worker" is very wide. A retail worker is defined as "a person whose duties primarily involve working in an area of a shop open to the public". A "shop" is defined as:

... the whole or a part of a building, place, stall, structure, tent, vehicle or yard in which goods are sold, or offered or exposed for sale, by retail, including by auction.

That is very broad. I think of my many years in this place. We make laws within this Chamber with our best intent, but ultimately it is up to our magistrates and the judicial system to determine the laws. I can see quite a few loopholes within that definition. It may surprise members to learn that one of my first jobs was selling soft drinks on Bondi Beach, when I was about 12 or 14. I used to sell it for 20 cents a glass and I would get 5 cents a glass. I was quite happy to go home with \$15 in my pocket; I thought it was sensational. Later in my career I had the privilege of working behind the bar at the Georges River Sailing Club.

I had the privilege of knowing the local members there, the Hon. Bill Crabtree—which probably predates anyone in the Labor Party within this Chamber—and then Brian Langton in later times. I support this legislation, but I get a bit concerned around the need for protection of workers in the hospitality industry and the liquor trade. In those areas, workers run into abuse by customers affected by alcohol or illegal substances. I think there should be some protection for those workers. I note that the Hon. John Graham, the night-time economy Minister, is trying to reinvigorate the late-night hospitality trade. Part of my work experience in the late-night hospitality industry was as the entertainment manager for the Revesby Workers' Club during the 1980s—the era of Tom Jones, AC/DC, Mental As Anything.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** We drank there when you were working there.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Absolutely. I can tell you that at times it was pretty rough going. I think I was in the Local Court 30 to 40 times during the five years I worked at the Revesby Workers' Club, participating in various matters. I wish this legislation would go just a little bit further, because our hospitality workers are at the cutting edge. We are trying to improve the night-time economy of our great city, the rest of Sydney and the rest of New South Wales. It would be nice to include hospitality workers in this legislation as well, if that is at all possible. But my chief concern is about magistrates interpreting all of the conditions of the offences—step one inch outside the provisions and an offender will get off. That is a real shame. Like many, I started working in the hospitality industry the day after I turned 18. I was quite amazed back in those days by what went on and by the abuse that we copped, particularly on the way home.

The hospitality industry is quite unique. On average, around 60 per cent to 70 per cent of workers in the hospitality and entertainment industries are women. I think the bill is a step in the right direction. I heard a few contributions from the other side saying that my side was in government for 12 years and did "nothing" et cetera. That very member in this House has the right of a private member's bill—we have seen the honourable member from Northern Tablelands using that ability to his best. There is the ability for any member to do that. As I said, the bill is pretty defined. The hospitality industry is one of our great industries and we want our restaurants and other venues to prosper throughout the State. With those comments, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:37):** I speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assault on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. This bill is the Minns Labor Government keeping a promise made to the hardworking men and women who kept this State running during the pandemic lockdowns. While in opposition, we committed to giving retail workers stronger protection against assaults, threats and abuse. This bill will achieve that by expanding the laws that provide higher penalties for assaults against frontline health and emergency workers—which was well-received legislation—to cover retail workers as well.

Retail workers in the Charlestown electorate and across New South Wales were at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic. My electorate of Charlestown is home to two of the largest retail centres in the Hunter region, Westfield Kotara and Charlestown Square, and a significant number of people in my electorate work in the retail industry. The treatment of retail staff is a key concern for many of my constituents, as it should be for all of us. Retail workers are absolutely essential workers. No-one should have any doubt about that after the events of 2020 and 2021. From the start of the first lockdown until the final restrictions were lifted, supermarket workers worked hard at keeping shelves stocked so that we could keep our pantries and our bathrooms full. I think we can all remember those hectic early days of the pandemic, in March 2020, when people rushed to supermarkets to panic-buy toilet paper and pasta. It was the supermarket workers who had to deal with the misplaced anxieties of worried shoppers. We know that, far too often, that manifested as aggression towards retail workers about circumstances that were completely out of their control.

The mistreatment of retail workers during COVID was not new though. Anybody who has worked in retail has no doubt copped a serve from an unhappy customer at some time or other. I note the member for Liverpool talked about her experience working at Woolworths. But the statistics show that the situation has gotten worse in recent years. That trend accelerated during the pandemic. From December 2016 to February 2017, thousands of retail workers, both union members and non-union members, responded to an online survey conducted by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA]. The data was horrific. More than 85 per cent of respondents reported that they had been subjected to verbal abuse from a customer in the preceding 12 months, and almost a quarter reported that they were victim to verbal abuse every week. More than a third of respondents said they had felt threatened by a customer one or two times during the preceding 12 months. Over 14 per cent reported they had experienced physical violence from a customer. Nearly 12 per cent reported that the incidents of customer abuse or violence involved behaviour by a customer that was sexual in nature.

According to a more recent joint study by the Australian National University and the University of Sydney, more than half of retail workers felt increased customer abuse over the course of the pandemic, and women were more likely to be targeted than men. The study was based on a survey of more than 1,100 people working in retail, fast food or distribution. It revealed that younger workers were also more likely to be targeted. More than two-thirds of respondents under the age of 30 reported experiencing higher levels of abuse. It showed, disturbingly, a marked gender imbalance. Sixty-one per cent of female respondents to the survey noted an increase in abuse compared with 48 per cent of men. As outlined by the lead author of the study, Professor Ariadne Vromen from the Crawford School of Public Policy, retail workers kept society functioning through the pandemic and they copped abuse for it. Professor Vromen said:

Women, linguistically diverse people and young people working in retail were ... much more likely to report increased customer abuse during the pandemic, while also being much more likely to say they felt stressed enforcing customer COVID-19 safety compliance.

I take a moment to highlight the gendered nature of the issue. A 2018 SDA survey revealed the horrific treatment of fast-food workers, especially young women. Of the 1,000 fast-food workers surveyed, nearly three-quarters were women and more than 40 per cent were 17 or younger. They reported having cigarettes and hot coffee thrown at them, coping abuse over broken milkshake machines, assaults triggered by incorrect orders, death threats and threats of sexual assault. That behaviour is disgusting and completely unacceptable no matter who it comes from and who it is directed towards, but retail workers are exceptionally vulnerable. Many of those who have experienced abuse from customers felt that their perpetrators would not face any consequences.

This bill addresses that concern. It will amend the Crimes Act to introduce three specific offences for assaults against retail workers when committed in the course of the worker's duty. The bill proposes to define a retail worker as "a person whose duties primarily involve working in an area of a shop open to the public". The new offences created under new section 60G of the Crimes Act will include assaulting, throwing a missile at, stalking, harassing or intimidating a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty when no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker, which will attract a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment; assaulting a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and causing actual bodily harm to the worker, which comes with a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment; and wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty while being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person—a serious offence, with a maximum penalty of 11 years in prison.

I note that those three provisions are modelled on existing legislation, including assaults against police and other law enforcement officers, as well as frontline health and emergency services workers. The bill is about sending a loud and clear message to the community that our retail workers are not an acceptable target for abuse. I am proud to be a member of a government that is standing up for essential workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:45):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. No person should ever be subjected to violence, assault or mistreatment in their workplace. There is absolutely no place for that kind of aggression or behaviour. That said, The Greens do not support the approach in this bill. We believe very strongly that the way to deal with violence against workers, including retail workers, and workplace safety is to address the fundamental and underlying issues that put people at risk, rather than simply waving around a piece of legislation in the Chamber in an effort to look strong and tough on law and order and hoping the issues will go away.

The bill is an example of punitive lawmaking. Rather than making an evidence-based, meaningful change to address the occupational violence experienced by retail workers, it is a tick-and-flick exercise. We are simply changing the penalties. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 appears to take action, but it will have no material impact, benefit or change for retail workers on the shop floor now. It will make everyone in this place feel like they have done a good job, but the reality that retail workers face day to day at work will not change as a result. For that reason, The Greens do not support the increased penalties introduced by the Labor Government's bill. We did not support the increased penalties introduced by the former Liberal-Nationals Government for the same reason.

The bill is yet another example of an attempt to address societal problems through a law-and-order approach. The bill seeks to model the laws that provide higher penalties for assaults against frontline health and emergency services workers and extend them to retail workers. Again, we do not condone the idea of violence or any workers being subject to violence. The Government thinks passing a law that slightly increases penalties will somehow deter people who often have complex mental health, drug and alcohol or other serious trauma-related personal issues that cause them to assault retail workers or act with frustration, violence or aggression towards them. But that is not the answer.

The bill will not make retail workers any safer. It is part of a worrying trend of extending aggravated sentences and carving out specific industries of workers as being more important, or more essential, than others. It continues the previous Government's tough-on-crime and law-and-order approach and applies it to work health and safety, which we know does not work. It does not make any real changes to address the workplace conditions and safety of retail employees. We know that harsher sentences will not decrease the rates of assault or abuse or provide greater protections for retail workers. We know that many of those who engage in that kind of aggression, violent behaviour or assaults are already disproportionately marginalised people in our community who struggle with language barriers, mental health issues and social disenfranchisement.

Those people are not—shock-horror!—following the details of this debate nor, I am guessing, would they have any idea of the penalties in the Crimes Act that would allow them to even know that we have increased or doubled or changed the penalties in any way. They engage in this kind of abuse, these kinds of tirades because they, themselves, require assistance and help. They require drug and alcohol support. They require mental health support. They require a system that does not traumatise them but supports them. This piece of legislation is

purported to provide protection to retail workers, but the reason for this harm is linked to much bigger societal problems than we will solve with the Crimes Act.

The Government can do many things to ensure that retail workers—in fact, all workers—are safe at work. The bill will not give retail workers more breaks, more pay or more protections. It will not reduce the casualisation of the workforce. It will not empower them to speak up to their bosses when they do not feel safe at work. Because they are in a casual work environment, they are not rostered onto shifts if they complain to their bosses. The insecure nature of retail work creates a power imbalance. The bosses and the big corporations profit from exploiting workers within those retail spaces. I note that some of those big associations are supportive of this legislation. It is not surprising that big business stands in support of legislation that allegedly protects the rights of workers. Every employer owes a duty of care to their workers, and the duty of care to retail workers could be massively increased. But we see those corporations standing hand in hand with the Minister as he announces these changes and these reforms, looking like they are caring about the safety of their workers, and yet at the same time so much could be done in those workplaces to make workers safer.

Workplaces can be made safer by ensuring that there are safe break rooms, abuse and harassment training, and adequate supervision, and that junior staff members are not left on the floors of retail shops without senior staff members to assist them. Occupational violence policies in the workplace must be strengthened. The Greens firmly believe in workers' rights to organise and to strike to ensure safety. Robust, democratic unions that reflect the needs and the wishes of the workers they represent are absolutely critical in that. Many retail workers have insecure and irregular work. Some of the most underpaid and precarious workers in our State are women, young people, recent migrants and disabled people. It is not a surprise that those people are the ones who suffer the most violence and aggression and abuse in retail work, because they are the people who experience the most violent and aggressive assaults in society in general.

Whether those people are retail workers or not, so often they are the ones providing the most critical services to our community in highly contested and sometimes challenging spaces, which was never clearer than during the pandemic. The bill is a reaction to something that occurred during the pandemic, particularly when there were large-scale attacks on Asian Australians, on Chinese Australian community workers, and on people in retail, hospitality and other spaces. We need to recognise that part of that aggression and violence was because of the requirement to demand that people sign in with QR codes, wear masks and stand socially distanced. All of a sudden retail workers, hospitality workers and others working in frontline services were required to play some kind of policing role to manage this. Understandably, in the highly stressful, massively unknown environment of a pandemic, people were reacting unacceptably. But we cannot then say that the solution is to police our way out of it, to put more crimes in the Crimes Act, to strengthen penalties and fail to look at the underlying causes.

As the member for Tweed pointed out, this bill does not capture crimes against hospitality workers. It is important for us to think about this because in carving out exceptions, where assaults on retail workers get tougher penalties, pretty much what we are saying to the 16-year-old hospitality worker is "Actually, the assault on you is less important. It is less bad." We are saying to the food delivery driver, "Actually, that abuse you copped, that assault on you is not as bad as the assault on the person who works in the bottle shop." We are saying to the librarian or the parking inspector or the person just catching a bus or a train in our city, "The assault on you is not as bad as an assault on someone else because we value the role that this person plays in society more than what you offer to society."

We create segmentation by setting up a model that, to serve our needs, puts on a higher platform the need to protect certain types of people. That is not something The Greens can support. It is certainly not something I want to see put into our laws. We cannot support creating a hierarchy in which assaults on people who do certain types of productive capitalistic work to produce profits for certain retail outlets are more important than assaults or aggression on other people. While The Greens hope that every retail worker is safe in their workplace, we do not support the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:55):** I speak on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. Before the election, the Labor Party took a strong stance on protecting retail workers across the State. This came about because of a lot of abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic and the important value we place on our frontline workers and retail workers in their everyday work. They need to be protected. The Minns Government has acted fast, reaffirming its commitment and delivering to retail employees the safe and secure work environment they deserve. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the critical reliance of our community and economy on the important efforts of retail workers. I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA], in particular the Newcastle branch, for the work it continues to do to protect and support retail workers across our community on the Central Coast.

Retail workers kept our community running. They ensured that during the unprecedented disruption of the lockdown and pandemic period community members were able to access essential goods, especially toilet paper.

Despite this, workers faced increasing levels of abuse and assaults, while just trying to do their jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on the issue, but their experiences are not isolated to that time. In my electorate office, I have heard continuous stories from my local retail worker community, who face horrible abuse from disgruntled customers every day.

Recent research from the McKell Institute, commissioned by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, found that 85 per cent of retail workers have been abused or assaulted at work. It is beyond time that our Government stood up for those workers and looked after them as they continue to look after us. The statistics make clear that current penalties do not provide a strong enough deterrent to assaulting or harming retail workers. The bill will make it an offence to assault, throw a missile at or intimidate a retail worker in the course of the worker's day, regardless of the harm caused, punishable by a maximum of four years' imprisonment; assault a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, causing harm, punishable by a maximum of six years' imprisonment; and wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duties, punishable by a maximum of 11 years' imprisonment.

All employees deserve to be respected at work. Most importantly, all employees deserve to be safe in the workplace every day. There is never an excuse to assault anyone in our community, and we have a duty to ensure that workers can expect safety and security in their everyday work environment. I commend the work of the SDA and its delegates in supporting shoppies along the coast and beyond in New South Wales. They have a tough job as well, fighting for the rights of our workers, but it is super important and appreciated. I thank the Attorney General for his swift action to protect the retail workers in our State.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:58):** I make a short contribution in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I start by noting that my daughter, who is 18, and my son, who is 16, both work in a retail supermarket. As a father, of course I am concerned that they have a safe workplace. My daughter will come home on most days and tell us stories about her day, including savoury and unsavoury incidents she experienced. Often she will tell stories of behaviour that, although it would not fall within the bill's definition of criminal activity, would nevertheless be unsavoury, unpleasant, unacceptable or intimidatory, and most of the stuff goes unreported. Most of the stuff will not be called out or reported to police, and most of the people who practise this sort of behaviour will not face any consequences. It is something that retail workers just deal with day to day. But this legislation sends a very strong signal that that sort of behaviour is unacceptable.

I too go back to the dark days of COVID when Chinese and Asian Australians out in public, and particularly in supermarkets, were subject to abuse and intimidation. I felt it myself, going up to the local shopping centre and the supermarket. I felt the eyes on me, and it was deeply uncomfortable. But I was lucky because I was not a retail worker and I could go home. I also note that during that period an Asian Australian neighbour of mine asked me to do her shopping because she felt so intimidated. She did not want to go out because she knew the sort of abuse she would experience, the looks and stares, and the words that would be said to her. She did not want to go out, but she was not a retail worker.

I note the comments of the member for Wahroonga and the member for Newtown about the risk that this legislation might open the floodgates and create a particular class of worker that is more worthy of protection than another class of worker. I tend to think this legislation strikes the right balance because it is based on three things that are quite distinctive about retail workers. The first is that they are often constituted by very vulnerable groups in our community, largely young people, often women and often migrants. It is often their first job and they are less experienced in dealing with the general public and less able to defend themselves or their rights. In a nutshell, they have less power.

The second thing the bill reflects that is distinctive about retail workers is the nature of their exposure to risk. Retail workers, because of the nature of retail, are exposed every day to large numbers of the general public for extended periods—lots of people—with very little control over or vetting of who comes in. The nature of the work involves service, interaction and serving those members of the public, and if somebody is minded to be abusive, intimidatory or just downright unpleasant they have the perfect opportunity to be so.

The third thing is the importance of the work. Retail workers play a valuable role. When we were all safe in our homes, retail workers were out there serving us, providing essential goods and services to the Australian public. For those reasons, I think it is reasonable for this legislation to support retail workers and promote their safety, in particular. I commend the Minns Labor Government for fulfilling this election promise and I commend the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association for its tireless advocacy in this space. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (16:02):** I speak briefly in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I feel somewhat torn as I speak to this bill. On the one hand, I am glad that our Labor Government is delivering on another key election commitment to give retail workers

greater protection against assaults from the public when performing their duties—in effect, to keep them safe at work. On the other hand, I feel disappointed that such a bill is needed. There are professions where workers have historically been subject to violence at work. I call out bank employees and anyone who is in a cash-handling role; police and other law enforcement officers, including council rangers; frontline health workers; frontline emergency workers—and the list goes on. We all want to see our loved ones return from work safely.

Retail is certainly at the heart of many communities, and so it is in Penrith. Sadly, the abuse of retail workers by aggressive customers certainly came to the fore during COVID, and Penrith was not immune. Who will ever forget the abhorrent behaviour we witnessed on television every night, with people fighting over rolls of toilet paper? Staff had to insert themselves into physical altercations, risking their own safety. Unfortunately, this violence and aggression is increasing and I fear it is now considered as "just part of the job". This should never be the case. Everyone has the right to be safe at work.

I reject earlier comments made in this place that the bill was introduced in response to lobby groups. Recent research into dysfunctional customer behaviour predictably shows that retail employees experience lower job satisfaction, lower organisational commitment, higher absenteeism, and reduced morale and motivation as a result of aggressive behaviour. It is not just a matter of dealing with it; it is an economic imperative for employers as well. Workplace violence and aggression can have significant short- and long-term impacts on a worker's health. It can contribute to physical injury and illness, as well as cause psychological harm to the person it is directed at and anyone witnessing the behaviour. It is a huge issue across the State and requires government intervention. Incidents of physical assault, such as biting, scratching, hitting, kicking, pushing, grabbing, throwing objects and intentionally coughing or spitting on someone, are abhorrent and not okay.

The fact that shops have had to erect signs calling for customers to treat their retail workers with respect is quite shameful. Everyone should be treated respectfully in their place of work. Proposed new section 60F defines a "retail worker" as a person "whose duties primarily involve working in an area of a shop open to the public". A "shop" is defined as "the whole or a part of a building, place, stall, structure, tent, vehicle or yard in which goods are sold, or offered or exposed for sale, by retail, including by auction". The Government has consulted widely on the bill and it is heartening that it has bipartisan support. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:06):** I express my support for the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 introduced by the New South Wales Government. Retail workers play a crucial role in the functioning of the New South Wales economy and society. However, they have been consistently exposed to the risk of assaults, threats and abuse. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that adequate protection is provided to retail workers in the course of their work. The amendments that the bill proposes to the Crimes Act 1900 and to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 effectively achieve that objective.

When I think about the risks that retail workers are exposed to, I am reminded of the lockdowns imposed in New South Wales during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am also reminded of the stories I heard about the abuse and harassment of retail workers. We all remember that there were severe shortages of essential items, such as toilet paper, and QR codes were mandatory for checking into any premises. Communities were under immense pressure to navigate through these challenging circumstances. While our law enforcement, emergency and health workers were vital in ensuring that New South Wales was protected, who was at the forefront, serving our communities and ensuring that our economy and society continued to function? It was retail workers, of course.

In my electorate of Cabramatta numerous accounts emerged of retail workers enduring abuse, stalking, intimidation and harassment. They bore the brunt of the frustration and anger experienced by our communities. While I do not blame people for the pressures they faced during lockdown, it is undeniable that retail workers were subjected to unjustified abuse. Therefore, this bill is important as it ensures that retail workers are properly protected and recognises symbolically the importance of their work to our economy and society. While we are now beyond the days of COVID-19 lockdowns, retail workers continue to face the risk of assaults, threats and abuse. This underlines the critical importance of the bill in safeguarding their wellbeing.

The framework of the bill is modelled on the existing offence structure for assaults against law enforcement, health and emergency workers. However, it is worth noting that the offence provisions introduced through these amendments to the Crimes Act 1900 are appropriated to accurately reflect the level of risk faced by retail workers. The penalties that are proposed to be imposed through the bill are less severe than those pertaining to police, health and emergency workers. This demonstrates fairness and highlights the thoughtful consideration given to the bill. The bill is comprehensive and appropriately addresses the wide range of risks faced by retail workers. New section 60G encompasses three new offences, ranging from assaults, stalking, harassment or intimidation of a retail worker that does not result in bodily harm to causing wounds or grievous bodily harm to a retail worker, with penalties ranging from four years to 11 years of imprisonment.

Ultimately, the amendments made to the Crimes Act 1900 through the bill are important in ensuring that retail workers are provided with the appropriate protection they need to continue their work in supporting the functioning of the economy and broader society. Under the leadership of our Premier and the Attorney General, I am positive that the Government will consistently monitor the impacts of these reforms to ensure that the changes are fair and equitable. This includes ensuring that the offences protect retail workers without disproportionately impacting disadvantaged individuals or communities. The bill is just another example of the Government getting on with the job and supporting all people across our State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:11):** I am delighted to make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. I acknowledge the presence of the industrial relations Minister in the House. I commend her for her hard work and long-held passion not only as a former shadow Minister, not only as a member of Parliament and not only as a Minister but as someone who has always supported workers for a long time, even in a union capacity. That is truly admirable. The bill introduces three offences into the Crimes Act 1900 via two schedules. I will go into more detail on those later.

First, the bill will make it an offence to assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, even if no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker, with a maximum of four years' imprisonment. The second addition will make it an offence to assault a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and cause actual bodily harm to the worker, with a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment. Finally, it will become an offence to wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty while being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person, with a maximum penalty of 11 years' imprisonment.

Much of this work came out of research from the McKell Institute that was commissioned by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, otherwise known as the SDA, which found that a staggering 85 per cent of retail workers have been abused or assaulted at work. That was on particular display during the pandemic. Many retail and hospitality workers are young people working at Woolworths, Coles and various other places. My son worked at Woolworths at the time and used to work at McDonald's—he still does but to a lesser degree. I hear stories firsthand as to what workers confront. Sadly and shockingly, many of those workers in Woolies, Coles, McDonald's and elsewhere tend to be young people. They are someone's children—like mine—or someone's grandchildren or someone's friend's children. I say "children" but generally speaking they are 15 to 18 years old. Even so, whilst they are not children by definition, they certainly are our children. They are young adults. They are capable young men and women. The thought that a child is going to a workplace that is not safe and secure is incomprehensible for any parent or carer. That is why I am delighted to speak in support of the bill.

Frankly, prior to this debate and the public commentary around it, I thought these laws already existed. We would not have the bill but for our union movement and the relevant shadow Ministers of the then Labor Opposition. I acknowledge the work of our Attorney General, as well as our Premier. They were very much a part of getting this together and making the commitment to have a bill before the House within 100 days of the Labor Government being elected. Thankfully, we did it. Legislative changes like this provide protection for people who need it most, and it is particularly needed for people at work.

The Government says that people should be able to come home from work as safe as they were when they left home. It is not an entitlement or a luxury but a right. Getting home safely, as sure as they did getting to work, is a right that every worker should have. When their child goes to work, any parent, carer, grandparent, aunt or uncle probably does not relax until they get home. I also acknowledge some of the public commentary around the bill and the importance of it. As I mentioned, research from the McKell Institute found that 85 per cent of retail workers have been abused or assaulted. That was taken very seriously by Labor when in opposition, which is why the Premier made the commitment to change things. That is precisely what we are doing.

Theo Foukkare, CEO of the Australian Association of Convenience Stores, said he "congratulates the Government on the introduction of the bill to criminalise abuse against retail staff". Mr Foukkare went further, saying he has been working with all States and Territories over the past two years as part of their crime committees, highlighting the significant increase in abuse against retail staff, which accelerated during COVID and has remained. Sadly, it has remained, as can be seen from the findings of the Australian Association of Convenience Stores. The CEO goes further and states:

Our retail members employ over 80,000 frontline staff who serve 3.5 million customers every day, and while the vast majority of customers are friendly and well-behaved, the challenges that our frontline staff have had to deal with while they are simply doing their job is unacceptable.

National Retail Association CEO Greg Griffiths echoed the association's remarks. He welcomed the announcement that the bill was being introduced into the Parliament to curb customer aggression and abuse against retail workers. The CEO notes:



In South Australia, similar legislation has already been introduced, and we've called on the State and Territory Governments to enact legislation and protect retail workers.

That is precisely what we are doing today. Woolworths Group CEO Brad Banducci also welcomed the bill, describing it as a significant day for the 50,000-plus Woolworths retail team members across New South Wales. That public commentary puts into context the situation that has existed for these workers. The Government understands that it is grossly and totally unacceptable. Some members in this place might crow sanctimoniously to be friends to the worker and all that kind of fluff and rubbish, but it is never backed up. The bill is the kind of thing that backs it up. It is changes to legislation like this that back up our workers and keep them safe at work. It is legislation like this that only a Labor government will introduce. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:19):** I join in debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. It is in the public interest to ensure that New South Wales law appropriately criminalises assaults against retail workers, who are essential to the functioning of our economy and society, and that maximum penalties for such acts of violence committed against those workers reflect community expectations. The bill is an important amendment that is in the public interest, ensuring that New South Wales law appropriately criminalises assaults against retail workers—the very workers who are essential to the functioning of a key employment sector. Parramatta is an important CBD, contributing significantly to the success of the New South Wales economy. The retail sector in this CBD is critically important, a major generator of jobs.

In the Parramatta electorate and right across New South Wales, everyone, including retail workers, has the right to feel safe at work. This amending bill shows that the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that retail workers are better protected against assaults, threats and abuse. Nineteen per cent of residents in the Parramatta electorate are employed in the retail sector. Those employees are largely conducting face-to-face transactions in their everyday work where they are at risk of acts of abuse and violence in the course of their duties, which is unacceptable. Such offending is distressing for those workers, their families and the broader New South Wales community.

According to a 2017 study by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA], 85 per cent of respondents have been subjected to verbal abuse by a customer in the past 12 months. A quarter of respondents were subjected to verbal abuse every week, 14.5 per cent experienced physical violence from a customer, while 33.5 per cent of respondents said they felt threatened by a customer at least once in the previous 12 months. Furthermore, 11.6 per cent of respondents reported sexual abuse or violence in the previous 12 months at work and 4 per cent reported customer abuse directed to them online. The most telling statistic of all is that 51 per cent said no action was taken after they reported the incident.

When offences for assaults against frontline health and frontline emergency workers were introduced into Parliament last year, New South Wales Labor noted it would seek similar offences to apply to retail workers. This bill, which will introduce new offences for assaults on retail workers, does not undermine the Sentencing Council's review in any way. Instead, it implements the New South Wales Government's election commitment and provides greater and much-needed protections for retail workers. Twenty-four per cent of residents living in the Parramatta electorate were born overseas and 23 per cent do not use English at home. In that context, when you consider that members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities are disproportionately employed in the retail sector, then those figures bring home just how significant the impact of this bill is to the people of Parramatta.

In addition to that, retail businesses are the largest employers of young people. In fact, a quarter of the youth workforce in Australia works in retail, including 422,000 team members aged under 25. There are no surprises there. In Parramatta the retail sector provides much-needed jobs for young people. The 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics data tells us that close to 11 per cent of residents in the Parramatta electorate are aged between 15 and 24. A high proportion of those youth are retail workers. As those young men and women step into the workforce, they are enthusiastic to be working their first job, earning their first income and gaining a level of independence. But, sadly, too many are subjected to appalling and shocking behaviour directed at them and at fellow retail workers. Recently I spoke with a young retail worker in our electorate who experienced abuse at work. He and his colleagues were shouted at and spat at by a customer who was disappointed about the service they had received. At the time, the young man was only implementing the store policy as set out by his manager. Unfortunately, as a frontline worker, he copped the serve.

Abuse of retail workers has strong consequences for mental health and personal development at work. With so many of our youth starting their working lives in the retail sector, it is so important the abuse of retail workers is addressed so that young workers' personal development, along with their physical and mental health, is protected. I thank the SDA for its advocacy and campaigning. The No One Deserves A Serve campaign highlights its continuing dedication to the cause of retail workers and the continuing importance of unions' advocacy to support workers. This legislation is evidence of the importance of this issue to this Government. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:25):** I too join in debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. At the outset I say that it saddens me somewhat that we have to even contemplate, let alone introduce, this legislation. My very first job was in a hamburger place at Westfield Warrawong, where I was half the time at the counter and half the time in the back. It was a very different environment in terms of the retail activity and the interaction between people at the time. Recently my niece started her first job. She is a 15-year-old at a large fast-food franchise. Obviously, it tends to be that the younger female workers do the work at the counter. Some of the behaviour we have seen on news reports, social media and just reported on generally over the past couple of years particularly indicates that people seem to have become unreasonably angry with each other. They are ridiculously angry at people who are just doing their jobs, for no comprehensible reason.

I can understand that when the order is wrong or the service is a bit slow people might be a bit annoyed, but for that to manifest in verbal or physical abuse is somewhat incomprehensible to me. The fact is that my niece and so many other young people, but also so many other people, work professionally in retail. We must remember that working in retail is not just a part-time job while people are at school or university in order to get them through. Working in retail is very good and stable employment for so many people. As the member for Parramatta pointed out, one in five workers in her electorate is employed in retail. There are people who make lifelong careers in retail, as they should. There is nothing wrong with the industry; it is perfectly good. We all like to go out and do our bit through retail therapy and stimulate the economy. But it seems almost incomprehensible to me that someone might get so angry with a perceived slight or perceived lack of service, or someone might just be having a bad day, that they take it out on my 15-year-old niece at the counter of a large fast-food franchise restaurant.

This is really highlighted through the SDA's No One Deserves A Serve campaign. Again, the fact that a union had to go to that length to tell adults to behave is quite ridiculous. That is what we are really doing here. We have reached the point where so many adults simply cannot behave like normal people and we have now had to give retail workers additional protection. I really wish that we did not have to bring this bill to the House. I really wish that cooler behaviour and common sense can prevail, but unfortunately we have found ourselves in this situation. I absolutely supported the commitment of the Premier and the incoming Government during the election campaign to give greater protection to retail workers. At the time, in addition to being the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, I was the shadow Minister for Police and the shadow Minister for Counter Terrorism, so I was involved in the work that led to this bill. I still struggle with the fact that we need to do it, but I was 100 per cent behind doing it because we need to. I think the House has heard that time and again as we have gone through the bill.

The bill amends the Crimes Act to insert new division 8C into part 3. The new division will introduce specific offences and associated definitions for assaults against retail workers when committed in the course of a worker's duty. The definition of a retail worker is set out as "a person whose duties primarily involve working in an area of a shop open to the public", whereas a shop is considered "the whole or part of a building, place, stall, structure, tent, vehicle or yard in which goods are sold, or offered or exposed for sale, by retail, including by auction". The bill introduces three offences to the Crimes Act: firstly, assaulting, throwing a missile at, stalking, harassing or intimidating a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty, where no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker; secondly, assaulting a retail worker in the course of a retail worker's duty and causing actual bodily harm to the worker; and, thirdly, wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty while being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person.

Assaults against workers in a number of other occupations have been dealt with in a similar manner in the Crimes Act. Offences for assaulting frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers were introduced in 2022 for similar reasons. For some bizarre reason, some of our frontline health workers and emergency workers were being assaulted while just doing their jobs. Workers who were being reached out to for help were then getting belted and assaulted in the process of helping. The offences against those workers were introduced to recognise the critical work frontline health and emergency workers do in protecting our community and the risks they bear in performing those roles. Naturally, the maximum penalties for those workers are higher than those proposed in the bill for assaults on retail workers. The new offences introduced in the bill are modelled on the existing offences but have been tailored to reflect the role and the risk exposure of retail workers. Consequently, the maximum penalties for the new offences carry one year less imprisonment than the equivalent offences of assault against frontline health and emergency service workers. There is a sensible delineation between the categories.

Some members have argued that we should not stop here—that we should continue to go further. But I do not think there is a need to continue further at the moment. I encourage everyone in this place to show support for retail workers. Basically, members should tell those people who do not quite understand that they have to behave like adults when they are out and about and going about their business that this bill is a reminder to them that we should all be behaving like adults. As I said, it disappoints me that the Government needs to bring this bill before the House. I am disappointed by the cause for and the reason behind the bill, but I am 100 per cent behind the bill.

I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association for its advocacy for retail workers. It has long stood up for the rights of men and women in the retail sector and supported them. This is an extension of that support. The advocacy of the SDA has led directly to this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:33):** I contribute to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023, which I address as a matter of utmost importance. The bill is a crucial step towards protecting the dedicated individuals who serve our communities in retail establishments. The bill aims to address the alarming rise in assaults on retail workers, providing workers with the necessary legal safeguards and ensuring their safety while they carry out their duties. It will amend the Crimes Act to insert a new division 8C into part 3. New division 8C will introduce specific offences, and associated definitions, for assaults against retail workers when committed during the worker's day.

