



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday 23 August 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Bills .....  | 1  |
| Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 .....                           | 1  |
| First Reading.....   | 1  |
| Second Reading Speech.....                                     | 1  |
| Committees .....   | 5  |
| Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics ..... | 5  |
| Reference .....  | 5  |
| Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics ..... | 5  |
| Reference .....  | 5  |
| Bills .....  | 6  |
| Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 ..... | 6  |
| Second Reading Debate .....                                    | 6  |
| Visitors .....   | 7  |
| Visitors .....   | 7  |
| Members .....  | 7  |
| Parliamentary Secretaries .....                                | 7  |
| Announcements .....  | 7  |
| Auditor-General at Members' Development Session .....          | 7  |
| Question Time .....  | 7  |
| Secretary of Transport for NSW .....                           | 7  |
| Government Grants.....   | 8  |
| Secretary of Transport for NSW .....                           | 9  |
| Rural and Regional Education .....                             | 10 |
| Secretary of Transport for NSW .....                           | 11 |
| State Finances .....   | 12 |
| Drug Summit .....  | 13 |
| Nursing Workforce .....  | 14 |
| Secretary of Transport for NSW .....                           | 16 |
| Bushfire Readiness .....                                       | 17 |
| Secretary of Transport for NSW .....                           | 18 |
| Bus Services.....  | 19 |
| Greyhound Racing Centre of Excellence.....                     | 20 |
| Announcements .....  | 21 |
| Parliamentary Friends of AFL .....                             | 21 |
| Personal Explanation .....                                     | 21 |
| Member for Hornsby .....                                       | 21 |
| Member for Newtown.....  | 21 |
| Business of the House.....                                     | 21 |
| Business Lapsed.....   | 21 |
| Bills .....  | 22 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 .....            | 22 |
| Second Reading Debate .....   | 22 |
| Third Reading .....   | 27 |
| Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 ..... | 27 |
| Second Reading Debate .....   | 27 |
| Committees .....  | 27 |
| Legislation Review Committee .....  | 27 |
| Reports .....   | 27 |
| Documents .....   | 29 |
| Surveillance Devices Amendment (ICAC) Regulation 2023 .....               | 29 |
| Tabling .....   | 29 |
| Bills .....   | 29 |
| Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 ..... | 29 |
| Second Reading Debate .....   | 29 |
| Third Reading .....   | 44 |
| ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 .....                       | 44 |
| First Reading .....   | 44 |
| Second Reading Speech .....   | 44 |
| Second Reading Debate .....   | 47 |
| Consideration in Detail .....   | 48 |
| Third Reading .....   | 52 |
| Public Interest Debate .....  | 52 |
| Sydney Metro West .....   | 52 |
| Community Recognition Statements .....                                    | 61 |
| Teej .....  | 61 |
| Bri Hughes .....  | 61 |
| Penrith Community Cabinet .....   | 61 |
| Doreen Wilson .....   | 61 |
| Layla and Nathan Cattell .....  | 61 |
| Rob Mason .....   | 62 |
| Bob Wittrien .....  | 62 |
| Legacy Week .....   | 62 |
| Skye Golding .....  | 62 |
| Picton Swimming Club .....  | 62 |
| Ken Sharp .....   | 63 |
| BAPS Hindu Temple, Kemps Creek .....                                      | 63 |
| NSW Police Force and Major Events .....                                   | 63 |
| Singleton Rugby Club Ladies Day .....                                     | 63 |
| Kailpodh Festival .....   | 64 |
| Computer Pals for Seniors Northern Beaches .....                          | 64 |
| Emily and Sophie Curtain .....  | 64 |
| Philippa Becker .....   | 64 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Private John Shields.....   | 64 |
| Taylah Iverach .....  | 65 |
| Central Coast Science and Engineering Challenge.....                          | 65 |
| Happy Hearts Walking Group .....  | 65 |
| We Are Studios.....   | 65 |
| Portia Roberts .....  | 65 |
| Vardavar Feast.....   | 66 |
| Miracle Babies Foundation.....  | 66 |
| Drawing US Together Initiative .....  | 66 |
| Anne Oliver .....   | 66 |
| Australian South East Asian Network .....                                     | 66 |
| St George Community Awards.....   | 67 |
| Private Members' Statements.....  | 67 |
| NSW Pacific Awards 2023 .....   | 67 |
| Cost-of-Living Support.....   | 68 |
| Howarth Drilling Pty Ltd.....   | 69 |
| Tweed Valley Hospital .....   | 69 |
| Swansea Channel Dredging.....   | 70 |
| Shellharbour Hospital .....   | 71 |
| Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre.....                        | 72 |
| Boost Youth Mentoring Program .....   | 73 |
| Tribute to Marcus Prentice .....  | 74 |
| Tribute to Zvonimir "Rale" Rasic .....  | 75 |
| Mr Perfect Barbecues.....   | 76 |
| Multicultural Media .....   | 77 |
| Uncle Wes Marne .....   | 77 |
| Berowra District Hall.....  | 78 |
| Keira Electorate Achievements .....   | 79 |
| Tribute to Terence Kenneth Giddy .....  | 80 |
| Iran Protests .....   | 81 |
| North Shore Bearpit Public Speaking Competition.....                          | 82 |
| Blacktown City Planning and Public Spaces.....                                | 83 |
| Castle Hill District RSL Sub-Branch.....                                      | 83 |
| Central Coast Cancer Services.....  | 84 |
| St Clair and District Men's Shed.....   | 85 |
| Central Coast Aged-care Services .....  | 86 |
| Written Community Recognition Statements .....                                | 87 |
| UDIA Awards 2023 – Hills Shire Council, Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre..... | 87 |
| Kellyville Bushrangers, Bushrangers Day, 2023 .....                           | 87 |
| Castle Hill Rsl, Sub-Branch, Life Members.....                                | 87 |
| Manish Gupta, Consul General of India .....                                   | 88 |
| Burma's 8888 Uprising Anniversary .....                                       | 88 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| National Tree Day – 30 July 2023 .....  | 88 |
| Northern Beaches Local Business Awards 2023 .....   | 88 |
| Triple H Radio 110.1fm - Rotary Matters .....   | 88 |
| Club Old Bar Bowlers .....  | 89 |
| Dundaloo Enterprises and Chatham High School .....  | 89 |
| Manning Valley Pipes and Drums .....  | 89 |
| Palm Beach RSL Sub-Branch - Mark Ferguson OAM .....                                       | 89 |
| Jax Tyres and Auto Mona Vale .....  | 89 |
| Joy Nason.....  | 90 |
| Kiama Bowling Club .....  | 90 |
| Meals on Wheels.....  | 90 |
| Kiama High School Under 15s Cup Winners.....  | 90 |
| Dr Tony Mosca .....   | 90 |
| Sanskrit School .....   | 91 |
| Vietnamese Student's Association of NSW Charity Dinner .....                              | 91 |
| NORPA Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary .....   | 91 |
| A Farewell to Warren and Judy of Leo's Cafe.....  | 91 |
| Lismore Workers Masters Games Return for 2023 .....                                       | 91 |
| Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards.....   | 92 |
| Sutherland Shire Business Awards 2023 .....   | 92 |
| Star Struck Ignite – Glendale East Public School .....                                    | 92 |
| From Newcastle to Northampton – Jon Brady Chases His Dream.....                           | 92 |
| Star Struck Ignite – Elernmore Vale Public School .....                                   | 93 |
| Ms Yogita Panjwani .....  | 93 |
| Teresa Chu .....  | 93 |
| Steve Mead .....  | 93 |
| Recognition of Brooklyn Acres .....   | 93 |
| Recognition of the Provost Boys of Walcha.....  | 94 |
| Walcha Players In the 16's Championships .....  | 94 |
| Dapto Dogs .....  | 94 |
| Warilla North Public School.....  | 94 |
| Warilla Florist.....  | 94 |
| Dudley Redhead JRLFC – Mighty Magpies .....   | 95 |
| Clare Wheeler .....   | 95 |
| Emily Van Egmond .....  | 95 |
| Congratulations Paige Hadley and Our Origin Diamonds.....                                 | 95 |
| Congratulations Matthew Galea .....   | 95 |
| The Rotary Old Boys .....   | 96 |
| Woy Woy Library Marks 75 Years of Service .....   | 96 |
| Emily Giltinan – NSW Health Excellence In Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2023 Finalist..... | 96 |
| Bankstown Bites .....   | 96 |
| Mrs Eleanor Menton .....  | 97 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Tender Loving Care .....   | 97  |
| Farewell Superintendent David Waddell – Blacktown Police Area Command .....  | 97  |
| Anthony Bonacruz – Aspect Western Sydney .....                               | 97  |
| Susai Benjamin OAM .....   | 98  |
| Education Week Awards for Community Contributions to Singleton Schools ..... | 98  |
| Scone Education Week Awards 2023 .....                                       | 98  |
| Muswellbrook Learning Community Education Week Awards 2023 .....             | 98  |
| Oli Chandler .....   | 99  |
| Kyne Allen, Hunter Doring and Brock Allen .....                              | 99  |
| Duck Creek Picnics .....   | 99  |
| Alicia Fox .....   | 99  |
| Robert "Morrie" Anthoney .....   | 99  |
| Murphy Hutchings – 2024 Wanderers Australia Junior Cricket Tour .....        | 100 |
| Burning Generation .....   | 100 |
| Kevin and Jo Murrell - Beyond the Front Line .....                           | 100 |
| Inner West Council – FIFA Women's World Cup Live Sites .....                 | 100 |
| Kiara Tran - Amy Large Young Volunteer .....                                 | 100 |
| IWC and Marrickville High – Storytech Connect .....                          | 101 |
| Caroline Chisholm College - Junior Netball Team .....                        | 101 |
| Terina-Grace, Charlee-Rose and Libby .....                                   | 101 |
| Inter Boys Football Team – Emmaus Catholic College .....                     | 101 |
| Camden Tigers Indigenous Festival of Football .....                          | 101 |
| Liverpool Olympic 40 Years .....   | 102 |
| St Anthony of Padua .....  | 102 |
| Appin Mine Disaster .....  | 102 |
| National Tree Day .....  | 102 |
| Teralba Fire and Rescue NSW .....  | 102 |
| Isaac Bliss .....  | 103 |
| Kayun Mudadana .....   | 103 |
| Victor Chang Institute School Science Awards .....                           | 103 |
| Holsworthy Aquatic Centre Winter Carnival .....                              | 103 |
| Peta Haimanot Pyrgiotis .....  | 103 |
| Finley High School - Tocumwal .....  | 104 |
| Katelyn Mills - Leeton .....   | 104 |
| Brett Polkinghorne - Griffith .....  | 104 |
| Zeak Smith .....   | 104 |
| Andrew Fletcher .....  | 104 |
| Kaye O'Leary .....   | 105 |
| Alvin Leung - NSW State Representative Award .....                           | 105 |
| Hanson so - NSW State Representative Award .....                             | 105 |
| Dr Amy Lee .....   | 105 |
| Recycling at Gundagai High School .....                                      | 105 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Illabo Family Jumping for Australia.....                              | 106 |
| Bribbaree Show Society – Ag Shows 2022 Resilience Award .....         | 106 |
| Tranby.....   | 106 |
| Darling St Church Community Documentary Screenings.....               | 106 |
| Lucy Hope-Moult .....   | 106 |
| Mackenzie Robertson .....   | 107 |
| John McCartin and Morpeth Art Gallery.....                            | 107 |
| Central Coast Breweries .....   | 107 |
| Matildas .....  | 107 |
| The Ponds Parkrun.....  | 107 |
| Jalsa Salana.....   | 108 |
| Indian Independence Day 2023 .....                                    | 108 |
| Bill Ferguson .....   | 108 |
| Connecting Community Services Multicultural Cookbook.....             | 108 |
| Dubbo Rivercare.....  | 109 |
| Legacy Week .....   | 109 |
| La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council .....                        | 109 |
| Patron of North Sydney RSL .....                                      | 109 |
| Rotary Club of Mosman Changeover 2023 .....                           | 109 |
| Vale Paul Dracakis .....  | 110 |
| Navah Crofton .....   | 110 |
| Financial Counsellors Association's Conference.....                   | 110 |
| Volunteers at Rocky Hill Memorial .....                               | 110 |
| Aunt Evelyn Little .....  | 111 |
| Pryde Butchery .....  | 111 |
| Professor Rifaat Yassa Ebied OAM .....                                | 111 |
| 3 Doors Down.....   | 111 |
| Byron Shire Awards 2023 .....   | 111 |
| Byron Shire Awards 2023 .....   | 112 |
| Vale Vince Castle, OAM.....   | 112 |
| Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy .....                                     | 112 |
| St Declan's Community Fun Day .....                                   | 112 |
| Anytime Fitness Campsie Opening .....                                 | 112 |
| Australia Bangladesh Business Forum Gala Night .....                  | 113 |
| Argentinian Independence Day .....                                    | 113 |
| Isabella Taranto .....  | 113 |
| Abhi's Indian Restaurant.....   | 113 |
| North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch Luncheon with Commodore Peter Scott ..... | 114 |
| Sydney Robotics Academy.....  | 114 |
| Vale Mr Seiji Funayama.....   | 114 |
| Brian HART.....   | 114 |
| Codey Bretherton.....   | 114 |



**TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing***

Toukley Hawks Rugby League Grand Final .....115

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 23 August 2023**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT 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) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. The bill makes amendments to the Explosives Act 2003, the primary legislation regulating the full life cycle of explosives, fireworks and explosive precursors for New South Wales. SafeWork NSW is the chief regulatory authority for explosives, with the NSW Resources Regulator responsible for compliance on mining sites. The bill finalises recommendations from the 2019 statutory review of the Act as well as strengthens the regulatory regime through a number of administrative measures. The amendments encompass improved administrative detail and entrenching of powers within the Act as well as providing the regulatory authority greater flexibility to effectively and safely fulfil their role.

The amendments in this bill insert and clarify the definition of "supply" within the Act to clarify that the definition covers circumstances where supply occurs without money being exchanged; establish a process that allows the regulatory authority to use certificate evidence and samples of evidence of proceedings under the Act where the regulatory authority has chosen to destroy the bulk of the forfeited explosives which are the subject of the prosecution; transfer key elements of the regulatory regime from the regulation to the Act to appropriately structure delegations within the legislation and ensure that key elements of the regulatory regime are empowered under the Act; establish powers for the disposal and destruction of unwanted and unusable explosives; and clarify authorisations for New South Wales police officers under the Act.

Those proposed reforms have been identified through consultation with industry stakeholders, legal experts, unions, those responsible for the day-to-day functions of the various agencies involved and a number of key businesses involved in the industry. The Minns Government is committed to providing a robust explosives framework that protects the health, safety and welfare of workers and the community while keeping pace with industry and technology changes. The bill reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring the safe and effective regulation and control of explosives and explosive precursors in New South Wales. The amendments in the bill represent a critical step in the improvement and continued refinement of the regulatory framework.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill, starting with those relating to the transfer of established parts of the Explosives Regulation into the Explosives Act. Schedule 1 [8] to the bill inserts new part 2A, which sees authorisation of explosives, the explosives register and cancellation procedures transferred from the regulation into the Act. The authorisation of explosives is a core mechanism of the regulation of explosives, not just in New South Wales but nationally and globally. In New South Wales the process for determining, reviewing and authorising explosives for use is captured within part 4 of the regulation under the Act. Authorisation grants the regulator authority to determine which explosives are appropriate for safe use as authorised by an explosives licence. As authorisation is an underpinning component of the regulation of explosives, it is considered more than appropriate that it be entrenched within the parent instrument, being the Act, subjecting it to parliamentary oversight. The ability of the regulatory authority to determine which explosives are authorised for use is a core safeguard against the potential misuse of explosives and is appropriate to be included within the Act.

As mentioned, the bill also transfers the provisions that set out the process of applying to the regulatory authority for authorisation of explosives from the regulation to the Act. Those provisions echo and replicate the existing processes and rigour that are applied to the process. New sections 9A and 9B ensure that the regulatory

authority, being SafeWork or the NSW Resources Regulator, is furnished with all necessary information when considering an application, and they allow for refusal of an application or the imposition or variation of specific conditions to the authorisation of explosives.

New sections 9C and 9D transfer provisions related to the register of explosives. The register is the mechanism through which the regulatory authority records the authorisation of explosives. Any explosive that is not on the register is considered to be prohibited and illegal for use. To ensure regulatory flexibility, some aspects of the transferred provisions will remain in the regulation under the Act. That includes the method and detail of the publication of the register as well as any supplemental information required for the register. Doing so will allow for publication methods to be updated more frequently to ensure it is appropriately available to those who need it.

I now turn to security clearances. A further core tenet of the regulatory regime is the requirement for security clearances. In most circumstances, a security clearance is required before an explosives licence can be issued. That is already captured to an extent within section 6A of the Act. Security clearances provide a further level of assessment to ensure that only fit and proper persons can be granted an explosives licence. As per section 13 of the Act, New South Wales police work in partnership with the regulatory authority to recommend that only such people are granted a security clearance. However, the power for the regulatory authority to grant a security clearance is currently within section 11 of the regulation. The bill uplifts powers and requirements related to the application and granting of security clearances into the Act. That will synergise provisions relating to security clearances, appropriately delegating legislative powers and importantly making any amendments to that important regulatory tool subject to Parliament.

Turning to the licensing framework, the bill will see the existing classes of licences transferred from section 21 of the regulation into the Act through new section 16AB. The regulation currently outlines 10 licence classes for the use of explosives. They are licences to manufacture, import, supply, transport by vehicle, transport by vessel and store explosives; licences to use blasting explosives, fireworks and security sensitive substances; and licences for pyrotechnicians. Depending on the licence granted, a licence holder is authorised to use and undertake certain activities.

While the detail of those activities and restrictions will continue to be prescribed within the regulation, as per new section 16AB (1) (k), the classes themselves will be set out in the Act. The classes are comprehensive and do not limit the effective operation of the sector, and the transfer of those provisions to the Act strengthens their position within the regime. Regulation-making powers for the prescription of additional classes have been included to ensure that, if needed, the regulator can quickly respond to any technological innovations or emerging risks. Regulation-making powers have also been included in new section 16AB (2) to support the activities permitted under a licence, which is currently contained in part 3, division 2 of the regulation.

Retaining the ability to exempt a person from legislative requirements is integral to ensuring that the regulatory authority can quickly respond to emerging issues or adapt a regulatory approach to ensure it is fit for purpose. New part 3, division 6 establishes powers for exemptions from requirements to hold security clearances and licences. Many of those exemptions are contained within schedule 2 to the Act, and they allow inspectors and emergency services to handle explosives in emergency situations where appropriate. The exemptions support the incredible work that our first responders do, allowing for emergency responses to occur without weighing them down with red tape. I again put on record my absolute thanks to our first responders, who do incredible work in this area.

While the granting of exemptions is an important regulatory tool, it is crucial that it be carefully considered and transparent. Regulatory authorities need to strike a delicate balance between granting exemptions for valid reasons and ensuring that public and worker health and safety remain paramount. As such, it is important that exemption powers are formed under the Act and administered with appropriate rigour and consideration. New section 24D outlines the application process for exemptions, the considerations that must be held and the circumstances in which an exemption may be cancelled, including on safety and security grounds.

Powers for the regulation to prescribe exemptions have also been maintained to provide necessary regulatory flexibility. That detail includes requirements for the application to be provided to the regulatory authority, duration of exemptions and other relevant conditions to be applied on the exemption by the regulatory authority to ensure the safe use of explosives. I acknowledge the transfer of provisions requiring the publication of exemptions in new section 24F. The detail of those procedures will continue to be held within the regulation to give flexibility in the publication of the information. The publication of exemptions gives licence holders and industry a transparent view of the granting of exemptions and ensures accountability by the relevant regulatory authority.

I note that the bill includes a number of consequential amendments to the Act. Those include minor amendments to sections 14, 15 and 16, as well as new sections 16AC to 16AH. The Act does not currently separate licences and security clearances when determining several aspects of the framework, including provisions that determine the application of conditions to licences and security clearances, and the duration of licences and security clearances, and that make it an offence to contravene licences and security clearances. While both are important, security clearances and licences are separate authorisations and achieve different purposes for the regulation of explosives. Security clearances do not authorise a person to obtain, possess, transport, use or otherwise handle explosives.

Applications are assessed in coordination with the NSW Police Force and are designed to ensure that an applicant does not pose a security risk to the community if given access to explosives or substances. Licences permit the use of certain explosives for certain activities. Conditions can be imposed on a licence to ensure greater regulatory control or flexibility as required. To better reflect those differences, the Act now separates licences and security clearances in relation to applications. The amendments reflect best-practice drafting etiquette without compromising their impact or function within the legislation.

The definition of "explosive" has also undergone minor amendment as a result of its transfer into the Act. The new language clarifies the intent of the existing definition and embeds it within the Act. While minor language and structural changes can be seen, the definition of explosives continues to apply to the same substances—that is, class 1 dangerous goods, goods too dangerous to be transported under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, as well as substances manufactured or commonly used to produce an explosive or pyrotechnic effect. The bill is in no way intended to change the substances that are regulated under the Act.

I now turn to the amendments relating to the implementation of the remaining 2019 statutory review recommendations. The bill clarifies the definition of "supply" within the Act, and I turn members' attention to the amended definition that the bill seeks to introduce. The 2019 review uncovered inconsistency in the definitions used across the Act and the regulation. As currently defined within the regulation, supply is simple and vaguely defined as "includes sell". This definition fails to explicitly capture the many other practical ways in which an explosive can be supplied or exchanged between parties. New section 4A transfers the definition into the Act and clarifies that it applies to situations where explosives are passed on without money changing hands. It makes it clear that a person may "supply" an explosive by transferring ownership or possession of an explosive, providing access to an explosive, or otherwise negotiating, offering or exhibiting an explosive for another person to receive.

The definition within new section 4A more clearly articulates what is covered by the definition of supply, providing greater clarity to areas of regulation relating to supply such as licensing, offences and record-keeping requirements. Ensuring clarity is important in cultivating a compliant and safe industry where requirements are well known and well understood. It is without question that the supply of explosives or explosive precursors should include circumstances where explosives are passed on without money changing hands. The bill makes that clear and undeniable. The simple amendment will support compliance operations in ensuring the safe and appropriate supply and transfer of explosives, continuing to ensure that communities, workers, operators and businesses are kept safe.

I now turn to the new provisions relating to procedures for the use of certificate evidence and samples as evidence in prosecutions, enabling the destruction of forfeited explosives by the regulatory authority before proceedings are finalised. The bill provides for the use of certificate evidence and the retention of samples of forfeited explosives where the bulk of the forfeited explosives are destroyed. The 2019 review recommended amending the Act to allow for the regulator to use certificate evidence and samples as evidence in prosecutions where the regulator would prefer to destroy the bulk of forfeited explosives that are the subject of the prosecution. Seized explosives may be forfeited to the State if the conditions in section 179 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 are met. Section 27 of the Explosives Act also applies certain provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act to the Explosives Act.

Forfeiture of seized explosives includes where the regulator reasonably believes it is necessary to forfeit the explosives to prevent them from being used to commit an offence. When inspectors exercise their powers to seize explosives, regulators are required to store the seized explosives. Once the explosives have been forfeited and avenues for review and appeal in relation to the decision to forfeit the explosives have been exhausted, it is open to the regulator to destroy the explosives. However, the regulator may bring or consider bringing a prosecution for an offence under the Act in relation to the forfeited explosives. In those circumstances, the regulator would ordinarily retain and store the forfeited explosives as evidence of the offence.

The need to store a large volume of explosives for lengthy periods until investigations and prosecutions are complete can be burdensome for regulators. As volatile products, even while stored in accordance with all required standards, they may have the potential to decay and become increasingly unstable and dangerous and develop an increased risk profile. Regulators are themselves subject to licensing requirements as to the maximum

storage capacity of their facilities, meaning that, when they seize large volumes of explosives, they may risk exceeding their maximum storage capacity. Even when smaller quantities are forfeited, the regulator's designated storage limit is reduced, impacting upon capacity for potential future seizures and accepting of forfeited explosives.

Further, the continued storage of explosives also places a financial burden on the regulatory authority not only in terms of storage but also when destruction does occur, as explosives may have deteriorated to a point that they become hazardous to destroy through conventional means. The amendments outlined in the bill, within new part 3A, seek to rectify that by establishing procedures for testing and retaining samples so that certificate evidence and samples can be used as evidence in prosecutions while the regulatory authority may then follow the process in new part 3A to destroy the bulk of the explosives and explosive precursors that have been forfeited to the State.

New section 24H of part 3A details that these procedures only apply to forfeited explosives when all avenues for appeal and review of the forfeiture have been exhausted. New section 24H (2) ensures that these procedures do not compromise the regulator's existing ability and power to destroy forfeited explosives under section 179 (1) (a) and (b) of the Work Health and Safety Act—that is, where the regulator "cannot find the person entitled to the thing after making reasonable inquiries or cannot return it to the person entitled to it, after making reasonable efforts". The bill establishes requirements that must be met before the regulator can destroy explosives forfeited under section 179 (1) (c) of the Work Health and Safety Act where the regulator "reasonably believes it is necessary to forfeit the thing to prevent it being used to commit an offence against the Act".

New section 24K outlines that a person appointed as an analyst, either by the regulator or the regulations, may be directed by the regulatory authority to test and analyse an explosive to determine the identity and certain key information about that explosive. Once this has been completed, an analyst may then issue a certificate of analysis, detailing the outcome of the analysis. New section 24K (2) validates the certificate as admissible and prima facie evidence in court matters. Before the regulator can order that a forfeited explosive be destroyed, the regulator must take steps to be satisfied of certain matters, including that a copy of the certificate of analysis has been given to the owner/defendant.

The regulator must also be satisfied that a representative sample of the forfeited explosive has been taken and retained as required by the regulation. If a copy of the certificate cannot practicably be served on the owner/defendant, the regulator will need a court order to destroy the forfeited explosives that the certificate relates to. The department/SafeWork will seek feedback on the retention process before finalising the required amount of forfeited material that is to be retained. I note that the statutory review recommended similar provisions to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, which maintains that an "amount that is three times the amount required for two samples of analysis" be retained.