Retail workers are the backbone of our economy—the friendly faces we encounter daily in our neighbourhood stores. They are the ones who got us through the hard days of COVID. They work in supermarkets and shopping centres. They work tirelessly, often for long hours and with little recognition, to meet the demands of customers and provide us with essential goods and services. However, these unsung heroes face an increasing risk of verbal and physical abuse, harassment and assault while on the job. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 seeks to send a clear message that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. By amending existing legislation, the bill introduces specific offences that target those who assault or threaten retail workers in the course of their duties. It recognises the unique vulnerabilities faced by these workers and addresses the urgent need for protection and deterrence.

One of the key provisions of the bill is the creation of an offence for assaulting a retail worker. That offence acknowledges the physical harm caused to these individuals—whether it be through acts of violence, spitting, or any other form of physical aggression. By providing a specific charge for assaulting a retail worker, the law will send a strong message that those actions carry severe consequences and will not go unpunished. Furthermore, the bill introduces harsher penalties for those found guilty of assaulting retail workers. By increasing the maximum penalties, it aims to reflect the seriousness of the crimes and act as a deterrent to potential offenders. It is crucial that we send a clear signal that our society values the safety and wellbeing of those who serve us, and that any assault on a retail worker will be met with the full force of the law. The offence structure is modelled on the offence structure for assaults against police, other law enforcement officers, frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers. However, the maximum penalties for the retail worker offence provisions are slightly lower to reflect the different nature of the risks faced by retail workers.

Additionally, the bill recognises the psychological toll that verbal abuse and threats can have on retail workers. In my electorate, over the summer holidays and school holidays, many young people work in retail outlets while additional tourists are in the area. I can inform the House from the experience of my children who work in the local IGA, that the verbal abuse they suffer over those periods is devastating to them. Imagine if there could be a sign in the shop reading, "Verbal abuse is against the law." It would be a deterrence. In my house we put strategies in place to help our 16-year-old daughter, after she came off work at the local IGA, to deal with the abuse that she coped on that day. We would sit down at the end of the day and say, "Let's talk about your worst abuse of the day." Then we would joke about it to help her get through it. It becomes so emotionally overwhelming, and it is not right. We need to recognise that the psychological toll on any retail worker, but especially on young retail workers, is creating a big problem.

The bill creates an offence for using offensive language or making threats towards a retail worker, acknowledging the harm caused by those actions. By criminalising such behaviour, we provide retail workers with the reassurance that their mental wellbeing matters and that they have the right to a safe and respectful work environment. In conclusion, the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023 is a vital piece of legislation that addresses the increasing violence and abuse faced by retail workers in our communities. It sends a strong message that we will not tolerate assaults on those who selflessly serve us. By providing specific offences, harsher penalties and recognition of the psychological harm caused by abuse, the bill seeks to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of retail workers. I implore all members to support the bill wholeheartedly. Let us stand united in our commitment to protect those who work tirelessly to make our lives easier and contribute to the prosperity of our society. The time for action is now. The passing of this bill will be a significant step towards a safer and more respectful environment for our retail workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (16:39):** I speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. The bill aims to strengthen the criminal law to better protect retail workers from assaults and other acts of violence. It does this by introducing three new offences that recognise that acts of violence against retail workers merit express and distinct recognition and higher penalties than the general assault provisions in the Crimes Act 1900. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Crimes Act to insert new divisions that create three new standalone criminal offences for assaults on, and other actions in relation to, retail workers.

New section 60G (1) will make it an offence to assault, throw a missile at, stalk, harass or intimidate a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty although no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker. That offence will have a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment. New section 60G (2) will make it an offence to assault a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and by doing so cause actual bodily harm to the worker. That offence will have a maximum penalty of six years' imprisonment. New section 60G (3) will make it an offence if a person wounds or causes grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and is reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person. That offence will have a maximum penalty of 11 years' imprisonment. Those offences are modelled on the existing offences in the Crimes Act to protect police, law enforcement officers, frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers.

It is unfortunate that the Government has to introduce this legislation to protect some of our most vulnerable people, particularly young people who work in the retail industry. Women are a major contributor to the retail industry. There is a large number of women from diverse backgrounds in my electorate, and they are often the first people on the receiving end of harassment, assault and violence. The Attorney General introduced legislation today regarding religious vilification. Muslim women often stand out in the retail space. Women of Chinese heritage are also often on the receiving end. It is completely unacceptable. Some people have the idea that they can enter a premises and abuse or not show respect to a person whom they see as "other" or not their equal.

We are at a strange point in the modern era. I am old enough, and I am sure the Deputy Speaker is old enough, to remember the days when we were taught to type on a manual typewriter because we were told we would not get electric typewriters in the workplace. I am sure Hansard will appreciate how difficult that was back in the day. Technology has changed how we react to each other. Every member in this Chamber understands that there are keyboard warriors who go on Facebook and social media to abuse people. MPs are used to it, but young retail workers or women working at the front desk of a chemist late at night might not be. There are no boundaries that people will not overstep to abuse and harass people.

For example, there are young girls who stop people from shoplifting in the store they work in. Those people then wait outside to attack the worker, which is why the legislation includes people being harassed outside their store. During COVID shopkeepers in my electorate asked people to wear masks and then became victims of violence. They had to put up plastic barriers to protect themselves because people refused point-blank to do what the law at the time required of them. It was a difficult time that heightened people's feelings. Those feelings are still raw in Western Sydney. People still carry the monkey on their back that was the COVID lockdowns, but that is no excuse for taking it out on a 15-year-old girl working in a shop. It is no excuse to take it out on women who are working late at night and trying to look after you. It applies to men too, but it is often women who are on the receiving end of this type of behaviour.

The bill allows for the defence of mental illness, which is a common and important defence within the Crimes Act. Certain behaviours are sometimes the result of mental health problems. Retail workers are often good at handling older people but dementia and Alzheimer's, in particular, cause behavioural changes. Some of the most significant behaviours of dementia and Alzheimer's include aggression and overreacting. People with those diseases sometimes scream, shout and get disoriented quickly. It is hard to tell whether someone has dementia, but those important defences remain within the bill and within the Crimes Act. Every bill is about balance. The Government wants to protect people who are providing a vital service, and it realised during the COVID pandemic that retail workers provide one of the most vital services. The Government wants to ensure that people who can and should behave themselves do so and that there are protections for people with mental health issues. Of course, dementia is also a physical issue, but that is included as a defence in the bill.

I congratulate the Minister on introducing this legislation. It will provide surety to those people who work at a McDonald's drive-through at 3.00 a.m. and have to deal with some of the worst behaviours—particularly from young men. I am not sure whether the bill covers nudie runs. Men might find that amusing, but I am not sure that 15-year-old girls are so impressed. I am sure the Attorney General will clear it up for us. I congratulate the unions, the Government and everyone else who has participated in this process. Every worker should walk out the door feeling they will be safe in their workplace, and this legislation is another piece of the puzzle that makes sure they will be.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:46):** I also make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023. Many members have stood here in recent times and spoken about the importance of the long overdue recognition of workers' rights, whether they are teachers, cleaners, retail workers or paramedics. It is worth mentioning, although it does not need to be said, that the Minns Labor Government is making that a priority. As we know, the purpose of the bill is to amend the Crimes Act 1900 to introduce dedicated offences for assaults against retail workers with higher maximum penalties than general assault offences. I look forward to sharing this with retail workers in the Blue Mountains and their families and friends.

By way of background, during the March 2023 State election the now Government, when in opposition, committed to giving retail workers greater protection against assaults, threats and abuse by extending to them the laws that provide higher penalties for assaults against frontline health and emergency workers. In layperson's terms, the bill will amend the Crimes Act to introduce specific offences and associated definitions for assaults against retail workers when committed in the course of the worker's duty. We have already heard in this place details of those offences.

Again, for the record and the benefit of my community, the offences are assaulting, throwing a missile at, stalking, harassing or intimidating a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty when no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker—a maximum penalty of imprisonment for four years; assaulting a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty and causing actual bodily harm to the worker—a maximum penalty of imprisonment for six years; and wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a retail worker in the course of the worker's duty while being reckless—a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 11 years. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to communicate this through a variety of means within our communities, the message being that all workers have the right to go to work, to serve customers and to be treated with dignity and respect.

I listened to the contribution of the member for Auburn and note that retail workers are often young people—young women in particular. Through COVID they had to bear the brunt of people's frustration and anger. The bill acknowledges that that behaviour is absolutely unacceptable. I note that the offence structure is modelled on the offence structure for assaults against police, other law enforcement officers, frontline health workers and frontline emergency workers. I believe that many who work in the retail sector will feel a sense of dignity from being included in that cohort.

I take a moment to acknowledge all of the retail workers throughout the Blue Mountains. I also recognise the union campaign No One Deserves A Serve. Over 6,000 responses from workers about their experiences with customer violence and abuse were collected through that campaign. The statistics are very sobering. During COVID my office heard many examples that fed into those statistics. The campaign revealed that 88 per cent of respondents had experienced verbal abuse in the previous 12 months. Almost half of the respondents who experienced that verbal abuse said it occurred weekly or monthly. As we have heard from other members in this place, female workers were more likely to have experienced verbal abuse from a customer than male workers. Almost all respondents said that they had been the victim of some sort of abuse from a customer.

Over 10 per cent of respondents said they had experienced incidents of customer abuse that were sexual in nature. It is an ugly truth, and it is important to make that point during debate on this bill. Further, 70 per cent of respondents said that abuse and violence were far more frequent during COVID, and one-fifth of respondents said they had been coughed on or spat at during COVID. My office heard anecdotes of incidents like this from distressed callers throughout the COVID period. When we think about assaults, threats, intimidation and violence, we must note that the impacts last for many days, weeks and months afterwards. I am not surprised to learn that more than 70 per cent of respondents said that the experience had impacted their mental health. Previous speakers have provided quotes from retail workers, detailing their experiences. I add to those a quote from a young female retail worker, who said, "Once, when I was pregnant, I was grabbed by the throat and dragged over the counter because we don't give refunds on certain products." I acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety, and the Attorney General in the Chamber. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:54):** In reply: I thank all members who have contributed to debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Retail Workers) Bill 2023, specifically, the members for the electorates of Wahroonga, Prospect, Badgerys Creek, Heathcote, Port Stephens, Oxley, Riverstone, The Entrance, Canterbury, Coffs Harbour, Mount Druitt, Wagga Wagga, Shellharbour, Newcastle, Swansea, Liverpool, Tweed, Charlestown, Newtown, Gosford, Strathfield, Penrith, Cabramatta, Campbelltown, Parramatta, Wollongong, South Coast, Blue Mountains and Auburn. I thank members for their support of the bill and would like to briefly address some of the matters raised during debate.

The member for Wahroonga suggested that the introduction of specific protections for retail workers ignores the fact that there are other types of workers who are also essential to our economy. He also implied that the New South Wales Government is strengthening protections for retail workers because those workers have a stronger lobby group behind them. The New South Wales Government recognises and values the contribution all workers make to our community and our economy and rejects any suggestion that the Government favours one category of worker over another.

As I stated in my second reading speech, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, and in particular the SDA NSW Secretary, Bernie Smith, and the SDA Newcastle and Northern NSW Branch Secretary, Barbara Nebart, have long advocated for increased protections for retail workers. As part of that, the SDA provided compelling information to the New South Wales Government in support of increased protections. The

New South Wales Government has also heard firsthand accounts from retail workers across New South Wales who have suffered abuse and violence in their workplaces. This is not something that was limited to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the now Government, when in opposition, committed to strengthening protections for retail workers as part of its March 2023 election promises. The New South Wales Government will consider strengthening protections for other categories of workers if requested.

The member for Wahroonga also noted that some of the new offences are being included in the Criminal Procedure Act, which means they will be tried summarily in the Local Court with a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment. That is consistent with the comparable offences for assaults against frontline health and emergency workers introduced by the former Government last year. The member for Badgerys Creek has suggested the New South Wales Government consider expanding the new offences to all persons who experience violence in a retail context, such as customers. The member for Tweed suggested the offences be expanded to capture hospitality workers. I appreciate both members' advocacy about the protection of other workers and people. However, at this stage the Government considers that it is retail workers who face a higher risk of assault and therefore require increased protections.

The member for Newtown does not believe the bill will act as a deterrent and says that it may have a disproportionate impact on persons who have complex mental health or other similar issues. The New South Wales Government strongly disagrees that the bill will not act as a deterrent. The maximum penalties in the bill reflect the seriousness with which the New South Wales Government regards this offending behaviour. It ensures that anyone who assaults a retail worker will be subject to very serious penalties, as they should be. The New South Wales Government also notes that mental health diversions will still be available, where relevant, for assaults against retail workers. In conclusion, the bill sends a strong message that deliberate acts of violence on retail workers are unacceptable. During the election, the New South Wales Government promised to strengthen protections for retail workers. This bill delivers on that promise. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Noes, 3**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Public Interest Debate*

**GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Before I call the member for Davidson to move the public interest debate motion, I welcome year 12 leaders from the Davidson electorate who are in the gallery. I appreciate them being here and I hope they enjoy the debate.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:04):** I move:

That this House notes the string of broken election promises by the Minns Labor Government, including:

- (1) Promising to roll over Active Kids, but instead cutting it by 85 per cent.
- (2) Promising to ban secret rent bidding, but now abandoning any ban.
- (3) Promising no privatisation, but now intending to sell off public land.
- (4) Promising a cashless gaming trial by 1 July, but instead having no design and no start date.
- (5) Promising no unfunded public sector wage increases, but instead proposing increases costing \$2.5 billion over the next four years.
- (6) Promising ferries made in New South Wales, but instead getting them from Tasmania.

I acknowledge the year 12 leaders from the Davidson electorate in the gallery. I am glad that they can see the bearpit in action today. I am shocked at the length of the list of broken promises. I am shocked that in such a small

amount of time—fewer than 100 days—the Labor Government has accumulated such a long list of broken promises. The Government can rest assured that I will be like Santa Claus; I will be keeping a list and checking it twice. The Labor Government reminds me of the Iemma, Rees and Keneally governments with their lack of reform, low energy and breaking of election promises. Today's motion could have been avoided if Labor had kept its election promises to the people of New South Wales. Today members opposite have an opportunity to apologise to the people of New South Wales. I look forward to their contributions in the debate. To those in the gallery, I want to explain that as a member of the Opposition I have an important duty, role and responsibility to hold the Government to account.

With such a long list of broken election promises over the past 100 days, where do I begin? I give a shout-out to a Twitter account, NSW Political Alerts. On 26 June it tweeted, "Should nswpol run a promise tracker?" You betcha it should! Let us start with the first election promise to build ferries in New South Wales. I was interested to learn that on 20 November 2022, the then Opposition leader tweeted, "Let's build these in New South Wales", alongside a picture of a ferry. When I went to Labor's election commitments on [chrisminns.com.au](http://chrisminns.com.au), the website said, "Made in New South Wales by New South Wales. Labor will back New South Wales jobs and content." Okay. Fair call. The then Opposition leader said, "New South Wales has a proud history of building things in New South Wales." The shadow Minister for Transport at the time, the member for Summer Hill, said, "We need to build our trains, trams, buses and ferries here." The member for Newcastle said, "Labor wants New South Wales to be a manufacturing powerhouse." Fair call. To my great surprise, on 26 June 2023 the Premier issued a media release, which read:

Seven new Australian-made ferries will take to Parramatta River after the NSW Government awarded the construction tender to Richardson Devine Marine Shipbuilders in Hobart.

Is Hobart in New South Wales? That is clearly an election commitment that has been broken. The list goes on. On 12 December 2022 the then Leader of the Opposition said, "We will legislate to ban secret rent bidding." A week later he said, "Today we're bringing back Parliament and we will be forcing a vote to put an end to secret rent bidding." Another one!

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** We need more high density in Davidson.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** They are going to give you high density.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** I note that interjection. On 18 April the Premier said, "There is no excuse for this. That is why we are acting now to reform our rental laws." He said that they would be banning secret rent bidding, and that was just the start. To my surprise there is an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* by Michael McGowan and Angus Thomson titled "Minns breaks promise to end secret rent bidding over criticism it would drive up prices". The article states:

The Minns government has been forced to drop a key plank of its election promise to tackle rental affordability after a wave of criticism from experts—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Oatley and the member for Canterbury wish to have a conversation, they will do so outside the Chamber. They will come to order.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** The article said that there was a "wave of criticism from experts who warned it would instead drive up prices and lock tenants into leases they cannot afford". Interestingly, there was a parliamentary inquiry into the bill. Who made a submission? It was none other than an organisation called Young Labor Left NSW. What did Young Labor Left say? It said:

Young Labor Left NSW (YLL) expresses significant concerns regarding Clause 22B of the proposed Rental Fairness Bill 23, which carries the risk of entrenching a flawed model of rental auctions.

I find that very interesting.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** When designing public policy, you would think, first of all, the Government would talk to stakeholders outside its political party. But you would also think it would actually talk to its party and learn from the wise brains of Young Labor Left in New South Wales. Finally, another election commitment was made around privatisation. A very simple page on the Labor Party website says, "Labor will end privatisation." That is it. An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 15 May states:

Premier Chris Minns will order his ministers to urgently find vacant blocks of public land to rezone for housing ...

How interesting.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:11):** I welcome to the public gallery students from the Davidson electorate. They are seeing what Parliament is like. The member for Davidson quoted Young Labor. I suggest to those students that, if they have a chance, they should join Young Labor because Labor will be looking for a candidate to stand against the member very soon. Let us be honest; he is not going to last. The Minns Labor Government has done amazing things in 100 days. Normally in these types of debates we look at what the motion says and go, "Okay, we will make some amendments." But this one is just rubbish. I feel sorry for the new member for Davidson because he has been set up. I have seen it happen many times over many years. The leadership says, "Well, this guy might have some potential, so we'll make a fool of him." That is what the leadership has done with this motion—made a fool of the member for Davidson.

The reality is that it is such a bad motion that we are going to throw it out and vote against it. There is no point even amending it. Let us consider the motion. It mentions Active Kids being cut. But let us look at the previous Government's plans to cut spending, including on Active Kids. The former Government took to the election campaign a whole swathe of commitments that it did not fund in the budget. What did it not fund? Active Kids, Creative Kids, First Lap, the regional seniors travel card and the regional students travel card were all unfunded. However, the most amazing thing is that the Active Kids program the member for Davidson mentioned will continue under this Government, but it is going to be means tested. That means wealthy families and children from the North Shore and the eastern suburbs will not get it. But the families and children who need it the most—working families—will get it because it is means tested.

Paragraph (2) of the motion refers to the Government "promising to ban secret rent bidding but now abandoning any ban". That is not true. It is just wrong. We have not abandoned it at all. We have continued the negotiations. If those opposite have time—and they have heaps of time now they are in opposition—they should read the committee report. In my contribution to the second reading debate on the bill, I said:

... in consultation with key stakeholders such as Shelter NSW, Homelessness NSW, Disability Advocacy NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW, the transparency and disclosure process under new section 22B has been deferred to ensure that further consideration can be given that appropriately supports all populations.

So the process is continuing; it has not been abandoned. Paragraph (3) of the motion relates to selling public land. That is unbelievable. We stopped the privatisation of water in the Hunter and in Sydney by changing the New South Wales Constitution.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Oatley will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate. He will cease interjecting.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** The promise has been fulfilled. We have started the process of stopping privatisation. As for the Attorney General's department, I saw the long list of courts that members opposite wanted to sell. It was unbelievable. They were even going to privatise our courts. We have stopped that as well. We have said that we need housing and there is a real problem for renters and young families—and for those students in the gallery when they try to buy houses in the future. We need housing. We need land. We will identify that land. If those opposite think that is privatisation, they are delusional. That is Orwellian; it is unbelievable.

I only have a minute remaining. I have a list of achievements of the Minns Government in its first 100 days. We have made over 300 commitments, including in health and education. They include a surgical taskforce to tackle the State's elective surgery waiting list, which is at a record high; the first competitive tender for electricity firming infrastructure; the start of consultation to ban the use of phones in high schools; and a \$97 million investment in health study subsidies to attract staff and retain talent in the New South Wales public health system. Professor Allan Fels has been appointed to work on toll relief. There is the Sydney Metro review, \$7.5 million to expand help to victim-survivors of domestic violence and an Environment Protection Authority investigation into the Darling-Barka fish kill. That is all in the first two weeks.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (17:16):** Thank you, Mr Speaker—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Prospect will come to order. He has made his contribution.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Did he make a contribution? I did not hear anything. I welcome the students from the Davidson electorate to the public gallery. I speak on the motion of the member for Davidson. What a wonderful motion. It is an absolutely great motion because the Government has broken so many promises—more than ever before. Labor came to power and started breaking promises. The member for Davidson spoke about a number of them, and I will speak about a few more. Do not worry about what the member for Prospect said. The first major broken promise, which we have spoken about in this Chamber many times, is—no guesses—the Active Kids vouchers.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** It is not going away.



**Mr MARK HODGES:** No, it will not go away.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** You admit it!

**Mr MARK HODGES:** No, the argument will not go away because it is a broken promise. The program was implemented in 2018 by the Coalition Government to help families—to help students like those in the gallery play sports. So what happened? On 20 March, just prior to the election, the then Opposition leader and now Premier was asked, "Active Kids vouchers will expire on 30 June. If Labor wins, will you extend or recommit?" Perhaps to get votes, the Premier said, "Yes, we're going to roll them out in a similar way to the New South Wales Government." It is a broken promise because the Government has not done that. It has cut them—slash, slash, slash. Shame on them. The constituents in my electorate of Castle Hill and all the other constituents have suffered because of the broken promises. It is illegitimate to come to government on a broken promise. Shame on them. You might recall that prior to the election there was a large debate on cashless gaming. We had a wonderful policy and those opposite tried to create a policy. They said that they would have a signature cashless poker machine policy. It is now almost 100 days later. What have they done? They have done nothing.

**Mr David Harris:** That's not true. We've done a whole lot of stuff. You're wrong.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Well, they brought nothing into this House—zero. There could be a number of reasons why they have done nothing. Perhaps they have no intention of honouring it. Perhaps they want the money for it. Perhaps they do not know what to do. That is probably the better answer. They just do not know how to comply with what they promised the electorate before the election.

**Mr Mark Coure:** They've got their L-plates on.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** That is right. They have their L-plates on. Hang on. There is another promise they broke. They promised they would increase public sector wages. I think the member for Hornsby called the Treasurer "Misinformation Mookhey" the other day. The Treasurer said, "We're promising a better system that allows us to sit down and talk with essential workers." I do not think they have done that yet. Nothing brought into this House would support that.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You guys have been asking us questions about the negotiations.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Yes, because they have done absolutely nothing. It is only broken promises.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:21):** I welcome the opportunity to speak on this public interest debate. The topic is broken promises, which those on the other side of the Chamber are all too familiar with. That is why they now find themselves on that side of this House, where they rightly belong and will be for a long time. The good people of New South Wales elected a Minns Labor Government because of our election commitments, one being to stop the privatisation of our public assets and keep them in public hands. That is why within the first 100 days of the new Government we placed Sydney Water into our Constitution to protect it for generations to come. I will not be lectured by those on the other side of the Chamber about broken promises. We will not be lectured during some smoke-and-mirrors public interest debate on fiscal responsibility. Those opposite privatised billions of dollars worth of State assets and introduced new taxes in the form of tolls on motorways.

Let us look at some of the public assets that were sold off by the former Government: the land titles office, Sydney Desalination Plant, Port Botany, Sydney Buses, Port Kembla, Eraring Energy and the Port of Newcastle. If it was not nailed down, they sold it off. "Taxes and selloffs" was the former Government's motto and the reason why the State's finances are in such a mess now for future generations—a mess that the Minns Government is now forced to clean up. My time to continue with the long list is limited. What does this mean to the people of New South Wales? Our assets and money have gone to private companies, probably offshore. We lost secure jobs, assets and infrastructure because of them. On this side of the House we talk about facts. Fact number one is that the former Liberal-Nationals Government left the Minns Government with the biggest debt in our State's history. It is hardly a record that screams "fiscally responsible government". Those opposite were spending money like it grew on trees. On behalf of the people of New South Wales and the future generations, I thank them for the debt!

Fact number two is that the Liberal-Nationals Government had not funded the Active Kids vouchers beyond this financial year. But it is not as if those opposite have ever let the facts get in the way of a good story. They have a knack for producing spin. Just listen to the member for Hornsby. They specialise in smoke and mirrors, lies and deception. Those opposite are disingenuous, disrespectful and plain dishonest. Fact number three is that from February 2011 through to February 2023, 71,000 manufacturing jobs left this State because those opposite were more interested in preserving their political careers than creating and securing jobs for the future of New South Wales. As members of Parliament, we are elected—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** The member opposite used unparliamentary language. I ask that she withdraw it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** What was that?

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** "Lies".

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** If the member for Heathcote wishes to withdraw the language, she is welcome to. I ask the member to proceed.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** No. Thank you. As members of Parliament, we are elected to this place to serve the people of New South Wales, not our self-interest. That is something those opposite have continually failed to understand. This is the greatest State in our country. We are the engine room of the nation. But the Liberal-Nationals Government did everything it could to run this State into the ground. In 1985 the manufacturing industry was the largest employer in the State. In 2022 the industry was the ninth largest employer. That shows you how far backwards we went under the Liberal-Nationals Government. Those figures are facts those opposite cannot dispute, no matter how hard they may try to.

Those opposite have been clutching at straws and doing anything they can to discredit this Government. They have harped on about how our new ferries will be built in Tasmania. But again I will choose to stick to the facts rather than peddle the fictitious nonsense that has been conjured up by the brains trust on the other side of the Chamber. Our ferries are designed in New South Wales but are being built by a Tasmanian company with a proven track record because no New South Wales companies submitted a tender. They did not submit tenders because, after 12 years under the Liberal-Nationals Government, no New South Wales shipbuilders were in a position to tender. The former Government sank any local shipbuilders' hopes of being awarded the construction contracts for the ferries.

Who could forget that those opposite were responsible for purchasing the ferries from Indonesia? Remember those boats that were built too high, the ones that required passengers to move to the lower decks when passing under a bridge due to the risk of decapitation? We on this side of the Chamber have legislated stamp duty changes that will make it easier for first home buyers. We have changed the Constitution to protect Sydney Water. When the Minns Government makes a promise, it keeps it. That might be foreign to those on the other side, but it keeps it. [*Time expired.*]

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:27):** I support the fantastic motion of the member for Davidson, which addresses the string of broken promises from the Premier and the new Labor Government. I am not sure whether the Temporary Speaker is aware of the great Willie Nelson song called *Broken Promises*, which goes:

A broken promise always means someone will surely cry,  
And I know who that someone's bound to be.

All of us on this side of the House know. The parents and the children, the small business owners and sporting groups will be suffering because of the broken promise of those opposite and Premier Minns—a promise he made in March to roll over the Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers. That promise has now been broken by those opposite. It is important for the Premier to hear and to try to understand the impact this will have on communities because right now it appears that all the pleas being made to the Premier and those on that side of the House to reconsider this decision are falling on deaf ears. It is either that or they just do not care about the people of New South Wales, and the people of regional, rural and remote New South Wales in particular.

The broken promise by the Premier to not roll over these vouchers and to instead cut the vouchers to \$50 means 750,000 children will lose their eligibility. To highlight the impact this broken promise will have on people in my electorate, I will share a story about a group called the Rainbow Warriors. The group is run by local legend Matty Zarb, who is an amazing champion for my community. The Rainbow Warriors promote inclusivity, supporting kids with disability and special needs. They come together every week and play soccer. The group runs off the smell of an oily rag. It is run by volunteers and the love and good community spirit that are so prevalent in my electorate. I have had many conversations with Matty about what this cut to the Active Kids vouchers will mean for those families. Currently 72 families are registered with the Rainbow Warriors and every one of those families used their Active Kids vouchers to participate in this fantastic group. The broken promise by Premier Minns to not roll over the vouchers means all 72 families will have to make a decision about whether they can continue on next season, which is a decision they should not have to make.

I also highlight and stress the importance of First Lap vouchers. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death and injury in children aged zero to five years in Australia. It is also one of the most preventable. It is absolutely vital in early childhood that children learn to swim. Swimming lessons come at a huge cost to parents,

particularly families that may have only one income. At my local YMCA, swimming lessons for one child cost \$228 per term, payable up-front. How is the Government's \$50 going to stretch to \$228 per child per term, payable up-front?

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Why did you defund them? At least they are going to get 50 bucks. They were going to get zero.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON:** It is your broken promise; it is your cut to the funding. Members opposite are in government and they make the decisions. Local businesses that offer Creative Kids vouchers to parents and families are also affected. More than ever families are hurting and need to be supported. More than ever members on the other side of the House are showing they cannot be trusted. This Government is pulling back the support that our families need, particularly families in our regional, rural and remote areas. All we are seeing is a succession of broken promises. What we are not getting is an explanation from the Premier or members on his side of the House, nor do we see any empathy. Members opposite do not care about the people of New South Wales. Sadly, it will be the people of New South Wales who will suffer under a Minns Labor Government, which talked a really big game but has failed to deliver.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes and acknowledge the Willie Nelson reference.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:32):** I thank the member for Davidson for moving the motion. Just like the public interest debate last week, this motion is giving members on this side of the House a great opportunity to remind everyone how bad members opposite were in government. In just 12 weeks, this Government has done more for essential workers, the health system and education than members opposite did in 12 miserable years. I note the member for Oatley was yelling something about Young Labor Left. I had quite a bit to do with Young Labor Left during the campaign.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Did you?

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Yes.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Tell us more.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I had a margin of 1.5 per cent and, after spending a few months with Young Labor Left, I now have an 8.9 per cent margin. I further note that the member for Oatley sits on 0.8 per cent. If he is keen to learn more about Young Labor Left, I am happy to send them to Oatley in four years' time. They can knock on doors in Mortdale—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Oatley will outline his point of order.

**Mr Mark Coure:** As much as I would like to keep the motion about me—

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** What is the number?

**Mr Mark Coure:** It is Standing Order 129—relevance. As much as I would like this public interest debate to be about me, today it is not.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Oatley will resume his seat. The member for Leppington is within the realms of relevancy. The member will continue.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I am happy to send Young Labor Left to knock on a few doors in Mortdale. We can knock on doors in Peakhurst, Hurstville and Beverly Hills, and that tiny number of 600 votes that the member for Oatley is sitting on might be in trouble. When I saw the notice come through that we were to have a public interest debate on broken promises, I thought, "Where have I heard about broken promises from a government?" I did a bit of digging and I found this in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 November 2021:

NSW government's trove of broken pledges holds promise for Labor.

When Dominic Perrottet became Premier, he got an incoming Premier brief. It obviously informed him about something he was well aware of, which was how bad the budget was, but it also went into the extraordinary details of the broken election promises that members opposite had railed out in 2015 and 2019. It was, I quote, "a staggering 913 election commitments". It gets better. Just 346 had been delivered. Apparently, 100 disappeared from the list. I have a long list of those broken promises, but I will not go through them.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Oh, go on.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** All right, I will.

**Mr David Harris:** Just a few. Give us the highlights.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** What about this one: Do you have a commitment to sell WestConnex? "We don't have a plan for that." Remember that? And during the last campaign: Do you plan to sell Sydney Water? "We don't have a plan for that." When I was standing at booths at Carnes Hill in Leppington for early voting, public sector workers were coming through. They knew about the trove of broken promises and they were ready to get rid of the previous Government, because they knew. Teachers and nurses were my favourite, but my "mostest" favourite was when someone turned up in a blue uniform that had "Sydney Water" written on it.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** They're the bestest!

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** They were, because they knew that if members opposite were re-elected, they would have plans for it, like they had plans for WestConnex. On this list we have Active Kids; we have delivered on that. We have housing, which has been mentioned. We have stopped the sell-off on privatisation and wages. I am done!

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:38):** There is a great old Irish prayer: Lord, if you give me enemies, make them stupid. Thank you, Lord. I speak from an independent perspective this afternoon. I love it when newbies have a go. We heard them talk about privatisation. Who privatised Gentraders? Who privatised retailers? Who privatised lotteries? Who privatised Qantas? Who privatised the Commonwealth Bank? Who supported the privatisation of the ports? It was Luke Foley, as leader. But Government members come to this Chamber and talk about privatisation.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Stop the clock!

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I do not take instruction from Opposition members. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Shellharbour will state her point of order.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Who privatised the Shellharbour Hospital?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** There is no point of order.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Who was the poster boy for the privatisation of Shellharbour Hospital and the development of Killalea?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am coming to you. There she is—the member for Shellharbour.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Kiama will resume his seat. We have school leaders from Davidson in the gallery. The exchange across the Chamber that they just witnessed was completely unparliamentary. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. The member for Kiama will continue. He will be heard in silence.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** It is wonderful to see the member for Shellharbour in the Chamber—a hardworking MP who is up at the crack of noon each day. It is great that she mentioned the Albion Park Rail bypass because she complained about the privatisation but now she wants to build off and on ramps for the Albion Park Rail bypass that she voted against. I am glad we are talking about broken promises. I am so pleased the member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber because I want to quote an article from the *Illawarra Mercury* on 2 March. I just happen to have one right here. It is in the folder. I love that thing.

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

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

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** There is no point of order. The member for Kiama is being relevant.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Shellharbour is not relevant.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I have made my ruling. The contribution is relevant to the motion. The member for Kiama will continue.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am talking about broken promises and, jeez, I've got a list. This is what the article stated:

Shellharbour MP Anna Watson has called for the new Shellharbour Hospital to be the women's hospital ...