It is of the utmost importance that procedural fairness and appropriate rigour apply to this process. The bill includes strict provisions designed to ensure the integrity of evidentiary certificates and protects the rights of a defendant before the bulk of the explosives can be destroyed. To maintain the rights of the defendant, new section 24M provides that destruction cannot occur earlier than 28 days after the day on which certificate evidence has been provided to the owner of the seized explosives and a defendant or accused person in proceedings relating to a forfeited explosive. This provides sufficient time for an application to be made to the Local Court to review any certificate evidence to ensure validity and accuracy. The Local Court will consider whether there has been a substantial failure to comply with the Act or regulations or whether there is real doubt as to the accuracy of the certificate issued by the analyst.

The Local Court can then make a review order that the explosive be analysed by a second analyst or that a further certificate of analysis in relation to the explosive be provided to the applicant. Once testing has occurred with details of the forfeited explosive recorded, a certificate of analysis produced and provided to the affected person, the required samples of the explosive have been retained, and the 28-day period has passed, then a destruction order can be made. The destruction order then authorises the regulator to destroy the forfeited explosives. With the ability to reduce the storage amounts of explosives required to be kept for evidence, regulators in New South Wales will be in a stronger position to adapt and respond to emerging compliance environments and continue to effectively prosecute those who break the law, all while reducing the risks associated with storing large amounts of explosives for lengthy periods and limiting the financial costs associated with storage.

I now turn to the amendments related to regulation-making powers. The bill confirms that the regulations may provide for New South Wales police officers to exercise certain functions of an inspector under the legislation. Police play an important role in compliance within the explosives sector, including, as previously outlined, in the assessment of security clearances applications. I commend our NSW Police Force for their diligent and committed work in this area. I also acknowledge our police Minister. I know how hard our the men and women of our Police Force are working to protect our community, particularly in this area.

These powers will ensure that, where necessary, New South Wales police officers are able to effectively support compliance and enforcement measures. This will assist the regulator in undertaking appropriate action and foster a stronger relationship between two important agencies. New section 30A of the bill similarly establishes important regulation-making powers regarding the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives. New section 30A (b) allows the regulation to prescribe ways in which persons can dispose of unwanted or unusable explosives. It is important that there are mechanisms available to ensure that individuals or businesses who no longer require explosives are permitted to dispose of them in a safe and well-regulated manner. I acknowledge that further regulations are required to fully detail these processes, and amendments to the regulation to develop and deliver underlying detail is anticipated.

I acknowledge the shadow Minister in the Chamber. I will brief him on those important regulations that will be made over a period of time. The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 complements the existing legislative framework and strengthens its function, operation and oversight. These are necessary, albeit primarily administrative, changes that will lay the groundwork for any changes that arise as a part of the scheduled remake of the regulation. The bill will commence on proclamation to allow for the transfer of provisions, as well as further consequential amendments, to be made in a harmonised way alongside the remade regulation. I acknowledge there is more work to be done in developing the regulations. As I mentioned earlier, SafeWork will undertake extensive consultation with critical stakeholders: industry, unions, business, operators, important agencies, the Opposition and the crossbench. A number of our crossbench members have an important interest in this area and are engaged in this process.

I give a special thankyou to our SafeWork NSW inspectors, who do really important work. Whether they are in regional and remote areas, Western Sydney or Sydney metro, I know that they have been working hard. I have joined them on a number of occasions. They do a very tough job. I want to publicly acknowledge their work and their contribution to keeping our community safe at work. In particular, the process of safety and regulation around explosives is step by step and tedious, but it is an important area of licensing and regulation. As I said, I thank the officials from the department and SafeWork NSW, who have been diligent in working with my office. I acknowledge all of my hardworking staff, who have been working hand in glove and diligently with stakeholders. I acknowledge their efforts in developing the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Committees*

### **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**

#### **Reference**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: I move:

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

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on the findings and conclusions of Elizabeth Broderick & Co in its 2022 report entitled *Leading for Change Independent Review of Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct in NSW Parliamentary Workplaces 2022* and make recommendations for further action to be considered by the House, the Speaker, the Clerk and the Government, as appropriate.
- (2) In undertaking the inquiry, in accordance with Standing Order 311, the committee shall have leave to confer with the Legislative Council's Committee on Privileges.
- (3) The committee shall consult the Speaker, the Clerk and others as appropriate.
- (4) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the terms of reference for the referred inquiry.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**

#### **Reference**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: I move:

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

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics conduct an inquiry into the adequacy of current procedures to protect parliamentary privilege in circumstances where law enforcement and investigative bodies seek to use coercive, intrusive or covert investigatory powers.
- (2) The committee's particular focus should be the operation of the agreements currently in place with the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], as they pertain to the Legislative Assembly, including:

- (a) the 2009 memorandum of understanding on search warrants between the Commissioner of the ICAC, the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the revisions proposed but not adopted in 2014; and
  - (b) the protocol currently observed in relation to notices to produce information under section 22 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 ('section 22 notices');
- with a view to developing appropriate revised arrangements.
- (3) Without limiting the matters that the committee should take into account in considering the appropriate revised arrangements between the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the committee should pay specific regard to:
    - (a) the ICAC's powers in relation to search warrants; section 22 notices; and the power to summon witnesses and take evidence under section 35 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988;
    - (b) any new powers of the ICAC under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to seek digital evidence access orders alongside search warrants, which enable the ICAC to issue a direction to a person requiring that person to provide assistance to unlock a digital device connected to the search warrant in a given case;
    - (c) whether protocols and a memorandum of understanding remain appropriate mechanisms to protect parliamentary privilege given the scope of the ICAC's statutory powers to compel the production of material for its investigations and modern investigative techniques;
    - (d) any search warrant protocols of relevance to the Legislative Assembly, as recommended in the reports of the Legislative Council's Privileges Committee entitled: *Execution of search warrants by the Australian Federal Police*, dated 13 October 2020; *Report No. 2*, dated 18 November 2020; *Report No. 3*, dated 16 November 2022; and *Report No. 4*, dated 2 March 2023; and
    - (e) the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics in the 57th Parliament for an interim protocol, as reported in *Further Interim Report: Parliamentary Privilege and the use of investigatory and intrusive powers*, Report 5/57 – February 2023.
  - (4) In conducting its inquiry the committee should consider any other related matter.
  - (5) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the terms of reference for the referred inquiry.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **REVENUE, FINES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 22 August 2023.**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (10:57):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As I was saying previously, the bill amends the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to enhance recovery of funds lost through phoenix activity, which would make successor entities to liquidated companies liable for payroll tax debts of phoenix companies. That is important because it ensures that the funds are paid to the Government, reduces tax avoidance and discourages the liquidation of companies as a means of tax avoidance by ensuring that owners of businesses pay their fair share of tax. In the industrial make-up of areas like Liverpool and Greater Western Sydney, phoenix companies are prevalent in industries like construction, labour hire and security. The economic impact of phoenix activity in Australia represents a cost of \$2.85 billion to \$5.3 billion annually across business, employees and government.

I was contacted recently by a constituent whose family has been rocked after its members became victims of illegal phoenix activity. Not only were they not paid for work done, but they have now spent tens of thousands of dollars in pursuing the matter legally. It has caused a huge amount of psychological, emotional and social harm. Obviously, this harm perpetrated on the victims of illegal phoenix activity extends beyond only financial harm. Its harm is felt across our community by many others.

A further area of change brought forward by the bill is in the Government Sector Finance Act and would enable the review of grace payments made during the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters; empower Revenue NSW to investigate eligibility and terms of payments on individuals, such as by requesting documents; and enable Revenue NSW to recover ineligible payments as if they were outstanding tax or by garnishing amounts from bank accounts. Furthermore, the bill enables Revenue NSW to share information about taxes and fines with Service NSW and NSW Treasury, which is currently prohibited. That will be useful for Service NSW assisting with verifying that persons applying—

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome all of the people in the gallery and acknowledge some guests who have joined us today. I welcome to the Chamber the guests of the member for Keira: Year 11 legal studies students from Holy Spirit College, Bellambi. I welcome a guest of the member for Orange: Jaxson Dowton, who is doing work experience with the member and whom I had the pleasure of meeting earlier today. I acknowledge and welcome a guest of the member for Gosford: Connor Davies. I acknowledge Ethan Westwood, who is a student at the University of Wollongong and doing work experience with the member for Heathcote. I acknowledge and welcome former Minister David Campbell, who was, I think, given a wave from the Premier earlier. David, it is great to see you here. I have not seen you for quite some time. You have not changed a bit.

*Members***PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that on 9 August 2023 Janelle Anne Saffin, MP, was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery.

*Announcements***AUDITOR-GENERAL AT MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT SESSION**

**The SPEAKER:** The New South Wales Auditor-General, Ms Margaret Crawford, will present at the members' development session on the interrelationship between the Audit Office and the Parliament at 1.00 p.m. today in the theatre. I encourage members and staff members to attend. A light lunch will be provided.

*Question Time***SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Yesterday the Minister was asked about any replacement for former Labor Minister Carmel Tebbutt as the "independent" member of the assessment panel for the transport secretary position, but she did not name anyone. Was Carmel Tebbutt replaced by former Labor Minister Verity Firth as the "independent" member of the assessment panel?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:06):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, which I answered yesterday. As I have said from the outset, the process for the appointment of the Secretary of Transport was run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, in conjunction with my office. Yes, as I said yesterday, my office was asked for feedback on the membership of the assessment panel. Yes, my office initially recommended a highly respected former Deputy Premier of New South Wales, former Minister for Health and former education Minister to sit on the assessment panel. She withdrew due to personal family reasons. My office then recommended a highly respected former New South Wales education Minister, Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, and Minister for Women, who is also eminently qualified to sit on an assessment panel like this one. She joined a range of other experienced, respected and professional public servants on the assessment panel, which was part of the process established by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the appointment of the Secretary of Transport.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will listen to the answer.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** As I have said repeatedly, asking the advice of highly respected former Ministers for their considerable experience is highly relevant to the appointment of a secretary of a department. We have seen what happens when there is a dysfunctional relationship between the office of the Minister and the office of the secretary. Passengers pay the price. Taxpayers pay the price. We saw what happened.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: The Minister was asked a very simple—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** What is the point of order?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will not coach from the Government front bench.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, concerning direct relevance. The question was a simple question: whether Ms Tebbutt was replaced by Ms Firth. The Minister is now straying. She would not answer the question yesterday. She was too embarrassed to answer the question—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Government frontbench members will come to order. I do not need their assistance in adjudicating on this matter. I understand the Leader of the Opposition's point of order.



He will resume his seat while I make some general comments about it. I had a discussion with the Leader of the Opposition this morning about my interpretation of direct relevance. It is very difficult to be specific about this matter, despite how it might appear to those who are not in the chair. I assure each and every member it is not that simple to rule that an answer be directly relevant. However, setting aside the answer from the Minister for Transport yesterday, I cannot seriously entertain an argument that the Minister has not been directly relevant in her answer today. I have reviewed previous rulings of the former Speaker regarding his interpretation of direct relevance, and I assure members that he also struggled with the concept. In this case, the Minister has been directly relevant. There is no point of order at this stage. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Those opposite would have us believe that if you spent time in political office, you should therefore be disqualified from public office. If we are going to apply that test, let us look at some of the people who Opposition members say should be removed from public office. How about the shadow Minister for Health? Does he think Patricia Forsythe, for example, should be removed from the Northern Sydney Local Health District Board? How about Peter Collins? That is the test the Opposition is saying people should be held to.

**The SPEAKER:** I will not put the member for Keira on a call, but I will give him a call-out.

### GOVERNMENT GRANTS

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (11:11):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier give examples of grants to National Party electorates that added to the State's debt and deficit position and are leading to major cuts to essential services for New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:12):** That is an unexpected question.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am happy to provide information to the House. If there is extra information, hopefully the member for Monaro will be ready to jump. I do not know; we will see how we go. Mr Speaker, you will be aware that there is a long history of grant programs rorted by the previous Government in New South Wales. We are aware of them. The Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Package went exclusively to Coalition-held seats. The Regional Cultural Fund—this was a good one—worth \$44 million funded 56 projects in 23 electorates. Guess what? Of those, 20 projects were in Coalition seats. At least eight projects were not recommended for funding at all but were given money. Of course, there is the Stronger Communities Fund. Some 96 per cent grants from the \$250 million available for stronger communities went to Coalition-held seats, including communities that had not even asked for any grants—they just got them by some kind of osmosis.

The former Premier, Dominic Perrottet, came out hard and announced a zero-tolerance approach to pork-barrelling after a damning report. To his credit, he said, "There is zero tolerance from my Government for any of this behaviour." That was pretty late in the piece, not long before the election. Unfortunately, I have to report there was a little grant that we have discovered was administered by the former Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Paul Toole—a grubby little slush fund. This was the Deputy Premier's Discretionary Fund. I know that leadership is difficult. In fact, a former colleague of ours has recently risen to the leadership of One Nation—Tania Mihailuk. There is only one member. We cannot rule out a coup in that party, even though there is only one. Anyway, congratulations to her. I digress, but it has taken her only five months to turn on her leader—which is a new record for her.

But when it comes to the slush fund administered by the National Party's former leader, I need to tell the House that, despite the fact that the National Party occupied around 41 per cent of regional seats in the last Parliament, a full 75 per cent of the funds flowed to National Party seats. That is \$1.2 million to National Party electorates. Some \$200,000 went to Independent seats, even though there are a lot of Independents in regional New South Wales. Some \$139,000 went to The Greens. Just \$60,000 went to Labor MPs in regional electorates, and the Libs—they really got screwed here—got \$28,000. That probably says a lot more about—

**Mr Steve Whan:** Mr Speaker—

[*Interruption*]

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Monaro is seeking the call—obviously I am not the only one who noticed.

**Mr Steve Whan:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I think the Premier is willing to provide it. I grant him an additional two minutes.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Some 75 per cent of funds went to National Party seats, and 20 per cent of the funds went to his own electorate of Bathurst—20 per cent. Now this was a discretionary fund. He had a think about it.

The requests came through and he said, "Yes, I think one in every \$5 should go to my own electorate." That was very benevolent of him. The second- and third-rated seats were the electorates of Monaro and Upper Hunter, which—and this is just purely coincidental—were the two most marginal National Party seats. I do not want members reading anything into that.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Nothing to see here.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, they would never. At the end of the day, this was a gigantic rort and part of a continuing pattern. The interesting thing about this latest slush fund is that it came about after repeated assurances from the previous Government that it had put an end to this kind of rorting and this kind of slush fund, and nothing changed. The implications for the New South Wales budget were severe. We knew that, as a result of pushing \$27 billion worth of funding out the door in the nine months before the election, there were savage cuts coming to health and education in New South Wales under the previous Government. Some 1,100 nurses were not funded.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Most shamefully of all, the second tranche of the recovery in Lismore was not funded, despite repeated assurances from the previous Government. When the former Leader of the National Party was quizzed about this in an interview yesterday, he said, "Well, what happens when these applications come in?" In a radio interview, he said, "These applications come in. They're actually assessed by the department", which is factually completely inaccurate. They were assessed by him, and he decided to put them in National Party electorates. This was a racket presided over by the National Party. We have put an end to it. It should not matter who your local MP is; you deserve your fair share of government resources.

#### SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Before the election, or at the election night party they both attended, did the Minister discuss the transport secretary position or any other government job with Josh Murray?

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** We were going, "Hey, we won!"

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will cease interjecting or she will be placed on a call to order.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** We were partying after 12 years of them.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:18):** I thank the Leader of the National Party for his question. I know the National Party likes a good party, and I am more than happy to talk about what we did on election night. I have to say it felt pretty good. It is no secret what I was doing on election night. In fact, it was at times a pretty uncomfortable position I was in because I was wedged between Mark Latham, a former leader of One Nation—which is now led by the former member for Bankstown, an interesting situation—and the member's friend, David Elliot. It was an interesting panel on Channel 7. We were well looked after by Michael Usher and Amelia Brace, excellent members of the fourth estate. It was nice to catch up with Mel Pavey. We miss her here, I have to say. It was an interesting night. But I did—

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I am sure the Minister will be expecting this, because direct relevance is in question.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You asked about election night.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I asked whether, before the election or on election night, which they both attended, the Minister talked to Josh Murray about the job as secretary or any other jobs. It is a simple yes or no.

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the Minister's attention to the specificity of the question. I ask her to come close to a direct answer to satisfy the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I apologise. I was digressing and reminiscing.

**The SPEAKER:** You were.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The fact is that I have declared the meetings that the Leader of The Nationals was referring to, as I am required to do. A meeting was held in the middle of Parliament House. On election night,

I was on Channel 7. Do members know what else was happening on election night while I was on Channel 7 talking about the election results? The trains broke down. Do members remember that?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The question specifically relates to the time before she was a Minister, so her ministerial disclosures are irrelevant. It talks about discussions, not meetings. My point of order is direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Manager of Opposition Business. Once again, I bring to the attention of the Minister that she is not being as directly relevant as I would like her to be.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I was on Channel 7, and passengers across Sydney were hit with delays. In fact, *The Guardian* reported on 25 March at 7.51 p.m. that—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** —Sydney trains were hit with widespread cancellations and delays on election night.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Unfortunately, the Minister's time has expired. I will seek advice from the Clerk.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I got up with 12 seconds to go.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not correct.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The member for Dubbo got up straight after me.

**The SPEAKER:** I will refer the matter to VAR and deal with it later. I will not grant an extension at this time.

#### RURAL AND REGIONAL EDUCATION

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:22):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Given the challenges raised by the Auditor-General's report, will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is working to improve educational outcomes for regional and rural students?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:22):** I thank the tireless member for Lismore and Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, who is a fighter for rural and regional students. I think we can all agree that, when it comes to education in rural, regional and remote New South Wales, students in those communities face different and greater challenges than those in the city. We have a teacher shortage crisis, which I talk about almost every day in this House and almost every day in the media. We know that it disproportionately affects children in rural, regional and remote communities. We have even seen some of those disappointing disparities in the NAPLAN results released today. The Government is working hard to address the systemic reasons why those disparities exist, including the teacher shortage crisis. We are looking at small-group tutoring for those students and delivering on our election commitments for those kids.

The people of New South Wales could have been forgiven for thinking that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government actually cared about rural, regional and remote students. When they were in office they claimed—and this sounds very promising—that they had a "plan". In 2021 former Deputy Premier John Barilaro and the former education Minister announced—and this sounds pretty impressive—a four-year "Rural and Remote Education Strategy and a Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy Unit". They said they would "eliminate the equity gap that exists between the bush and the city". It sounds like a good idea, right?

I can advise the House that, unfortunately, the Auditor-General found that it did not close the equity gap for rural, remote and regional students. The Auditor-General looked very closely at the former Government's rural and remote education strategy and found that it was "unlikely to achieve its vision that every child in regional New South Wales has access to the same quality of education as their metropolitan peers". It seems to me as the current Minister that all the Liberals and The Nationals did in government was put out a press release and announce a plan; they did nothing to make it a reality. As a Minister under the Minns Labor Government, I cannot sit by and watch as nothing happens. The Auditor-General found that the announcement was made without a team. There was no team in place. [*Extension of time*]

The former Government took a year to properly staff the unit. There was confusion about what the policy unit was supposed to do; its responsibilities were unclear and there were no programs attached to it. Great work! The former Government announced a unit that had absolutely no work program. There were no programs, no time frames were set and no measurements were put in place. There was limited action and there was insufficient

influence by the Government in the responsibilities it gave the department. The most damning thing is that these concerns were raised multiple times before and after the announcement and nothing was done to address them. It is interesting that, in response to these damning findings by the Auditor-General, the former Minister in the other place commented on 2BS radio two weeks ago that the unit needs to be properly funded and resourced, and to work with the rest of the department.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: We are four minutes into an answer and we are yet to hear what the Minister is doing about the issue. We do not want to look back. What is the Minister doing? She is not in opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour well knows I will not uphold that point of order.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** She is not answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They can run a protection racket for their failed education policies every day. We will task the most senior people responsible to make sure our kids in rural, remote and regional New South Wales get a fair go in our schools. We will also address the teacher shortage. We will be making thousands and thousands of teachers permanent who the former Government made temporary. We will be investing in small-group numeracy and literacy tutoring and making up for 10 years of neglect.

#### SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:27):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Yesterday in question time she said, "It is reasonable that my office and people across government would share those advertisements with people who they believe to be qualified and skilled for the position." Other than Josh Murray, with which other individuals did the Minister or her office share the job advertisement for the transport secretary position?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:28):** I thank the member for her question and for her interest in publicly advertised positions. I have repeatedly answered this question. As I have said, the process for the recruitment of the Secretary of Transport for NSW was run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in conjunction with my office. It is only reasonable that people from within my office, people from within this building, and people across this country and across the world might share the publicly available advertisement that was in newspapers, on government websites and on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a lovely place to spend some time. I am sure many members are spending some time there now, perhaps promoting a few podcasts.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: Has the Minister finished her answer?

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** No.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Minister was asked who else apart from Josh Murray got this special treatment of sharing the ad.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order. I have heard enough. The Minister will be directly relevant.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Special treatment? It is called the internet. Millions of people have "special treatment".

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition frontbench members will come to order. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have said repeatedly that my office would reasonably share an advertisement that was publicly available with highly qualified skilled people who they would want to reply to the advertisement. What is interesting here is what others have done in similar circumstances. Yesterday I canvassed what the now shadow Minister for Transport and Roads did when making appointments to her portfolio.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: Once again, my point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, you asked the Minister to be directly relevant. We are yet to hear whether the advertisement was shared specifically by her or her office—maybe by her chief of staff—to anyone else.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I said yes.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Any other names?

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order. The Minister will be directly relevant to the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I absolutely answered the question when I said this publicly available advertisement was shared by my office and, indeed, shared by many people across this Parliament and across the Government. That is only expected, appropriate, reasonable—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: The Minister is now flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's point. The Minister has 10 seconds remaining for her answer.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** What the Opposition is seeking to do is to canvass other names for this appointment. That is completely inappropriate, and it will only deter qualified people from applying for public office.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hawkesbury is seeking additional information.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** An answer, just any answer.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted. The Minister has concluded her answer.

### STATE FINANCES

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (11:31):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, in his capacity of representing the Treasurer. Will the Minister update the House on the trajectory of the former Government's spending commitments, particularly since COVID spending started to decline?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:32):** I thank the member for Cabramatta for his question. He is someone who is all too aware that reckless budget management and unsustainable spending measures have a real impact on his capacity to rebuild and deliver the services that his community needs and have missed out on for so long under the previous Government. There is no doubt that in the past few years we have seen some challenging times in New South Wales: a COVID pandemic where people expected governments to take all the necessary steps to protect lives and livelihoods, and we experienced bushfires and floods. We recognise that governments needed to borrow at that time to keep people safe, to keep people in jobs, to keep the economy moving. That came at a cost. But it also came with the expectation that when the pandemic stopped, when it eased up, the spending would ease up too and that the budget would get back to a much more sustainable level. And, in many places, it did; everywhere except New South Wales, it seems.

It seems that the previous Government so enjoyed handing out the largesse during that pandemic period that it became addicted to the spending. We heard from the Premier earlier today about how the National Party became addicted to handing out money through its own discretionary slush fund—only to selected seats in selected periods, mind you. As a result, not only did the previous Government deliver the highest budget deficit in New South Wales history; it delivered the second highest as well. It not only delivered the highest debt in New South Wales history; it set us up on a trajectory to reach \$187 billion in debt into the future. In what can only be described as a fever dream of reckless spending, the member for Hornsby racked up \$27 billion in "new policy measures" in the nine months in the lead-up to what?

**Government members:** The election!

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The election. That fever dream became a fiscal nightmare for the incoming Government—

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** They still support it now. They love their spending. The member for Hornsby just can't get enough.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Tamworth wanted the Commonwealth Games, Speakman wanted the Commonwealth Games—a \$7 billion event that no-one in Victoria wanted—but Scully Park, a greatly named park, at Tamworth is going to host it! That is not to mention all of the other things that they were spending on. But hidden in the detail was the fiscal trap that the member for Hornsby laid for 1,100 nurses when he did not fund them in the future. [*Extension of time*]

I am happy to provide additional information. As I was saying, hidden in the detail was the member for Hornsby's fiscal trap: 1,100 nurses, not funded; Northern Rivers reconstruction, not funded. These were the sorts of things that those opposite were willing to leave and not tell people about. They were willing to tell people about

their spending, but they were never willing to tell people the truth about what the implications were. Their \$7 billion interest bill—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome, misleading the House about nurses that were COVID recovery nurses.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Government members will come to order. The member for Keira will come to order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** There you have it, folks—the former Treasurer. The truth is revealed.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The truth is revealed: In the back end, two years into the next budget, he was going to sack 1,100 nurses. He was going to sack them. That is not how you do services in New South Wales.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Can we stop the clock?

**The SPEAKER:** No.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome. He is misleading the House.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that is how the member for Hornsby sees it. The member will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

The member for Hornsby will come to order. The Minister will continue his answer.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am being deliberately factual. I know he does not like it, but the fact is, if they had all of their spending commitments of late, it would have added \$30 billion to the budget bottom line. There was \$30 billion in extra spending. Only the Minns Government is repairing the budget so we can get on with rebuilding essential services.

**Mr Matt Kean:** That was the worst audition for the leadership ever.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** No, the last year of you as Treasurer was the worst audition for leadership ever.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Just because Jo is under pressure, you are still not going to jump over her.

**The SPEAKER:** I could direct the member for Hornsby and the member for Wollongong to leave the Chamber under Standing Order 249A to sort out the matter. They will calm down. The member for Hornsby will come to order.

## DRUG SUMMIT

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:38):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's commitment to host a drug summit?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:38):** I thank the member for Sydney for his advocacy in the area of harm minimisation and drug law reform. He is on the harm minimisation roundtable, along with my colleague, the Minister for Transport. They are two individuals who care very deeply—along with others on both sides of this Chamber and the crossbench—about drug law reform and making sure that we keep our citizens as safe as possible. It is also great to have the second-best member for Keira in the public gallery today. I am only joking—he remains the best.