She said that the birthing services would be returned. Who ruled it out on 30 June? It was the Labor Government. Labor members promised it before the election. They say one thing before the election and they do another thing afterwards. Where else did they do that? The Tripoli Way bypass. What did they do during the election? They promised \$20 million. Government members should listen to this. I love the newbies getting all excited on the Government benches. They will not be there very long. Labor promised \$20 million for the Tripoli Way bypass, and do you know what? It is relying on \$16 million provided in the last term of Parliament.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** It's all good. "Start spreading the news, I'm leaving today. I want to be a part of it, New York, New York."

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Good on you. It is good to see the Parliamentary Secretary is having a wonderful time, but the reality is that Labor promised the Tripoli Way bypass and then cancelled it. Let's talk about the regional seniors travel card. Today I was speaking to a constituent of mine who is struggling very much with the costs of living. They told me that because of the pressures they are facing they will have to sell their home. Those are the sorts of decisions that people are making because of this heartless Government, which is no better than the last Labor Government. The Government's decisions are impacting on the people of New South Wales. But I do not think we have to put up with the current Premier for very long because I hear that there was an uproar in caucus recently in relation to the lack of action on pay increases for public sector workers. You know you are in trouble when leaks start coming to me. I have had a few and I have some here, ready to go. Labor members are upset because the union movement is already expressing its concern about the lack of delivery on those pay increases.

I understand that they have lots of leadership potential. I think in the next few months we will see Prue Car start her leadership challenge, maybe backed by Ryan Park or Paul Scully—potential leadership challengers—who will, of course, take the Premier down because of his lack of delivery on promises. But also we saw members in the Illawarra, during the election campaign, promise that they would fix the helipad at the Shellharbour Hospital. Of course, we have now seen the member for Shellharbour defending the health department, not backing in her community, but attacking people who are raising issues on behalf of paramedics. Labor is not interested in delivering on those promises either.

Labor members are masquerading as a government with a legislative agenda, but the crossbenchers' legislative agenda is bigger than theirs. They do not have a real agenda and all they have done in government is cut promises, cut services and impact on the people of New South Wales. I think we will keep a list and we will keep on checking it and keep updating it. I will keep reminding the people of my electorate of the promises Labor has made and the promises Labor broke. I see that the member for South Coast is having a great old chuckle there. Let's see what her community says when she does not deliver the Milton-Ulladulla bypass that she promised, or when she does not deliver the upgrade of the Princes Highway that she promised. I will keep reminding Government members that they promised a lot. They told everybody that they were going to get everything that they promised at the election, but in government it is cuts, cuts, cuts under Labor.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the member for Kiama, and wish him a happy birthday.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Point of order: During that contribution a Government member made a comment that was totally unparliamentary. Comments have been made in this Chamber during question time that were incredibly offensive. I heard one levelled at the member for Kiama that was totally unparliamentary. That member should retract the comment. It was unparliamentary.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** What was it?

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Has the member for Shellharbour left the Chamber? Yes. She has raced out of the Chamber because she made a comment about the member for Kiama that was totally inappropriate. She should be made to retract it.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** What was it?

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** I never heard it.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** I am not going to repeat it because it is unparliamentary.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the member for Terrigal. Should the member for Shellharbour wish to retract the comment, she will have plenty of opportunity to do so.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:45):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Prospect, Castle Hill, Heathcote, Leppington, Myall Lakes and Kiama for their contributions. I also thank every single other member in the Chamber for their contributions. I have never seen so much energy in this place outside

of question time. For the students in the gallery, I said, "Welcome to the bearpit." Hopefully now they know why it is called the bearpit. It is not called the sandpit; it is called the bearpit.

In relation to Opposition members, I appreciate that they particularly spoke about the impact that the Labor Government is having on their communities. I was particularly moved by the member for Myall Lakes, who spoke about families in the Myall Lakes electorate who will be impacted. Specifically, she spoke about the 72 families from Rainbow Warriors who will be impacted by the 85 per cent cut to Active Kids. I say to all families who will be impacted by the cuts to Active Kids that we, the Coalition, certainly will be standing up for them. I am so glad the Minister for Sport is in the Chamber so that he can hear the pain that we are expressing from our communities.

I also found it interesting to hear the member for Leppington and the member for Prospect promoting Young Labor Left NSW. I say to those in the gallery that if they are considering joining a political party—I certainly encourage them to do so—think about the Coalition side of the Chamber before they consider the Government side of the Chamber. I note the contribution to the debate by the member for Heathcote in relation to manufacturing. I am so pleased the member for Heathcote acknowledged that the ferries that are being built for the Parramatta River are in fact being built in Tasmania, and that Tasmania is not in New South Wales.

None of the Government members defended their broken commitment around the wage cap. In September 2007 the New South Wales Government implemented a wages policy of 2.5 per cent. Who was the party in government when that was moved? It was the Labor Party. Who was the Premier? It was Morris Iemma. The 2010 budget statement—the final budget statement under Labor—stated:

Wage outcomes greater than 2.5 per cent must be funded by employee-related cost savings.

Labor is prioritising public sector wages over sound economic management. I say to Premier Minns and Treasurer Mookhey that, if they are proposing public sector wage increases costing \$2.5 billion over four years, where is the funding coming from? What will they be cutting in terms of programs, in terms of infrastructure and in terms of services? I hear it could be the Community Building Partnership—cut; the M5 cashback—cut; the regional seniors travel card—cut. Cuts, cuts, cuts—Labor cuts.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....30  
Noes .....50  
Majority.....20

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

Aitchison, J	Hagarty, N	Piper, G
Atalla, E	Hannan, J	Quinnell, S
Bali, S	Harris, D	Saffin, J (teller)
Barr, C	Harrison, J	Saliba, D
Butler, L	Haylen, J	Scully, P
Butler, R	Hoenig, R	Shetty, K
Car, P	Holland, M	Smith, T
Catley, Y	Hornery, S	Stuart, M
Chanthivong, A	Kaliyanda, C	Tesch, L
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Vo, T
Crakanthorp, T	Kirby, W	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Leong, J	Warren, G

## NOES

Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D

Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Whan, S (teller)  
Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Ayyad, T  
Layzell, D  
Saunders, D  
Williams, R

Dib, J  
O'Neill, M  
Minns, C  
Park, R

**Motion negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I acknowledge the presence of Bill Bowtell, AO, in the gallery, and wish Bill a happy seventieth birthday in the coming weeks.

*Community Recognition Statements***TROY WOODS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:58):** The Salvation Army Family Store in Coffs Harbour has celebrated a significant milestone with one of its much-loved team members. Volunteer extraordinaire Troy Woods has racked up 10 years of continuous service, and has been congratulated on his outstanding contribution to the community. His decade of dedication was recognised during a presentation by Major Andrew Van-Galen and his wife, Jeanette, from Coffs Harbour Salvation Army; Sylvia Opsteegh, manager at Coffs Harbour Family Store; and the store's staff. Troy, who has a disability, originally discovered his rewarding role through Chess Connect. He said that he had appreciated being given the chance to volunteer, and he encouraged others in the community to take up an opportunity that suited them. Troy says that he is keen to keep helping out for at least another 10 years. I congratulate Troy on his dedication and commitment to giving back to the community. He is an outstanding example of the caring attitude of all the volunteers who work to make the Coffs Coast an even better place to live.

**NSW SWIFTS**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:59):** I wish the NSW Swifts all the best in the Super Netball preliminary final to be held this week at the Qudos Bank Arena against West Coast Fever. The NSW Swifts have had a terrific year leading the ladder with 10 wins from 14 games and were well rewarded with the backing of a very large vocal, parochial crowd for their semi-final. They almost brought the house down with seven seconds to go, only to see the Adelaide Thunderbirds pull off a remarkable draw at full time. This thrilling encounter went into extra time and again the Swifts were only pipped in the dying seconds of the game. They are now headed into a do-or-die preliminary final. Congratulations Romelda Aiken-George leading the stats for an amazing 78 offensive rebounds and Helen Housby, who also led the Super Shot on 86 and the Super Shot attempts on 127. Well done to Tayla Fraser, Paige Hadley, Allie Smith, Helen Housby, Sarah Klau, Teigan O'Shannassy, Maddy Proud, Maddy Turner, Sam Wallace, Sophie Fawns, Romelda Aiken-George and all the coaching staff. Bring it home, NSW Swifts!

**OLIVIA ROTH AND EMMA KEENE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism) (18:00):** I acknowledge Olivia Roth and Emma Keene, who were awarded the Queen's Scout Award. Olivia and Emma attained the Queen's Scout Badge in December 2022. The badge acknowledges proficiency in scouting skills, in teamwork as a member of the unit and group and in the spirit of scouting as represented by living the Scout Promise and Laws. The Queen's Scout badge demonstrates an individual's dedication to their community and nation and a willingness to help others. Emma and Olivia attended a formal presentation for the award at Government House in March 2023. Olivia is the first Belmont Venturer to receive the award in almost five years, and Emma is the first Swansea Venturer to receive the award in almost five years. Congratulations to Emma and Olivia. They are an absolute credit to both the Belmont and Swansea Scout groups.

### PORT MACQUARIE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:01):** I recognise the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association and congratulate it on the commencement of construction of its new astronomy and science centre in Port Macquarie. The astronomical association and the current observatory building date back to the 1960s. During the past 60 years association members have contributed much to local schools and the community, connecting with them through education sessions, open days and special events to make astronomy easy to understand and accessible. The new centre will be a state-of-the-art facility and include an observatory dome and telescopes, an exhibition and education space, as well as an auditorium.

On completion the centre will mark an exciting new chapter for the astronomy association, and its members are optimistic that there will be more innovative opportunities to increase public engagement with astronomy, the universe and beyond through the centre. This significant project has been years in the making and many individuals contributed to get to the sod turning on Monday. I thank those visionary members of years gone by. I particularly commend the current executive committee, including president Robert Brangwin, vice-president Chris Ireland, secretary David Edgerley as well as Eugene Besh, Bruce Dawson, Gayle De Faveri, Chris Francis, Grace Connor and Michael Cater. The new centre will open in April 2024.

### GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:02):** It was fantastic to attend the Greystanes High School Diversity Week celebrations on Monday 19 June 2023 with staff, students, teachers and members of the school community. It was great to celebrate and recognise the diversity and positive contributions that students from different backgrounds bring to the school community during their Diversity Week celebrations. There was an assembly that also coincided with Refugee Week. Students, teachers and staff participated by wearing their cultural dress, organising interactive activities and displaying their culture's national flag. Greystanes High School is host to a school community that brings a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds—with 61 per cent of students from a language background other than English and 3 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The rich diversity of the school significantly contributes to and benefits the learning experience and environment of students and their teachers. I congratulate the Greystanes High School community on arranging a vibrant and exciting celebration for Diversity Week and Refugee Week. I thank Principal Grant Sparke, teachers, staff and parents for continuing to provide inclusive educational experiences for our children.

### ROBERT "BOB" GREEN

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:03):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Gerringong Rotary Club Paul Harris Fellow recipient Robert "Bob" Green. Bob and Roz moved from Sydney to Gerringong in 2014. A few years later Bob retired. As well as being Bob the car enthusiast, salesman, husband, father, snow skier, international businessman and grandfather, he became Bob the builder, Bob the gardener, Bob the Sunday night dinner chef and Bob the Rotarian. Bob joined Gerringong Rotary in 2016. He became director of the new market committee following Pat Crowhurst's and Margaret Hyslop's retirement from market management. It was not an easy job to step into, but he led the transition to a new structure of the club's markets that has proven to be very successful. He still continues to help out on market days and in the roster preparation. Bob took on the role of overseeing the continuous upkeep of Rotary Bilya Reserve from Ray Cox. It is a role he seems to love, especially with his magnificent team. With his background in business and innovation, and his many skills, Bob is well deserving of this most prestigious award. The community and Gerringong Rotary express their appreciation for his services and contributions.

### GREG SMITH

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:04):** Today I congratulate Greg Smith on celebrating 36 years in his role as groundsman at Peninsula Village in my electorate of Gosford. Greg has worked for almost four decades in his role, which includes being one of the first people on the site during the facility's construction. In March 1985 Greg embarked on the career that he loves, working outside taking in the fresh air and keeping the grounds looking good for residents and staff to enjoy. Peninsula Village CEO Colin Osborne said they have been incredibly honoured to have such a dedicated and experienced groundsman in Greg, who has worked so hard for the village for 36 years. He also said that Greg's commitment to the organisation is testament to the wonderful role model he has become. This milestone is such an incredible feat, and Greg should feel immensely proud of the impact that he has had on staff, management and residents alike. Greg also finds time in his busy schedule to speak to residents as they enjoy their day, and he has certainly had an impact on a vast number of lives. I congratulate Greg and thank him for his fabulous accomplishments.



**PHILLIP DOTTI**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:05):** It is an honour to acknowledge Kempsey-born Phillip Dotti, a former Smithtown Tiger and the first Aboriginal player for the Cronulla Sharks. Mr Dotti recently unveiled a reconciliation plaque at the Cronulla Sharks' home ground. After leaving Kempsey at age 18, he went on to have a successful rugby league career with Cronulla and Eastern Suburbs. The impact of the Stolen Generation has resulted in some former Indigenous players not identifying as Aboriginal until later in life. However, in 1986 Mr Dotti was the first player to identify as Aboriginal while playing with Cronulla. Mr Dotti unveiled the plaque with fellow Indigenous Sharks player David Peachey and said that reconciliation is a must. Other sporting clubs could take a leaf out of Cronulla's book. Mr Dotti continues to be a regular speaker at his old club and to encourage the next generation of league players. Alongside his work with the club, Mr Dotti has also been at the forefront of ensuring recognition for Dunghutti boxing legend Dave Sands and helped to bring home the boxer's Commonwealth title belt last year. My congratulations to Mr Dotti on his services to the community.

**PHILIPPA YOUNG**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:06):** When I first moved to Medowie in 2006, my eldest child started at Wirreanda Public School. In 2010 I was P&C president of that beautiful school when a new principal, Philippa Young, stepped through the school gates. It was immediately obvious that she would leave her mark. This week, after 13 years as school principal, the school community bid Philippa their "farewell for now". Philippa is an impressive educator who is moving up in the Department of Education and, whilst she may well return, her school community could not let her go without a special send-off. That is what they did this week and here is what the students said. School captain Annika McFarlane said, "Thank you for your leadership, kindness and encouragement to be the best I can be." Kindergarten student Lenny Phillips simply said, "I love seeing you at the top gate when we arrive for learning at school." Prefect Isla Bailey said, "An excellent principal is hard to find, difficult to part with and impossible to forget." I thank Philippa for the difference she has made in Medowie and beyond. I bid her farewell for now with much thanks, gratitude and good luck.

**EMPIRE BAY TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:07):** Today I celebrate the Empire Bay Tennis Club, which locals fondly call "the best little tennis club on the coast". The Empire Bay Tennis Club has been going from strength to strength since a rejuvenation in recent years, and last year was nominated for Club of the Year in Tennis NSW's annual awards. Focusing on providing a great family environment, the club offers cost-friendly court hire, social and competitive tennis, and coaching for kids and adults. This has resulted in rapid growth in membership for this outstanding local club in recent years, going from zero paid-up members to over 100 financial members in 2023. I also welcome the announcement from the now Labor Government on 21 March 2023 to provide \$100,000 of funding to upgrade the court surface of our outstanding local tennis club. I call on the Government to honour that commitment and provide the funding by the end of this financial year or as quickly as possible this year. That will allow the amazing volunteers at the Empire Bay Tennis Club to proceed with this vital upgrade for our community.

**EMU PLAINS FOOTBRIDGE**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (18:08):** I inform the House about a new path, footbridge and car park in my community of Emu Plains. The 220-metre long footpath is dedicated to Rhys Walker, who was tragically struck down and died on his way to the station from school 12 years ago when he was just 17 years old. The tragic loss impacted heavily on his family and the community. This important infrastructure will improve pedestrian safety and connectivity between Emu Plains railway station and the Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School. A cast bronze sculpture named "Buru", or wallaby, by local Dharug artist Hayley Pigram sits prominently at the car park entrance and represents a living connection between the past, present and future. The design of the new footbridge was inspired by an emu, and the colour resembles an emu egg. It is appropriate that Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School students and teachers were involved, and they were delighted to work on the street art project.

**TRIBUTE TO ERROL BLENCH**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (18:09):** I recognise the life of Errol Blench. Errol was a stalwart of the Kings Langley community and, sadly, passed away a few days ago. He was a life member of the Kings Langley Cricket Club and had been a strong supporter of junior cricket for many years, including spending time as a selector for district cricket teams. Errol will always be remembered for his more than 40 years of community service and advocacy. As an active member of the Pearce Reserve parks committee, he oversaw the design and construction of a pavilion at the cricket ground and upgrades to the nearby Robyn Castle Tennis Complex. Errol spent many years lobbying local, State and Federal governments to source funding for various projects to improve

the amenity of not only his local area but also the community at large. I send my condolences, and the condolences of other members of this House, to Errol's wife, Margaret; his children, Kerrie, David and Michael; and their extended families. I thank them on behalf of our community for unselfishly allowing Errol time to be with us. Errol will be remembered by us all and, for his service, his name will be forever recorded in the Parliament's record.

#### **ELIZABETH HENDERSON**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:10):** I recognise Elizabeth Henderson for her 10 years of service as an administration volunteer at Mount Druitt Hospital. Elizabeth is a resident of my electorate and has demonstrated continued dedication to the Mount Druitt community. Elizabeth has recently been presented with a certificate in recognition of her 10 years of service and commitment to those who use Mount Druitt Hospital. I congratulate Elizabeth on this much-deserved award and thank her for her dedication to the Mount Druitt community.

#### **JOEL DORAHY AND JD MEATS GERRINGONG**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:11):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Joel Dorahy and JD Meats Gerringong, who have received the Rotary Club of Gerringong's community recognition and appreciation award at the club's changeover luncheon on the weekend. Joel and JD Meats Gerringong were acknowledged for their charity and work in the Gerringong community. It is a charity-minded business and a great example of a typical country town enterprise that has been in the family for generations, with Joel being the third generation of butchers to run it. His pop, Kevin, and dad, Robert, ran the butcher shop across the road. Joel says that he never thought of following in their footsteps until he needed a reason to leave school and found that he fell in love with the trade of butchering. The Rotary Club of Gerringong reports that Joel is obliging at each of their market days, making up orders, whatever the amount, depending upon the current weather. That goes without saying in Gerringong, which is infamous for its windy outlook. The weather can cause a cancellation at the last minute, but he never complains. The community of Gerringong, the Rotary Club and the market's barbecue team express their appreciation to Joel and JD Meats Gerringong for their professionalism and community service.

#### **ROD CULLEN**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:12):** Rod Cullen has been the principal dealer at Lander Toyota since 2008. It is located in Blacktown and offers sensational service in new and used vehicle sales, as well as being a highly regarded car service facility. Rod knows there is more to business than sales and profits. He quietly but proudly supports local organisations that make significant differences in the local area. Those include the WASH House and the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, which deliver great support and outcomes to women impacted by poverty and social disadvantage. Lander Toyota is supporting the Blacktown City Show as it celebrates its 100th year with its first-ever car show. Rod puts on his gardening gloves and supports National Tree Day with a local school. Rod's support of and donations to the Better Foundation—a charity that supports Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals—has resulted in significant health outcomes through the purchase of life-saving medical equipment. I thank Rod for his amazing support for local charities.

#### **BRIARS RUGBY UNION**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:13):** On Friday 16 June I attended the 100 years of Briars Rugby Union celebration lunch in Concord. Together with over 250 players, members and supporters, we celebrated what it means to be a Briar. I congratulate Briars Rugby Union for being a longstanding and impactful club in our community. From creating a safe space for our youth to develop as athletes to perfecting skills for adults, Briars has been essential in creating pathways for local athletes. I congratulate all the rugby coaches and volunteers from over the past 100 years on their hard work and the time they have put into making the club what it is today. I thank the board of directors of Briars, made up of President Brett Howle, Matina Moffitt, Mick Jaroszewicz, Kylie Beckhouse, Aaron Boyter, Kylie Norris, John Price and Ric Cilona. I also acknowledge Briars Women's Rugby President David Lannan. I congratulate Briars Rugby Union and wish it a very happy 100th birthday.

#### **PANANIA DIGGERS SOCCER CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:14):** I congratulate the Panania Diggers Soccer Club on reaching its remarkable milestone of 60 years in July this year. The significant achievement is a testament to the club's enduring legacy and countless volunteers who have contributed to its success over the years. For six decades, Panania Diggers has provided a platform for athletes to showcase their skills and brought the community together through the great game of soccer. Throughout the years, the club has witnessed numerous triumphs and unforgettable matches, and forged lifelong friendships. The dedication and passion exhibited by players, coaches, volunteers and supporters have undoubtedly played a vital role in shaping the club's history and instilled the

important values of teamwork, sportsmanship and community engagement. As the club celebrates this momentous anniversary, I hope it takes pride in the countless memories created on and off the field. May the next 60 years be filled with continued success. I congratulate Panania Diggers Soccer Club on the legacy it has built. It is a true testament to the power of sport and community.

#### **BEAR COTTAGE SUPERHERO WEEK**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:15):** I notify the House that something super will be happening in Manly over the winter break. On 23 July Bear Cottage will be launching Superhero Week. This fantastic initiative helps raise money for Bear Cottage. The money goes towards helping Bear Cottage to continue the fantastic work it does as the only children's hospice in New South Wales. This year the goal is to raise \$250,000. So far, just under \$5,500 has been raised. I encourage all MPs to give what they can to help. I further recognise the real superheroes of Bear Cottage: the highly skilled staff and selfless volunteers who provide outstanding care and the necessary comfort and support to families across New South Wales. I recognise the brave children themselves, whose superhero qualities shine through every day and whose positive outlook and warm smiles are an inspiration to us all.

#### **ALLEN KRUSE**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:16):** I take this opportunity to recognise one of my constituents from the South Coast electorate, Allen Kruse of Sanctuary Point. Allen has been volunteering for Sanctuary Point Community Pride for over 15 years, with 13 of those years as president. Sanctuary Point Community Pride's mission is to increase pride in the community by encouraging residents to come together to increase quality of life and create and maintain pride in the village for all. Allen has been integral to the amazing work that Sanctuary Point Community Pride does for the community. It is a driving force behind the well-known Spring into Sanctuary Point Fair and so many other amazing initiatives and projects for the benefit of all residents and visitors to the village. Allen recently stepped down as president. I thank him for everything that he has done and continues to do for our community. Volunteering to help make our community a better place is important to Allen, and he has inspired so many others to follow in his footsteps.

#### **BELLINGEN RIVER AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:17):** I extend my congratulations to the Bellingen River Agricultural Society on its achievement in winning the 2023 President's Innovation Award from AgShows NSW. This honour recognises the society's exceptional efforts in advancing the show society and integrating innovative practices throughout its work. The committee has collaborated with OzGreen to develop new processes for waste management, making the show more sustainable and environmental. It is the society's dedication, hard work and commitment to sustainability that truly sets it apart as a leader in the agricultural show community. Through the use of technology, it has brought more volunteers and greater efficiency to the operation of the Bellingen Show. It has preserved the rich heritage and tradition of agricultural shows in our community and modernised the show so that generations will attend it into the future. Agricultural shows are crucial to regional communities, and they have been bringing people together for generations. To see Bellingen leading the charge in sustainability and innovation is a proud moment for us all. I congratulate the Bellingen River Agricultural Society on this fantastic achievement. The society's dedication and hard work is greatly appreciated by our community.

#### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE BASEBALL PLAYERS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:18):** I congratulate the highly talented young baseball players from the Riverstone electorate who have recently competed in the 2023 Australian Little League Championship. Quakers Hill Pirates Baseball Club players Jett Creamer, Harrison Goodwin and Tom Hayhow were part of the Hills Junior Baseball Association team who won the national tournament, undefeated after seven games, in the division 1 under 14s. Quakers Hill Pirates coach Stuart Goodwin added to the strength of the undefeated team as assistant coach. Impressively, the team will now travel to the United States to compete in the Little League Baseball World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, going up against Little League players worldwide. Representing Australia at such a young age is commendable and an opportunity few of us will ever achieve. I wish Jett, Harrison and Tom, and coach Stuart, the best of luck for their Williamsport tournament. It is encouraging to know that north-west Sydney is producing sportspeople of such a high calibre. They have made the Pirates and our electorate proud.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MARGARET CRAWLEY**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:19):** Margaret Crawley has put her heart and soul into the Coffs Coast community, which is why her loss is being felt so keenly. Margaret passed away in February at the age of 79, only days away from her eightieth birthday. She lived a generous, hardworking, loving, creative, sporty, fun and supportive life. She was an Avon lady, a talented and award-winning card crafter, and a great cook.

Margaret was a longstanding and valued member of the Coffs Harbour Garden Club where she always made herself available for any task. She served in executive roles, including president and vice president. She was also a passionate advocate for the Coffs Harbour Show and was last year named a Legend of the Show. Up until her death, Margaret was serving as vice president of the Coffs Harbour Show Society and was also well known for her role as Pavilion Chief Steward. My thoughts are with Margaret's family and her many friends in my community. Rest in peace, Margaret.

#### **MARCONI TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:20):** Since 1973 Club Marconi has been a hub for tennis players in my community. On 4 June 2023 I had the pleasure of joining my community to commemorate 50 years of tennis at the club with a celebratory barbecue on its tennis courts. While I did not manage to show off my tennis skills, I was able to meet local tennis legends, including David Hall, one of Australia's greatest wheelchair tennis champions; David Jeflea, the only Grand Slam finalist from Fairfield City; and Stewart Whicker, the head coach and program director of the Marconi Tennis and Squash Centre. I thank Stewart for inviting me to such a great community event. I acknowledge the significant contributions he has made to my community and the wider tennis community.

#### **MANLY ELECTORATE STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:21):** I recognise four outstanding young leaders from my community. Today I welcomed Anneke, Maisy, Melissa and Kaviya from the Manly and Mackellar Girls campuses of Northern Beaches Secondary College to our Parliament. We can all take great inspiration from those young leaders and rest easy that we will have a bright future thanks to those inspirational young women. I have no doubt that between Anneke, Maisy, Melissa and Kaviya, I met a future Premier or Prime Minister today.

#### **EID AL-ADHA**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:22):** This morning it was an honour to be invited by the Parramatta Mosque Committee represented by Ali Samad, Mahmoud Hussein and Mossad Issa to join their community celebrations of Eid Al-Adha. Hajj is one of the holiest months on the Islamic calendar, one of the five sacred pillars of Islam and the month Muslims around the world reflect on the story of Ibrahim and the significance of his devotion to Allah. Parramatta's success is largely due to our incredibly diverse community, which includes almost 9,000 Muslims who make an invaluable contribution to the Parramatta electorate, enriching our multicultural and multi-faith community. Today is a special day for Muslims worldwide, but it is also a special day for New South Wales because the Attorney General gave his second reading speech on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2023. That is an important step towards ensuring the safety of, and respect towards, members of all faith communities, including those who worship at Parramatta Mosque. I thank Parramatta Mosque for all it does to unite and support our local Muslim community.

#### **BOARDRIDING CLUBS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:23):** Today I acknowledge the following outstanding local boardriding clubs in my electorate: Mac's Own Boardriders from Macmasters Beach, Wamberal Express Boardriders, Copa Boardriders at Copacabana, Forresters Beach Boardriders, Avoca Boardriders and North Avoca Boardriders. Boardriding clubs provide great community engagement for surfers of all ages and abilities, and for the more competitive surfers to compete at local, State and national levels. In addition, they also provide support in keeping our local beaches safe for swimmers on the Central Coast, often being some of the first responders to swimmers in trouble. I welcome the announcement made by the now Labor Government on 23 March 2023 to provide \$10,000 of funding to each of those local clubs for equipment upgrades. I am calling on the Government to honour that commitment and provide the funding by the end of the financial year, or as quickly as possible this year, so that those outstanding local volunteer boardriding clubs can proceed with the vital equipment upgrades they have been promised, which they will utilise to help keep our communities safe.

#### **KALLAN LODGE LIBRARY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:24):** Earlier this month Adamstown Heights woman Ashleigh Webb swam across the English Channel, which fewer people have accomplished than have climbed Mount Everest. Ashleigh undertook the challenge for an inspiring reason—the Kallan Lodge Library. Its aim is to supply local mental health facilities with books and albums to bring some joy during treatment and recovery. The library is named after Kallan Lodge, who died by suicide at Duntroon in 2011. Ashleigh and Kallan were very close friends. Ashleigh recounts that he loved listening to music and wondering what it was that made songs mean so much. Ashleigh has always been a voracious reader and has taken a lot of support from fiction

during her own mental health journey, hence the albums and books which are distributed by Kallan Lodge Library. I congratulate Ashleigh on her massive swim and her work with the Kallan Lodge library.

#### **MINI-MOS COMMUNITY FUN RUN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:25):** I give a very special congratulations to all of those who volunteered at, ran or supported from the sidelines the Mini-Mos Community Fun Run. In particular, I recognise the outstanding work of members of the Mosman Public School P&C—they are amazing parents and staff—for all of their efforts in organising the day and for always having the best cake and sweet stall. Mini-Mos is a wonderful community event that has been held for more than 40 years, raising funds for Mosman Public School and its nominated charities. Mini-Mos is proud to sponsor the Be Centre Foundation. It assists children aged three to 12 with emotional, behavioural, psychological and social issues using play therapy. A great day was had by all, and I was truly excited to spend some time with Ruffles, the Mini-Mos mascot, and the wonderful Amber Sherlock who was once again our emcee. I congratulate the 10-kilometres men's placegetters, Ed Goddard, Keith MacPherson and Lachlan Bryant; the 10-kilometres women's placegetters, Alex Barnes, Jennifer Clancy and Claire Raper; the five-kilometres men's placegetters, Angus Hammersley, Nick Fisher and Matthew Maudrell; and the five-kilometres women's placegetters, Sophia Squires, Emma Walton and Imogen Howard. I congratulate them all. I look forward to being out running with them in 2024.

#### **CHALDEAN FESTIVAL**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:26):** I was delighted to join the Chaldean Australian community at the Chaldean Festival, held at Fairfield Showground on Sunday 4 June 2023. The day was marked by a celebration of culture, including traditional food, folkloric dancing and cultural clothing. As the indigenous people of Iraq, our Chaldean Australian community is characterised by a rich and proud history. I am honoured to recognise their contributions in all facets of our society. I look forward to their continued contribution to Fairfield and New South Wales.

#### **SYDNEY BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:27):** I acknowledge the incredible efforts of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation, which recently raised an overwhelming \$440,000 at its eighteenth Rugby Long Lunch, smashing its \$400,000 goal. The Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness and funds in support of women and men with breast cancer. The foundation was established in 1995 by a group of passionate doctors, surgeons and advocates committed to supporting breast cancer patients by raising much-needed funds in support of research, treatment and care. I make special acknowledgment of Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation Chair Lynne Crookes, OAM, and Mosman local and foundation director Catherine West for all of their work in seeking to improve the early detection of breast cancer and raise the quality of life and survival rates of breast cancer patients. Once again, I congratulate the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation on all its amazing work. I loved joining its members at their wonderfully successful Rugby Long Lunch and I look forward to continuing to support their incredible work.

#### **KINGSGROVE HIGH SCHOOL CAREERS EXPO**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:28):** I was privileged to represent Premier Chris Minns at my old high school, Kingsgrove High School, at its recent careers expo. This exceptional event provided students with invaluable opportunities to engage with various organisations and educational institutions, fostering a platform for exploring future pathways and aspirations. The careers expo showcased an impressive array of organisations, including NSW Ports, the Australian Defence Force and the NSW Police Force, allowing students to connect directly with professionals and gain insights into potential career paths. Furthermore, the presence of esteemed tertiary education centres provided students with the chance to learn about diverse academic opportunities and seek guidance for their future academic pursuits. It was fantastic to see students from Kingsgrove North High School, which is in my electorate of Canterbury, and also students from Beverly Hills Girls High School. Their presence at the careers expo further enriched the event and showcased the collaborative efforts within the educational community. I congratulate Kingsgrove High School careers adviser Artemis Theodoris Papoutsis on the event.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:29):** My parents migrated to Australia from Hong Kong in 1960. That act of migration, shared by many residents in my electorate of Strathfield, severed our family's ancient physical connection with our ancestral land in China. Mum and Dad built a new life from the ground up through sacrifice and hard work. We love Australia. It is our home. We will be buried here or our ashes will be scattered here. Yet

Mum and Dad have not engaged emotionally with reconciliation, nor have they thought deeply about the vast Indigenous history of our nation. They were too busy working to build the foundations of our lives to have had the headspace to engage politically or spiritually with Australia. While they do not carry guilt from our nation's dark past of dispossession and brutality, they also do not share a strong connection to Australia's 75,000-year Indigenous history. In that sense, their Australianess is still incomplete, unfinished.

Research is showing a majority of culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] citizens support the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. But CALD communities, the research says, are not genuinely engaged in the Voice and lack understanding about our system of government, reconciliation and the Voice itself. The danger, then, is that their support is vulnerable to scare campaigns and misinformation. I have heard some of those scare campaigns in the community. "Why isn't there a multicultural voice for the many CALD communities who remain chronically under-represented in our Parliament?" "Will it endanger our democracy?" I have also seen some truly ludicrous claims on social media, such as that migrants will lose their homes to Indigenous Australians if they vote yes.

The urgent challenge for the yes campaign is to reach into multicultural communities to build engagement and understanding while articulating a compelling narrative for supporting the Voice. That must encompass both what the Voice is and what it means for diverse Australians. I believe it has three pillars. The first and most basic pillar is that the Voice is fair and that it is safe. It is a modest proposal that does nothing more to our system of government than give First Nations people recognition and a say in the decisions that impact them. There is no multicultural voice to Parliament because the Voice reflects something unique about First Nations people: that their direct ancestors were here first; that this was and still is their land from which they have been dispossessed unjustly; and that they remain the most disadvantaged people on earth. That is a distinctive and enduring burden.

Most migrants have not experienced being torn from their mothers' arms by the government. Nor do they experience the same devastating health, education and employment disadvantages of Indigenous people. However, many migrants share with First Nations people a lived experience of racism and the struggle for respect and belonging. Accordingly, the second pillar of the argument for migrants to support the Voice is about justice. The narrative of dispossession and dislocation speaks powerfully to many migrant communities. When I was a child, Grandma would tell me about the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, the massacres of Chinese people on their home soil and how China was carved up by foreign powers after the Opium Wars and in the pre-war years. Migrants and refugees from the Middle East would know millennia of conquest and displacement from ancient times to the modern day. Those from India, South-East Asia, Africa and South America would understand the harrowing history of colonisation.

Migrants understand the visceral pain of losing ancestral homelands. They also understand the slippery-walled pit of structural disadvantage, the struggle to get a guernsey in Australia's history and mythology and, in the face of persistent racism and discrimination, the fight for justice and belonging. If Indigenous Australians as the traditional owners of these lands cannot obtain justice and recognition, then what hope of this is there for migrants? The third and most profound pillar is that the referendum invites migrant Australians to embrace Australia's Indigenous culture, joining it with Australia's dynamic multiculturalism and thereby fusing our past, present and future into a powerful, unifying tenet. That is the soaring ambition at the centre of the Uluru Statement from the Heart: for Australia to imagine itself as a better nation.

For migrants such as my parents, the Voice is an invitation to learn about and accept wholeheartedly the gift of Indigenous culture from the world's oldest living civilisation that continues to guide and nourish us. In that sense, the Voice referendum is part of the Uluru statement's invitation for communion with Australia's spirit. It means sharing in our nation's pain as well as our joy, our shame as well as our pride, our brightest angels and our darkest demons. It is an invitation to love and embrace our beautiful but imperfect nation as a whole and, in so doing, ourselves be made whole and more completely Australian. Indeed, it is an opportunity for all of us. After all, apart from First Nations people, we are all migrants to Australia.

#### **WAHROONGA ELECTORATE EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:35):** Unfortunately, when wild weather hits our State, it often does so with such a vengeance that at times it even outstrips the scientific predictions and analyses of our own weather experts. If not for the volunteers in the emergency services selflessly placing themselves in harm's way to protect our communities, no doubt we would not make such resilient recoveries following extreme weather events. I therefore acknowledge our emergency services, both locally and across New South Wales. The NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer fire service, made up of more than 70,000 dedicated volunteers across the State. Similarly, the NSW State Emergency Service is a volunteer emergency and rescue service numbering over 10,000 volunteers, who assist our communities in times of natural and man-made disasters.

Locally, the Wahroonga electorate is home to the Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, and Westleigh brigades of the RFS, as well as the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby SES units. Sadly, our local community has been dealt its fair share of bushfires and violent weather events. I think all the way back to what is called "The Storm", the cyclone in 1991 that tore through large parts of St Ives, Turramurra and Wahroonga, or the incredible firestorm of the summer of 1993-94 that engulfed so many communities in our State and the fantastic national parks in my electorate. More recently, I think of the Turramurra bushfires in 2019 or even the storm of 2019 that swept across our community, bringing down trees and powerlines across the former Ku-ring-gai electorate and the Davidson electorate, including those near my own home.

As destructive as those extreme weather events were, I am incredibly grateful to our local emergency services, both the SES and RFS, whose tireless efforts saved lives and homes on multiple occasions. But their selflessness extends beyond our communities. During the 2019-20 bushfire emergency, members of the local Hornsby Ku-ring-gai district RFS were deployed across New South Wales, playing an integral part in the firefighting response. Likewise the Ku-ring-gai SES was on the streets of Newcastle during that city's shocking and deadly earthquake in 1989. Before that the Ku-ring-gai unit had a presence at the evacuation of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy in December 1974 and was on the scene of Australia's worst ever train accident, at Granville.

Considering all that, I was honoured to be invited to the tenth anniversary of the Ku-ring-gai emergency services compound in North Wahroonga on 27 May this year. The compound houses both the Ku-ring-gai RFS brigade and the Ku-ring-gai SES unit. I always enjoy the esprit de corps of our local RFS brigade and SES unit when I meet them. It was a truly special occasion. Just like many of the structures our emergency services save and help bring back from the brink of destruction, the headquarters at North Wahroonga is somewhat of a phoenix story itself. The Ku-ring-gai SES used to be headquartered in the Golden Jubilee playing fields, in a compound alongside the Ku-ring-gai Rural Fire Service. Due to structural issues arising from the instability of the land on which those buildings were located, the units were forced to relocate so that the old headquarters could be removed and new structures developed. This process of demolishing and rebuilding took over five years.

In 2013, within just two years of the election of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, the compound was finally completed thanks to \$3.3 million in funding from various levels of government. The facility was commissioned by none other than former local member and then Premier Barry O'Farrell, who was my parliamentary predecessor. I am pleased that after years of structural issues and patience from our emergency services, the facility was eventually built. The complex is a credit also to the local community, which helped to raise more than \$160,000 to build this community asset. I thank inspector Alex Mackay, commander of the SES Ku-ring-gai Unit, and captain Nic Lyons, brigade captain of the Ku-ring-gai Bush Fire Brigade, for leading those great community organisations. I thank also past and present volunteers for everything they have done, both locally and throughout New South Wales.

#### **LANCE STUDDERT RESERVE**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (18:40):** I inform the House about the amazing community hub that has grown and blossomed over the past 10 years at Lance Studdert Reserve, Kyeemagh, which is in my electorate. Lance Studdert Reserve was well known for many years as the home of the fishoes, the old Brighton-Le-Sands Amateur Fishermen's Association.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Hear, hear!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I am sure the good member for Tweed is familiar with it, being a former local. The clubhouse opened in 1957 and backed onto the adjacent Muddy Creek. There were slipways for working on boats, a launching ramp, extensive parking and it was an ideal location with all-weather access via the Cooks River to Botany Bay and beyond. The fishoes was a landmark in my electorate for 55 years. At the same time, just a bit further along the creek was the 1st Kyeemagh Sea Scouts—also a longstanding centre for youth and community activities. Sadly, in the late 1990s and 2000s changing local demographics undercut both of those once-proud institutions. The Scouts closed down and the fishoes club followed in 2012. The old clubhouse had to be demolished some years later due to age and dilapidation.

Despite those blows, my local community was determined to not lose the great facilities at the reserve, and a new boating and fishing association was quickly formed to make use of the old fishoes infrastructure. While the boaters and fishers were getting back on their feet, a delegation from the Bayside Men's Shed came to see me. They were looking for a permanent home, as their existing sublet accommodation in a former smash repair workshop at Arncliffe was about to end. With the help of council, we quickly established that the old Sea Scout hall at Lance Studdert Reserve would be perfect for their needs, and they moved in and set up shop. If members saw that facility today, they would be amazed. The building is packed with wood and metalworking equipment, and it hums with the mixture of working and talking that means so much to many of our senior blokes.

In 2017 the final piece of the puzzle fell into place with the creation of The Bay Community Garden. Built entirely by volunteers, it instantly became a much-loved feature of the park. In fact, it drew in so many people of all ages and backgrounds who wanted to dig, mulch and grow that it had to be doubled in size in 2018. It now covers 800 square metres and is as loved by the general public as it is by the gardeners themselves. What is particularly great about Lance Studdert Reserve is that the three groups work together, constantly looking to improve both the park and wider community. The Bayside Men's Shed makes beehives and other structures for the community garden, while the gardeners make sure the Men's Shed gets herbs and fresh produce. Meanwhile, the boaters and fishers recently organised a berth for a Marine Rescue NSW boat to be stationed permanently on Muddy Creek, improving the rescue coverage of Botany Bay and all the areas off the coast.

It is obvious how much time and effort has gone into building up this fantastic community hub. It is a happy and productive space that has grown organically, entirely thanks to the vision and hard work of some of our best citizens. Currently, Bayside Council is formulating a new plan of management for the reserve, and I look forward to seeing all of the outstanding community users fully catered for in the final version. With the right support, with their needs respected and the park's facilities and infrastructure enhanced and upgraded, these great community organisations can be powered up and taken to the next level. Lance Studdert Reserve is a vital component in our fantastic Rockdale and Bayside lifestyle. Long may it continue.

### NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:44):** I update the House on the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. New life has been breathed into a section of the old Casino to Murwillumbah rail line, with the first leg of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail officially opening in March this year. Spanning 24 kilometres from Murwillumbah in the Lismore electorate through the Tweed Valley and on to Crabbes Creek in the southern end of my electorate of Tweed, the Northern Rivers Rail Trail has already welcomed thousands of visitors. It is a drawcard for walkers, hikers, runners, cyclists, families, locals and tourists alike.

The first section of the trail features 26 bridges and two tunnels. The Burringbar Range Tunnel is 500 metres long and one of New South Wales' longest train tunnels. It is long enough to provide suitable darkness for microbats to roost in and is also home to glow-worms. It is a very popular section of the trail. The glow-worms are an attraction in their own right. The trail winds through the scenic Tweed hinterland, showing off the beauty and diversity of our region. The villages of Crabbes Creek, Mooball, Burringbar, Upper Burringbar and Stokers Siding have seen an influx of visitors, giving a much-needed boost to small businesses in those villages—businesses like The Barn Burringbar, the Victory Hotel in Mooball, Moo Moo Roadhouse, Tweed Valley Whey Farmhouse Cheeses, Heaths Old Wares, Brooklyn Tasting Room and Stokers Siding General Store and Post Office.

Local bike shops have also benefitted from the trail's opening, and clever fix-it stations have been set up along the trail, providing handy tools necessary for on-the-go bike maintenance. The opening of the rail trail has given new opportunities not only to local businesses but also to local residents of the Tweed. The purpose-built rail trail provides a safe place to cycle, among other activities, without the worries of riding on main roads or alongside traffic. The majority of the rail trail is a gradual slope with no tight bends or sudden dips, providing a pleasant and enjoyable experience for users. The rail trail attracts a wide range of users, from e-bikes to push scooters, prams to dog walkers, and there is even a 2.2-kilometre stretch for horseriding—for those with a permit. Importantly, the rail trail is inclusive and features six kilometres of sealed asphalt in two high-traffic areas. The remaining 18 kilometres is compacted gravel, which is suitable for mobility scooters and other devices. It is a wonderful addition to the activities that are available in the Tweed.

I am proud of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government, which provided \$7.8 million in funding under the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, plus another \$600,000 for operational and maintenance costs. The Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek section was the first of four stages in the Northern Rivers Rail Trail project, which will total 132 kilometres when complete. I acknowledge also the work of Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc. for its significant contribution to making the rail trail a reality. I offer my personal thanks to president Pat Grier for being a tireless advocate for the rail trail, as well as all members of the executive, the board and association members for their dedication and hard work towards making this project a reality. Thanks also to Tweed Shire Council for managing the design and construction of the rail trail. It truly is a feather in our cap in the Tweed. It is a wonderful addition to our region, and I encourage everyone to add the Northern Rivers Rail Trail to their to-do list.

I thank also the Hon. Mick Veitch, formerly of the other place. He was a patron of the rail trail association in New South Wales. He was a tireless worker and supporter. I remember the very night—morning, at about 2.00 a.m.—when the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail Trails) Bill 2022 finally got through the upper House. I must admit the bill passed through this House fairly rapidly but, as we know, the other place can be rather difficult at times. Mick Veitch was a strong worker. Some people are not happy with the rail trail and want to



bring back the train, but the majority of people who use it day in, day out support it. I think it is a fine addition. I encourage other areas to go down the same route as it really helps local businesses. I am sure it will only grow in success as time goes by.

### WORKPLACE FALLS FROM HEIGHTS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:48):** My electorate of Canterbury is home to thousands of essential workers, including many construction workers and apprentices. In February, in the dying days of the former Coalition Government, a District Court judge raised the alarm over the worrying increase in falls from heights leading to serious injury and death. His Honour made comment in the judgement on the number of falls-from-height matters the court has observed in recent years. He also requested that SafeWork NSW send a copy of the judgement to the Minister with responsibility for workplace safety who holds office in the next Government. Those are remarkable instructions from an officer of the court. He drew attention to the need for strong deterrence to prevent falls.

Falls are the single biggest cause of all traumatic injuries on New South Wales construction sites, with 16 people killed between 2018 and 2022. A fall from as little as two metres can be catastrophic, and nearly one-quarter of all current SafeWork NSW investigations relate to falls from heights. This Government is committed to taking urgent action to ensure workers, including those in my electorate of Canterbury, make it home safe at the end of the day. The anytime, anywhere campaign will see inspectors on the ground visiting construction sites across the State. They will not hesitate to stop work on site, issue fines of up to \$3,600 and consider prosecution against a person conducting a business or undertaking and individuals breaking the law and flouting critical safety regulations.

Every day SafeWork NSW inspectors are on the ground. The Government is currently running a campaign on falls from heights. Construction sites have many young people on them, particularly in the areas of north-west Sydney and south-west Sydney. I have been on the ground with inspectors and seen inappropriate processes. A number of building sites have no guard rails or void protection in place. I have seen apprentices working on those sites, usually young people, and falls from heights can be quite traumatic. Falls from heights are entirely preventable tragedies. They can be avoided with tried and tested measures such as using roof guard rails, harnesses and covering voids. There is no excuse for not meeting the work health and safety standards to protect those working at heights. The Government will continue to work hard to get the message across.

The former Government did very little in 12 years when it came to running campaigns, particularly for young people. Many young people, including apprentices, people going through TAFE and university, young people working across retail, construction and hospitality are receiving very little messaging about work health and safety. The Government will continue to work hard across government, particularly with our multicultural communities and agency to ensure that workers who speak another language receive that information in different languages. The Government's message is for construction sites to expect a visit from an inspector who will throw the book at anyone breaking work health and safety laws.

### SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL AND BIOELEKTRA AUSTRALIA

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:52):** I present evidence of what appears to be wilful neglect and abject failure by Shoalhaven City Council to undertake the most basic due diligence, which has resulted in ratepayers being ripped off and our environment being left worse off. I refer to the smouldering and discombobulated mess that is council's contract with Bioelektra Australia and its managing director Fred Itaoui. In 2018 Shoalhaven City councillors and staff visited Bioelektra in Poland. Attractive to councillors was a claim that Bioelektra's technology did not require conventional source separation and that only 4 per cent of municipal waste would be returned to landfill with the remaining 96 per cent of waste being turned into fertilizer or fuel. In 2019 Bioelektra Poland visited Shoalhaven to discuss its technology. Convinced by the technology, council signed a contract with Bioelektra Australia.

I make clear that while I supported the introduction of a green bin during my time as a Shoalhaven councillor, I commend those councillors who wanted to challenge conventional waste management thinking. But they were dubiously duped. Bioelektra Australia's contract with Shoalhaven City Council was predicated on a requirement that neighbouring councils would run their waste through Bioelektra Australia's facility at West Nowra in order to make the technology and the investment viable. No neighbouring council with Shoalhaven has ever signed on—not even close. Despite that, millions of ratepayer dollars were committed to clearing and preparing the site, which also involved ripping out hundreds if not thousands of trees, displacing local wildlife.

But it gets worse. EQ Constructions, contracted by Bioelektra Australia to prepare the site, went into voluntary administration leaving local subbies unpaid for work carried out. Not long after, Bioelektra Australia would go into administration and now liquidation. On 30 May Bioelektra Poland sent a shocking communication

to council. In the letter it was revealed that Bioelektra Australia, with whom council had signed up, had no legal connection with Bioelektra in Poland. For all intents and purposes, Bioelektra Australia was a shelf company. It did not own the rights to Bioelektra Poland's technology or intellectual property—not even the trademark. Bioelektra Australia has never delivered a single waste facility.

What I find inexplicable is that councillors went to Poland to visit a waste management company. That same company then visited the Shoalhaven. But rather than enter negotiations with the company with which council was working, council entered an arrangement with an entirely different company that does not own the technology, has never delivered a waste contract and has no legal relationship with Bioelektra in Poland. Instead, council entered a contract with Bioelektra Australia and its managing director Fred Itaoui, who has seemingly come from nowhere and nabbed a contract worth millions of dollars.

Who is Fred Itaoui? According to his LinkedIn profile, he is the general manager of Swan Services Pty Ltd. Liquidation proceedings concerning Swan Services in the New South Wales Supreme Court in 2016 indicate that Mr Itaoui was the chief executive officer for the Swan Group from March 1993 until October 2012. He was also the managing director of Clearlink Services, which was the subject of a proposed deregistration notice under the Corporations Act. In 2017 Mr Itaoui was listed as a key speaker at a waste expo conference in Australia where he was boasting the benefits of Bioelektra's technology. The December-January 2018 edition of *Waste Management Review* reports that Mr Itaoui said:

2017 has been the global launch of Bioelektra Group. At the moment, we're talking to countries like Chile, Argentina, India, Iran, Turkey and Australia.

I return to the letter I mentioned earlier from Bioelektra Group in Poland to Shoalhaven City Council on 30 May this year. In that letter Bioelektra Group advised the council of the following:

Today we feel that we have been cheated and have had our reputation damaged by both the actions of Mr Fred Itaoui and also his company Bioelektra Australia. Bioelektra Group SA has never had any financial, personal or contractual connection with either Bioelektra Australia nor its shareholders or managers. Neither Mr Fred Itaoui nor Bioelektra Australia were ever given permission to use our name, logo and promotional materials which remain the property of Bioelektra Group S.A. It must be pointed out that Bioelektra Australia has never received our permission to act in our name nor on our behalf, and further that any claims that Bioelektra Australia and Bioelektra Group are formally connected or that Bioelektra Australia is holding company to Bioelektra Group are false.

Ratepayers have been ripped off not just because the council was duped but also because for 13 years the pursuit of different technology has meant waste that could have been deferred from landfill has been going into landfill and attracting additional taxes to residents who have also missed out on subsidies from government to promote more environmentally friendly waste management. The Minister for Local Government must launch an independent inquiry into council's dealings with Bioelektra Australia and Fred Itaoui. If he ignores the request, I will consider referring the matter to ICAC. Whilst there is much more to say about Mr Itaoui, I simply say that no-one rips off my community and gets away with it.

#### AUBURN POET LAUREATE

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:58):** Every year since 2020 I have funded the Auburn Poet Laureate Competition. The competition is open to all primary schools and high schools within the electorate of Auburn. The laureates are awarded for outstanding creative and intellectual achievement, and there are two awards: the Junior Poet Laureate for Auburn primary schools and the Senior Poet Laureate for Auburn high schools. The laureates are chosen from a list of finalists in each category, and the two laureates win \$500 each for their school's P&C and a trophy. I do not judge the competition; the judging panel has always been independent. The judging panel is headed by Nadia Repin, the former head of English at Sefton High School and a consultant for the south-west region, and Walter Mason, an accomplished travel writer and popular literary lecturer who was formerly part of the University of Western Sydney's prestigious writing and society research unit.

Every year there has been a different topic. In the first year, 2020—during COVID—the topic was "Reflection", which gave children the opportunity, particularly at the start of the lockdown, to reflect on their feelings. The other two topics have been "Joy" and "Beginnings". This year's topic, which will open shortly, is "Seeing things differently". This year trophies will be awarded to the winner and the runner-up and there will be a highly commended category. I would love to read last year's winning senior poem about joy, from Kyah Nguyen at Birrong Girls High School, but it is a bit long. Instead, I will read the 2021 senior winning poem on beginnings by Sophie Du, who was in year 9 at Birrong Girls High School:

It's scuffing of shoes against concrete pavements,  
It's tripping before reaching your destination,  
It's a far reach to the top shelf,  
A wilting daffodil in your palm,  
And you can't really help how it goes.  
It's life before you know who you're going to be.  
It's big,

loud,  
 slow,  
 and cruel.  
 It's a white canvas waiting for disaster to happen,  
 But why won't you let chaos ensue?  
 It could be new shoes waiting for you,  
 A hand helping you up,  
 A stool to help reach,  
 A new daffodil seedling,  
 And perhaps you can make your mark.  
 It's a new life awaiting you.  
 It's big,  
 loud,  
 swift,  
 kind —  
 And you won't ever know what'll happen  
 If you don't go past chapter one...

You can see the talent that we have in our schools. The poetry competition receives hundreds of poems every year. Sophie Du has also been a runner-up in years past. The poems from our primary school students are just as impressive. This is the poem about joy that won last year's junior category, entitled *When I saw my grandmother for the first time*, by Hassan from Regents Park primary:

I was on cloud nine  
 When I saw my grandmother  
 For the first time.  
 JOY  
 Excitement, delight as  
 She ran in full flight  
 JOY  
 I hugged her tightly  
 As my heart skipped a beat  
 Feeling the fluttery butterflies  
 Right down to my feet  
 JOY  
 Seeing her tears  
 Eliminated my fears  
 JOY  
 Her crescent moon smile  
 Would light up the winter night  
 JOY  
 The darkness on my side  
 Flew away with a glide  
 As she stood by my side  
 JOY

This remarkable poem from a 10-year-old boy about his grandmother is indicative of the poems we get. The beauty of the poet laureate competition is that it gives children an opportunity to express themselves. I am a great advocate for sport because it brings so much to classroom education and health, but the arts, drama, music, poetry and an ability to express themselves is also important for children. We must ensure that we give them those vehicles to get through. The competition is the best money I spend in the electorate. When the competition reaches its fifth year, I hope to put all the poems from the finalists of the Auburn Poet Laureate Competition into a little book.

#### MEMBER FOR DAVIDSON

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (19:02):** I give a 100-day report card on my work as the member for Davidson and the performance of the New South Wales Government. I plan to update the people of the electorate of Davidson twice yearly on how I am working for our community. In this first 100 days I am pleased to have delivered my inaugural speech, which will act as my tracks and my North Star as long as I am a member of Parliament. It outlines my public policy interests, my values and my hope. I am also pleased to have made private member's statements. My first outlined the 2023 election in Davidson, setting out my focus for the next four years and thanking our wonderful volunteers. My second launched a petition to save the Active Kids vouchers program, which has been cut substantially by the Minns Labor Government. With this advocacy, 15 per cent of the program remains. However, 85 per cent has been cut, which will hurt the families and children of the Davidson electorate. My third private member's statement outlined my support for a yes vote in the upcoming constitutional referendum. I stress again to all Australians that they will have the opportunity to vote on that important issue.

During the past 100 days I asked the Premier a question without notice on planning. He pointed out that I am on the record as stating, "We need more homes and supporting infrastructure, not overdevelopment." The Premier called that "nimbyism on steroids". It appears the Premier thinks that when it comes to more homes, we

do not need to invest in more schools, hospitals, police stations, roads and transport. I am an advocate for infrastructure. The Minister for Housing stated, in relation to new medium- and high-density social housing, "If they can't get behind it then get out of the way." That sums up the disregard for proper community consultation and investment in infrastructure.

In and around the Davidson electorate, whether it be the proposed developments at Lourdes in Killara or those at Lizard Rock in Belrose, we must ensure that the community has its say, that there is infrastructure investment and that there is no substantial risk from bushfires. Over the next four years I will have much more to say on planning. I have also had the pleasure of asking over 35 questions on notice about the management of integrity measures, respect for taxpayer funds and public policy. I am genuinely interested in New South Wales playing a key role in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics; in using the latest technology to keep our kids safe around schools, as advocated by St Ives High School P&C; and in preventative health measures. I am pleased that the Government answered my question on investing \$200,000 in the Killara Rural Fire Brigade, which is a great win for the Davidson community. I am pleased to have contributed over 45 community recognition statements. The people of the Davidson electorate have made that extremely easy, as Davidson has the second highest volunteer rates in New South Wales. It has been an absolute pleasure to highlight my community's achievements.

Finally, I will touch on public policy and on my role as a member of the Opposition. Holding the Government to account is a necessary job. I am committed to using my energy to bring back a rejuvenated Liberal team, led by Mark Speakman, to reclaim government in four years. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition did a lot of good work in its 12 years in government. It built transformative infrastructure, including metros, motorways, schools and hospitals. It employed record numbers of doctors, nurses, teachers and police. They are the heroes who helped us get through the pandemic. It also undertook asset recycling that helped grow the State's asset balance sheet by over \$100 billion. This was all made possible by starting strongly in 2011 during the first 100 days of government under Premier Barry O'Farrell. That Government had a 100-day action plan that was detailed, transparent and fully implemented. Twenty-seven pieces of legislation were passed in that time to reduce payroll tax, establish Infrastructure NSW and implement new integrity measures.

As we all know, the cost of living is spiralling. As a millennial and as part of a new generation of Liberals in this place, I understand that delivering a strong economy is central to everything. The New South Wales economy is Australia's economic powerhouse. When New South Wales does well, Australia does well. The Minns Government needs to step up. Instead of curbing inflation, which is now at 7 per cent, it prioritised abolishing the public sector wage cap, which will cost \$2.5 billion over the next four years. Instead of supporting families and investing in preventative health, it has axed 85 per cent of the Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers. Instead of making home ownership a reality, it has made it even harder for first home buyers by abolishing the choice of paying an up-front stamp duty or a broad-based land tax. If the first 100 days of the Minns Labor Government are anything to go by, the people of New South Wales are in for a challenging four years. But, rest assured, I will hold the Government to account.

## **SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (19:07):** Shelter is a basic human right. I am pleased to be part of a government that recognises not only that but also that the shelter we provide for our most vulnerable citizens has, over the past several years, not been anywhere near good enough. I have lost count of the number of times I have spoken in this place about public housing issues in my local area, the ongoing and persistent maintenance issues that have plagued public housing tenants, the lack of access and the interminable waiting times in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, the massive increases in the number of people experiencing or facing homelessness, and the previous Government's clear disinterest in providing safe and secure accommodation for the most vulnerable members of our community.

The previous Government's disinterest is obvious. In June last year the wait for a studio apartment or one-bedroom property in Newcastle was two to five years, and anyone waiting for a larger property faces a wait of up to a decade. It is even worse in Lake Macquarie East. More than 500 people were on the waiting list on 30 June last year, and they were facing waits of between five and 10 years for a property of any size. Each and every day my office deals with multiple issues related to the legacy of neglect of our social housing, whether it is tenants who have been left waiting for repairs, families left languishing on transfer lists in overcrowded homes, or people who are desperate to access stable, safe accommodation. Every day I hear from people who are trying to navigate a public housing system left in an absolute shambles by the former Government. To demonstrate how truly dire the situation this Government inherited is, we only need to look at the 2023 street count of rough sleepers. It recorded 1,623 people sleeping rough, which is over 400 more people sleeping rough than last year's count. What is even more disturbing to me is that the count showed that more people are sleeping rough in regional areas like my electorate.

Even the longest night is followed by the dawn. Today, as I speak once more about these issues, I am pleased to report that there is finally some positive news. We have a Minister for Housing, and Minister for Homelessness, and a Minister for Planning and Public Spaces who care and who have vision for the future. We have a government in which every member is committed to working with the others to fix this long-neglected problem. We are taking a fresh approach to support housing organisations with the announcement of a two-year extension of specialist homelessness services contracts. That decision will enable those organisations to build up their networks, to develop their capacity and, most importantly, to deliver services and support with certainty to the people who need them.

We have also taken the decision to ease the burden on people living in temporary accommodation. These are people who are already under an enormous amount of stress, as my experiences in the Charlestown electorate office have shown me. We are taking a more compassionate attitude towards people experiencing or facing homelessness. We are taking a more engaged stance with our public housing tenants and their needs. And we are doing it by taking on the problem right at its source. As the housing and homelessness Minister said, "You can't solve homelessness without housing." I am proud to be part of a government that understands this. I am proud to be part of a government that will streamline the complicated and byzantine network of agencies responsible for this area by creating Homes NSW. I am proud to be part of a government that is auditing all New South Wales government land to identify options for more housing.

I am proud to be part of a government that will remove barriers to the construction and provision of more high-density, low-cost and public housing. I am proud to be part of a government committed to working with the private sector to incentivise the provision of affordable housing. And I am proud that we have instituted a freeze on the sale of public housing stock. We have to put a stop to the off-loading of public housing so that we can keep more people in safe, secure housing. After 12 years of waiting, public housing tenants in Charlestown have reason to be optimistic. I am proud to say that the Minns Labor Government is deeply committed to ensuring everyone can live in safe, affordable housing. I know the people in my electorate need it.

#### COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:12):** On the Coffs Coast we are fortunate to have countless individuals, organisations and clubs who are enriching the community in which they live and work. They are to be commended for their dedication and passion and for helping to make our region the best address in New South Wales. I applaud the hard work of just some of those people and groups who bring great credit to themselves and the Coffs Coast. To celebrate the people among us who drive positive change, RSPCA NSW has awarded Sawtellian Graham Isaac the 2023 Volunteer of the Year award.

In his acceptance speech, Graham said it was a special moment to celebrate all the volunteers who generously donate their time to RSPCA NSW. After moving to the Coffs Coast 30 years ago and working with Centrelink for 20 years, Graham said he was not quite ready to sit back and relax in retirement. Instead, he wanted to give back to his local community. Graham has volunteered for three years at the Coffs Harbour shelter, where most of his time is spent working with the dogs. He is among more than 50 volunteers who give their time at the shelter. In fact, volunteers are the cornerstone of the remarkable work undertaken by RSPCA NSW. Last financial year alone, volunteers donated more than 224,000 hours.

Sporting organisations tend to bring out the best in their participants. At Woolgoolga Croquet Club, for example, recently it was time to party to celebrate the birthdays of seven members who turn 80 this year. The club celebrated the birthdays of Leslie Fitzgerald, Trish Heckenberg, Val Mackay, Carol Rowe, Geoffrey Scotford, Maggie Watson and Carmel Woldseth. Woolgoolga Croquet Club plays on Tuesdays and Fridays from 7.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. and Saturdays from 8.00 a.m., and holds its meetings at C.ex Woolgoolga.

Coffs Coast schools, meanwhile, are providing the right environment for our children to thrive. In fact, two Coffs Coast students are proudly flying the flag for our region after they were awarded prestigious scholarships at the 2023 Proudly Public awards at Sydney Town Hall. They were among more than 700 public school students and educators from across Australia to receive scholarships administered by the Public Education Foundation in 2023. Nada Ali from Coffs Harbour High School was awarded the Friends of Zainab Senior Secondary Scholarship, and Mason Stubbs from Sandy Beach Public School received the Public Education Foundation Primary Scholarship. I congratulate Toormina High School student Leandra Avuri-Williams, who has been selected to dance with the prestigious Indigenous dance company Bangarra Dance Theatre. Leandra, 16, was accepted into a select group chosen from across New South Wales to dance with Bangarra in the Schools Spectacular at Sydney Olympic Park. Leandra has also gained a certificate III in Gumbaynggirr language, and she is able to educate others about her culture.

On the health front, Coffs Coast locals are supporting Bowel Cancer Awareness Month in June by promoting the importance of doing a bowel cancer screening test at age 50, which is when people become eligible

for the free program. Donna Blythe and Sharen Hackfath are sharing their journeys to highlight the importance of early detection, and they hosted Red Apple Day on 21 June at Coffs Harbour Hospital. That is Bowel Cancer Australia's annual giving day, when we are encouraged to support the charity's vital work.

Donna Blythe, a registered nurse, received and did her test when she turned 50. The result was unfortunately positive, and a follow-up colonoscopy found a cancer. She was feeling well and had no symptoms at the time. She was in great hands with local colorectal surgeon Dr Andrew Sutherland, who removed the cancer. It had spread to the lymph nodes, so Donna underwent three months of chemotherapy. Sharen Hackfath, a swim and dance instructor, was aged 54 when she had a positive result from her at-home bowel screen after two previous negative tests. A colonoscopy confirmed a cancerous tumour and within six weeks of diagnosis her busy life was put on hold so she could have surgery to remove the cancer, successfully performed by her colorectal surgeon Dr Wilson Petrushenko. That was followed by three months of chemotherapy. Bowel cancer is often considered a silent disease, which is why early detection is so important. I encourage all people over 50 in New South Wales to do the test.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** A happy birthday present.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** It is a great happy birthday present. Early detection and treatment are far better than having the process drag on for months if not years.

### MARINE RESCUE CENTRAL COAST

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:18):** I sing the praises of Marine Rescue Central Coast. Since it is surrounded by 80 kilometres of coastline, it is important for the Central Coast to have an organisation to watch over the vessels and water users on our coast and beautiful waterways. The Marine Rescue Central Coast takes up the challenge of this task. For 24 hours a day, every day, there is a team of volunteers ensuring that members of the boating community can be confident that when they call for help a professionally trained and equipped rescue crew will be quickly underway. Recently I had the privilege to attend the awards presentation of Marine Rescue Central Coast at the Ettalong Diggers Club. I was lucky enough to be joined by my good friend and the Federal member for Robertson, the fabulous Dr Gordon Reid. There was a plethora of awards to be handed out, including unit life memberships awarded to Ted Leeson, Sherwin Hensby and Geoff Dark.

Sherwin is an amazing volunteer who received a life achievement award for 35 years of service. He was visited in hospital by a couple of his Marine Rescue colleagues in the week prior to the event because they thought he would not be able to make it. So it was amazing to see Sherwin out of hospital, dressed in his beautiful Marine Rescue uniform and accompanied by his beautiful wife, there to receive this award. It was important to the Marine Rescue family that Sherwin enjoy receiving his award on the night. Sherwin's volunteering journey started not with water but with fire. While volunteering for the RFS, he spent many years serving food to frontline firefighters at the scene, along with many other duties, and then committed his time to serving with Marine Rescue.