This is an important issue. Next year we will be hosting the drug summit. The member for Sydney and I have discussed the issue already, and I hope that everyone across the Chamber engages on it. Having spent a lot of time in various communities over the past four years as shadow health Minister and then in the role of the Minister for Health, I assure members that this issue touches every single one of our communities. Whether in the bush, in remote parts of New South Wales, in large metropolitan areas like Wollongong or Newcastle or in Sydney and the suburbs, if you scratch the surface, many families and communities are dealing with the issue every single day. Nearly 25 years ago, this place hosted the first and only drug summit that we have had. What outcomes were delivered were as a result of the brave women and men, as legislators and reformers, who took a leap of faith. As

a result of that summit, just a few kilometres away in the electorate of the member for Sydney, we have the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre.

If members have not been to it, I would encourage them to make their way there and have a look. Uniting runs it. The service has saved lives and helped people who have undergone a drug overdose in a way that was simply not possible before. We know the challenge is real. Back then it was largely heroin. The drug of choice has changed to ice and that sort of psychedelic drug. We know the challenge is real within our communities. Right now at St Vincent's there is an investment in— [*Extension of time*]

Right now at St Vincent's Hospital, just down the road in the electorate of the member for Sydney, is the Psychiatric Alcohol and Non-Prescription Drug Assessment or PANDA operation. It is designed to allow people with psychiatric alcohol and non-prescription drug use to be treated in an emergency department in a way that they have never been before, giving them dignity, respect and rapid treatment, whilst at the same time allowing a general emergency department to operate. That is what we are going try to roll out in other parts of New South Wales. That is the sort of initiative that I want the men and women—the experts in the field—to bring forward as part of the drug summit next year.

The summit will look at legal issues, law enforcement, education and, most importantly from my perspective, health and treatment. We must focus on the people who often see us in our electorates, whose family members have been dealt a severe blow because of drug use and who are looking for help. They are looking for treatment. We will be rolling out a treatment service in the electorate of Dubbo, something that the member for Dubbo and others across this place and in the other place have advocated for. The Hon. Stephen Lawrence in the other place was a very strong advocate for that service. It is an example of a service that I want to see driven as a result of the drug summit. Opioid use in this country costs us around \$15 billion a year. If we do not get on top of this health issue, we will continue to lose lives. I hope all members in this place will work with the health professionals and people like Dan Howard, the commissioner in the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice", and help to put forward real solutions that will change lives, change families and change communities across New South Wales.

#### NURSING WORKFORCE

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (11:43):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. In question time a few moments ago, the member for Hornsby stated that 1,100 nurses were COVID-recovery nurses. Is the Minister aware of any previous public reference to those vital members of the health profession being purely temporary?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:44):** Every now and then, you cannot believe that this place can generate a campaign ad, but what the shadow health Minister just said is essentially that. He admitted to the lie that we discovered on day one in this place. I am going to spell it out for everyone, local health district by local health district, because I reckon there might be the odd person among those opposite who knocks on room 12 today and says, "Were you really going to take 138 nurses out of the Hunter New England Local Health District?" I do unannounced visits every week, and the first thing people talk to me about is staffing. When I do the next one, if I tell them that the previous Government was only going to temporarily fund 1,112 nurses, they will be horrified.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Ten thousand, mate.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** You are completely wrong.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** When the Premier and I visit health and hospital services, the first and often last issue people talk to us about is staffing. They had a government that made out it was going to deliver 10,000 health workers and never once said that 1,112 of them would be axed—would be cut. That is one of the most appalling government decisions that I have ever seen.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome and misleading the House. The Coalition has never shied away from the fact that we delivered record health funding during the budget.

**The SPEAKER:** I will rule on the point of order under Standing Order 74. I understand that the answer is—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Very relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** The point of order was not about relevance; it was about being quarrelsome. Maybe it was about being more relevant or somewhat provocative. I understand that.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** You can say it—misleading.

**The SPEAKER:** I will not say that. I do not need the assistance of the member for Port Macquarie. I call the member for Port Macquarie to order for the first time. I do not uphold the point of order under Standing Order 74.

**Mr Steve Whan:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Monaro rises to seek additional information. I wish he had not done so, but I grant an additional two minutes.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Let us go around the room. As of 1 June next year, the Hunter New England Local Health District, under the mob opposite, would have lost 138 nurses. In south-western Sydney, 119 nurses would have been gone. Western Sydney—

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

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

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Why don't you fund them?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie will come to order. The Clerk will stop the clock. All members, particularly Government frontbench members, will come to order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is now moving completely away from what was a very specific question.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I am going through the 1,112. I do not know how much more relevant I can make it. I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Port Macquarie. She said, "Why don't you fund them?" For south-east Sydney, 104 would have been gone.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** For the Sydney Local Health District, it is not bad—99, gone. In northern Sydney, whose member has had a lot to say today—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Always.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I was out at your hospital a couple of nights ago—the Royal North Shore Hospital. They didn't know you, either.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** You have 82 that are gone—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** It's actually in Willoughby.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** But do not panic—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I have a direct mail coming.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Do not panic. I have a direct mail coming.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock again. The Minister will not continue speaking if I tell him to resume his seat—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will not approach the lectern until I call him to take his point of order. But I will overlook that this time.



**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister was pointing across the Chamber and not directing his comments through the Chair. He was being completely disorderly in the way he was conducting himself.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Do not panic: The direct mail is written, approved by Tim James. The Central Coast has 57—gone.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** As for Western NSW, we have the odd challenge out there but they were going to cut 56 nurses—gone.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Is this the number of nurses that the Minister is going to cut?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hornsby to order for the third time. The Minister has the call.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** And 41 nurses were cut from the Children's Hospitals Network. The previous Government did not care about health care. It never cared about health care and it never will care about health care.

#### SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:51):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. In respect of the Transport secretary recruitment process, did the Minister ever declare a conflict of interest? If so, how, when and what was the conflict?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:51):** I thank the member for North Shore for her question. I have made all the necessary declarations that I am required to make to this Parliament as a member of Parliament, to the Premier as a Minister in his Government, and I have also declared, as I have made clear to this House multiple times, my ministerial diaries, as I am required to do under the Premier's requirements in the memorandum on the publication of ministerial diaries. I have made those disclosures. If we are going to go to conflicts of interest, I think what is relevant here is what those on the Opposition side of the House did in similar circumstances, because it made the member for Oatley rather uncomfortable.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I think I can anticipate the point of order, and I know how I will rule.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I absolutely uphold the point of order. I will not countenance any digression; the question can be answered quite concisely and quickly. The Minister has given a prelude, but her answer is now straying too far from the question. I draw the Minister back to the leave of the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have answered these questions multiple times. I have made very clear that I have declared, as I am required to do, any conflict of interest. I have done so. What is inconvenient to those opposite, however, is that this process is exactly what they did not do in office. We undertook a proper process run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In fact, candidates were interviewed by a panel of highly respected public servants, as I have explained—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: It was not a question about the whole process. It was a simple question about whether the Minister declared a conflict of interest. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I uphold the point of order. I rule that the Minister has concluded her answer.

### BUSHFIRE READINESS

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:54):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is preparing New South Wales for the upcoming bushfire season?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:54):** I thank the member for Bega for the question and for his strong personal interest in an issue that affects so many people in his community who are still recovering from the 2019-20 bushfires, as well as in the electorates of many members across all parts of this Chamber. I have updated the House before on this matter and I will continue to do so, for two reasons: One is to make clear the challenges we face and the other is to give confidence that the Government and the agencies are doing all they can as we face these challenges.

The bushfire season commences on 1 October, but for some areas it has commenced on 1 August—mostly around northern New South Wales and western New South Wales areas. Mr Speaker, as you would know, and as the member for Clarence and some members representing parts of northern New South Wales know, the weekend just past was a warm and windy one, with 65 fires burning over the weekend. We are at an alert and advice level. Over 400 volunteer firefighters were deployed over the weekend, trying to do everything we can to bring those fires under control and manage them. Currently, 46 fires are burning across the State as we sit in this Chamber. That means that 262 personnel, 47 appliances—in other words, trucks that are out on the road dealing with those fires at the moment—and six aircraft have been deployed at this very moment.

There were bushfires and grassfires. I have spoken about the dangers we face, particularly given the challenges over the past couple of years, especially the fact that, on average, almost every second day it rained over the past two years, which means that hazard reduction has been hampered really terribly. I have said that we are doing everything that we can. We were not where we needed to be. We are doing what we can as the conditions favour us. But almost every second day we are still seeing some rain or some frost or something that acts as a little bit of a deterrent. We committed \$10 million last month to ensure that we could hire an additional 100 mitigation crew. They will work in addition to the 360-odd that are already there as a mitigation crew.

Those people are not volunteers. They have been employed so that we can do as much as we can in preparation for the upcoming bushfire season, including hazard reduction burns; clearing fire trails; helping out vulnerable communities, particularly the elderly; and protecting important vulnerable community assets, such as medical centres, schools and other centres. The challenges that we face are pretty big. We are not hiding any of that. We know that we can do everything that we possibly can, but it also really comes down to the way that we prepare and the way that we respond. Only recently we took delivery of a \$9 million Chinook helicopter. *[Extension of time]*

That helicopter takes our aerial fleet to 11, which means that we have the capacity for 11,000 litres of water or retardant. Next year we are hoping also to prepare that so that it can do night things. That carries the same as the incredible *Marie Bashir* large air tanker. We are doing what we can to try to prepare and to try to help. As I said, we have the others. Last week, the Premier and I joined emergency services personnel in one of the simulation programs that brought together all of the emergency services. Based on real data from January 2020, they created a simulation of what it would be like during a bushfire. It was an incredible experience but it was also an important experience because we wanted to road test all the different things that we could.

There is not one person in this Chamber or across the State who does not value the work of our RFS and does not appreciate the 70,000-plus volunteers—including some members in this Chamber who volunteer. I am looking at the member for Prospect, for example, who I know volunteered a great deal during those fires, as well as other colleagues. We will continue to support those, but we are also trying different things. We now have an artificial intelligence element to it. The program Athena takes all of the input data and tries to predict where the fire is going. Then that feeds into the commanders, who can then make those decisions.

We also have better protective gear to protect those firefighters as much as possible, and a computer-aided dispatch, which not only means that all of the 43 districts can now combine together but also feeds into the other emergency services. The opportunity to have some interoperability is incredibly impressive and important, but we can only do all of this together. We know the challenges; we have lived those challenges. Members went above politics during the fires, and any response to any upcoming fires has to be exactly the same. I am working with my shadow ministerial colleague and keeping him updated, as I do with other members, and I thank everybody for their work and for the contributions that they make to keep the State safe.

**SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (11:59):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Page 22 of ICAC's *Managing Conflicts of Interest in the NSW Public Sector* document, dated April 2019, states, "Just as a conflict of interest disclosure must be in writing, so must the management response". What management response for any conflict of interest of the Minister was documented? What steps did the Minister take to manage any conflict of interest when on 1 July she met Josh Murray and another candidate for the transport secretary position?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:00):** I have answered questions in relation to declarations that I need to make, and I have made those relevant declarations. Regarding conflicts of interest, I direct the member for Badgerys Creek to look at how her colleagues have managed those in the past. Her colleagues were quite anxious about how the now shadow Minister for Transport and Roads managed them.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The point of order is regarding direct relevance. The Minister has not answered the question, which required her to give details about the documented response, and she is now straying into other matters.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: If a question contains an imputation or an implication of criticism, the Minister must be allowed to respond. The question opens up criticism of members opposite because it contains an imputation.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business. I concur that a clear imputation was built into the question, so I will give the Minister more scope to respond.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I reject the premise of the question, and I have answered questions regarding disclosures. In relation to conflicts of interest, it would be of interest to the House to consider how former Ministers have dealt with those issues. The now shadow Minister for Transport and Roads, and Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been asking a lot of questions about conflicts of interest, and it turns out that she did not take the kind of approach that those opposite would expect. In fact, when she was the deputy chief of staff to former Minister Greg Pearce—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Canterbury will come to order. The member for Dubbo rises on a point of order.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to make those sorts of allegations, she should do so through proper channels. It is Patches O'Houlihan from *Dodgeball* over here—dodge, duck, dip, dive, dodge!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. I do not appreciate the way in which the point of order was articulated. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I have made it very clear that the way in which the question was couched allows more latitude to the Minister in her answer. She has not advanced very far since I made that ruling. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We are talking about conflicts of interest, and the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads had to quit her job because she failed to manage a conflict of interest. She accepted some very generous hospitality from two insurance firms. She attended the Birdcage at the Melbourne Cup, probably sipping on some champagne. She was a guest of insurance firms when her office was considering policy changes related to compulsory third party insurance.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129—direct relevance. The question did not imply there is a conflict of interest.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Mark, you need to look behind you before you ask questions like this. You really do.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Can you just be quiet? There are a couple of points. The question referred to "any conflict of interest" of the Minister and did not say whether there is a conflict. The Minister could answer the

question by saying there is no conflict. That is the first point. The second point is there is no adverse inference from saying there is a conflict. The question is how the Minister manages the conflict, and she is straying beyond that.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** You're a pig, Mark.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his point of order. I ruled earlier that I believe there was an imputation in the question. I concur with the view of the Leader of the House in that regard. The Minister answered by explicitly saying she rejects the premise of the question. I do not get to direct the way in which a Minister answers the question to be directly relevant. But the Minister has covered that pretty well. As to the other points, I rule that there is broader scope for the Minister to answer because I accept that there was an imputation in the question. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: During that exchange the member for Coogee used unparliamentary language towards the Leader of the Opposition. I am happy to repeat the comment if you would like, but I ask her to withdraw it.