Another recipient, Geoff Dark, received his award posthumously and a moment's silence was observed. I deeply appreciate the contribution that Geoff made to the unit over many years of service and take this opportunity to offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends. Unit Commander Mr Ian Morrow is also worthy of mention. There was lovely camaraderie in the room that night, and many comments were made about Ian's efforts to turn around morale at the Point Clare base. In the King's Birthday honours, Mr Morrow was awarded the Emergency Services Medal for his service to the Central Coast and Newcastle communities. He received the National Medal for 15 years of service and is a valuable asset to Marine Rescue Central Coast.

In the past six months Marine Rescue Central Coast has attended almost 200 boat-related incidents. Such statistics show how integral it is to the community. The importance of Marine Rescue Central Coast was clearly demonstrated this past weekend, which was another busy one on the water. Vessel CC21 was called to assist a 42-foot yacht that had run aground at Half Tide Rocks. The vessel was refloated and guided back to deep water by Marine Rescue. On the way back to base, CC21 was tasked to assist another vessel that had run aground in front of the narrows.

Sunday was a beautiful, clear, crisp day on the coast, but the ripple-free water did not deter Marine Rescue volunteers from taking part in a sea survival and firefighting course, which was conducted on the jetty. I am sure they had fun practising letting off flares. Following the training, there was a call for help from a vessel that had run aground in the mud at Davistown. CC21 and the team onboard successfully got the boat free and then carried out a surveillance of the water depth around the channel marker buoys at Half Tide Rocks and Lobster Beach. I have seen them do this a number of times. I was at Ettalong, watching Marine Rescue go out because it is a tricky time in the channel and the ferries have stopped running. On the awards night, I not only thanked them but also gave them a briefing on where the channel dredging will occur in the future. I appreciate their support in the weeks and months ahead until that dredging occurs.

I thank everyone across Marine Rescue. Norah Head has a fantastic lookout. It is a delight to wake up regularly to the ABC and hear Marine Rescue updates about the weather across our community. Terrigal has an ocean rescue unit, and at the Entrance a great team of volunteers work on the beautiful Tuggerah Lakes. They comprise a cross-section of ages and show fabulous teamwork and camaraderie. Skills are developed and passed on effectively through the generations within the organisation. I sing the praises of Marine Rescue Central Coast and thank the volunteers for their work.

### BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS SCHEME

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:23):** When the Biodiversity Conservation Act was introduced in 2016, the Liberal-Nationals Government sold it as a streamlined approach to biodiversity conservation and land management. In his second reading speech the then environment Minister said:

The new framework is based on the widely accepted view that we can have sustainable development while also protecting and enhancing our biodiversity.

We are a few years down the track, and I assure the House that the stated intent of the bill differs from the reality of the legislation in operation. Our regions have grave concerns that development of any type—for employment, schools, hospitals, agricultural infrastructure, services and now the critical supply of housing—has come to a grinding halt because of the Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. The cost of offsetting credits is now so high that it financially and commercially prohibits nearly all types of development from proceeding. Simply put, the opportunity for regional centres to grow is hamstrung by the scheme.

I recently spoke with a coalition of regional surveyors, local government and regional developers—including Craig Davies, the mayor of Narromine—who ask why the bush must carry the city's environmental compliance burden. The layers of disadvantage we face in the west far outweigh those of the city. Our life expectancy is shorter. We cannot attract doctors or healthcare professionals to our towns. Droughts, floods and bushfires impact us in many ways worse than ever before. The bush sees the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme as another layer of disadvantage, this time of a bureaucratic nature and one that holds us back from helping ourselves. What we see out west is major State significant infrastructure, such as Inland Rail and TransGrid, powering ahead and driving up the price of credits and depleting them. Regional growth targets cannot be met because of the need for affordable credits within the western region.

That means vital housing projects, employment and social infrastructure, like schools and universities, become unviable as they are forced to discharge their environmental obligations through the Biodiversity Conservation Trust at a considerably higher cost. I have been told about one situation where the market value was \$600 per credit but \$7,500 per credit through the trust. A project valued at \$336,000 in Bourke shire had additional offset costs of \$3.4 million, and so the project was lost. A commercial project in Gilgandra with an estimated value of \$4 million has the additional offset cost of \$1.4 million, which means that the project is being reduced in order to go ahead. They are just two examples from Barwon. Who knows how many more projects in other electorates have not gone ahead because the offset costs were just too much?

Regional development is critical to attracting people to our regional, rural and remote towns. The current situation under the Biodiversity Conservation Act is the antithesis of balancing development and environmental outcomes. Without development, there can be no environmental benefit from the offsets scheme. We are not asking to pave paradise to put up a parking lot. We need projects for the public good—hospitals, schools, housing—to help support our growing population centres. The intent of the Act is good, but it is not working. What was once designed to streamline an overly prescriptive system has become complicated, convoluted and open to vast interpretation.

Many concerns arise around the consent authorities who assess the development applications for biodiversity credits and the inconsistency with which they apply the framework. The inconsistency creates uncertainty, leading to perverse development outcomes driving up costs and creating barriers to investment. For example, a biodiversity constraints study was conducted on cultivation paddocks that had not been worked for a couple of years and were left to fallow. The paddocks had not been sprayed or cultivated prior to the assessment. The weeds found in the paddock were considered native species, and the cultivation paddocks were classified as degraded woodland. The overall ecosystem offset cost for the 46 lots was calculated to be around \$16.2 million. That is \$352,000 per lot. Post-subdivision the land value would be \$300,000 to \$350,000 per lot. In this one example, the offset costs are greater than the value of the land—and that is without adding the development application costs, construction costs and council fees.

There needs to be a better system, and there are good people out there with great solutions. One of the solutions is setting an offset cap at no more than 10 per cent of the englobo land value. Another, which I brought to the attention of this House through a notice of motion, is using the significant increase in national parks in regional New South Wales to provide offsets at no financial cost for public-good projects. Our offset goals will

still be achieved, but they will be balanced with public-good developments that our regions desperately need. We are currently experiencing a housing crisis. The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme does not align with the Government's Housing Strategy, which focuses on supply, affordability, diversity and resilience. We need to realign the Biodiversity Conservation Act with a changing State, otherwise we will continue to fall behind. We have a golden opportunity in our regions now to invest in all scales of development. Let us not let a poorly designed offsets scheme hold us back any longer.

### TRIBUTE TO ALAN FREDERICK GARSIDE, OAM

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:27):** Today I pay tribute to the late Mr Alan Frederick Garside, of Granville, who was recently posthumously awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the general division for service to football. Mr Garside was a renowned figure in the world of football, known for his significant contributions to the sport. He was also an avid cricketer and worked as a milkman throughout his life. A Granville football great, he commenced his career with the Granville Kewpies at the age of 11, in 1937. He later played for the Granville Magpies from 1943 to 1958, scoring 188 goals in over 210 NSW Soccer Football premiership matches, and knockout and cup games. He represented New South Wales from 1949 to 1959 and went on to play for Australia. He played in an era when players were not paid much at all and balanced a sporting career with the demands of work. He described this in an interview a few years ago. He said:

One weekend I did the milk run on Saturday morning, played on Saturday afternoon away at Woonona, did the milk run again on Sunday morning and then went to Newcastle and played Sunday afternoon, came back Sunday night to do the milk run Monday morning.

He scored two goals in each of those games. Arguably Granville's best ever player during Granville football's golden era of the 1940s and 1950s, Alan Garside was a versatile player who could play in a number of positions, and he was known for his athleticism, his passing ability and his eye for a goal. He was also a fierce competitor who never gave up.

Mr Garside's passion for the game and dedication to improving its infrastructure and development have helped shape the landscape of soccer in Australia and beyond. He was a strong advocate for the development of youth soccer, and he was instrumental in the growth and success of the Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association. He was also a tireless volunteer who gave his time to coaching, refereeing and administration. He was always willing to help out and he was always there to lend a hand. Mr Garside's contributions to the sport are highly regarded and appreciated by players, fans and the soccer community as a whole. Due to his contribution to Granville football, the Alan Garside Cup is now a fixture of the Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association's annual calendar for under-15 mixed teams.

Up until his recent passing, Alan was recognised as Australia's second-oldest Soccerroo. In 1952 he scored 53 goals in only 24 games, before forcing his way into the national team as he won selection in 1953 and became the 148th Soccerroo. He played his first game as a Soccerroo against China, and all together he played five matches for Australia, including games against South Africa and Hungary, before a leg injury and family life shortened his football career.

Alan Garside passed away peacefully on the evening of 23 May 2021 surrounded by his four children. He was 94 years old. Alan Garside was a true gentleman and a great ambassador for the game of football. He will be remembered for his dedication, his passion and his commitment to the sport. His legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew him. He was a true pioneer of the game and the award of an OAM is overdue recognition of one of the greats of Australian soccer. I quote from the 5 October 1952 edition of *The Sunday Herald*:

Soccer Premiership to Granville

Granville won its first State Soccer premiership when it beat last year's winner, Wallsend, by three goals to two in an exciting grand final at Lambert Park yesterday.

The match, rated by leading officials as one of the best grand finals since the start of the series in 1928 ...

The teams were one-all after the even and hard opening half ...

Then in the 12th minute came the turning point ...

After only three minutes Granville went to the lead when rangy centre-forward Alan Garside made a good opening ...

[Granville] further increased its lead in another five minutes when Garside jumped high to head the ball out of the goalkeeper's hands into the net.

The Garside family name is synonymous with Granville Soccer. Garside Park, the former home ground of the Granville Magpies, is named in honour of his father Frank Sr. On the occasion of Mr Garside's passing, the governing body of the sport for which he is renowned commented:



Football Australia is saddened to learn of the passing of Socceroo number 148, Alan Garside ...

Recently, Football Australia, together with former Socceroos goalkeeper Mark Bosnich, visited Garside in Sydney to present him with a Socceroos jersey and acknowledge his contribution to Australian football history.

Many of Garside's family and friends came out for the occasion, and shared with Football Australia many moments from his career through a variety of pictures, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia such as his national team selection letters.

Football Australia extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to Alan Garside's immediate family and friends.

Mr Alan Garside, OAM, thank you and congratulations on your Order of Australia, and my best wishes to your family.

### GOULBURN ELECTORATE MOTOR SPORTS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:32):** Today I take members back in time to the year 1905, the year in which the book entitled *The racing boys: a chequered history of motorcycle racing in the Goulburn district 1900-1930*, compiled by Wayne Adams, mentions that the first motorcycle arrived in Goulburn. In 1911 the Goulburn Motor Club was formed and it remains the oldest operational club in Australia today. It was in 1914 that Goulburn saw the first trophy race, with more being held in following years. It was undoubtedly an exciting time for motor enthusiasts within the Goulburn region and, more broadly, for the development of motor racing across Australia.

Almost 20 years later, on 23 June 1924, the Goulburn Motor Club proudly went on to host Australia's first official motorcycle grand prix. That race saw 139 riders navigate the track, pressed to utilise and draw on their racing aptitude and agility to manage bikes, some of which were not even equipped with brakes. The track followed a trilateral formation commencing on the periphery of Goulburn to Windellama, across to Bungonia and then back towards Goulburn along Mountain Ash Road. While heritage motorcycle enthusiasts may spruik a controversy as to who exactly hosted the first grand prix and where, I stand here today with the evidence that the race in Goulburn was endorsed by the Auto Cycle Union of NSW, proving Goulburn as the origin location for Australia's first motorcycle grand prix in June 1924. It was Dave Brewster, on the back of an Indian motorcycle, who came out victorious that day, 99 years ago.

Goulburn certainly is renowned for its fine wool, for the Big Merino, and for being bitterly cold and Australia's first inland city, but today we embrace the right to proudly claim a piece of the origins of motor sport too—a sport that continues to capture local, regional, national and international interest and participation, and holds historic importance to us. A monument has been erected to commemorate the first trophy race and motorcycle grand prix at the start and finishing points of the race off Windellama Road on Mountain Ash Road.

The community of Goulburn, including the Classic Riders Club of Goulburn, Goulburn Motorcycle Club, Goulburn Mulwaree Council and Goulburn Chamber of Commerce, and the Indian and Harley-Davidson motorbike manufacturers are recognising the celebrated history of the race and motor sport in Goulburn. Together, the group is planning celebrations for the centenary of the first motorcycle grand prix in June 2024, which undoubtedly will excite many motorcycle enthusiasts. The celebrations will aim to re-enact the first ride, along the original route, and there are big plans beyond the race involving the whole community, including local businesses and both Wakefield Park in Tirrannaville and Pheasant Wood Circuit in Marulan.

It is with a great sense of pride and recognition that I acknowledge the longevity of the history of motor sport in Goulburn and recognise the continuous and zealous work, research and preparation that will be undertaken to celebrate a prominent and significant part of Goulburn's history. In closing, I ask the House to save the date 23 June 2024 and join us in celebrating the centenary of Australia's first official motorcycle grand prix in Goulburn.

### STAR STRUCK 2023

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:36):** If you ever want to see the full force of the power of public education in New South Wales, then Star Struck is the place to be. For those who do not know, Star Struck is a Department of Education annual performing arts event for Newcastle, the Hunter and Central Coast. It is our very own version of Sydney's Schools Spectacular. It is a massive annual showcase of dance, drama and music, with more than 3,000 student performers, from kindergarten to year 12, from a vast network of New South Wales public schools.

Incredibly, this year was Star Struck's thirty-first performance. I am not ashamed to say that I absolutely love Star Struck. I love everything about it, except perhaps the logistical nightmare of managing rehearsal drop-offs and pick-ups when my kids were younger, but that is a very small price to pay for being part of the Star Struck family. I have been going to Star Struck for a very long time, as both the proud member for Port Stephens, supporting the efforts of local students, teachers, volunteers and parents, and as a proud parent of performers.

Star Struck rightly prides itself on providing performance and learning opportunities for students, fostering an appreciation of the performing arts. I have witnessed this firsthand with my daughter Lily participating as a younger performer, growing in experience and confidence to become a member of the 500-strong student orchestra, and in this, her final year of school, performing as a featured artist leading a quartet on centre stage in the Newcastle Entertainment Centre—yes, I did shed a couple of tears.

The professionalism and quality of the production is incredible. The mentoring and support for budding performing artists is invaluable. Each year there is a special theme. This year's was "Ignite"—and ignite they certainly did. The performances were explosive and high energy, with colourful displays of everything that is good in our schools. On stage, students and staff from Port Stephens shone. Driving the creativity was Kirsten Dickason from Hunter River High School in Raymond Terrace in her role as creative director, with Corynne Darcy from Wirreanda Public School in Medowie once again contributing her time and talent to choreograph sections.

On their months of practice and impressive performance, I congratulate the students, teachers, principals, staff and families involved in Star Struck 2023 from Grahamstown Public School, Medowie Public School, Wirreanda Public School, Hunter River High School, Hinton Public School, Tomaree Public School, Irrawang High School, Salt Ash Public School, Seaham Public School, Tomaree High School, Raymond Terrace Public School and Tanilba Bay Public School. With students from all of those schools, together with students from Port Stephens who attend Hunter School of Performing Arts and those who were part of the Combined Schools Choir, Port Stephens was very well represented. And who could ever forget the incredible Irrawang High School Drum Corps and their dance and hoop ensembles.

The award-winning Irrawang drum corps took over the entire stage floor of the Newcastle Entertainment Centre, warming up the spellbound crowd with their mesmerisingly powerful performance. I give a special mention to the talented performers who were this year given the nod to be featured artists with singing, dancing or drama. Isabelle Ping from Irrawang High School and Sage Brooks from Hunter School of the Performing Arts were featured vocalists. Kyara Darcy, Ebony Deguara and Dylan Bailey from Hunter School of the Performing Arts were featured dancers alongside my Lily, who was a member of the featured orchestra. Dylan and Kyara also played leading roles as student dance choreographers, with Medowie's Ruby Van De Wijngaart playing a role in the student drama choreography team.

In the featured drama ensemble were Nick Patten, Shakyia Apthorpe, Evan Flippence, Holly Olding, Brodie Warner and Ellie Ping from Irrawang High School, and Vivien Carpenter, Olive Phillips and Kelsey-May Woods from Tomaree High School. Playing roles in other core groups were Eva Mansfield from Hunter River High School and Dylan Partridge in the Hunter Signing Choir, which was such a special performance; Reannah Hyland from Tomaree High School in the Core Choir; and Scarlett Gibbons from Hunter River High School as a senior backing vocalist, with Mia Russell and Hailea Witt from Hunter River High School as featured dancers in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance ensemble—again, an incredible performance. In the featured dance ensemble we had Violet Carpenter and Kaylee Hodgson from Tomaree High School, Lilly Gorham and Mikaela Neil from Irrawang High School, Bella Keightley from Hunter River High School, and Wilbur Bradbury and Hannah Arkless from the Hunter School of the Performing Arts.

Not only were students on the stage; they also were learning and working as backstage crew. Well done to Elyssa Holden, Shelby Hammond, Alyssia Matthew, Maryla Millar, Nicholas Watts and Jaimen Webster from Irrawang High School for making the extravaganza run smoothly. This year, like every year, I was blown away by the level of the talent and skill from such young performers. I constantly have to remind myself that they are all students. But none of it would happen without the dedication and commitment of teachers, staff, principals, mentors and volunteers who make the magic happen. This Parliament, this proud member for Port Stephens and this proud parent is grateful to them all for giving children and young people memories for a lifetime.

### **BATHURST WINTER FESTIVAL**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:41):** When the chills of winter hit the city of Bathurst, there is one special event on the annual calendar that is not to be missed: the Bathurst Winter Festival. Back in 2015, the Bathurst Winter Festival emerged as an attraction that lures people to the region from across the State and beyond. In turn, it gives the local economy a huge boost. It is great to have been a long-term supporter of this festival. Back in 2018-19 the former New South Wales Government provided \$40,000 for the event to grow. We were able to follow that up with another great announcement in 2020 of a three-year commitment of \$90,000 from our Regional Flagship Event fund. That fund identifies and assists in the marketing of events that contribute to the unique character of tourism in the regions where these events can demonstrate an increase in overnight visitations.

The good news is that the Bathurst Winter Festival is here to stay. It just keeps going from strength to strength, warming us with bright lights, fun activities and social nights. This year's events theme is "Connections":

connections to people and place, connections to each other and connections to our region. Activities will run from 1 July to 16 July, perfectly timed with the school holidays, so there is no excuse for not marking it in your diary. In keeping with tradition, the giant two-storey Ferris wheel is one of the major attractions in the heart of the CBD, in Kings Parade, right next to the incredibly popular McDonald's Bathurst Ice Rink. One of the new additions in 2023 is the kaleidoscope, which is a breathtaking mirror maze and colour field of ever-changing light. However, there is more—much, much more—with something for all the family, both before and after dark. The historic streetscapes of Bathurst play a leading role in bringing the city alive when the sun goes down.

At the heart of the illuminations is the Bathurst Court House, which takes centre stage as the central point of the entire event. This year, the illumination design of this architectural masterpiece delves into the connections theme. From basic binary pairings to intricate scientific and social concepts, the artwork incorporates pattern animation and text treatments to convey these ideas. The installation is crafted by Esem Projects, accompanied by music created with local Bathurst musicians. So prepare yourself for a fantastic photo opportunity and the opportunity to become a part of the illumination spectacle. During special events, you can dance to the rhythm of the silent disco on the steps of the courthouse, immersing yourself in the vibrant atmosphere. Do not miss out on this captivating experience that seamlessly merges art, music and community engagement.

Just around the corner at 179 George Street, the historical Webb Chambers will be adorned with artworks created by the Wiradjuri community and the local land council. This unique piece is the result of the creative efforts of local Indigenous individuals and esteemed Elders, whose work will be projected onto the building's facade. Other notable locations to be illuminated include the fernery in Machattie Park, Ribbon Gang Lane, the former TAFE building in William Street and the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre. Machattie Park also gets to play a major role in the Bathurst Winter Festival; it features the Enchanted Forest, with any number of special displays such as the Pinwheel Garden, rainbow arches, light trail, story walk, giant star arch, forest of lights and giant Bathurst sign.

While the Armada Opening Night on Saturday afternoon and evening is a spectacular start to the winter festival, get ready for an unforgettable evening of music performed as part of the Bowman Dental All Schools Stage showcase, which allows our high schools to be involved. The stage is not just for musicians; it also allows our local dance academies to showcase a dynamic expression of dance styles between sets. Do not miss the opportunity to witness the very best of our student talent in a mesmerising display of musical artistry. A new addition in 2023 is the Flix & Chill, thanks to Westfund, on Sunday 2 July from 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. It is a chance to get out of the cold and enjoy two family movie afternoons in the cosy warmth of Walshaw Hall. What is so special about Flix & Chill is the fact that this fundraising initiative for Veritas House is being held in conjunction with the Bathurst Winter Festival, with all proceeds going towards changing the lives of vulnerable children, young people and their families in our community. And the organisers have not forgotten the little ones, with two dedicated days just for the kids. Children are being encouraged to dress up as their favourite superhero, princess or book character and come along for a guaranteed fun time.

One of my favourite initiatives is the Accessibility Day on 6 July. It is now a signature part of the Bathurst Winter Festival and aims to ensure people living with disability can enjoy the event in a fun, safe and supported environment. The day includes letting carers skate for free and there are ice-skating sessions for those who have a reduced capacity on the ice-skating rink. The headline act on 7 July is the Brew and Bite, which is an opportunity to taste some of the best wine and food that we have in the local area. It will be something that you will not want to miss. I look forward to being a part of it and being out there again on the ice-skating rink.

### **MRS GAI HAWTHORN, OAM**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:46):** I congratulate Mrs Gai Hawthorn of Emu Plains on her Medal of the Order of Australia in the general division at the recent King's Birthday 2023 Honours List. Gai is a most worthy recipient, and this award acknowledges her long service to community through a range of organisations over many years. It would be difficult to find a local Penrith charity that Gai has not been involved in together with her husband, Derek. Gai is currently in her twelfth year as the CEO of Penrith CBD Corporation. She assists startup businesses in Penrith CBD by providing her expertise and advice about available opportunities for business. This provides us with insight to keep up to date with the needs of the city.

Describing herself, Gai said, "I've always been a keen organiser, enjoy working and organising events and have a passion for hard work with outcomes that benefit others." This statement does not nearly describe the positive impact Gai has on our local community and small businesses. There are a number of passions that she has been involved in, and the list is extensive. She is the secretary of the Penrith Community Kitchen, which feeds our homeless and those in need, and president of and ambassador for Pink Up Penrith, which has raised \$265,000 for the McGrath Foundation over the past four years and has funded three breast care nurses treating over 400 patients at Nepean Hospital. Gai has really embraced the Pink Up Penrith phenomenon, with our city literally tuning pink. She also included local businesses and organises a local pink golf day to raise extra funds.

Gai has been president of the Police Citizens Youth Club Penrith since 2019 and The Haven Nepean Women's Shelter since 2018. She was an organiser of the Penrith Winter Appeal; a committee member of Penrith Community College from 2015 to 2018; an organiser of Anzac Day dawn service and bi-centennial events; a committee member of Parents and Friends of St Dominic's College, Kingswood; a volunteer for Westcare Community Services; a volunteer for Christ Mission Possible from 2010 to 2017; a volunteer for Our Community Cares since 2021; a volunteer for Lions Club of Cambridge Park; and a volunteer for Cancer Council Penrith for nine years.

Gai also has the following awards and recognitions: New South Wales Minister's Award in Volunteer Excellence in 2020; Women with Attitude Visionary Leaders Award in 2013; Local Woman of the Year Award in 2013; New South Wales Community Service Award in 2011; and Paul Harris Fellowship, Rotary Australia. We all have those volunteers in our communities who really go the extra leap. In Penrith, that volunteer is Gai Hawthorn. If there is someone in need, Gai will be the first person to offer help, or she will know someone who could help. She has deep connections in the community and is always supported by her husband, Derek. Gai credits her success to the support of her family and local community. All of Penrith congratulates Gai Hawthorn on this most deserved honour.

### DAIRY FARMING

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:49):** Tonight, I speak about stopping harm. This harm is preventable. If Premier Chris Minns wants to stop this harm, he can. He just has to want to stop the harm. I have said a lot about water over the years because, as an MP from rural New South Wales, I know that without water there will be no rural New South Wales. Members have probably heard enough about water from me—for today, at least. Instead, I will tell a story of one dairy farmer whose whole world relies on water from the Murray-Darling Basin. I will not name the farmer on record, but I can assure members that he is happy to be known off the record. He would be happy to meet with the Premier privately. Farmers are proud and private, and city politicians seem to have counted on that for too long.

Let me share what this dairy farmer told me. He said—and he was right to say—that 17 years ago there were 90 dairy farming families in his region. Now there are only 19 such families. His neighbours used to be dairy farmers, but they have gone. The dairy farmer currently employs 30 people on his farm. He knows that if water becomes more scarce, every single one of his employees from the rural community will be unemployed. Their lives will be turned upside down and their future plans will be torn apart. It is not just direct employees who are affected. The dairy farmer said that, at a minimum, his business supports the lives and lifestyles of 60 people, including his kids. He can already see the trends, which we must reverse. Australia is producing less milk than we ever have in the past 20 years. In his area, milk production falls 5 per cent a year, every year.

As the farmer kept talking, his voice got shakier and sadder when he said that he knows his kids will not be dairy farmers, even though they want to be. When I asked about the Federal Government's plans to buy back 450 gigalitres from the Murray-Darling Basin for environmental reasons, he said that the Federal Government is targeting New South Wales because it knows that New South Wales will be the easiest place to get the water from. That is the only reason New South Wales is under threat. The Feds will not get that water from Victoria because Victoria has already told the Federal Government that it cannot touch their water. He is right. The Feds have moved on to New South Wales.

He then went on to talk about a period of Australian history that a lot of city politicians seem to have forgotten. I would say that history is being betrayed and ignored by modern politicians. But either way, he said that he wanted to remind the Parliament that after World War II, which was not that long ago, there were no rural communities in New South Wales like those we have now. Settler farmers were sent to rural areas to open up Australia. They were there to help build the nation. To be honest, they were also sent there because the politicians did not know what to do with war-damaged and war-weary Australians. But those communities the farmers built now serve Australia incredibly well. Central to the communities, the soldiers-turned-farmers built in fair access to water.

The dairy farmer and I agree that the first step is to respect rural communities—to emphatically oppose the Federal Government's ludicrous hope to take 450 gigalitres from rural communities. Any responsible State government would oppose this. I ask that the Premier not just protect the people of New South Wales but also tell them they will be protected. The people of New South Wales need to hear this, and we all need the Premier to do that now.

### SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE BIRTHING SERVICES

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:54):** Tonight, I speak about birthing services in the southern end of the South Coast electorate. Approximately seven years ago the previous Liberal Government removed birthing

services at Milton hospital on the South Coast, meaning that women have had to travel one hour north to Nowra or one hour and twenty minutes south to Moruya to give birth. That was done to reduce "risk" but risk to whom? The only answer is to reduce risk to the hospital because the risk is now firmly placed on everyone else. We have risks to the woman and her partner travelling on some of the most dangerous roads in the State, to other drivers and to paramedics delivering babies on the side of the road, often under difficult circumstances. Ultimately, the risk is placed firmly with the mother and her baby.

When birthing services were removed from Milton hospital, one GP obstetrician requested that she be placed on the delivery roster at Shoalhaven hospital in Nowra to allow her to keep her skills and hours so that she could continue to deliver babies. Guess what? Her request was denied due to budget constraints, so she advised that she would do the work pro bono—at no cost. That was also denied. It was obvious that the previous Liberal Government did not want to ever return birthing services to Milton hospital. In my view, stating that "risk" was the reason for removing services and then claiming that obstetrician GPs were unable to be recruited to the area was all to reduce the hospital's budget. I am of the firm opinion that the reason that the previous Liberal Government removed birthing services was not about risk; it was about budgets. That story has been repeated around the State in regional areas: remove birthing services in regional areas and centralise them. When we remove birthing services from local hospitals, we tend to lose many other services.

Last year I was at a Rotary dinner in Ulladulla and the guest that evening was a local paramedic. He was there to demonstrate a piece of equipment that was paid for by the local Rotary Club. It had sold Christmas trees to raise money to purchase this vital piece of training equipment—a mannequin that simulates a woman giving birth when the baby's shoulders are stuck in the mother's pelvis. It is the only one of its kind in New South Wales outside the paramedic training facility. The local paramedics requested that the mannequin be purchased because birthing services were removed from the Milton hospital and that scenario, which happens more than one may think, was causing much concern. When a baby is stuck in its mother's pelvis, paramedics have approximately seven minutes to deliver the baby to prevent any adverse outcomes. As one can imagine, it is extremely concerning for our wonderful paramedics. The level of risk that has been placed on them is overwhelming.

Let that scenario sink in. At times paramedics must deliver babies on the side of the road under difficult circumstances. But it was the local Rotary Club that raised funds by selling Christmas trees over two years just so it could purchase the piece of training equipment that paramedics need to practise delivering babies with stuck shoulders. It is unbelievable. I am the first to acknowledge that not all services can be viably run in all locations across the State. But more must be done to ensure that, regardless of postcode, residents can seek, access and receive treatment in a timely and cost-effective manner. I am proud to be part of the Minns Labor Government that is committed to doing just that.

The Government recognises the importance of first-class health services and is committed to improving the health system for all residents in New South Wales. I inform the residents of the South Coast electorate that it will take time to return services to Milton hospital, but I am working on it. I will not give up. Recently I met with the area health service, which has agreed to place local GP obstetricians on the roster at Shoalhaven hospital. That is a major step toward returning birthing services to Milton. I will continue to work closely with the Minister and the area health service to ensure that future projects such as a CT scanner and upgrades to the Cancer Care Centre will enhance facilities and care to patients to ensure that more people can access more local healthcare services.

#### KG MILLNER FIELD

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (19:59):** One of the first motions that I moved upon my election to this place related to KG Millner Field, which is located in Marsfield in my electorate of Ryde. Marsfield is a fantastic community with great, well-established local residents and a chronic shortage of useable, open green space, as is the case across the vast majority of my electorate and, I am sure, the electorates of many other Sydney-based MPs. KG Millner Field is a premier rugby field located on Vimiera Road. It was at one stage owned by the Millner family and was bequeathed to the community for open-space use many decades ago. There has been significant joy brought to the community as a consequence of the site, and it is something that, unfortunately, has come under threat in recent times.

The reason for that threat is a proposal for development. The proposal is, on the one hand, for seniors living and, on the other, for other private residential use. There is nothing wrong with either of those developments. We need housing, and we need to continue to invest in not only more supply but also seniors living across Sydney. However, with development comes a need for infrastructure. We speak often in this place about the need for transport infrastructure, hard infrastructure, schools and hospitals, but there is also a critical need for social infrastructure. That includes the use of open spaces like KG Millner Field. The local community in Marsfield has been ably led by Tobias Lord, a hardworking Ryde resident of many years. He has done an amazing job in amalgamating local residents, often with disparate views, together around this one issue.

It is important because we cannot get enough kids in Ryde onto sporting fields. In my previous role as mayor and as a councillor, I did a good job in trying to get kids onto fields as best as I could. The simple reality is that there is not enough space. The threat of losing TG Millner Field presents a huge issue for our long-term plans. Ryde continues to grow and there are more families and kids who want to play, so that space is chronically needed. Over the previous two terms of council, Ryde played a leadership role in taking up the fight to protect the site, work constructively with the owner and try to ensure that the community has confidence going forward. A series of motions have been passed relating to things like exploring whether it could be heritage listed. Of course, that was not successful.

In recent times, we have embarked upon a series of good-faith negotiations with the owners to see whether they would allow the council to take the site on. That would be a good outcome for Ryde. It would be a good outcome for the communities and sporting groups not just in Ryde but around Sydney. As we embark upon that process, it is important that the council, the community and I, in my role as the member for Ryde—like my predecessor Victor Dominello—are united in that fight. I regret to inform the House that last night there were some concerning developments, with some City of Ryde councillors referring to the potential to acquire TG Millner Field as a vanity project. Upon further inquiry, it seems that some councillors are a bit gun-shy about the need to purchase the land if that is the path we need to go down.

That is concerning because, in my time as mayor, the council passed a bipartisan resolution to engage in good-faith negotiations with the ultimate view of acquiring TG Millner Field, if needed. Both sides supported that. There is overwhelming community support for it, and it was encouraging to give that confidence to the community. Unfortunately, we saw a slight walking back of that position last night, with another councillor referring to the question of "if the council decides to pursue it this way". That is a concerning development, but I was reassured to see the council reaffirm its position last night that it still supports the maintenance of TG Millner Field for open space, and I will be writing to councillors asking them to reaffirm that view. It is important, at this time more than any, that we remain united and give the community confidence. As I said at the beginning of this private member's statement, there is nothing more important than investing in social infrastructure to keep up with the growth being experienced in Ryde. We must save TG Millner Field.

#### **BLACKTOWN CENTRAL LIVING DISTRICT**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:04):** Design competitions for CBD developments are an opportunity to test, compare and evaluate design options and have a vision for the future. Design competitions promote innovation, enhance a city's design reputation and support emerging and local design practices. The City of Melbourne undertakes the Design Excellence Program. The guidelines outline an ethical and streamlined competitive process to support innovative and architecturally diverse buildings, landscapes, infrastructure and public realm. There are design competitions in the United States for 15-minute city urban design, focusing on transport movement and allowing people to access major attractions within a city within 15 minutes.

C40 Cities is a global network of nearly 100 mayors from the world's leading cities. This year C40 Cities launched urban design competitions in 12 cities to transform underutilised sites. Using the basis of C40's description of design competitions, they create multidisciplinary teams, including architects, developers, community groups, infrastructure experts, artists, civic leaders and more, who come together to design and develop urban projects that are climate friendly, serve the needs of local communities and become sustainable city landmarks. The initial launch of the Barangaroo international design competition was in May 2005. The Western Sydney Aerotropolis began its design in 2017, with design review panels. The City of Ryde council has had design competitions to establish a vision and address key issues such as movement and place strategy.

The Blacktown CBD does not reflect its multicultural vitality, the business prominence in the region or the aspirations of the community. It looks dated and almost reminiscent of a stagecoach town of the 1800s. The population of Blacktown City will surpass Tasmania's population by 2035—in just 12 short years. By 2041 the population will be in excess of 615,000. The Gross Regional Product is in excess of \$22 billion, making it larger than 72 nations in the world and growing at an average of 4 per cent per year. Blacktown should be thinking like a State capital, not an unrecognised, small suburban town located in Western Sydney. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government and the Greater Cities Commission have a lot to answer for in the undervaluing of Blacktown and the failure to recognise its true potential.

Even the so-called Western Sydney University has over the past 12 years substantially reduced its footprint in Blacktown so that it can easily be renamed the "Western Sydney Ex-Blacktown City University". Thankfully, the Australian Catholic University has introduced a multi-faculty campus, giving local students the opportunity to train and study in a variety of disciplines. The concept of allowing developers to buy individual blocks within a CBD, build skyscrapers, say "isn't this wonderful" and bring jobs, jobs, jobs is an outdated, simplistic sales pitch and is insulting to the local community. CBD development should be transparent, have a clear vision of the future and allow for design competitions so that we can get the best for the local area.

The new concept is referred to as a central living district, or CLD. Blacktown CLD has the perfect opportunity to move from a stagecoach town to a thriving, world-leading metropolis that truly incorporates work, live, play and study principles within a safe and sustainable environment. Blacktown has 45 acres of land that, until March of this year, were owned by three key owners. It now has four substantial owners, but there is nothing to stop the four owners from working together, forming a cooperative and treating the 45 acres as one consolidated lot. Where else in the world is there 45 acres of prime land in a CBD that is fit for the future? There are historically significant buildings such as Bowman Hall—the birthplace of modern Australian thinking and multicultural Australia, through the election campaign launch of Gough Whitlam in 1972—and the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre, which was an Anglican church for decades before it could be used.

There must be a vision for what the city of the future can be—a town square to allow a 24/7 festival precinct; the relocation of the police station and courthouse that are no longer fit for purpose; better placed commercial and residential towers rather than just rows of buildings; and a place and movement framework to allow for a healthy environment and deal with car parking before it becomes a problem. All we need in the first instance is a mayor supported by councillors and council officers who are visionaries, like all the Labor mayors from John Aquilina in 1977 through to the last mayor. We do not need behind-closed-doors presentations by a developer; we need someone to talk to the community and present a viable future.

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:09):** The National Skills Commission's Skills Priority List 2022 reveals shortages in 286 occupations, compared with 153 just one year earlier. The number of jobs advertised reached 309,900 in August 2022, which is a 42 per cent increase from August 2021. The top 20 occupations in demand for Australia, based on a combination of skills shortages, current job vacancies and projected employment growth over the next five years, tell us that registered nurses are the most in-demand workers. Scrolling down the list, we see that programmers, carers, construction workers, motor mechanics, cooks, metal fitters and machinists, and electricians all rank higher than the next primarily university-qualified priority group, civil engineers, at position 13. This tells us it is trade skills that drive the nation.

As a participant at a recent Business NSW round table on training pathways and the NextGen Manufacturing roadshow in Albury put it, "We might not be able to deliver the future." Skilled manufacturing work is being turned away now. What I am hearing from these discussions can be summarised in three points. First, governments must be in tune with manufacturers. For example, government grants and funding support programs based on job creation or apprenticeships can unintentionally steer manufacturers away from the needs of manufacturing itself. Another participant spoke to this, and said:

I completely appreciate it is in the State's interest to create jobs—this is obviously a good ambition. However, it's important to realise that it's also in the State's interest (because it's in the local economy's interest) to achieve other, potentially less tangible, benefits such as: enabling increased productivity and revenue generation for businesses, which has, (a) supply chain, and (b) household consumption impacts; replacing, or improving competitiveness with respect to imported products and services; diversifying economies where vulnerabilities exist; removing constraints for an entire region or sector that market forces are not addressing; attracting or developing skills.

I acknowledge that a number of government programs have been successful. I am thinking of the Regional Industry Education Partnerships Program, which designs and delivers bespoke opportunities for employers to connect with secondary schools, creating pathways to careers and employment, and the Girls Can Too campaign to encourage greater participation by women in the trades. Local manufacturers and supporters spoke favourably about the Coalition's \$240 million Regional Job Creation Fund, which supported existing businesses in regional New South Wales to grow, innovate and increase productivity.

Yet, with no replacement program in sight, the Labor Government's Comprehensive Expenditure Review, ushered in without warning to manufacturers, is landing in disastrous fashion. I heard from a regional manufacturer who has had to hit the brakes hard on a multimillion-dollar contract here, with its United States partner losing much more. That local manufacturer is now considering working with the government in another State. The New South Wales Government must start communicating in advance about its shutdowns, program closures, reviews, pauses and halts. Industry, students and training organisations are being left in the dark. Labor is choking the State's employment and productivity pipeline. Just think what this is doing to potential apprentices.

The *Australian Universities Accord Panel Discussion Paper* notes that in 1989 the percentage of the Australian population aged 25 to 34 educated to at least bachelor level or above was 12 per cent. The 2008 Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education set a target to lift this to 40 per cent by 2020. By 2021, Australia had attained this and pushed to 44 per cent. Meanwhile, manufacturers are talking about the drop in numbers of school-age applicants looking for work experience in a trade, and of negativity coming from careers advisors. We can move beyond barriers and postures that denigrate TAFE in the public consciousness, and work together to maximise synchronicity between industry, unions, small business and skills training institutions.

The perspective emerging from forum discussions centres on becoming an "employer of choice". We know that this means businesses reshaping the work they do to include an emphasis on wellbeing, ongoing career advancement and education, more flexible work hours, and efforts to eliminate any remaining pockets of sexism, bullying, ageism and so on. This will become a powerful encouragement for students, teachers and manufacturers to make that move, which will improve their training and their prospects for balancing fulfilling work and life.

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (20:14):** I raise an issue that is important to many families in my electorate and that is affecting many families in New South Wales. It is an issue that the former Liberal Government recognised last year. As a result, it supported a review of the not-for-profit requirements of the Education Act 1990. In addition, this was an issue that Labor promised it would review as part of its election platform. But we are yet to see real action by the Government on this issue. I implore the Labor Government to act now.

The independent school sector is a critical part of the education system in our State. A strong, independent school network represents choice in education and provides educational opportunities to families across New South Wales in all situations. It is not right that the choice for independent schooling is limited only to wealthy parents in our State. There are many low-fee independent schools that serve our communities. Parents work hard and save in order to send their children to these schools. It is their choice, and Parliament should be supporting it as best we can. These independent schools are different from those in the public school system. They offer something unique, and parents sacrifice in order to choose it for their children. They do not compete with the public schooling system but support the overall educational opportunities that our parents of New South Wales demand.

The current regulatory framework for the not-for-profit requirements under the Education Act and their guidelines require urgent overhaul. Independent schools should not be forced by the legislation and the guidelines to behave like schools in the public system. There are real differences between the operations and administration of independent schools and public schools. For example, a public school can look to the Department of Education to secure the land it needs and there is a range of powers available to do so. That is not the case for independent schools. They have to understand their needs many years in advance and seek to secure their required land. But land banking or securing the land and using it in a fiscally sensible way pending it being required—by, for example, renting it out—runs the risk of contravening the not-for-profit regime and subjecting the school to significant adverse consequences. But this is the sort of thing that prudent independent schools should be doing when they are financially able to do so, in order to secure their future growth.

The consequences of a for-profit or a non-compliant finding are severe. A school in this position could be exposed to a clawback of all its funding over many years and, if it survives this, will be exposed to a requirement for public shaming by being required to write to the school community, using emotive language such as that it has been found to be operating for profit. This is just one example that has been brought to my attention. It highlights why a complete overhaul of the requirements must proceed. We must revisit the key policy purposes that gave rise to the current form of the legislation, as well as the support that needs to be provided to our independent schools in New South Wales. I encourage the House to revisit the comments of the then Minister for Education at the second reading of the bill that introduced the current form of the legislation. He said that the bill:

... should not be seen in any way as a punitive exercise, nor is it a licence for unnecessary interference in a school's operations.

The then Minister also said:

The amendments in the bill are not about putting obstacles in the way of non-government schools ...

He further said:

The changes in this bill do not prevent those schools from purchasing appropriate resources to support their unique mission.

But, as I have highlighted, there is a conflict between intent and actual approach and regulatory actions undertaken by the education department. The approach adopted has cut across many longstanding practices of independent schools that were in place before the legislation and which were never intended to be impacted by the legislation. These practices are now subject to review and there are possible adverse effects for schools, even if the practices were undertaken without issue for many years and including if they are currently no longer being engaged in. This has resulted in schools ceasing practices that were longstanding and regarded as central to their ethos.

In November 2021 the Association of Independent Schools of NSW surveyed its members and found that because of this legislation dozens of schools had modified or ceased longstanding practices that they regarded as central to their ethos or pastoral programs. I remind the House that at the time of the second reading of the bill introducing the not-for-profit changes the then Minister for Education said:



We will not restrict the capacity of non-government schools to meet the needs and expectations of their communities, and to follow their particular mission or ethos.

In addition, the current approach by the department is formal and regulatory in nature. It is not collaborative or cooperative and is not undertaken to assist with better systems and processes or the like. It causes time imposts and stress on any school body that is the subject of these audits and investigative processes. These processes can go on for over a year. A survey undertaken by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW found that a majority of the responding schools that had been subjected to an audit reported it took longer than 12 months to complete.

Further, while the Department of Education can make an allegation that property, goods or services have been acquired at more than a reasonable market rate, the onus is on the school to disprove the allegation. This is an unfair position. It is an entirely unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is in all our interests to fix this problem. During the election campaign the Labor Party promised to review the not-for-profit provisions, and I call on the Government to do so with haste. The then Minister for Education at the second reading of the bill that introduced the current form of the legislation concluded:

When the new legislative provisions have been in operation for some time, the Government will be in a better position to assess whether any unforeseen issues have arisen from the Act.

After nearly nine years, a review is long overdue. As I have said, the current state of affairs is entirely unsatisfactory and, because of this, I call on the Government to place on hold all current investigations and processes until these serious matters can be addressed.

### **NARRABEEN SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (20:20):** Wet, moist carpet, stripped back to the centre of the room, exposing bare, hard concrete. Ceilings with holes. Open cavities on the outside of buildings exposing the roof to vermin, birds, pests and no doubt rats. Rooms that seep with water with every rainfall, such is their state of dilapidation. Black mould creeping up the walls, repeatedly required to be cleaned off, but relentlessly returning. Water-damaged ceilings, roofs, walls and floors. Toilet cubicles without doors, the most basic of privacy being denied. Gas lines without sufficient pressure to move gas through them. Hazardous chemicals stored in unsafe conditions owing to inadequate facilities. Condemned, dilapidated stairways, so unsafe that access is not permitted. Whole rooms boarded up and blocked off, and 1950s buildings still standing but barely upgraded or touched.

One might think I am describing an abandoned building, condemned in wartime. Depressingly, that is not the case. I am describing Narrabeen Sports High School in the electorate of Pittwater. With Sydney recently being labelled as one of the most liveable cities on earth, the state of this school could not be farther from that truth. Quite frankly, it is embarrassing, and I am ashamed that in Sydney in 2023 we, as a collective, have allowed this school to reach its current state. Children's and teachers' health and safety are compromised, every single day. Not only this, but our kids' futures are also compromised, and for what?

In 2018 the Narrabeen Sports High School community was filled with hope and optimism when the former Government announced the development of a Narrabeen education campus. That would have seen world-class, state-of-the-art classrooms and facilities for our local kids—and anything less than world class is simply not good enough. Public education should be the best. We should train, recruit and retain the best teachers. We must provide our students with the best environments in which to learn and thrive. In anticipation of new facilities at Narrabeen Sports High School, locals could understand the fiscal sense in scaling back maintenance programs temporarily. Why paint or recarpet a classroom today that would be knocked down and rebuilt in a couple of years' time? Unfortunately, a combination of COVID, construction industry delays and the disproportionately higher construction costs today than a couple of years ago have seen Narrabeen Sports High School left behind. What was envisaged for the school is now a distant memory.

Recently, further plans have been released regarding the school upgrade. These barely scratch the surface of what is needed. Tonight I do not seek to blame the new Government. I do not seek to blame the old Government. I do not seek to blame the public service. In a series of unfortunate circumstances, Narrabeen Sports High School has fallen through the cracks. My job in this Chamber is to help pull this school up and bring it to the attention of those who have the power to make decisions and allocate funding. I am passionate about education, and I am passionate about my local schools. In recent times, Narrabeen Sports High School has not been held together by bricks and mortar but by the sacrifice, goodwill, dedication and commitment of all its teachers, parents and students. I pay tribute to Principal Heidi Currie and all her team. They are the heroes of this story. They provide the best possible education to our wonderful children in spite of the circumstances. I thank them and their team for all their service.

I was recently shown around the school grounds by the school's devoted, passionate and knowledgeable P&C president James Wiggins and honorary secretary Peter McDonald. I thank the P&C for their herculean efforts in recent times. It is my hope that these words spoken in this Chamber will spur action on these troubling circumstances. I have recently reached out for a meeting with the office of the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Although I am yet to hear back, I know the Minister has sincere and genuine care for education and its people. I look forward to speaking with her soon so that we can get this school fixed.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:25 until  
Thursday 29 June 2023 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**HARDING MILLER EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I rise to recognise the work of the Harding Miller foundation, founded in 2015 by philanthropists Kim Harding and Irene Miller to lift the educational outcomes and support the career aspirations of under-resourced girls. This year, Harding Miller has awarded 200 new scholarships to girls across Australia. These scholarships will support high potential students with access to laptops, broadband, personal tutoring, school essentials and other extensive support arrangements. I was delighted to meet with the Executive Director of Harding Miller, Cara Varian, to discuss the impact the foundation has in my electorate, having sponsored 10 girls across schools in Liverpool. These scholarships will ensure high-potential girls can overcome their personal difficulties to realize their academic potential and pursue their career aspirations. I look forward to celebrating the achievements of Harding Miller scholars at the awards night on the 26th of June, and I hope to further support the work of Harding Miller in my electorate.

**NORTHPARKES COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the NorthParkes Mine Community Investment Program, which has invested more than one million dollars into their local community. Since 2011, the investment program has supported a wide range of community groups in both the Parkes and Forbes Shires. By giving back to the community, the NorthParkes Mine Community Investment Program has assisted organisations such as the Country Women's Association, various sporting organisations, arts and crafts groups and the local show societies in both Parkes and Forbes. For organisations and sporting groups operating in Parkes and Forbes, these donations can often make the difference between a team being able to take to the field in the local sporting competition or sit the season out. Kudos must go to the NorthParkes Mine management who initiated this program twelve years ago, combining with Triple Flag Precious Metals to make sponsorships a reality. Recipients are selected by an independent committee made up of local community members from Parkes and Forbes who review applications to approve funding to be allocated. Criteria for selection includes addressing economic, social, environmental, cultural, recreational and educational needs. NorthParkes copper and gold mine is a major employer in my electorate.

**FIRST RESPONDERS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I acknowledge the incredible work of first responders in Manildra, Molong and Orange following recent tragic events. It goes without saying that smaller communities feel the full impact of an unexpected and sudden death and trauma as these communities are so close knit and supportive. For first responders in smaller communities however, arriving at traumatic incidents sometimes initially before backup arrives can have a long lasting and deep impact. Today I would like to acknowledge deep gratitude to our first responders on behalf of the smaller communities involved, and indeed the wider community in my electorate. Very often first response teams can also involve volunteers who put their community first in times of need, supporting our professional police, fire and rescue and ambulance. First responders in smaller communities often know or are friends of victims, adding to the overall trauma of their experience arriving at a trauma scene. The families of our first responders too, also need to be acknowledged for the emotional support they provide their loved ones when they return home after work. We owe every one of our first responders – as well as the families who support them through it all – a debt of gratitude.

**BOWEN COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTRE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I recognise the Bowen Community Technology Centre, which provides vital technical support to community of the Bowen suburb in Orange. Born out of frustration after a crime spree in the area around 2007, the Bowen Community Technology Centre was created and is run by the Bowen Residents Action Group—a not-for-profit organisation supported by Orange City Council and Mission

Australia. The centre is a vital link to the online world for its community, a majority of which is Indigenous and under-employed, with households often struggling to afford computers. First Nations young people make up 95 per cent of its clientele. The Bowen CTC has 14 computers and provides printing and scanning machines and internet access free-of-charge. Staff, led by the centre's driving force, manager Paula Townsend, are on hand to help clients write resumes, job applications, online job training, send emails and assist with other online transactions. The Bowen CTC also provides a safe, stable environment after school. The community the centre serves is also regularly surveyed for feedback and over 43,000 visits have been recorded since 2011. I congratulate Paula Townsend and her team at Bowen Community Technology Centre for their valuable community support.

#### **SID BURNS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Sid Burns 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. Sid from the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Juniors Competition, taking out the silver medal in the Under 13's/14's male board relay. Along with a bronze medal in the Under 13's male iron person. Congratulations Sid on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **TOM AND MITCH CHALMERS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Tom and Mitch Chalmers for their 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. Tom and Mitch from the Swansea - Belmont Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Juniors Competition, taking out the gold medal in the Under 13/14's beach relay. Congratulations to Tom and Will on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **WILL GRIFFITHS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism)**—I rise to acknowledge Will Griffiths 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. Will from the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club competed in the Juniors Competition, taking out the silver medal in the Under 15's Male board race. Will also took out silver in the Under 14's Male beach relay and Under 13's/14's board relay. Congratulations Will on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **ICOPE ILUKA**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate the local committee behind the establishment of Iluka Community Organisation Planning for Emergencies [ICOPE], a new not-for-profit community organisation focussed on empowering and educating the local community to proactively prepare for and effectively respond to emergencies. ICOPE was formed in September 2022 by a small group of like-minded locals concerned about the isolation the communities of Iluka and Woombah had experienced during the recent bushfires and floods. It works closely with the Red Cross, SES, RFS, Clarence Valley Council, Rotary and other local organisations. It is the first community group to receive endorsement for a Community Managed Evacuation Centre mapping out a local plan to ensure nobody is forgotten during a disaster. ICOPE recently secured a grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and the Yulgilbar Foundation to host a series of community events. It hosted its first free event 'Fields of Friends' on 19 June which by all accounts was an outstanding success. ICOPE is a shining example of a community taking charge to prepare for future natural disasters and emergencies. I congratulate everyone involved in its formation and their efforts in fostering a resilient and more connected community during times of disaster.

**JESSICA HICKS – AUSTRALIAN RODEO QUEEN 2023**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Ms Jessica Hicks from the Clarence Valley on her recent achievement of being crowned Australian Rodeo Queen 2023. The Australian Rodeo Queen Quest was founded 31 years ago and is aimed at encouraging young women from across Australia to become involved with the sport through education, promotions and fundraising activities. A judging panel determines the winner of the quest based on presentation, public speaking skills, personality, knowledge of the rodeo circuit and horsemanship. Ms Hicks will now travel to Canada and the United States of America in July for five weeks representing Australia alongside other rodeo queens from around the world, they will travel to the Calgary Stampede and then on to other events in Dallas, Texas. This will be Ms Hicks' first time travelling overseas. I would like to wish Ms Hicks all the best on her upcoming overseas adventure and in her role as 2023 Australian Rodeo Queen.

**MRS STEPHANYE HOLDEN – AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDAL**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of Mrs Stephanye Holden who was the recipient of an Australian Fire Service Medal in the 2023 King's Birthday Honour list. Mrs Holden has been a volunteer member of the Clarence Valley District Catering Brigade and Ashby Brigade for many years, appointed Brigade Secretary in 2013. Her contribution has been of significant benefit to the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and the local community of the Clarence Valley District. Since 2019 Mrs Holden has been the Catering Captain for the Clarence Valley Catering Brigade. She is a well-respected and trusted leader who has a patient, friendly and caring nature. When not volunteering with the Rural Fire Service, Mrs Holden assists at her local women's shed and also volunteers in the community working with cancer patients during the difficult stages of palliative care. I thank Mrs Holden for her ongoing contributions to the Volunteer Rural Fire Service and for her tireless dedication, exceptional leadership, reliability, and commitment to helping in her community.

**GWEN AND RUSSELL DEAVES**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—Today I would like to recognise the work and service of a couple of real Lake Macquarie legends and tireless community volunteers Gwen and Russell Deaves. Gwen and Russell have dedicated their lives to helping our community and were on the board of trustees who established the Wyee Community Hall and have also been involved with the Rural Fire Service since the 1960s. Gwen recently clocked up 55 years of service with the Wyee RFS, while Russell, who is a founding member of the brigade has served with them for 63 years. This length of service is incredible rare and must be commended. In their younger days Gwen and Russell were out on the hoses, actively fighting fires, with Russell serving as Captain of the Brigade from 1965 to 1980 and today remain committed to the brigade. I have huge regard for Gwen and Russell, who have been personal friends of me and my family for many years, but this is not extraordinary, Gwen and Russell are true friends of the community and much loved by all.

**KIM JEFFS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to congratulate Kim Jeffs on achieving a wonderful career milestone, clocking up 40 years of dedicated service with Macquarie Preschools Cooperative Limited. Early childhood educators are just so important and often don't receive the praise and recognition they deserve. They're not only responsible for educating, caring and playing with our pre-school aged children they also guide children through their first experience of structured learning. Kim began her career with Macquarie Preschools back in 1983 when Toronto Preschool was run out of the Uniting Church Hall in Toronto before moving to facilities at Biraban Public School, where she worked for 20 years. She then moved to Cary Bay Preschool where she remains today. Kim has a true love of children and has taught multiple generations of the same Lake Macquarie families. She says the most rewarding aspect of her job is seeing children happy and helping to shape their young minds. 61-year-old Kim has no plans to retire yet and I wish her all the best for many years to come.

**2023 NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS FINALISTS – HARDIE & CO PLUMBING**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I rise to congratulate local Pittwater business Hardie & Co Plumbing for their nomination in the Professional Services category as a part of the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. William Hardie runs the 10-year strong family business based out of Mona Vale providing plumbing services across Pittwater and wider Sydney. Our community is so proud to see our local businesses nominated for and representing Pittwater in awards like these. Congratulations to William and your team for your efforts, and best wishes for the upcoming Awards. I am proud that these words will be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of this country as a small recognition of your efforts.

**2023 NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS FINALISTS – BARBERT PIZZA CO**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I rise to congratulate local Pittwater business Barbert Pizza Co for their nomination in the Restaurant category as a part of the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Josie and Heath run and should be congratulated, and recognised for their wonderful pizza and pasta restaurant based in Elanora Heights. Every neighbourhood needs exceptional cuisine and Barbert Pizza Co deliver just that to our local 2101 community, and beyond. Our community is so proud to see our local businesses nominated for and representing our Pittwater community in awards like these. Congratulations to Josie and Heath, and your team for your efforts, and best wishes for the upcoming Awards. I am proud that these words will be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of this country as a small recognition of Barbert Pizza Co, Josie and Heath, and all their staff's efforts.

**2023 NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS FINALISTS – VEES DOGGY HOLIDAY CARE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I rise to congratulate local Pittwater business Vees Doggy Holiday Care for their nomination in the Pet Care category as a part of the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Vanessa Howes runs and should be congratulated and recognised for her wonderful doggy care business based in Mona Vale. Every neighbourhood needs exceptional pet care, and Vanessa and her business does just that for our Pittwater community, and beyond. Our community is so proud to see our local businesses nominated for and representing our community in awards like these. Congratulations to Vanessa, and your team for your efforts and best wishes for the upcoming Awards. I am proud that these words will be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of this country as a small recognition of your efforts.

**ROBERT (BOB) BOUFFLER**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I pay tribute to Robert (Bob) Bouffler, who died on 23 June 2023. Bob was a member of the North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club for 67 years. Bob was an outstanding lifesaver, completing 10 years of active service as well as being a patrol captain. He was captain of the club's first Senior Rescue and Resuscitation Team to win the gold medal at the Australian Championships, in Tasmania in 1969, annexing the Association Premiership for Surf Life Saving. The team also won gold at the NSW, Metropolitan and Sydney Championships that season. In R&R he won two gold, two silver and two bronze medals at the Australian Championships and numerous medals at the NSW, Metropolitan, and Sydney Championships. Bob competed in R&R for North Cronulla for over 20 years. As a member of the 1978 North Cronulla team, Bob won gold at the Australian Championships at Kingscliff Beach on his 40th Birthday. Bob was the North Cronulla Club Champion on a number of occasions winning both the Surf and Belt Race events. I offer my sympathy to his children Paul, Wayne, Jane and Scott, his four sisters and their families.

**DULUX TRADE CENTRE BACKS LISMORE WITH NEW STORE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to long-established Lismore paint supply business Dulux Trade Centre, which has made the difficult decision to leave its flood-damaged CBD premises but has put down fresh roots in South Lismore in a major commitment to our city's future. The business's new premises boasts modern facilities and a spacious showroom and is looking forward with confidence once more after a very tough 14 months. Dulux Network Area Manager Phil Kenrick is anticipating a strong turnout for the official opening ceremony happening on 5 June, with food, drinks and prizes on offer to lucky opening-day customers. Despite their own struggle to get the business back on its feet, key staff led by Chris Jones decided to gift \$140,000-worth of flood-damaged stock (the paint inside the tins was unaffected) to the local community to help in recovery efforts. Chris and his team also donated a further \$80,000 to various flood-related relief efforts including the Lismore Flood Appeal. This is exactly the sort of open-hearted generosity that is seeing our community get back on its feet, and I commend Dulux for standing with us through this terrible time.

**NIMBIN HEADERS CELEBRATE FEMALE FOOTBALL WEEK**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I applaud the formidable Nimbin Headers Football Club women's division for their outstanding contributions to female football in our region. It is important to highlight the dedication and hard work that this club has put into promoting and supporting women's football in our community. In tribute to Female Football Week, Lucy White, Carol Boomsma, Csilla Foraita, Kat Balkin, Deborah, and Marlana Garcia organised a fantastic and fitting event. The Nimbin Headers Football Club have been instrumental in creating a safe and inclusive environment for women of all ages and skill levels to participate in football. Their commitment to providing opportunities for female players to develop their skills and compete at a high level is truly commendable. The club's efforts to promote gender equality in sports have not gone unnoticed. They have actively worked towards breaking down barriers and creating a level playing field for all athletes, regardless of their gender. I sincerely thank the Nimbin Headers Football Club for their tireless efforts in promoting female

football in our community. Their dedication and hard work have undoubtedly made a significant difference, and we are all grateful for their contributions.

### **NORPA CELEBRATING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH NEW WIDJABUL WIA:BEL-LED THEATRE PROJECT**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—We all love celebrating birthdays and it is fantastic that NORPA, our Lismore-based Northern Rivers Performing Arts company, is this year celebrating its 30th anniversary. Along the way it has grown into one of Australia's leading regional theatre-making organisations, telling local stories from our region while also showcasing some of the very best performing arts productions from all over Australia. Under the guidance of Artistic Director Julian Louis and Creative Director First Nations Rhoda Roberts NORPA continues to go from strength to strength. Despite losing its base at Lismore City Hall in the 2022 flood disaster, NORPA keeps producing top-notch shows like last year's sold-out 'Love For One Night'. NORPA was awarded a \$60,000 Create NSW grant to develop a new production based on the life of the first Aboriginal Olympian, Francis 'Frank' Roberts, a Wadjabul boxer who grew up in the Lismore area. He represented Australia at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics but until now his story has remained largely unknown. The grant funding will assist with the lengthy creative development process, with the full-scale work to be staged in 2025 and expected to gain national attention. Bravo NORPA!

### **CHECKING OUT OF STORE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my congratulations to Craig English, a valued member of our community, for his sincere contributions to the grocery industry over the past 48 years. The Border supermarket owner earlier this year retired selling his business of twelve years. Mr English's impact on the community has been significant, particularly through his ownership of the Discount Grocery Warehouse in Lavington where he got to know his customers and all the regulars who formed his local community. He is known for his dedication to providing a most important local service, focused on keeping prices affordable for quality produce. His direct communication with suppliers has stood him in good stead, and his commitment to reducing waste has had a positive influence. I am grateful for your contributions Mr English, and I wish you a well-deserved retirement.

### **DREAMS COME TRUE FOR A TEENAGE SHOWJUMPER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my congratulations to Lyla Ferrari, a year nine student from The Scots School in Albury, who was chosen to represent Australia at the international level in show jumping. Lyla competed at the Global Amateurs Tour [GAT] in Mexico this June, and was awarded highest placed international children's rider on a borrowed horse. Lyla has always loved horses and has always been around them as her grandfather trots horses and other family members have participated in show jumping. Well done Lyla, and a big thank you to Jess Fittock from Horseland Albury for your assistance in helping Lyla secure funding to support her on this great sporting adventure.

### **NATAN VARTKES PAYLAK BEDROSIAN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my welcome to Natan Vartkes Paylak Bedrosian and his beautiful family, who arrived in Albury and whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau & Multicultural Services' Refugee Week Celebration held at the Mirambeena Community Centre. Natan's journey as an Armenia-Iraqi refugee led him to Lebanon, where he spent the past nine years. He was then granted the opportunity to start afresh here in Albury. Natan has embraced his new life here with incredible enthusiasm, already familiarising himself with the services and neighbourhoods of Albury and is now looking at the options for pursuing higher education at either Charles Sturt University or La Trobe University. I am appreciative of the warm welcome extended by the community to Natan and his family and look forward to hearing more news of his plans as he settles in. Welcome to Albury, Natan.

### **ARCHER POOL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I am delighted to bring your attention to a wonderful 6-year-old community member named Archer Pool, a little boy with a big heart. Earlier this year, Archer has received a Special Achievement Award for Young Person of the year from the Central Coast Council on Australia Day. Since Archer was 2 years old, he started picking up rubbish at local parks and playgrounds with his mother, Han Le. Archer has continuously showed his appreciation to his local heroes by baking cookies and delivering them to the local police, ambulance, and hospital staff as well as his frequent rubbish truck drivers. When Archer heard of his old preschool's cubby house had deteriorated, he asked his parents if he can donate his savings so his old preschool can build a new cubby house. I congratulate Archer on his initiatives and exemplary actions to care for our local community. I thank you Archer for reminding us that you are never too young to make a difference and I am looking forward to seeing what you do next.

### **CWA WOY WOY AND GOSFORD CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW CRAFT PROGRAM**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Recently, the Woy Woy Branch of the Country Women's Association has partnered with the Gosford Division of Corrective Services NSW. This volunteer-based project aims to teach offenders sentenced in community-based supervision how to knit, crochet, and loom. It has resulted in the production of beanies, blankets, scarves and trauma teddies, which have been donated to Ambulance NSW for use in Birthing Kits, and to assist babies in need. Through their work, the CWA is providing the offenders with new productive skills, which is a crucial aspect of their rehabilitation. The program enables offenders to contribute to the lives of vulnerable groups, and has been a positive experience for all involved. This is demonstrated through improvements in the language, attitudes and behaviours of participants - with all participants noting pride in their new skills. So far 131 beanies have been donated! I wish to offer my sincere gratitude for the community service and initiative that the CWA has undertaken. The effects of this program will be observed at multiple levels of the electorate, and I appreciate these women giving their time to increase community wellbeing, cohesion, and understanding.

### **REGIONAL YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I rise today to draw attention to and thank the local Regional Youth Support Service for their work on the Central Coast concerning youth engagement. I would also like to draw attention to their successful 'Peninsula Youth Voice Forum', which held this past week on Thursday, 22 June 2023. These types of forums are instrumental in engaging the local youth community and driving youth engagement in local events. The forum was dedicated to issues faced by the youth community in Woy Woy, Umina, Blackwall, Booker Bay, Patonga and Pearl Beach. The RYSS is an important organisation on the Central Coast that provides events and community engagement with local youths. The organisation also draws attention and takes an active role in issues relating to Aboriginal health, gender, and sexual diversity, as well as unemployment, homelessness, and disability inclusion. I would like to thank Beck Johnson for her role in the organisation of the Youth Forum as well as the entire RYSS team for the extraordinary work they do to engage with the youngest people on the Central Coast. I look forward to seeing the results!

### **SHELLHARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the students, teachers, staff, and parents of Shellharbour Public School for their collective effort in supporting The Wollongong Homeless Hub and participating in Wrap Up Homelessness Week. Wrap Up Homelessness Week serves as a reminder that not everyone has the opportunity to stay warm during the winter season. On Wednesday, June 7, 2023, the students of Shellharbour Public School organised a fundraising day by organizing a mufti day. It was truly remarkable to see children attending school dressed in warm clothing and donating a gold coin to raise funds in support of the Wollongong Homeless Hub. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Shellharbour Public School for their exceptional efforts in supporting the Wollongong Homeless Hub.

### **ZOE DAVIES**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Zoe Davies, from Warilla High School, who represented South Coast at the NSW CHS Open Age Lawn Bowls Championships. She was awarded gold and bronze in the singles and pairs and was named Player of the Tournament at 13 years of age which is very impressive. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Zoe and wish you well in your future sporting endeavours.