**The SPEAKER:** I would prefer that the member for Miranda did not repeat the comment.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** It was very audible and very clear, and if language used previously was unacceptable then that comment should also be withdrawn.

**The SPEAKER:** I was not able to hear the interjection. I ask the member for Coogee whether she said something that she would be prepared to withdraw.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coogee has said there is nothing that she wishes to withdraw.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Further to the point of order: Mr Speaker, you have ruled in the past that language around calling a member in this place a "cat" or making cat-like noises should be withdrawn. The member for Coogee called the Leader of the Opposition a pig, and that is unacceptable.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda can raise that matter with me in my chambers after question time. I was unaware of that as I did not hear the comment. The member for Coogee was asked whether she would withdraw anything that was said and she said no. I have no ability to require that to be done, but I will deal with it. Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I confirm to the House that those insurance firms were clients of Michael Photios.

#### **BUS SERVICES**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:07):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the actions being taken by the Government to fix bus services in New South Wales?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:07):** I thank the member for Coogee for her question, for her long advocacy for better bus services in her community and for leading the bus task force as Parliamentary Secretary. I would like members to be able to hear about these important issues because they relate to passenger services for buses across New South Wales. Last week at the bus depot in Leichhardt, I released the first report of the Bus Industry Taskforce. Opposition members do not want to see that report, which helps explain the sorry state of the bus network and how it came to be. It exposes how the former Government carved up our bus network and signed it away to the lowest bidder.

Members opposite put price before passengers, and the community has lost out. They selected foreign-owned companies over long-term local operators. That has created a vicious cycle. That has driven people away from the bus industry, leading to a record bus driver shortage. Opposition members want to play down this report. They will keep interjecting. I understand why. What the task force has to say is uncomfortable reading, particularly perhaps for the member for Willoughby. I think he is particularly uncomfortable. You know what, I think the member for Oatley is a bit uncomfortable too. I would be uncomfortable too if I knew what my government had done to my community. I would want a glass of water too. It is particularly uncomfortable.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Oatley can leave his seat to get a glass of water from the table without gesticulating. He will resume his seat quickly.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I would get a glass of water too if I knew that my colleagues had sold out my community like his did, delivering a bus operator to his community that could not provide the services that his passengers needed. Kids have been left on the side of the road because of what the former Government did. In

fact, the member for Miranda might be equally uncomfortable as well. The former Government did not engage with bus drivers and, as a result, 30 per cent of them walked away.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The colleagues of those opposite just wanted to save a bit of money and we now know the consequences of their actions. The community is paying the price. The community deserves to know how we got into this mess. The former Government promised that privatisation would deliver better services.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In fact, the former transport Minister even said that bus customers would receive additional services and innovation. But we know what happened: the exact opposite. [*Extension of time*]

The report shows us that we now have "ghost" buses. They do not appear on TripView technology. That has caused people to lose faith that their bus will ever turn up at all. In fact, because the former Government failed to invest in very simple low-cost technology, 10 per cent of buses do not show up on the TripView app.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It means that people are left waiting and wanting for a service that they need. Do members know what else it shows? It shows that the former Government also went on a go-slow on buying new buses. As a result, our fleet is getting older and our ability to grow the network has been reduced, particularly in areas of growth like south-west Sydney. Those communities are losing out. The report also shows that areas privatised by the former Government have led to the worst driver shortages and that those areas are failing to meet contract key performance indicators, with greater cancellations and lack of on-time running. That is what has happened as a result of privatisation.

The report also revealed the appalling state of layover facilities for bus drivers. The state of those toilets, as printed in *The Daily Telegraph*, show what has happened and why we have lost so many drivers from that essential profession. The state of those facilities is nothing short of disgraceful. Bus drivers are critical workers. They drive our kids to school. They look after those commuting to and from work, people who need those services every day. They deserve decent facilities like any other worker. We will get on with the job of fixing the mess that was left behind. The report provides a road map. I thank the task force for its ongoing critical work.

#### GREYHOUND RACING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. In light of the Bathurst greyhound track being destroyed in last year's floods and the advancing negotiations between the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association and Orange City Council for a \$15 million greyhound racing centre of excellence at the disused Orange track, will the Minister update the House on what the Government and Greyhound Racing NSW are doing to progress and support this much-needed facility?

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the Minister to answer, I draw his attention to the clock.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (12:14):** I will be quick. It is good to talk about something that is not controversial. I thank the member for Orange for his question and his commitment to his community, particularly with regard to greyhound racing. Like the member for Orange, the Government is committed to competitive, safe and sustainable greyhound racing in New South Wales, particularly in the Central West. With regard to the Orange site, I note and applaud the councillors from Orange City Council who in March this year voted to back the use of the former trotting track for greyhound racing. The rehabilitation and use of that land in Orange for greyhound racing is estimated to provide a \$20 million boost to the local economy and local jobs.

Currently, I understand that Greyhound Racing NSW and the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association are in active negotiations with both Orange City Council and Bathurst Regional Council about a greyhound racing centre of excellence in the Central West. However, I note that it is a commercial decision by the relevant organisations and there are sensitivities in commenting publicly on the progress of those negotiations. I look forward to receiving an update on the centre of excellence proposal in due course. I understand that that decision may be imminent. We will find out about it. More broadly, \$30 million has been committed for conditional grants to fund improvements that promote track safety and greyhound welfare across the State. We are committed to delivering an industry that is safe and puts animal welfare first. I thank the member for Orange for his question.

*Announcements***PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF AFL**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members that the Parliamentary Friends of AFL is about to commence an event in the rooftop garden on level 9.

*Personal Explanation***MEMBER FOR HORNSBY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (12:16):** By leave: I correct the record on account of a misleading answer from the Minister for Health. As Treasurer, I was proud to have delivered record funding for health care across New South Wales. In the June budget we delivered a \$33 billion spend, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring world-class health services for people across the State. On top of that more than \$30 billion in recurrent funding, the former Government invested \$2.8 billion in capital works funding to continue building and redeveloping hospitals and health facilities. That also included \$900 million for the COVID-19 response.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Hornsby that he gives his personal explanation at my discretion. It seems to be more of a rebuttal at this point.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Isn't that what a personal explanation is?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby is going beyond giving a personal explanation.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I want to clarify the comments, Mr Speaker. I was proud to have funded an increase in the health army of 10,000 full-time equivalent staff over four years, with more than 7,000 this year as part of a \$4.5 billion investment. The Coalition provided extra surge funding that included extra staff for COVID—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We thought that was important. It is up to Labor to decide whether it wants to cut the staff that we funded.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby has concluded his contribution. On that basis, there is no point of order.

**MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:18):** By leave: I believe that giving a personal explanation is the only means available for me to do this. Given that I was personally involved in the referral to the advisory committee established in the last Parliament in relation to sexual harassment, bullying and assault in Parliament, and given that I was the one who initially asked the former Premier about those issues, I put on record my extreme disappointment at the fact that in the Chamber earlier the Government undertook to refer the Broderick review to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics, with no notice given to crossbench members.

As far as I am aware, no consultation has occurred with the advisory group that was established in the last Parliament to help steer across MPs and staff in a cross-party way in how we deal with bullying, harassment, serious misconduct and assaults in this building and precinct. No prior notice was given to staff members and members of Parliament, which was a significant request of the last advisory group. Given the traumatic and serious nature of the content of the Broderick report, prior warning should have been given to staff who work in this precinct to ensure their safety and protection. There should not be discussion of the content of the report without advance warning to them, so that they do not find themselves in their workplace with perpetrators at the time that these topics are discussed.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Newtown. I do not believe that was a personal explanation, but I am happy to hear from the member for Newtown. I would like to deal outside the Chamber with a number of matters that were raised. I am happy to speak to the member for Newtown about them.

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 60 to 89 will lapse tomorrow.

*Bills***REVENUE, FINES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:22):** I and many others, I am sure, hope that this is the third and final crack that I have at speaking to the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill ensures that information between Revenue NSW, Service NSW and the Treasury is shared, which will hopefully assist with verifying that persons applying for grants or services are eligible to do so and reduce any loss to the Government from leakage of funds. Revenue NSW and Service NSW are increasingly collaborating to deliver a range of services and programs and an enhanced customer experience for the people of New South Wales. Enabling Revenue NSW to share information with Service NSW will help reduce the risk of fraud and error and enable smoother processing of customer applications. The value of this cannot be underestimated, given the increasing sophistication of fraudulent schemes, scams and other issues in this respect.

The amendments will permit tax and fines information to be disclosed to Service NSW, and the Treasury will further assist with revenue forecasting and policy development. In recent months many would have watched with dismay and disdain the unfolding breaches of confidentiality relating to the Federal Government. The bill also seeks to impose penalties for breaches of confidentiality by consultants. Revenue NSW confidentially consults certain bodies on draft taxation legislation. Most of those bodies have tax experts from the private sector, some of whom are employed by major accounting and law firms. While Revenue NSW is not aware of any confidentiality breaches by any of these bodies that it consults—and, so far, has no reason to suspect any breach has occurred—in light of recent events with PricewaterhouseCoopers it is appropriate for the Government to send a clear message that such behaviour is unacceptable and constitutes a breach of trust that will attract significant penalties.

The bill proposes penalties of \$1.109 million for an individual and \$5.549 million for a corporation, partnership or association. The Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will be allowed to report any person to any relevant professional body, publish details of the breach and undertake investigations into suspected breaches. This will hopefully go a long way towards restoring public trust and confidence in such work and ensure that trust in government is rebuilt. Finally, I draw to the attention of members the changes to the work and development order scheme proposed in the bill. A work and development order, or WDO, allows a person to pay off or reduce their fine by doing certain activities, such as unpaid work, courses, counselling or treatment programs. One available WDO activity is undergoing mentoring. Currently, the Fines Act 1996 restricts this activity to persons under 25 years of age, despite 40 per cent of WDO participants being aged 26 to 39.

This means mentoring programs for persons 25 years and over cannot be used under a WDO to help them resolve a fine. The bill removes the age limit and allows persons of any age to undertake a mentoring program as a WDO activity. In my inaugural speech I mentioned that one of my previous professional roles was in headspace, a mental health organisation. In that role, I saw the value of WDO program. It ensured many young people were able to undertake activities that helped them build skills, approach the circumstances of their life from a strengths-based perspective and build relationships in the service network around them in order to overcome the circumstances that had led them to require a WDO in the first place. On my third and final crack, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:27):** The Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 comes to the House in the context of the budget position that the Labor Government inherited from 12 years of a Liberal-Nationals Government. It is a budget position that, with each day in office, the Government is learning is worse and worse. We not only have the largest gross debt inherited by one government from another, currently about \$128 billion, but that debt is on track to rise to \$180 billion by 2026. We had a budget deficit in the last financial year of \$12 billion—again, the largest budget deficit inherited by an incoming government.

There is also a growing black hole in the public services and programs that most people would reasonably expect to have been part of the full four-year forward estimates of a budget inherited by the incoming government from the outgoing government. But we are finding day in and day out that they are unfunded, including 1,100 nurse positions that are only funded until next year. Funding for programs that the former Government introduced, including Active Kids vouchers and the regional seniors travel card, ended on 30 June this year in the budget we inherited. Cyber Security NSW, an important part of the State's cybersecurity network, is also unfunded as of next year to the tune of \$70 million. Out-of-home care for vulnerable children is underfunded as of June this year. It goes on and on.

The Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to amend 12 pieces of existing taxation and finance legislation that apply in this State. It seeks to restore integrity to the budget process, help to repair the budget and stop revenue leakage, which was a feature of those opposite when they were in government. I will not go into all of the changes in this big piece of legislation, which was put together by Minister Houssos, her staff and the public servants that support her. I thank them for their work.

I talk about a couple of elements of the bill that may be of interest to my constituents. They go to fines and demerits. Currently, the Fines Act 1996 makes it an offence for a person to falsely nominate another person or themselves as being the driver of a vehicle at the time of an offence. A false nomination is often made to not only avoid fine payment but also relieve the real driver of demerit points that may lead to them losing their driver's licence. The new bill extends those offences and creates new offences of offering to be falsely nominated as the driver at the time of offence and providing false or misleading information.

I was not aware, but apparently there is an entrepreneurial network of people out there who offer to nominate themselves as the driver of an offending vehicle in return for payment. They suffer the demerit point loss in return for payment. The bill will put a stop to that. Some constituents in my electorate may be disappointed by this further crackdown. From time to time, we hear about people who share their demerit points to avoid losing those points, possibly losing their licence and the consequences of that. People in my area who rely on commuting and travelling to Sydney for work are at pains to avoid losing their licence. The bill is an important part of making sure that there is integrity in our licensing system and that we avoid leakage from fines that are due to the State.