### **SHELLHARBOUR COMMUNITY CHURCH FOODCARE PROGRAM**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I congratulate the Shellharbour Community Church and its dedicated volunteers for their exceptional FoodCare Initiative. This initiative plays a crucial role in providing an affordable grocery solution for families within the local community. It is truly commendable that over 25 volunteers generously donate their time to support this program. In collaboration with OzHarvest, FoodCare collects food from Woolworths and Coles, ensuring its delivery to Foodcare and subsequent distribution to individuals in need. Since its establishment in 2009, FoodCare has been instrumental in supporting thousands of families, pensioners, and individuals facing challenging socioeconomic circumstances. On average, the initiative serves well over 200 people per week, making a significant impact within the community. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour Community, I would like to express my profound gratitude for the hard work demonstrated by the FoodCare team. Their dedication and commitment provide a vital service to the local community, offering much-needed support and assistance.

### AUSTRALIAN AGE AND OPEN SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The 2023 Australian Age Championships and the Australian Open Swimming Championships were held on the Gold Coast from April 7-20, 2023. The Wallsend electorate can boast 22 competitors at the Age and 11 at the Open. Congratulations to those at the Age Championships, including competitors Millicent Campbell, who won Gold in the 12-13yr Multi-class 100 Freestyle, and Ella Mounter, who took home silver in the 200 Breaststroke, bronze in the 15yr 100 Breaststroke and bronze in the 15yr Breaststroke. Congratulations also to those participating the many final swims, some setting amazing personal bests and some great relay races. We had quite a few first-time qualifiers at Age. A further congratulations the Australian Open swimmers with Amber Clark with silver in the 18-19yr 200 Butterfly; Emily Dobbins with bronze in the 18-19yr 50 Backstroke. There were many finals qualifiers and relay events. A big shout out to our little pocket rocket, Ella Mounter also competed in 4 events at the Open championships, achieving places in several of the B finals.

### VARIETY BASH 2023 – LAMBTON AND NEW LAMBTON LOCALS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—A hearty welcome to the arrival of 'The Flintstone' Bashers Geoff and Margaret Haren and Maree and David Jordan, residents from Lambton and New Lambton. The quartet have been 'The Flintstones' for the last 10 years in their 1984 model WB Stateman complete with their roof-top 'Dino'. The 2023 Variety NSW Bash vehicles drove into Newcastle on 27 May 2023 after a 7-day 2160km charity journey from Dubbo on 21 May in cars 30 years old. The event raises money for Variety Children's Charity to financially support kids and families requiring wheelchairs, specialist equipment and medical supplies when they can't afford it and are not able to receive government assistance. The Variety Bash started in 1985 when Dick Smith and a group of motorists raised \$250,00 along the way. The results of the Bashers fundraising help with a range of educational, health and mobility equipment to local schools and organisations all in support of Aussie kids. It is a worthwhile charity and a great service to the community. Thank you to all those who participate and contribute to this very worthwhile event.

### MULTICULTURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE SERVICES 2023 EXPO

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Congratulations to the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Services for their 2023 Expo held in the Auditorium of the Callaghan College Jesmond Campus on Wednesday, 31 May 2023. There were approximately 50 stalls showcasing services to the multicultural community, as well as food and henna. The entertainment was from the Afghan, Chinese, Indonesian, Ukrainian, Russian and Armenian communities as well as the Heaton Public School Choir. Heaton Public School also featured their students speaking on their heritage, background and life in Australia. The event was well attended with visitors able to connect with government, charity and community services and programmes that are available to assist the needs of the multicultural community. With the use of the roving mic at the event, exhibitors were able to explain their services to the community attending. The Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Services provides free conversational English classes to anyone who wants to practice their English regardless of their residency status or visa. Thank you to all those involved and providing their services to support this great event. I look forward to next years' expo.

### RACHEL GRAY

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate, Ms Rachel Gray, for her generosity and dedication to helping the Blakehurst Public School community. Ms Gray has been a vital member of the Blakehurst Public P&C committee for over 8 years. Ms Gray, is currently the secretary of the P&C but for the past few years has taken on the role of secretary, treasurer and fundraising coordinator simultaneously. Rachel along with her team of volunteers, have successfully raised much-needed funds for the school allowing many school projects that aim to improve student wellbeing to be realised. Recently, she was responsible for the introduction of a wellbeing dog for the school, advocating for the difference this would make for the school's students and staff. Without her support, this wellbeing initiative would not have been possible. Ms Gray is always positive and continuously gives up her time and effort to help the school community without asking for anything in return. I want to thank Ms Gray for her dedication to improving student outcomes and for fostering a positive and enjoyable environment for both students and parents at the school.

### SAFIYAH BOWENS

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and recognise the wonderful work of Arkana College school captain, Ms Safiyah Bowens. Safiyah is an exemplary student with outstanding grades, attendance, and class participation. She is a leading member of the schools debating and public speaking teams and has represented the school with distinction in several sports. Safiyah graciously volunteers her time and effort through many programs initiated by the school. This includes cooking and preparing meals for victims of domestic violence, participating in environmental conservation programs, and promoting harmony and peace



through the school's interfaith program. Remarkably Safiyah even set up her own volunteer group called Get Up Kids, which organises many environmental and social justice campaigns to help those in need. Safiyah is an outstanding leader and truly an inspiration to us all. I want to sincerely thank her for the important work she does across the school and more importantly throughout our local community and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

#### **PAUL COX**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate, Mr Paul Cox, for his generosity and dedication to helping the St George community. Mr Cox has been an active member of the St George Men's Shed for the past 11 years. The St George Men's Shed is an independent not-for-profit association, located in Carss Park and operates five mornings a week from 8:00am to 12:00pm. Men's Sheds provide a home for men prepared to share their skills in endeavours for the common good and for community projects. Paul is an extremely skilled craftsman restoring previously loved toys for continued usage. Most importantly, Mr Cox, constructs new toys and specialised accessories to meet the specific needs of children in special schools, hospital support groups and other community organisations. Paul has done extensive work, in particular for the St George School, Kogarah for children with special needs. Often giving up his time outside the Shed, to build personalised sensory toys for the needs of individual students and group activities. I would like to express my deepest appreciation towards Mr Cox for his dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the St George community.

#### **OLIVIA FRISBY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Olivia Frisby might only be a teenager, but she's already making a name for herself as a classy driver of harness racing horses. The 18-year-old from Bathurst produced a huge upset when she piloted \$61 outsider Kingston Shannon to victory at Menangle Park on Saturday night, May 27. After being given the drive for trainer Mckayler Barnes, it was Olivia's breakthrough win at a metropolitan track as well as Barnes' first win at that level as a trainer. Olivia had driven Kingston Shannon to victory for Barnes twice prior to Saturday night. However, the win at Menangle was a fairy-tale as the seven-year-old gelding had to make its move from the rear of the field on the final turn in what was a winning tactic from the young reinswoman. Needless to say Olivia was elated with the victory as she beat popular Georges Plains trainer-driver Bernie Hewitt who led for almost all the way on the \$2.30 favourite Always Thunder. If confidence is anything to go by, Olivia will be given a real boost by the victory at Menangle Park which is the headquarters for harness racing in the state.

#### **BATHURST AND DISTRICT PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Highlighting the importance of research into prostate cancer set the scene for a group of Bathurst locals to pound the pavement and walk 22 kilometres to further their cause. That was the chosen distance as one man is diagnosed with prostate cancer every 22 minutes in Australia. It was part of the "Perfect Match" campaign being organised by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. Chairman of the Bathurst support group, John Troller, won his battle after being one of those men with his diagnosis coming in 2009. John was joined by his wife Pat, along with Tony and Bernadette Sutton and Jim Hallahan and earlier this month completed their mission of walking several kilometres each day in the Bathurst central business district to achieve their target. Members of the community were invited and encouraged to join them on their pilgrimage as well as kicking the can with a donation. All donations to the campaign were then doubled by the Perfect Match sponsors. Residents such as these are amongst the real quiet achievers of our community and the difference, they make in helping others following a positive diagnosis cannot be underestimated.

#### **BLAYNEY JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—A big shout out to everyone involved with Blayney Junior Rugby League. On June 17 they took part in the 2023 #Playinpurple campaign fundraiser which is a nationwide initiative coordinated by PanKind, the Australian Pancreatic Cancer Foundation, whose aim is to triple the survival rate by 2030 and dramatically increase the quality of life for patients and their families. Players from the Blayney Junior Rugby League pulled on purple socks for their matches at King George Oval with funds being raised for pancreatic cancer research. All players and clubs were encouraged to participate in the initiative by simply swapping their regular club socks for purple ones. PanKind purple socks were available for purchase on the day for \$15 a pair with the Blayney club being the first team nationally to host an event of this kind. It's this type of community spirit that's so special because its events like this that units the club, players and the broader Blayney community while also shining a light on pancreatic cancer research. Well done to everyone from Blayney Junior Rugby League, you all deserve a gold medal for your efforts.

### **LIFESOURCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COMMUNITY FOODCARE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Thursday 8 June 2023, I accepted a very kind invitation to visit, tour and meet the volunteers at LifeSource Christian Church in Chatswood for their weekly Community FoodCare Program. This initiative provides fruit, vegetables, bread, plus other groceries at an affordable price for those in need. LifeSource Christian Church is a supporter of worthwhile services to those in need – including debt and other forms of counselling. I acknowledge the many sponsors of the FoodCare program, including Coles, Woolworths, Foodbank Australia, Willoughby City Council, OzHarvest, and Second Bite. Special thanks to Senior Pastor John Iuliano, Senior Pastor Anne Iuliano, and LifeSource Community Care Manager Matthew Cross (who I coincidentally share a namesake with) for their leadership in our community. I look forward to engaging with LifeSource Christian Church and participating in similar Foodcare programs in the years to come.

### **DUFFYS FOREST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE STATION OPENING**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 25 June 2023 I was delighted to attend the opening of Duffys Forest Rural Fire Brigade's upgraded headquarters. The original fire station, constructed in 1965, was replaced due to growth of the Brigade's membership and the increasing needs of the community in dealing with hazard-reduction and other disaster-related events. I am proud to report that the new station features a larger function room, kitchen, cleaning area, media room, and spaces for up to four fire trucks. These much-needed works have brought the facility up to current standards and improved the ability of the Duffys Forest Rural Fire Brigade to continue their vital service to the Northern Beaches and wider NSW community. I was pleased to join my parliamentary colleagues Rory Amon MP and Sophie Scamps MP, Northern Beaches Mayor Sue Heins, RFS Deputy Commissioner Kyle Stewart, and former Commissioner Greg Mullins AO. I have consistently expressed – and will continue to express – my utmost respect and support for the heroes who serve in volunteer organisations such as the Rural Fire Service. I look forward to engaging with them and other emergency services for many years to come.

### **125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Tuesday 13 June 2023, I joined the Consulate-General of the Republic of the Philippines Charmaine Rowena C. Aviquivil to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence. On 12 June 1898, the Philippines declared their independence from Spain after the Spanish colonial government fell during the Spanish-American War. Held in Harbourside Room at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, this event showcased a range of Filipino textile exhibitions and cultural performances. More than 200 guests from the Consular Corps, local government officials, and dignitaries attended this wonderful event. On this milestone, I make a special acknowledgement to Clare Amador and Aika Robredo – wonderful friends from the Philippines – who I know celebrated this special occasion. As the Member for Davidson, I look forward to engaging with the Filipino community in the future and once again, congratulations on their significant milestone.

### **KELLYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL 150TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—Today I congratulate Kellyville Public School which is celebrating its 150th year since opening. In 1873, there were more than sixty children living within a two-mile radius of the proposed school site, and permission was finally granted to establish a public school in a building offered by one of the local residents. Today with over 600 students, Kellyville Public continues to provide a vibrant learning environment for the Kellyville Community. Under the leadership of Principal Jenny Walker (our 2023 Local Woman the Year), the staff are committed to promoting student wellbeing, personal best, leadership and academic excellence. All students have the opportunity to shine across the rich and diverse programs offered at Kellyville Public which has an excellent school environment, well equipped classrooms and beautifully maintained grounds. The school will be commemorating the 150th anniversary with a huge school fete, gala dinner and an open day during the first week of August, and knowing the school as I do, these events will be quite the celebration. So congratulations to the teachers, staff and students of Kellyville Public School. From humble beginnings, to one of the leading schools in the Kellyville electorate.

### **CAFÉ THYME**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise Nerida Ramsay and the staff at Café Thyme in Taree. Café Thyme are donating \$1 from every coffee sold this week to the Mark Hughes Foundation – a charity that raises funds for research, creates awareness, and supports brain cancer patients and their families. This coincides with the National Rugby League's annual Beanie for Brain Cancer round, where fans are urged to buy an MHF beanie with the aim of raising money for brain cancer research and patient support. Having experienced a brain tumour herself in December 2016, Nerida has a personal connection to this cause. Although she has been cancer-free since then, she still remembers the exceptional care she received from the Mark Hughes Foundation

during that time and has been supporting the MHF ever since. I thank Nerida, Café Thyme and all those involved for their dedication to the Mark Hughes Foundation. Their generosity and compassion are an inspiration, thank you for making a positive impact on the lives of others.

#### **GREAT LAKES FORSTER CAMPUS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Great Lakes Forster Campus on their outstanding production of "We Will Rock You." This achievement marks a significant milestone for the school, as it was their first musical theatre production in six years. Over the course of six months, talented students perfected this inspiring performance. The show took place over three unforgettable nights at the Forster campus, captivating all who were fortunate enough to attend. I commend the entire cast, crew, and staff of the Great Lakes Forster Campus for their dedication and outstanding achievement. Their collective efforts have not only brought joy and inspiration to our community but have also showcased the invaluable role of the arts in fostering creativity, expression, and unity. "We Will Rock You" was a shining example of the extraordinary talent and spirit that resides within our community.

#### **MANNING RIVER ROWING CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Manning River Rowing Club. Manning River Rowing Club attended the 2023 Australian Masters Rowing Championships [AMRC] held at Sydney International Regatta Centre earlier this month. Out of the 96 participating clubs from across the country, Manning River Rowing Club achieved an impressive 17th place on the highly competitive medal tally. Their outstanding achievements were evident in various women's, men's, and mixed events. In total, the Manning River team received a total of 8.875 medals. This consisted of 3.625 gold medals, 3.125 silver medals and 2.125 bronze medals. The overall medal count comprised 7 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze medals. The fractional values of the total medals reflect the contribution of composite crews where athletes from multiple clubs joined forces. Congratulations to Manning River on this well-deserved recognition. I hope they continue to make waves and I wish the club continued success in their next regatta.

#### **"HELLO, NEI HOU MA" ART EXHIBITION OPENING CEREMONY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was a pleasure to attend the "Hello, Nei Hou Ma" Art Exhibition Opening Ceremony on Saturday, 17th June 2023, hosted by the Australia Hong Kong Link. The Australia Hong Kong Link is a wonderful organisation that supports our Australian-Hong Kong community in NSW and across Australia, and advocates for the democracy, freedom, rule of law, and human rights in Hong Kong. The "Hello, Nei Hou Ma" Art Exhibition, curated by the talented Pamela Leung and Rachael Kiang, provides an intimate glimpse into the diverse and cultural complexities that are inextricably linked with the spirit of Hong Kong diasporas. It was great to join friends, supporters, and members of our Australian-Hong Kong community, including Ted Hui – former Hong Kong legislative councillor, to celebrate the intersection of our cultures through the artistry and talents of Hong Kong diasporas residing in Australia and Taiwan. There were vibrant, insightful, and personal artworks that showcased the talents of artists and their personal expression of their identity. Thank you to members of the Australia Hong Kong Link and Director, Jane Poon, for pioneering this event and for your continued efforts to advocate for Hong Kong diasporas.

#### **HOMENETMEN NAVASART – 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was wonderful to attend the Homenetmen Navasart 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance on Saturday, 24th June 2023. Homenetmen Navasart is a fantastic organisation that supports our Armenian youth in Western Sydney, providing them for 50 years with a home and family to participate in scouts and sporting activities. Homenetmen is an organisation with over 100 chapters and 25,000 members worldwide and was established after the Armenian Genocide. It provided a safe space for Armenian youth in the diaspora to come together in support of one another during this difficult time. As the State Member of Prospect, I have seen the numbers of this organisation dramatically increase – with over 250 athletes and 50 scouts, and this number is growing weekly. The growth of this organisation is a testament to the hard-working Executive Committee, members, coaches, scout leaders, volunteers, parents, and families. Importantly, your efforts continue to provide our Armenian youth with a sense of community and pride. It was great to celebrate 50 years of Homenetmen Navasart with members our Australian-Armenian community. Thank you to Chairman Yeghpayr Ara Boyajian, Executive Committee members, and volunteers for organising a fantastic event.

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE STATE CRIME COMMAND EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARD – DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE AMY CODY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Detective Senior Constable Amy Cody 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 Senior Constable Cody has 16 years of service with the NSW

Police Force, with four of those years attached to the State Crime Command. She is currently with the Child Abuse Squad and was nominated for her investigation under SF Wongarra which investigated reports made to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children. Detective Senior Constable Cody led and managed a strong and efficient collaboration with internal and external stakeholders which resulted in the identification of a Person of Interest who was uploading child abuse material. There is no doubt that the investigation undertaken by Detective Senior Constable Cody and subsequent arrest of this Person of Interest was vital in stopping further offending upon children. Thank you, Detective Senior Constable Cody, for your commitment to preventing and responding to crime, and for helping to bring justice to victims. Congratulations again on your receipt of this Award.

#### **BLAKE HODGES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend the exceptional achievements of Blake Hodges, a talented golfer and resident of Erskine Park. Blake's remarkable performance at the 2023 Jack Newton Junior Golf Wagga Wagga Junior Masters, held in late February this year, has earned him the honour of sharing first place in his age group. Competing against a field of skilled golfers, Blake displayed tremendous skill, focus, and determination throughout the tournament. With consistent scores of 74 in each round, he not only secured an impressive tie for fourth place overall, but also claimed the title in his age category. Blake's achievement is a testament to his dedication to the sport and his unwavering commitment to excellence. His outstanding performance showcases his talent and highlights the potential for a bright future in the world of golf. As a local resident, Blake has brought pride and distinction to our community through his sporting accomplishments. I want to wish Blake continued success in his golfing journey and look forward to witnessing his future accomplishments.

#### **HIGGINS AND CO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I extend a warm welcome to Higgins and Co, the newest addition to our vibrant community in Luddenham. It is always a pleasure to witness the opening of a new business in the Badgerys Creek electorate, as it highlights the attractiveness of our area as a hub for commerce, work, residence, and family life. The opening of Higgins and Co signifies the continued growth and prosperity of our community, offering valuable real estate agent services to local residents. Their presence not only enhances our local economy but also contributes to the unique fabric of our neighbourhood. I am eager to see Higgins and Co actively engage with our community, forging connections and creating opportunities for collaboration. Their involvement in local events, initiatives and partnerships will undoubtedly foster a stronger sense of community spirit and togetherness. I wish them every success in their business endeavours and I look forward to witnessing the positive impact they will have on our community.

#### **THE BUNKER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish to acknowledge the opening of a new business in the Badgerys Creek electorate. The highly anticipated opening of The Bunker's third venue in Mulgoa marks a new favourite destination in our area. With their commitment to using locally sourced produce and providing a high-quality dining experience, The Bunker has quickly become a beloved establishment. The opening of The Bunker signifies the continued growth and prosperity of our community, offering valuable real estate agent services to local residents. Their presence not only enhances our local economy but also contributes to the unique fabric of our neighbourhood. I wish them every success in their business endeavours, and I look forward to witnessing the positive impact they will have on our community.

#### **KOWLOON CAFE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—It was an honour to officially open the new Kowloon Cafe in Eastwood this week. The atmosphere was one of excitement and anticipation as guests gathered to witness the grand inauguration. The ceremonious ribbon cutting marked the official launch of this new business, a testament to Kowloon Cafe's commitment to expanding its culinary legacy. Adding to the festivities, a captivating lion dance performance took centre stage, mesmerising everyone with its vibrant colours and rhythmic movements. The traditional dance symbolised good luck and prosperity for the new venture, infusing the occasion with an air of cultural significance. The Eastwood location offers an extensive selection of delectable dishes, blending traditional Asian flavours with contemporary twists. Attending the opening of Kowloon Cafe's Eastwood location was a truly memorable experience, and I am eager to return and savour their exquisite offerings. I congratulate Kowloon Cafe's rich heritage and their passion for bringing their renowned flavours to the Eastwood community. Particular tribute must be paid to the owners, the formidable Howard duo. They have done an incredible job getting the business off the ground and I wish them every success.

**JOSEPH LIM**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I am pleased to announce Joseph Lim from Epping Boys High School as the recipient of a highly commended award in the prestigious Moving Forward Together Songwriting Competition. While most contestants submitted impressive songs, Joseph's contribution stood out as a captivating and thought-provoking poster. Joseph's poster showcased his remarkable talent for visual storytelling, capturing the essence of the competition's theme with skill and creativity. The vibrant colours and intricate details of his design drew the viewer's attention, effectively conveying a powerful message of unity, resilience, and hope. His artwork portrayed a diverse community standing united, holding hands, and embracing diversity as they strive for progress and harmony. Joseph's exceptional ability to communicate a compelling message through his visual art sets him apart as a talented artist with a unique perspective. His dedication, creativity, and attention to detail were evident in every brushstroke and element of his composition. I congratulate Joseph Lim on his highly commended award in the Moving Forward Together Songwriting and Poster Competition and commend him for his outstanding poster. I look forward to witnessing his future endeavours and the positive impact his art will undoubtedly continue to make.

**JAEHEE LEE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I am delighted to recognise Jaehee Lee from Eastwood Heights Public School for receiving a highly commended award in the renowned Moving Forward Together Songwriting and poster competition. It is noteworthy that Jaehee showcased his exceptional artistic talent through a visually captivating and impactful poster, emphasising the diversity and resilience of our communities. Jaehee's poster displayed an incredible fusion of colours, symbols, and imagery, demonstrating his keen eye for design and composition. The artwork effectively conveyed a message of unity, inclusivity, and progress, aligning perfectly with the competition's theme. Through his poster, Jaehee successfully communicated the power of togetherness, portraying people from different backgrounds joining hands to face challenges and embrace a brighter future. The meticulous attention to detail and the use of vibrant elements showcased Jaehee's artistic prowess and ability to evoke emotions through visual storytelling. I congratulate Jaehee Lee on his highly commended award and applaud him for his remarkable poster, which serves as a testament to his artistic excellence and his dedication to promoting harmony and progress. I eagerly await witnessing his future artistic endeavours and the positive influence they will undoubtedly have on our community.

**ROSELANDS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Saturday 17 June 2023, Roselands FC also known as the Roselands Raptors held a ceremony to unveil a plaque to celebrate the upgrade to their amenities at Bennett Park. Roselands FC has long been a pillar of our community, fostering the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and inclusivity. I am proud to witness the positive impact of the Government's Community Building Partnership grants across my electorate. This grant has made it possible to improve the club's toilets and change rooms which are used by both the boy and girl teams. I want to express my appreciation and extend my warmest congratulations to the President of Roselands FC, Kylie Kegg, for inviting me to this momentous occasion. This significant improvement serves as a testament to the deep-rooted passion, dedication, and unwavering spirit of this esteemed football club. I showed the players a few tricks to take to the field and of course, I had to make sure that the oranges were ready before the players came back from halftime. I thank Kylie Kegg, Grace Martin, and the Roselands Raptors family for their ongoing support and for inviting me to join them in celebrating this milestone.

**LORENZO FAZZINI**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to commend Lorenzo Fazzini, on his recent Dempsey Medal award for outstanding services in the Archdiocese of Sydney for volunteering to carry out works in his parish of St John Vianney and St Thomas More, Greenacre. In 2011, he was also awarded 'ad Commendam' (Commendatore), by the President of the Italian Republic, for services to the Australian and Italian communities. Lorenzo is the owner of the LAF Group, a company that specialises in the manufacture, supply, and installation of fire engineering solutions for elements of building construction. The company has operated since 1960, with Lorenzo commencing in the early '80s. Lorenzo also has a strong civic ethos and has been serving in his capacity as Director on boards of various industry and community organisations. He is currently approaching his 20th year as President of CoAsIt which he undertakes on a volunteer basis. Lorenzo is married to his lovely wife of 40 years, Laura and during this time they have raised 3 daughters. He is now a grandfather of 3, with another on the way. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Lorenzo's generous contribution and outstanding service to our community.

**FRANKLIN GEORGE DAVIES**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—It is a great privilege and honour to congratulate Mr Franklin George Davies for being awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours list for his service to the community through a range of organisations. More than 54 years ago, Mr Davies moved to NSW to start a new life and what better place to choose than Greenacre? For over 45 years he has served as a Justice of the Peace, as well as fundraising and volunteering for over 50 charities. Mr Davies, a tennis and table tennis player, and ballroom dancing teacher has never slowed down. When news of his OAM was announced, he was helping to transport a group of visitors to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. To add to this wonderful achievement, in 2002 he was awarded the Anniversary of National Service Medal, in 2010 the NSW Seniors Week Achievement Award, in 2011 the NSW Government Community Service Award, in 2013 the Volunteer of the Year, Bicycle NSW, in 2014 the Senior Volunteer of the Year, The Centre for Volunteering, and in 2016 Citizen of the Year in the Bankstown Council's Australia Day Awards.

**BUSINESS OF THE YEAR UAINE CANDLES HUNTER VALLEY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Andrew and Suzanne Mason of UAINE Candles who were awarded both the Business of the Year and the general business excellence awards at the recent Hunter Region Business Hub Excellence Awards. The awards were held at the Cessnock Leagues Club late last month and I was thrilled to be there to share in the celebrations. The name UAINE ('oonyah') is Gaelic and means green and verdant reflecting the company's Hunter Valley heritage and their commitment to the environment and the local community. The UAINE manufacturing facility overlooks the Hunter River and interestingly are only metres away from Morpeth's original candle factory established in the 1850's. Following a candle accident in their home Andrew and Suzanne established UAINE Candles with the goal of making beautiful candles that are the cleanest, safest, and healthiest available. UAINE Candles are hand poured using 100 per cent soy wax and the finest fragrances and raw materials available. Unlike most other candles, they contain no chemicals or additives - they are natural and fresh & vegan-friendly. Congratulations Andrew and Suzanne.

**LORETTA BAKER – RECOGNITION OF HER IMPROVEMENT OF PEOPLE'S LIVES IN THE MAITLAND REGION**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Councillor Loretta Baker has proudly represented the community of Maitland for over 30 years. Firstly, through her career as a community health nurse helping support those with mental health and addiction issues, implementing immunisation programs for local schools, and she was bestowed the honour of being Maitland's first ever female Mayor. Loretta is passionate about arts, theatre, and creatives, and was instrumental in gaining much needed traction for Maitland Region Art Gallery during her tenure as Maitland Council Mayor. Her ability to see the possibilities for injection of creative flow into our community has enabled our artistic scene to flourish within the region. Behind her motivation is an unwavering passion to assist people and help them make their lives better through social justice and improving access to facilities, which has been a hallmark of her life. Loretta is a lover of the tight-knit community of Maitland, and her love of our community is demonstrated in everything that she does to continue to enhance the lives of members in our region. I celebrate your achievements Loretta, and thank you for your ongoing, unwavering commitment to our Maitland community.

**MAITLAND HERITAGE FEST 2023**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the committee of Maitland Heritage Fest. I was honoured to attend the opening dinner recently to thank some of these volunteers personally. The Maitland Heritage Fest began in 2021 to showcase the city's history. This year's event began with the heritage dinner at Monte Pio, followed by a piano recital at Sun Street Studios, heritage walks and Bridge House tours on the Saturday. Sunday's Family Fun Day featured historic games, local history tours, stalls, crafts, artisans, delicious food and live music. The festival spread across Church Street, St Marys, Grossmann and Brough Houses, Maitland Country Women's Association Hall and Maitland Guide Hall. The day featured the ever-popular town crier, a blacksmith, and a silhouette artist. The music on offer included folk singers, Maitland City Choir and City of Maitland Pipes of Drums. This event fosters a love of Maitland's past for future generations, from our Indigenous past, through to when the cedar getters first came and to the beautiful buildings we now see that were built as the region prospered. Congratulations to Dr Janece McDonald, Margaret Richardson and the whole committee for their efforts.

**DR DIANA ROBINSON AM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—With the recent announcement of the King's Birthday Honours, I would particularly like to congratulate Dr Diana Robertson, a constituent of Willoughby in Castlecrag. Diana was honoured as 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. In a distinguished medical career, Diana has had more than 26 years of clinical experience as a sport and exercise physician where she has treated patients with insulin resistance, diabetes, hypertension and other chronic conditions. In 1995, she was awarded a Fellowship of the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians and presently serves as an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. Diana was also the Australian Team Doctor for the Commonwealth Games and Medical Director of Triathlon at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. In addition to her physician work, Diana served on the Antidoping Rule Violation Panel for eight years and has been a member of the International Triathlon Union Doping Commission. I again congratulate Diana for her remarkable service to sports medicine and contribution to anti-doping regulation.

**AUSTRALIAN CHINESE DAILY – 36 ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Friday 3 March, I had the pleasure of joining the team at the Australian Chinese Daily for a Gala Dinner at North Ryde RSL to celebrate their 36th anniversary. The Australian Chinese Daily is a popular newspaper in the Chinese Australian community, founded in Sydney by Liu Meiling in 1987 shortly after she immigrated to Australia from Hong Kong. Her vision was to produce a newspaper which would serve as a bridge between Australia and China, with the aim also of helping Chinese immigrants to understand their new homeland of Australia. Published six days a week, the Australian Chinese Daily sources news from combination of media sources in Australia, mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The content includes a mix of local and international news, politics, sports, entertainment, business and finance. Its magazine supplements also provide coverage of culture, commerce, food, fashion, festivals and entertainment. The paper is distributed across Australia, with its largest readerships in Sydney and Melbourne. I congratulate the Australian Chinese Daily on its anniversary and am very grateful for the new service it provides to our Chinese Australian community.

**ARTARMON COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Artarmon Parklands Community Garden is a special place in my local community. It is not only a green oasis in the midst of suburbia, but a community space attracting a variety of local gardeners eager to cultivate their hobby. Located on the former Artarmon bowling green, the community garden features a great range of vegetables, herbs and fruit trees grown by the gardeners as well as their new chicken coop and run. The mission of the community garden is to grow healthy and sustainable produce and to build a vibrant, resilient and engaged community. Keen to showcase its beauty to the local community, the Garden offered a wheelchair-accessible tour in February where visitors could learn some handy gardening tips and find out about seed saving and sorting over a light morning tea. Operating since 2020, the garden members have harvested plentiful supplies of tomatoes, zucchinis, lettuce, beans, cucumbers, sweet corn, melons, yams, soy beans, berries and other produce. The Artarmon Parklands Community Garden brings great benefits to my community and I look forward to seeing it grow from strength to strength.

**DAVID REID**

**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)**—I would like to acknowledge local resident David Reid from Wadalba who was selected for the State Country Hockey Championships competing in Shepparton Victoria next month in August. David has previously played in the Australian team overseas competing in Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Argentina, South Africa, and Fiji. This was David's 10th year playing in the Australian team overseas and accompanied by his partner Simone Williams joining the overseas tour as the Australian men's country physiotherapist for the third time. David currently plays in both Sydney and Newcastle Hockey competitions. Goodluck to David and his teammates competing in the upcoming championships.

**AMCAL GOROKAN PHARMACY**

**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)**—Amcal Pharmacy located in Gorokan shopping centre will be the first in the region to open a drive-through pharmacy. The well-known pharmacy recently upgraded to new Amcal branding, also now open for longer hours and an e-commerce platform to make life more convenient for customers. Over the last 17 years owner pharmacist Eric Ngo had made numerous changes since he took over and the drive-through for Amcal Gorokan is one way

to embrace technology to innovate and expand healthcare services for the community. The pharmacy will be offering a simple click and collect program to simply pick-up essential needs and medicines, it is all about convenience. Customers are always looking for ways to save time with their busy schedules and lifestyles, especially for parents not having to organise their children to come inside, people with mobility difficulties or even those who are feeling unwell. To use the click and collect program you can place an order over the phone, use the Amcal Gorokan app or order online and staff will inform the customers when their order is ready, and it will be delivered to the customers vehicle in the parking area behind the pharmacy.

### **COAST SHELTER**

**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)**—Coast Shelter located in Gosford will be opening their new Community Centre in Wyong next month, to support individuals experiencing homelessness and domestic violence. Last year 2022 the service celebrated their 30th birthday and have made a positive impact across the Central Coast with their amazing support, especially CEO Michael Starr who established Coast Hands. The new Community Centre will be located in the centre of Wyong offering a range of services including hot meals, emergency accommodation and transitional housing assistance, social work support, domestic violence support and counselling, mental health and drug and alcohol counselling, and life skills training and workshops. Michael sees this as a step forward in their mission to provide comprehensive support and resources to those in need and will serve as a much-needed hub on the northern end of the Central Coast community.

### **ANGELE FIELD AND TESS MCWILLIAMS 18 YEARS GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Port Macquarie MacKillop College students Angele Field and Tess McWilliams on their selection in the inaugural NSW Combined Catholic College [CCC] 18 years Girls Rugby League team. The inaugural 18 years girls team for the NSWCCC reflects the growth of girls playing league and finally gives girls an opportunity to continue playing league through all age groups in the Catholic school system. The team will compete in the Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League Championships from 1 to 7 July 2023 with an Australian representative team to be selected. It is heartening to see the growth in girls and women participating in sports and that Rugby League is supporting the development of the girls game in our local schools. Angele and Tess are setting the platform for other girls to follow age specific pathways in rugby league and are role models for students from Port Macquarie and other regional areas. Congratulations to Angele and Tess and I wish you both all the best in the upcoming championships and in future representative events.