The other important change goes to payroll tax and the existence of phoenix companies. Most members would be aware that the Payroll Tax Act 2007 currently allows related companies to be grouped together for payroll tax purposes. The bill extends the grouping mechanism to enhance the recovery of tax debt from phoenix operators where a business operator at one company structure may seek to close that company structure down to avoid payment to debtors and open another company structure down the track. The Payroll Tax Act will now capture that new phoenix company as part of the original debt, enhancing our ability to collect payroll tax from those who seek to avoid paying that tax and avoid payments to contractors and those who provide services to the company. I end there. It is an important bill. It is part of Labor's plan to repair the budget and bring integrity back to the budget process. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:33):** I speak in debate on the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill encompasses amendments that aim to ensure the effectiveness and modern relevance of multiple pieces of legislation that are necessary for the continued functioning of our government. The recent Government amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 and the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 underscore a commitment to rectifying loopholes and fostering accountability in the realms of business and legal processes. The changes are indicative of a proactive stance aimed at safeguarding the economy, supporting businesses and protecting the public from the negative repercussions of activities such as phoenixing and other fraudulent practices. The revisions made to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 signal the Government's unwavering determination to curb the prevalence of phoenix activity.

The amendments in the bill herald a more equitable and transparent business environment by addressing deficiencies in the existing law and enforcing accountability among both successor entities and promoters. With the changes, the Government takes a significant stride towards shielding the economy, businesses and the public from the detrimental impacts of phoenix activity. The consequences of phoenix activity extend beyond tax evasion. In addition to reducing the Government's ability to deliver public amenities and services, it affects individuals, businesses and creditors left burdened with unpaid debts. Recently I had people in my office as a direct result of being caught up in a phoenixing scam. A huge amount of money was owed to them was unpaid, and they were at their wit's end trying to find out how it could be recovered. This malicious practice depletes public funds, disrupts market equilibrium and erodes investor and consumer trust in the corporate sector.

The current version of the Payroll Tax Act 2007 allows entities to be grouped for payroll tax purposes, but it fails to encompass the necessity of grouping entities that have undergone phoenix activity. This oversight has enabled unscrupulous individuals to manipulate the system, perpetuating a cycle of fraudulent actions. The proposed amendments represent a comprehensive solution to the issue by extending the payroll tax grouping rules to cover entities that are in administration, winding up or deregistered. The expanded scope empowers Revenue NSW to hold successor entities accountable for the payroll tax debts inherited from defunct companies. By linking the entities through an authorised person tasked with tracing debt from entity to entity, the amendments foster accountability and serve as a potent deterrent against phoenix activity.

The joint and several liability mechanisms ensure that the responsibility for payroll tax debts cannot be evaded, thereby protecting creditors and the general public. Furthermore, the incorporation of promoter penalty provisions in the Taxation Administration Act 1996 is an integral part of the amendments in the bill. By imposing civil penalties, injunctions and voluntary undertakings on promoters of phoenix activity, a clear message is being



sent that orchestrating such deceitful practices will result in consequences. This multi-pronged approach, which targets both successor entities and promoters, amplifies the resolve to eradicate phoenix activity from its root causes. The amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 signal a pivotal advance in tackling the issue of phoenix activity. The changes considerably enhance the Government's ability to counteract such illicit behaviour, ensuring equity and responsibility within the business arena while bolstering consumer confidence in corporate accountability.

Shifting focus to the State Debt Recovery Act 2018, the proposed amendments hold paramount importance in upholding fairness and accountability within the legal system. The amendments, aligned with the adjustments to the Fines Act 1996, bridge critical gaps in existing legislation and provide essential safeguards against fraudulent practices aimed at circumventing accountability on the roads. Of the new offences introduced, the first offence relating to falsely nominating oneself or someone else as a driver during traffic offences is particularly noteworthy. This tactic, which is unfortunately common, undermines the credibility of the fines system and jeopardises genuine drivers' demerit points and licences. Additionally, it erodes road users' confidence in fellow commuters' skills.

Criminalising this deceptive behaviour closes a loophole that has enabled such evasion of accountability. Through my electoral office I have heard of cases of fines being attributed to individuals who are here on work or student visas who have had it pushed upon them by their employers. When they have received permanent residency, it has presented a significant challenge because they are now no longer eligible for a licence. That needed to be corrected, and the penalty attached to the offence serves as a strong deterrent against engaging in such dishonest actions.

The second new offence, centred on providing false or misleading information, is instrumental in preserving the integrity of the fine-review process. Instances of submitting false information to Revenue NSW to contest fines or State debts pose a significant threat to the justice system's credibility. These amendments ensure consistency across administrative law domains, underscoring the principle that dishonesty will not be tolerated. Unifying this offence across the Fines Act 1996 and the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 establishes a coherent approach to tackling misinformation in various penal contexts.

In addition to these offences' implications for accountability and fairness, the proposed amendments offer provisions for emergency situations, such as natural disasters, that necessitate prompt financial support. The recent flooding experienced in various areas, including in my electorate of Riverstone, highlighted the need for a balance between timely assistance and ensuring checks to prevent the misuse of public funds. We had multiple instances of people seeking grant funding by using false addresses, which caused great distress to the people living at those addresses and also opened the potential for the State Government to be rorted of many thousands of dollars by people who were ineligible. These amendments empower the Government to investigate and recover payments through taxation laws, offering a multifaceted approach that addresses both the urgency of financial support and the necessity for accountability.

Speaking of Riverstone, an electorate marked by rapid growth and a significant proportion of young families, these amendments hold substantial implications. The benefits of these changes are particularly palpable in my community, where housing affordability and inclusivity are pressing concerns. The amendments to the New South Wales shared equity scheme signify a substantial move towards addressing these concerns and promoting socio-economic inclusivity within the State. The significance of the proposed changes to the enabling legislation, initiated in November 2022, cannot be overstated.

By establishing a dedicated fund within the Special Deposits Account, distinct from the Consolidated Fund, the legislative framework demonstrates a commitment to segregating funds for the scheme's specific objectives, fostering transparency and enhancing financial accountability. This commitment is especially meaningful in a growing community like Riverstone, where the need for affordable housing is paramount. However, an oversight in the initial legislation cast uncertainty over the appropriation of funds into the newly created fund. This concern is effectively addressed by the retrospective amendment, currently under consideration, which affirms the validity of payments made into the fund during the 2022-23 period.

This rectification ensures the lawful disbursement of funds from the designated fund, maintaining the seamless functioning of the shared equity scheme. Moreover, the proposed amendments introduce a forward-looking provision that grants the Treasurer the authority to channel funds appropriated by the Parliament into the fund. This strategic authority aligns with established practices in other government funds, imbuing the Shared Equity Scheme Fund with the flexibility required to adapt to evolving financial demands beyond traditional budget cycles.

This foresight is indispensable for situations requiring unforeseen high government contributions and policy-driven shifts in eligibility criteria. These proposed legislative amendments truly stand as a cornerstone of

the shared equity scheme's sustainability and effectiveness. By addressing past discrepancies, ensuring ongoing financial injections and facilitating responsiveness to changing requirements, these amendments fortify the scheme's ability not only to assist aspiring homeowners but also to swiftly adapt to emerging socio-economic imperatives. This proactive approach underscores the State's dedication to affordable housing and inclusive progress, setting a commendable precedent for other jurisdictions to emulate. [*Extension of time*]

In the Riverstone electorate, where rapid growth and affordability concerns intersect, these changes bring a sense of promise and optimism. In addition, the amendments are set to benefit the Riverstone electorate in terms of the shared equity scheme. As a rapidly growing area with a significant proportion of young families, Riverstone stands to gain enormously from the scheme's provisions. The amendments offer adaptability to address emerging issues, ensuring that funds are directed to those most in need. This will undoubtedly resonate with the aspirations of the people of Riverstone to achieve property ownership and foster a brighter future for its residents.

The Government Sector Finance Act 2018 plays a role in ensuring the appropriate distribution of public funds through act of grace payments, especially during circumstances like the recent COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, like the flooding that affected the Riverstone electorate. These payments, subject to terms and conditions, have been instrumental in supporting individuals and businesses to recover from extreme events. Many of these programs have been administered by Revenue NSW. The necessity for this amendment became evident following the recent flood experience in the Riverstone electorate and across New South Wales.

Rapid funding was required to address the urgent needs of households, businesses and communities affected by the natural disaster. However, despite the swift provision of funds, a significant delay in the validation of claims occurred. Less than half of the applications for major flood relief grants, established in the aftermath of the floods, have been paid out. Reports indicate that approximately 43 per cent of applicants for the Back Home grant, which provides essential financial support to devastated residents, have received their funding. A significant challenge arises from the rise in claims by individuals at false addresses within the flood-affected areas of Riverstone. This surge in fraudulent claims necessitates the identification and handling of deceitful activities.

Balancing the urgency of providing immediate emergency support with the need for proper checks to ensure the rightful use of public funds presents a complex challenge for the Government. In response to this challenge, the proposed amendments allow for investigation and recovery through taxation laws. This strategic move aligns with the Government's commitment to accountability and proper fund utilisation, hopefully bringing down the debt inherited from the previous Government. The amendments provide a multifaceted approach to addressing the public's immediate needs while safeguarding the appropriate distribution of funds.

In my electorate, where the effects of natural disasters can be acutely felt, these amendments offer a means to support the affected community promptly and effectively. Therefore I reiterate my strong support for the proposed amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007, the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 and the New South Wales shared equity scheme, which showcases our Government's dedication to accountability, fairness and inclusivity. These amendments address existing gaps, curtail fraudulent practices and foster an environment of transparency and responsibility.

The Riverstone electorate, with its unique characteristics and needs, stands to benefit significantly from these amendments. They signify a comprehensive and proactive approach to addressing challenges and promoting positive outcomes in a range of areas, from business practices and legal accountability to housing affordability and disaster response. Through these amendments, the Government will set a commendable precedent for others to follow, ultimately enhancing the wellbeing of communities and the integrity of the State. I commend the Attorney General and the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:47):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill strengthens the integrity of our taxation and fines systems. Revenue legislation needs regular amendment to ensure that it remains effective, up to date and fit for the purpose of funding the vital public services that New South Wales needs. There are seven broad categories of reform in the bill. These are amendments to State taxation legislation, government sector finance legislation, fines legislation, police legislation, unclaimed money legislation, valuation of land legislation and shared equity scheme legislation.

For State taxation legislation, the bill amends the Duties Act 1997, the Land Tax Management Act 1956, the Payroll Tax Act 2007, the Property Tax (First Home Buyer Choice) Act 2022 and the Taxation Administration Act 1996. The Duties Act amendments will modernise several concessions and exemptions to ensure that they operate equitably and as intended, reduce revenue leakage by changing the test for aggregating transactions and ensuring that divisions are liable for duty, clarify when and where an electronic instrument is first executed to provide certainty and to ensure that the legislation stays up to date with practices in an increasingly digital world, and clarify provisions around the recalculation of duty when there are changes to the consideration paid before a

property is transferred. The amendments to the Land Tax Management Act will remove a redundant land tax concession for rural land that has been rezoned for subdivision but continues to be used for a rural business, and remove the requirement for land used as a school to be owned by the entity that operates the school to qualify for a land tax exemption.

Amendments to the Payroll Tax Act will improve revenue integrity and combat phoenix activity. Phoenixing is a major concern of Commonwealth and State authorities, because of not only tax avoidance but also the harm caused more broadly to individuals, businesses and other creditors. Under the amendments, the grouping rules for entities will be extended so that a company that is in administration, winding up or deregistered can be grouped with any successor entity. That will strengthen the integrity of New South Wales' revenue system and help combat the harmful practice of phoenixing. Phoenix activity will also be addressed by one of the amendments to the Taxation Administration Act by enabling promoter penalty provisions to be applied to promoters of phoenix activity. Those amendments send a strong message to phoenix operators.

One of the key amendments to the Taxation Administration Act will impose a new penalty for breaches of confidentiality relating to tax information to address concerns raised by the recent revelations of misuse of confidential Commonwealth Government tax plans. As I said in my incredibly long second reading speech, Revenue NSW does consult with industry bodies, such as the Law Society of New South Wales, the Taxation Institute of Australia and other professional committees. Consultation is the bedrock of good policy, and it is good government policy to do so. However, during consultation and development of policy, the Government needs to be certain that confidentiality is maintained, and I find it peculiar that the member for Miranda would suggest that that issue does not exist in New South Wales. That issue exists whenever good policy is being developed.

The Government is proactive and is introducing strong penalties to ensure that breaches of confidentiality do not happen at a State level and, if they ever do, that it has the appropriate powers to investigate and prosecute such behaviour. Additional amendments to the Taxation Administration Act will increase penalties for offences that hinder compliance activities and introduce a new penalty for evading or attempting to evade tax; introduce a requirement that out-of-time objections to a tax assessment be lodged no later than five years after the assessment, and clarify the current five-year limit on reassessments of tax liability; allow Revenue NSW to share information with Service NSW and the NSW Treasury to improve administration, enable customer applications to be processed more smoothly, reduce the risk of fraud and error, and assist with revenue forecasting and policy development; and make administrative improvements to processes for valuations, tax refunds and tax payments.