### **PORT MACQUARIE SES SUPPORTS AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS LIFEBLOOD**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to commend the Port Macquarie State Emergency Service [SES] for rolling up their sleeves and donating blood through their Annual Emergency Services Blood Drive. Members of the Port Macquarie SES led by Adam Davidson, Tim Cady, Alison Neale and Zanthie Bailey attended Australian Red Cross Lifeblood to support others by undertaking the selfless act of giving blood and plasma. Director of Donor Experience Cath Stone is calling on the community to consider donating blood this winter season. Currently, over 2000 donors a week are rescheduling or cancelling their appointments on account of flu-like symptoms and this is expected to increase into July. Cath is asking for people of all blood types, particularly O and A blood to book an appointment and support Lifeblood. When considering becoming a donor, you might like to know that just one donation can save up to three lives. This could go towards treating a trauma patient that is literally facing a life-or-death situation. I sincerely thank the Port Macquarie SES for responding to the call to give blood this winter and encourage others in the community to follow in their footsteps.

### **LOWER NORTH COAST MEN'S DIVISION TWO GOLF PENNANT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I rise to give special mention in Parliament golfers from the Kew Country Club who were successful in recently claiming the Lower North Coast Men's Division Two Golf Pennant. The Kew Country Club golfers had much to celebrate in their emphatic victory at the Division Two Golf Pennant achieving an overall, dominant score of 36-4, including a 6-0 resounding defeat of Port Macquarie to take home honours. The Kew golfers were never out-of-stroke, winning every tie and even securing two shutouts before taking home the prestigious, commemorative shirts on Saturday, 10 June. Those part of the winning side included Club Captain Steve James, Team Captain Chris Iveli, Brett Webber, Adam Heslop, Stefan Everingham, Garry Forster, Mathew Guffogg, Luke Ellis, Levi Tomasone and Dean Myers. Kew Country Club Golf Course is situated 30 minutes south of Port Macquarie on the Mid North Coast. Avid golfers are treated to a player friendly 18-hole championship course and driving range, located in one of the most scenic areas in the Camden Haven. I congratulate the Kew Country Club Men's Division for securing another commemorative shirt and flag acknowledging their resounding win at the Golf Pennant.



### LAURETTE MACSWEEN CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I acknowledge Darling Point local Laurette MacSween, who recently marked an incredible milestone with the celebration of her 100th birthday. Laurette has been a well-known member of the Darling Point community for decades. Laurette served in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force during the Second World War, spending time at defence stations in Sydney. I recently had the pleasure of visiting Laurette and congratulating her. I wish Laurette and her family all the very best for the future.

### NORTH BONDI SURF LIFESAVING AWARDS

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I recently joined Surf Life Saving Sydney at their Awards of Excellence evening to celebrate some of our most valued volunteers – our surf lifesavers, and notably those from North Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club. North Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club has been keeping an eye over Bondi Beach since 1906. North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club members won their share of awards with Gerry Stephenson named 'Duty Officer of the Year', Lilly Finati named 'Athlete of the Year', Emerson Hoo named '9-10 Junior Female Athlete', Mia Hoo named '11-12 Junior Female Athlete' and Sophia Garvin named 'Junior Female Lifesaver of the Year'. Congratulations to all the winners. It was wonderful to be part of your special night.

### MACMASTERS BEACH SLSC SENIOR AWARDS NIGHT

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to recognise MacMasters Beach SLSC Presentation night held on Saturday 17th June 2023. I had the pleasure of attending this great awards night, celebrating senior SLSC members with a host of awards, stories, laughs and achievements from across the season. Mister Speaker, the amazing volunteers at Macmasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club have performed over twenty-nine rescues, sixty-three First Aid actions and a combined total of five thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five patrol hours – well done team! These volunteers put their hand up to protect our local beaches, and I would like to say a huge thank you to all the members of Macs SLSC for keeping Macmasters Beach safe for everyone to enjoy.

### RUGBY UNION CENTRAL COAST

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge Avoca Beach Rugby Club, better known as the Sharks, on their resounding win against The Lakes Rugby Club in which Avoca won 57-19 at Heazlett Park. This excellent win follows on Avoca's success in past games, recently defeating Terrigal 30-22, with Avoca now being undefeated after 10 rounds. The Avoca Sharks have a long history in the community, being founded in 1975 and having an active place in our local Central Coast rugby games. I have previously spoken about their success in the past, and today shall be no different – excellent work, team! My congratulations to the Club members, players, and coaches for a successful season and wish them all the more success in future games.

### PETER WYLLIE OAM

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I wish to recognise an outstanding constituent in my community, Mr. Peter Wyllie OAM. Peter is volunteer with the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club and is only a handful of volunteers who have achieved the astonishing feat of 80 years' service. I was pleased to be able to present Peter with his 80 years' service award at the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Presentation Awards night and listen to Peter's life story. Peter was born in rural Mungindi in the far north of NSW before moving to Terrigal and joining the SLSC in 1943. In Peter's speech to the Club, he noted that despite the changes of Terrigal from a sleepy beachside village to a bustling tourist hub on the Central Coast, the SLSC has always stayed in the same location and has become stronger and more important to the community. I want to thank Peter for his outstanding contribution to our community, and also thank him for his tireless devotion to Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club.

### KRYSTAL BLACKWELL

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Krystal Blackwell of Goulburn, and her recent success in achieving a contract with the Official NRLW, National Women's Rugby League. While it is unfortunate that Krystal will be leaving Goulburn for North Queensland to play fullback, Krystal played her junior years with the Goulburn Stockmen and, more recently, in the open women's Katrina Fanning Shield competition with the Goulburn City Bulldogs. Krystal's athletic accolades are already significant and include here selection in the Monaro representative team and player of the match in the recent New South Wales Rugby League Country Championships Final game. Furthermore, Krystal was also named in the Women's Nationals team of the carnival. I have no doubt that this is just the beginning of many more future honours for Krystal and I look forward to watching her compete as a forerunner in the advancement of NRLW and women's sport. I recognise the hard work that it has taken for Krystal to attain this success and I congratulate her on this magnificent achievement. Congratulations Krystal.

### LINDNER QUALITY SOCKS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I recognise Lindner Quality Socks. The Lindner story began in Thalheim in Germany, where the family worked in their hosiery industry, contributing significantly to the townships economy, dating back to 1730. This was the birth of the family tradition that has gone from strength to strength and continues to celebrate its very successful business today. In 1988, the Linder Quality Socks Pty Ltd set-up a small factory in Goulburn, becoming very popular with the community. Initially selling direct from the factory and markets, stores soon became stockists for the socks that became widely known for their comfort, and durability. The Lindner family moved to Crookwell in 1997, where they set-up a new factory and shopfront in the main street, which fondly became as the 'Sock Shop' with locals, also attracting many tourists. Proudly in 2008, Wilfred Lindner, handed the charge of the business to his wife Gisela and son Andrew. Gisela managing the sewing rooms and orders, whilst Andrew managed the sock machines. The Lindner Quality Socks have now been named as finalists in three categories in the 2023 Australian Rural Business Awards. In 2022, winning the "Australian Made Small Business Award". Congratulations to the Lindner family.

### CAMERON LOMAS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I recognise Cameron Lomas of Wallaroo NSW Rural Fire Service. Cameron has been a committed and practicing firefighter since 2013. In conjunction with his practice, he has continued and maintained an ongoing learning and development pathway, undertaking studies in Fire Investigation, Fire and Culture and Bachelor of Environment and Sustainability – Environmental Science / Forestry Science. Cameron's broader experience has included work within the fire safety industry, several roles within the brigade, including Breathing Apparatus Officer, Equipment and Maintenance Officer and Training Officer, and Fire Field Officer. Cameron's passion for not only defending the community against natural disasters and other challenging events, he also has demonstrated his thirst for knowledge and interest in ecosystems. Cameron has now been named as a finalist in the 2023 Rotary Emergency services Community Awards, which "honour those who have dedicated their lives to protecting people and property from a range of emergencies, hazards and severe weather events". The winners of the awards will be announced later this year at an award ceremony. I take this time to congratulate Cameron on being named as a finalist and thank him for his work, commitment to community protection, building teams and safe work practices.

### JAN BLIZZARD OAM

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—It is fair to say that motorsport was in Jan Blizzard's blood. So it came as no surprise when the Loftus resident was awarded an Order of Australia Medal during the recent King's Birthday Honours for her contribution to motorsport over many years. In fact, Mrs Blizzard was only 15 when she joined the St George Motor Cycle Club. It was a decision that seemed inevitable given her mother's maiden name – Speed. Mrs Blizzard's high regard within the St George Motor Cycle Club was highlighted by her 11-year tenure as president. Incredibly she also held the position of secretary of the club for 60 years, from 1959 until 2019, and served as an Auto Cycle Union delegate. Mrs Blizzard's contribution to the motorsport was certainly not limited to the St George club though. She officiated various meetings throughout the years at several locations including: Oran Park; Amaroo Park; and Mt Panorama, Bathurst. Congratulation again to Mrs Blizzard on a much-deserved Order of Australia Medal. I know the many people that you have assisted over the years through your association with motorsport would be enormously proud of you, like I am.

### THE LOCAL PANTRY

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—I have said it before and I'll say it many times again, small businesses are the backbone of our local community. They not only provide the goods and services that we all need and love, but they are also a major employer of local residents. The Heathcote electorate is so fortunate to have an incredible number of small businesses located within its boundaries. One of those small businesses is café, The Local Pantry. The Engadine business is a favourite of many locals. the husband and wife team behind the café, Lisa Travini and Michael Teasel, are incredibly hospitable and warm. The food and drinks are also wonderful. The décor and fit out of the space can only be described as stunning. But the reality is, it isn't just one of these factors that makes the café so popular. Running a successful small business is about passion and dedication, and that is why Lisa and Michael were recently awarded the Global Café of the Year in the Corporate LiveWire Global Awards. It's an incredible achievement but one that doesn't come as a surprise to many Engadine locals. Congratulations again Lisa and Michael.

### NORTHBOURNE PUBLIC SCHOOL CHESS TEAM

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—Students from Northbourne Public School recently participated in the Interschool Chess Challenge Online. The students were required to play 7 games of chess across the day against

other schools on laptops and used the breaks between games to develop their skills by playing against their teammates. There was a large range of experience and skill level within the competition, creating a challenge for the students involved. It is fantastic to see young people stepping outside of their comfort zone and trying something new. The Northbourne Public School Team took home second place at the end of the day on 20 points – well done to all the students and teachers involved!

#### **ARMIDALE RIFLE CLUB QUARTET TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of four members of the Armidale Rifle Club for being selected to represent Australia in New Zealand for the trans-Tasman Test in January 2024. I congratulate Matt Foster, Tim Booth, Nick McRae and Jock Foster on their selection, following their nomination, successful competitive ranking assessments and performance in the NSW King's shoot. In October the quartet will also undergo pressure testing trials held in Brisbane, in the lead up to the trans-Tasman Test. I commend each of the players on their hardwork in their preparation and practice leading up to selection and your commitment to the sport. I also thank the Armidale Rifle Club and all involved in the support of the team on this journey. Matt, Tim, Nick and Jock are fine ambassadors for their sport and the Northern Tablelands Electorate will be right behind at the Test!

#### **RECOGNITION OF KATE LUMBER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Moree's Kate Lumber for being a finalist in the Young Cotton Achiever Awards. Kate has dedicated the last eight years of her career to the cotton industry, starting out bug checking crops to becoming an agronomist, helping local growers improve yields and farm performance. I congratulate Kate on this achievement, for being recognised by her peers for excelling in her career, reaching goals and giving back to the industry and community. I commend Kate for her contribution to the Australian Cotton Industry and to the Moree community. I also thank Cotton Australia for recognising such talent and for hosting this annual event. Kate will join other finalists in the CRDC Chris Lehmann Young Cotton Achiever of the Year Awards at Toowoomba on 3 August.

#### **TOUR DE ROCKS 2023**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Tour de Rocks Committee for staging their 10th anniversary annual three day cycling trek. The mission is to raise awareness of cancer prevention, to assist those battling the disease and to raise funds for cancer research. There were 345 riders and 110 supporters, with a reported \$336,089 raised this year and approximately \$2.5 million since its inception in 2010. I congratulate Chair Kay Endres; Co Chair David Boundy and John Sewell; Treasurer Paula Williams; Secretary Justine Biddle; Logistics Darren Cook; Fran McDonald Catering, along with Board Members Gerard Stephens, Mike Killen and Dane OConnor, on such a successful event. I commend all involved on their hardwork and effort in preparation and hosting the trek. A special thanks to Jonathon Wheeler who started the event, along with all the members of the support team. Such events are integral to regional communities and appreciated by all.

#### **BOB PERCIVAL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Bob was awarded the International Lions President's award in May. Bob is a well-respected community member and has represented this region on district cabinet for more than 35 years and has been a member of Lions for almost 44 years. The international Lion Club President's award is awarded to lions who have shown outstanding commitment to the principles of Lions and made contributions in the world of service beyond club and district levels. I congratulate Bob on receiving this prestige award and thank him for his many years of commitment to the local community.

#### **GARIMA NEPAL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Garima has been awarded the "new to practice Nurse of the Year" in Western NSW Health District's annual nursing and Midwifery awards. This award recognises her demonstrated excellence in care and leadership, attaining a high level of skillset, which allowed management of high complex situations with minimal support. Garima moved to Australia in 2018 to study nursing in Sydney and then in 2022 moved to Coonabarabran to work at the local Hospital. I congratulate Garima on receiving this year's new to practice Nurse of the Year award. Encouraging new nurses to the regional parts of NSW is extremely important and I thank her for taking the opportunity to work in the country. Your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed.

#### **DUBBO MACQUARIE ROTARY CLUB**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie which celebrated its 30-year anniversary this month. Thirty years ago, a group of visionaries came together with

a shared commitment to make a difference in their communities and beyond. Breaking the mould and meeting at lunchtime instead of evenings and being the first of the 4 Dubbo clubs to accept women into their membership, it was an exciting time for Rotary and for Dubbo. Dubbo Macquarie fell into becoming the family friendly, fun orientated club who had a great time doing worthwhile jobs, earning money, and donating it to deserving recipients and this 'fun-club' feeling and community focus still exists today! It is the collective efforts and commitment to service of all Rotarians at Dubbo Macquarie that make it the force for good that it is today. Service above self, camaraderie & friendship are clearly obvious within the Dubbo Macquarie membership, and I would like to congratulate both past and current members for their selflessness & spirit. Well done Rotary club of Dubbo Macquarie, here's cheers to the next 30 years!

#### **GEORGIA FARR**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—It is with great pride today that I recognise an exceptional young woman Georgia Farr, who, only a couple of weekends ago, shaved her head for a very worthy cause and to help make a difference in the lives of others. Following her mum Julie's diagnosis 3 years ago, 16-year-old Georgia was so thankful to the Leukemia Foundation and their wonderful care of her Mum, she decided she wanted to send some love and support back their way and raise much needed funds so they may continue what they do best and help other patients and families in need. The event held at, and proudly supported by, Club Dubbo on Sunday the 4th of June saw Georgia bravely shave off her locks surrounded by family and friends and raise almost \$6000. Georgia has proved to us all that it's not the length of your hair that matters, but more the size of your heart and your willingness to do wonderful things for others. Congratulations Georgia on your selfless act of kindness. You truly are a wonderful young woman I am so proud to acknowledge here today.

#### **NATHAN ASTRI**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to take this time to acknowledge Nathan Astri for his long-term commitment to a game popular with so many Australians – Cricket. Nathan was recently acknowledged and thanked for his dedication and service to the NSW Cricket Umpires & Scorers Association for his 20 years of membership. That's a significant milestone and a testament to his dedication and passion for the sport. As a member, Nathan has been part of the Dubbo cricket community, umpiring, scorekeeping, and adding to the spirit and camaraderie that makes sport so special. This momentous occasion commends his enduring commitment to the game he loves and celebrates him as an outstanding individual contributing to a thriving sporting community. Once again, congratulations Nathan on reaching 20 years of membership! May the years to come be filled with even more successes and memorable moments for you.

#### **THE HILLS BUSINESS CONNECTOR EVENT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Recently, the annual Hills Business Connector Event was held, hosted by the Sydney Hills Business Chamber. This annual event provides opportunities for business owners who are starting a new local business, have launched a business in the last 12 months, and established businesses who are new to The Hills District. These business owners came together to meet other local businesses, connect with and find out about the Networking Groups and Government Services available, and to access information about the Hills Shire Councils New Business Support programs. This is designed to continue to build the local businesses of the Hills area, to encourage economic and small business growth, and continue to grow the community of the Hills. My thanks to the Sydney Hills Business Chamber for their continued support of the Hills and Castle Hill areas. And good luck to all local businesses our wonderful electorate of Castle Hill.

#### **HILLS-KELLYVILLE ROTARY CLUB**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise the efforts of the Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club. The Club is involved with many activities including community, international, vocational, and youth services. They recently held their Change Over Dinner, which recognised the work of one out-going Board Member, Haran Ramachandran, as well as the many events and good works thanks to the tireless efforts of the Rotary members. The Club raised more than \$50,000 across the last financial year, and the funds were donated to various local community groups in need, including Wisemans Ferry Mens Shed for flood damage recovery, Turbans 4 Australia, and Rotary Health Foundation. Congratulations to Haran, who was recognised for his outstanding work with international projects, mainly in India and Sri Lanka, and as well as his assistance with organising the local Indian community to help with flood relief in the local areas. Congratulations to the continuing board members; President Ian – Pascoe, Treasurer Keith – Stapley, Secretary – Wilf van Emmerik, Community Service Director – Robert Mackey, Club Service – Dimitry (Jim) Sifonios, Youth Service – Sheila Krishnan, Vocational Service – Nira Sivathnathan, and International Projects – Kudzaishe Malaya. My thanks are extended to all members for their ongoing efforts to support local and international communities.

### OUTSTANDING YOUTH LEADER AWARD - ZEST AWARDS

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—On Friday 23 June I attended the Zest Awards 2023 Ceremony where, amongst many worthy nominees, two exceptional young women were nominated for the Outstanding Youth Leader Award. More than a quarter of the population of the Parramatta Electorate is under 25, so seeing local youth taking on leadership roles fills me with confidence that our future is in safe hands. Congratulations Lina Rehan Ali on your nomination. A Parramatta resident, a young writer whose work delves into invisible disabilities, suicidality, eating disorders and explores the intersectional experiences of communities of colour and the challenges they face. I also acknowledge organisations in the Parramatta Electorate such as the GWS Giants that help develop and foster leadership. The GWS Giants have provided an environment for Haneen Zreika to make history and pave the way for others as the first Muslim woman to play in the AFLW. Haneen's success is a wonderful win for diversity in sport and a testament to her strength and dedication. In addition to her sports career Haneen works as a teacher's aide to vulnerable children with disabilities. I congratulate Haneen on winning the 2023 Outstanding Youth Leader Award.

### SYD DUDLEY - FINLEY

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Syd Dudley of Finley, for his decades of ongoing service to the town of Finley, and his tireless work for the local health service. Syd's contributions to his community are vast, with Syd holding positions on the Finley Care Board, Finley Chamber of Commerce, Berrigan Shire Australia Day Awards, and the Finley Pioneer Rail Committee. Syd's work in the Finley health sector can't go unnoticed, with him chairing the Finley Local Health Advisory Committee since its inception. The ongoing growth of the Finley Hospital can be credited to Syd's contributions and his dedication to his region. Syd was recently honoured with the "Volunteer of the Year" award from Murrumbidgee Local Health District's 2023 Excellence Awards for his work in the Finley health sector. I would again like to congratulate Syd on his recent award and recognise the tireless work he has given to the Finley community over the past 25 years.

### EMMA JOHNSTON - HAY

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I recognise Emma Johnston of Hay for her contributions to mental health awareness, and her community. Emma, still a school student, began the Facebook page Mental Health Matters in 2022. Since then, it has amassed over 350 members, working to destigmatise mental health and look at a brighter future. She recognises how vital it is that young people know where to look for support. Emma is active in netball, athletics, and Landcare. Named school captain for 2023 and Young Citizen of the Year, she has been awarded the 2023 Regional Achievement Award from the NSW/ACT Young Achiever Awards Office for Regional Youth. Achieving selection as one of 29 NSW Scouting members to attend the 2023 Kandersteg International Scout Centre centenary in Switzerland, is the culmination of her efforts in the Venturer Scouts. Emma continues to contribute to her local community through volunteering, her contributions to NAIDOC Week, and her upcoming mural at Hay Public School. I would again like to congratulate Emma on her achievements and contributions and I wish her the best of luck at university next year.

### FESTIVAL OF CHARIOTS

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—On Saturday 24 June, I attended the 16th Annual Festival of Chariots in Liverpool, a festival dedicated to celebrating the rich cultural history of the Indian Subcontinent. As one of the largest and longest running festivals in human history, the Festival of Chariots is a worldwide celebration that prides itself on the worthwhile promotion of peace and communal harmony. It was extraordinary to see such a wide range of cultures and peoples galvanised together in the name of such a great cause. With many attendees having never visited India before, I saw reflected in the faces of those attendees a genuine understanding and appreciation of India's rich cultural history, language and tradition. I would like to thank Arvind Baldeo for coordinating this festival. I also wish to say a special thanks to the attendees and all those whose actions were instrumental in the unprecedented success of the festival. I eagerly anticipate continuing to support Indian communities in the Liverpool electorate and look forward to witnessing the Festival of Chariots grow even further in the future.

### SANDY KILLICK

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of local resident Sandy Killick, Director and Lead Educator of Democracy Matters. This organisation equips people with the skills to implement democracy effectively by understanding how our system works and actively using their democratic skills to create change. Sandy established Democracy Matters to support as many people as possible to participate effectively in our democracy through an education-based approach. At the 2016 federal election, Sandy started delivering non-partisan voter education sessions, and noticed a genuine appetite among voters to find out more about how Australian democracy functions. Using her experience in teaching design, systems thinking and ethical

decision making, Sandy has helped establish an important space for voters and elected officials to have the challenging, necessary discussions about the big ideas affecting all of us. Democracy Matters educates early voters, elected representatives and the teachers who inspire our future voters and political leaders and aims to make our system of democracy stronger and more stable. I want to thank Sandy for her crucial work to improve our democracy.

#### **RETIREMENT OF GARY LAVELLE - TEMORA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to thank Gary Lavelle for his 43 years of dedicated service to local government, a service that was acknowledged in 2016 when Gary was awarded a Public Service Medal [PSM]. Gary has spent the past 34 years at Temora Shire Council and the past 28 years as their General Manager. Gary has a strong interest in regional NSW and understands the importance that smaller communities play in supporting the economic health and growth of the region. Gary should be proud of the hard work and outcomes he has achieved in his time as General Manager. With a long list of achievements such as the Temora Airpark Estate that has not only supported aviation enthusiasts but also boosted the local tourism economy. Along with the Temora Pool upgrades which has benefited many local schools, visitors, and the local community. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Gary during his tenure at Council. Thank you for your dedication to the community of Temora and Temora Shire Council. We wish you and your wife Jane all the best in your much deserved retirement. Gary officially retires on 30 June this year.

#### **FATHER ALLEN CROWE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to congratulate and thank Father Allen Crowe of Murringo for publishing his book titled "Fairview. Murringo (Marengo) Flats, NSW. The History of Ancestral Land of the Crowe Family". Father Allen was welcomed at the Murringo Cemetery on 15 April by hundreds of spectators as he launched his book. The book is comprised of over fifty years of research, including genealogy of the Murringo Crowes since their arrival. Most of the first generation of Crowes are buried at the Cemetery, and the book contains details from their arrival at Marengo Flats dating back to 1864. The first Crowes, Michael and Sarah originated from Ireland, they had fourteen children, twelve of whom went on to marry and have children themselves. In total, Michael and Sarah had an astonishing one hundred and seventeen grandchildren.

Celebrating ancestry and acknowledging the varied backgrounds and originations within our vast rural and regional communities, particularly our smaller villages is a vital part of our rich history. Father Allen has literally dedicated his life to this research, an achievement which words truly cannot describe. Thank you and congratulations Father Allen, I can't wait to read your book.

#### **CLONTARF STATE OF ORIGIN**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Congratulations are extended to two senior students from the Narrandera High School and Clontarf Academy. Campbell Lyons and Jakeem Morgan were both selected to play for the NSW Clontarf side that played against the Queensland Clontarf side in the Annual Clontarf State of Origin Game. Campbell and Jakeem both travelled to Sydney to join the rest of their team for a tour and training session at the new, state of the art facilities in Homebush before boarding a plane to Townsville. In Townsville, the boys engaged in a training camp with their fellow team members to get to know each other better before they took to the field against the Queensland Clontarf team. The match was played on Saturday 13 May 2023 as a curtain raiser before the Cowboys and Dragons NRL Game. The NSW Clontarf team came away as the winners of the match with Campbell scoring the team's last try of the game. Campbell and Jakeem also enjoyed some sightseeing whilst in Townsville, including a walk on the Strand and swimming in Crystal Creek. Congratulations again Campbell and Jakeem.

#### **TODD CREMER**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Kangaroo Valley's police officer, Senior Constable Todd Cremer on being named Police officer of the year. After performing burpees for hours at a time to raise money for charity Senior Constable Cremer has been named police officer of the year at the Shoalhaven Emergency Services Community Awards. Senior Constable Cremer's community work started about ten years ago when Senior Constable Cremer was stationed out west and began running fitness classes for young people in danger of getting into trouble with the law. Since being stationed in Kangaroo Valley he has twice done burpees for 10 hours at a time – the first time raising more than \$43,000 for youth suicide services. He also organised a charity dinner after the Black Summer bushfires, raising thousands of dollars to help people and communities get back on their feet. Senior Constable Cremer was named the Shoalhaven's police officer of the year, Captain Paul Collins from Fire and Rescue was named the Shoalhaven emergency services officer of the year, and Linda Tiltzen from the Red Cross was named the Shoalhaven emergency services volunteer of the year. Our community is proud of each of these incredible citizens.

### NSW NETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges two outstanding Kiama Netball teams who had great success recently competing in the Senior State Title Netball Championships, with one team claiming the title. The Kiama Netball Association under 17s team has returned from the competition in Newcastle as undefeated champions and were declared the Senior State Titles Winners in the 17 and Under Division 3. The Titles consisted of five to seven shortened games played each day over the three-day event, with the winning team the first past the post. The under 17s team went through with one draw and no losses and finished five points clear of the next team. Kiama's 15yr team competed against a total of 18 teams in the Championships and finished in a credible 6th place. Well done to all the players and I also congratulate the President of the Kiama Netball Association, Rhonda Beedles for her ongoing commitment and hard work. The Kiama Netball Association junior teams are set to take the court at the Netball NSW Junior State Titles this weekend on 1st July 2023.

### CAMBEWARRA P&C AND PONY CLUB

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the hard-working members of the Cambewarra Public School P&C and the Cambewarra Pony Club. Last Friday 23rd June 2023, marked the first instalment of the Winter Solstice Family Campfire, which the local organisers are hoping will become an annual fixture in the Shoalhaven event calendar. This joint effort quickly came together thanks to the efforts of a number of locals. I would like to acknowledge and recognise Cambewarra Public School P&C member Amanda Cole Richardson and President of the Cambewarra Pony Club Sue Johnson for their leadership and community spirit. The family event doubles as a fundraiser, with gold coin donations going towards fixing fencing and other issues around the Cambewarra Pony Club along with assisting Cambewarra Public School, who are raising funds for new outdoor equipment. Cambewarra Pony Club played host to the event on Illaroo Road. The event, on top of the big bonfire, also had a sausage sizzle, obstacle courses, face painting and a chance to meet and interact with the club's ponies. A huge congratulations to all the organisers and participants.

### MAUREEN SINCLAIR

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to recognise an outstanding Mosman local, Maureen Sinclair, who has devoted much of her life to supporting girls and young women to play netball locally. Maureen has helped grow Mosman Netball Club from five teams to over fifty teams, setting generations of girls up for success. Maureen was just ten years old when she discovered her passion for netball which has lasted a lifetime, as a player, netball mum, coach, volunteer, and president of Northern Suburbs Netball Association. Maureen has more than lived up to her pledge to be all about the community, volunteering not only in the netball world for decades but also at her son's cricket club and cub scout group. In 2000, Maureen joined Northern Suburbs Netball Association for twelve years, with many positions including president. Today Mosman Netball Club has more than 600 members across 50 teams, from seniors to the seven-to-nine year olds who play in the popular Net Set Go program. Maureen is back where she started coaching a team of eleven year olds, which she says has reinvigorated her by encouraging them to soak up the team-spirit. Congratulations to Maureen for your dedication to netball across our local community.

### CLAIRE ENGGANIAN LOW WINS REIMAGINE ART PRIZE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate Kirribilli artist Claire Engkanian Low who recently won the Recycled/Reused Materials Award in the annual 2023 Reimagine Art Prize. Hornsby Shire Council runs the prize in partnership with Hornsby Art Society with the theme of this year's event being 'Wasteland or Wonderland'. The competition is open to digital art skills, sculpture, mixed media, painting, photography, print making, ceramics, and drawing. Claire won the recycled/Reused Materials Award for her painting on a discarded skateboard, titled All Monsters Are Real. The panel of judges for 2023 for this year included director of the Mosman Art Gallery John Cheeseman, Australian contemporary artist Leila Jeffreys and curator Nick Vickers. I congratulate Claire on winning this prize and for her fantastic artwork in the 2023 Reimagine Art Prize.

### NEUTRAL BAY PAMPERED POOCH PARADE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Once again the Neutral Bay Club in my local community hosted pooches, dogs, and puppies of all shapes and sizes for the second annual Neutral Bay Pampered Pooch Parade. It was another amazing turnout with over 250 people attending with over 50 category entries. Congratulations to Beau the majestic Greyhound who won both the best dressed and best in show, Teddy who won best trick, Sassi the Poodle who won most lookalike dog and owner, and Otto the Swiss Shepherd who won most unique dog. Of course the day would not have been a success without the amazing effort of the Neutral Bay Public School P&C, teachers, and parents, but in particular the fantastic judges for the day Liz, Poppy, and Candice. As always the esteemed general manager of the Neutral Bay Club Peter Lewis was the MC for the day.

Congratulations to all involved on the day raising important funds for the Neutral Bay Public School P&C Association, and a big congratulations to all the local pooches who paraded on the day.

### **ROPES CROSSING COMMUNITY CARNIVAL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It is always a pleasure to join the Ropes Crossing Community at the Ropes Crossing Community Carnival hosted by the Ropes Crossing Strikers Football Club. The carnival marks the start of the community soccer season and is the clubs major fundraiser for the year. The day included various carnival rides, performances from local performing arts groups, free heart health checks and of course lots of carnival food to enjoy! The Strikers have become an integral part of the community since forming in 2016 and are to be congratulated on the work they have done for the community and providing an opportunity for kids of all ages to participate in weekend sport in our local community. None of what the Strikers do would be possible without the hard work and commitment of the club committee led by President Adam Hartas. I congratulate them for putting together a wonderful community carnival and wish them luck for the rest of the season ahead. Go Strickers!

### **GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERS FORUM**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It was an absolute pleasure to join secondary school leaders from across Greater Western Sydney at their recent leadership forum at The Ponds High School with the Member for Riverstone! The forum provided an opportunity for students to collaborate with each other from across different schools in both the public and private systems on initiatives and issues that impacting the students they have been elected to represent at their schools. It was an afternoon filled with robust discussion and many action items for each leader to take back to their respective schools. Thank you to The Ponds High School for hosting and all the students who participated for inviting me, it was an inspiring afternoon and I know the future is bright for this cohort.

### **LA CASA**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to congratulate La Casa on their grand opening in Five Dock RSL just a few weeks ago. I am so excited to have a new small business opening shop in the Drummoyne electorate. La Casa are bringing amazing food and drinks to our local area along with the interior to suit. My Drummoyne electorate is home to many well-known restaurants and food destinations and I know La Casa will definitely be added to that list. I look forward to seeing La Casa flourish and bring more people to Five Dock RSL. Congratulations to Carmel Ruggeri and Tony Sabia on this new venture. And well done to Five Dock RSL and the CEO David Conway. I wish you nothing but the best.

### **JOYCE DUNCAN**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise today to warmly congratulate a constituent Joyce Duncan on her 90th Birthday which she celebrated on 15 June. Joyce is a pillar in our local community. Receiving an OAM for her service to the community as a volunteer and fundraiser for the Balmain Hospital Auxiliary, the Children's Hospitals at Camperdown and Westmead, and Bear Cottage, Manly. Joyce is also volunteers for Legacy for War Widows, and Balmain Inner Wheel Club of Balmain. She is a well-known member of the community who is seen around the Drummoyne electorate making friends with everyone. Oh behalf of our community, Happy Birthday Joyce! I hope you had a wonderful day celebrated with those close to you.

### **DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT MARTIN HAYSTON**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise this evening to congratulate Detective Superintendent Martin Hayston from Burwood Local Area Command on 30 years of service. Dedicating his professional life to helping others and keeping us all safe and is someone who deeply cares about protecting our community. Leading many major operations, including a strike force to break a major crime syndicate in Fairfield, lasting months and involving hundreds of officers. Detective Superintendent Martin Hayston has also been the first responder at difficult scenes, one of which he says is one of the most emotionally difficult assignments, a bus crash in 2009. A crash between a car and a school bus, where the car's passengers were trapped in a vehicle and the driver died at the scene. Being there to comfort and support students who were in shock and some suffering injuries. In recognition of his bravery, leadership and service, he has been awarded the New South Wales Police Diligent and Ethical Service Medal, the National Medal and the National Police Service Medal. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude from our local community for everything Detective Superintendent Martin Hayston has done and for his years of service.

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