Although the property tax scheme is no longer open to new participants, annual assessments will still issue to those who are in the scheme, necessitating two amendments to ensure the scheme can be administered properly. The first of these corrects several minor drafting errors in the Property Tax (First Home Buyer Choice) Act 2022. The second amendment is to the Valuation of Land Act to ensure that anyone assessed for property tax has a right to object to any valuation used to determine their liability. Additionally, the bill contains amendments to the Valuation of Land Act that clarify the authority of the Valuer General to receive, use and provide property sales information to third parties when it is lodged directly with the Registrar General.

The bill also contains amendments to the Government Sector Finance Act 2018. Those amendments will enable Revenue NSW to use functions under the Taxation Administration Act 1996 to support compliance activities following any grant or support program where act of grace payments have been made—for example, payments made to individuals and businesses affected by extreme events such as natural disasters. The amendments will allow Revenue NSW to use investigative powers to determine whether a recipient has contravened a term or condition of an act of grace payment, to enable payments to be recovered if a term or condition has been contravened and allow for penalties to be imposed if necessary.

The amendments to the Fines Act will introduce new offences for offering to be falsely nominated as the driver who committed an offence. That is a practice that the Government does not want to continue to spread. There are increasing instances of people advertising their demerit points on social media and friends or family offering to be falsely nominated and take on demerit points. That all undermines the demerit points system and results in dangerous drivers not being held accountable and continuing to drive on our roads, putting other road users at risk. That new penalty will help keep our roads safer.

Additional amendments to the Fines Act will broaden the ability of Revenue NSW to share information with Service NSW, introduce a new offence for providing false and misleading information, allow an enforcement order posted to a company's registered office to be deemed as served even if it is "returned to sender", and permit fines that are not yet enforced to be written off when a fine recipient has other enforced fines that may be written off. The bill will improve the operation of Work and Development Orders by removing the age limitation for mentoring programs available under Work and Development Orders. The bill also clarifies the operation of Work and Development Orders outside of New South Wales, which will support those living in border communities.

The bill amends the Police Act 1990 to help the NSW Police Force to undertake law enforcement and investigative functions. Currently, while information can be shared between Revenue NSW and the NSW Police Force for the enforcement of fines, there are no provisions that allow for information to be shared for other law enforcement purposes or in the investigation of a serious offence. The bill will enable the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Fines Administration to enter into an information-sharing arrangement. The information that can be shared under any agreement will be limited to information that assists in the exercise of the law enforcement and investigative functions of the NSW Police Force.

The bill also contains amendments to unclaimed money to clarify the application of the Taxation Administration Act 1996, including treating claimants of unclaimed money as taxpayers; to permit Revenue NSW to not publish a sum of unclaimed money where the owner is not known; to prevent enterprises and public sector superannuation funds from referring monies that are in dispute; and to permit unclaimed money that is the subject of a successful claim to be offset against a tax, fines or referred debt in certain circumstances. Those amendments will allow the recovery of incorrectly paid money, provide review rights to unsuccessful claimants and generally improve the administration of unclaimed money.

The bill also amends the First Home Owner Grant and Shared Equity Act 2000 to ensure the proper and ongoing operation of the NSW Shared Equity scheme fund. The legislation governing the scheme fund did not ensure that money previously appropriated could be paid into the fund. This amendment fixes that retrospectively. It also includes a provision to enable the Treasurer to direct money appropriated by Parliament into the fund. That authority is consistent with other government funds. I commend the bill to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **DRUG MISUSE AND TRAFFICKING AMENDMENT (APPOINTED PERSONS) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 2 August 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:57):** I make a short contribution to the second reading debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. The Opposition supports the bill. There is very little I would add to the Attorney General's second reading speech on the bill other than to make the point that, although there is a retrospective validation of appointments of persons under the bill, the persons who are appointed under the bill are the persons who were intended to be appointed under the bill. They are suitably qualified people to give the certificates that they gave. The certificates that will be validated retrospectively do not make something legal that was previously illegal. The certificates involved a rebuttable presumption with regard to the matters that they contained. The evidence is of the same quality as it would have been if the appointments had been correctly made, notwithstanding the machinery-of-government changes.

That is a classic case of legislation correcting an error that had no substantive effect on the outcomes in the particular cases. Although it is quite controversial to make something illegal retrospectively that was previously legal, it does not fall within that category at all. All that it is impacting on are certificates which were rebuttable if there was any issue with their substance, and ensuring that convictions secured by reason of certificates that were provided by people with appropriate expertise are legally valid. On that basis, the Opposition supports the bill, which picks up and corrects a technical error.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 1.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the committees take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

### *Committees*

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** I move:

That reports of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 1/58* and *Legislation Review Digest No. 2/58* be considered together.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the House take note of the reports.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:00):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as the chair of the Legislation Review Committee for the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. The committee tabled its first and second digests of this Parliament yesterday. Since the last meeting of the Legislation Review Committee in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament, the committee has examined 36 bills and 241 regulations. Of these, the committee commented on 22 bills and reported on nine regulations. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced in Parliament and all regulations subject to disallowance against a set of issues set out in the Legislation Review Act 1987. The committee's scrutiny of legislation is intended to inform members and the community about the potential impacts of legislation on personal rights and liberties, and whether they enable the inappropriate use of government or legislative power.

I draw to the attention of the House some of the key issues raised in the first and second digests. The Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 addresses concerns about the validity of appointments of people able to issue certificates of analysis of plant materials or substances, which were caused by the Act's references to an outdated department name. The certificates produced by appointed individuals may be key to certain convictions for drug offences, and, if the appointments are deemed invalid, the convictions could be challenged. To address this issue, the bill validates appointments made by the subsequent departments. However, it further allows the regulations to prescribe a person who may appoint these individuals. The committee recognised that the bill attempts to avoid similar problems in the future by delegating this function to the regulations, which allows for flexibility. However, because the certificates issued by appointed persons can be used as *prima facie* evidence in trials for certain drug offences, this may defer a wide power to regulations. As regulations do not undergo the same level of parliamentary oversight as primary legislation, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for consideration.

The Crimes Amendment (Breaking and Entering) Bill 2023 aims to reform and modernise domestic violence laws in response to a recent High Court decision that called for changes in the language of offences involving breaking and entering. In New South Wales, breaking and entering is a common element of aggravated offences that carry higher maximum penalties. The bill replaces "break and enter" with "entry without consent" across numerous offences in the Crimes Act, effectively removing the requirement of unlawful trespass and shifts the focus to the lack of consent. However, the committee noted that it is unclear from the bill what constitutes consent, or when or how it can be revoked. It noted that, without defining these things, it is unclear how the provisions of the bill will operate, and the bill may have an unintentionally broad application. This lack of clarity is especially relevant where the accused may have a lawful right to enter or remain in a home where an entering without consent offence occurs. For these reasons, the committee has also referred this matter to Parliament for its consideration.

The Government Advertising Amendment (Exemptions) Regulation 2022 updated the exemptions for government advertising campaigns during the pre-election period. This included an exemption for the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade to conduct such campaigns for the purpose of promoting investment, trade or education in New South Wales. The committee considered that this regulation may not be within the intended objectives of its parent Act, the Government Advertising Act 2011. The Act restricts most government advertising campaigns during a pre-election period to ensure the election's independence. While there are exemptions to this restriction, they are usually limited to categories that would not be deemed political or contentious.

The committee was concerned by the broad wording of the exemption for the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, which had the potential to allow the department to conduct political advertising campaigns. The committee acknowledges that it was not able to meet before the disallowance period for this regulation had passed. Nevertheless, it has noted this matter for Parliament's consideration and intends to review the issue in further detail. I encourage everyone to read the full digests, which are available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digests and the secretariat for their support. I commend the digests to the House.

**Reports noted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Documents***SURVEILLANCE DEVICES AMENDMENT (ICAC) REGULATION 2023****Tabling**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:32):** By leave: I table the Surveillance Devices Amendment (ICAC) Regulation 2023. Part 2 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 establishes offences relating to the installation, use and maintenance of surveillance devices. In addition, part 2 prohibits the possession, publication or communication of a record of a private conversation or the carrying on of an activity knowing that it has been obtained by the use of a surveillance device in contravention of the Surveillance Devices Act.

On 9 August 2023 the Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Hon. John Hatzistergos, AM, wrote to the Premier, and copied in the Special Minister of State and me, as the Attorney General, indicating that the ICAC has obtained certain evidence which appears to be records of private conversations made by a third party. The chief commissioner advises that the records may have been made in contravention of part 2 of the Surveillance Devices Act and are of interest to an ongoing investigation. In his letter, the chief commissioner also advises that the ICAC wishes, or may wish, to lawfully obtain, possess, publish and communicate the recordings and reports of the recordings as part of its ongoing investigation.

I inform the House that the Governor, on the recommendation of the Executive Council, has made a time-limited regulation amending the Surveillance Devices Regulation 2022 by inserting a new section 6A, providing that the ICAC is exempt from part 2 of the Surveillance Devices Act in relation to obtaining, possessing or communicating a relevant recording obtained by the use of a surveillance device in contravention of part 2 of the Surveillance Devices Act by a person other than the ICAC or an officer of the ICAC. The effect of the amendment will be that the ICAC can make use of material that is created by third parties in contravention of the Surveillance Devices Act in the exercise of the ICAC's statutory functions. The Surveillance Devices Act will otherwise continue to apply to the ICAC and its officers, including the requirement to apply for a surveillance device warrant to use a surveillance device in the ICAC's investigations. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

The regulation provides that if the ICAC relies on the proposed exemption in the course of conducting an investigation, the ICAC will be required to include a statement to that effect in any report of the investigation made under the ICAC Act. Section 59 (2) of the Surveillance Devices Act provides that the regulations may, subject to compliance with any specified conditions, exempt certain specified persons from any or all provisions of the Act. Section 59 (3) of the Surveillance Devices Act provides that any regulation made for the purposes of section 59 (2) takes effect on and from the date of expiry of the period during which either House of Parliament may, under section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987, disallow the regulation. The regulation has been made and will be published on the NSW Legislation website today. Notice of the making of the regulation is accordingly being laid before each House of Parliament. The section to be inserted by the regulation will be repealed at the end of 31 December 2025.

I have chosen to make this statement to the House today—and not to simply allow the regulation to appear unannounced in the *Government Gazette* on Friday—as a courtesy to members, to expressly alert them to the fact that the regulation has been made. I understand that the Hon. John Graham has made, or will shortly make, a similar statement in the Legislative Council, also as a courtesy to the members of that place. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business for our productive conversation in respect of this issue about an hour ago.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:41):** By leave: I do not seek to make any detailed contribution on the matter. I thank the Attorney General for his briefing a short while ago. We will consider his statement and the regulation. I very much appreciate him providing me with advance notice of the statement, informing me of the regulation that is already publicly available, I believe, and giving me some background as to what has given rise to it.

*Bills***DRUG MISUSE AND TRAFFICKING AMENDMENT (APPOINTED PERSONS) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:41):** As Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, I speak in support of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. My electorate of Prospect includes four major police area commands: Parramatta, Cumberland, Blacktown and Fairfield. I thank

the Attorney General for his work in preparing the bill and his collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust.

The Minns Labor Government is acting to support the significant workload of the NSW Police Force in monitoring, investigating and prosecuting drug offences by ensuring that convictions under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 [DMT Act] remain unchallenged. The bill seeks to streamline the function of appointing experts who provide evidentiary certificates to identify the type and mass of cannabis leaf and plants. Evidentiary certificates are used by police prosecutors and the NSW Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in court prosecutions against offenders charged with minor and major drug and drug-related criminal offences.

Illicit substances continue to plague New South Wales, with cannabis recorded as the most widely consumed prohibited drug. Unfortunately, our Western Sydney community is significantly impacted by the sale and use of illicit drugs, with some 4,239 incidents of use or possession of illicit substances recorded throughout 2022 in the region. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has reported that almost half of those offences related to cannabis. It is a clear issue for our community, and the Government wholeheartedly supports New South Wales law enforcement as they fight the problem. Last month a NSW Police Force investigation saw three men arrested over an alleged 80 kilograms of cannabis seized from a drug lab.

Another two men were charged earlier this month in the Western Sydney region when police seized prohibited drugs believed to be cannabis during raids by officers of Task Force Magnus. With dedicated efforts from the NSW Police Force, the Crime Commission and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to find and prosecute illicit drug use, it is essential that the New South Wales legislative framework remain accurate and timely. It must ensure that law enforcement can identify and quantify illicit substances to the evidentiary standard required to convict before the Local Court, District Court and Supreme Court. Accordingly, the proposed amendment to the DMT Act is extremely necessary.

The Drug Misuse and Trafficking (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 will amend the DMT Act to ensure consistency in the appointment of persons with capacity to give evidentiary certificates in legal proceedings, regardless of intermittent machinery-of-government changes. The bill addresses an issue highlighted by the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Department of Communities and Justice, regarding the validity of appointments. In any legal proceedings under the DMT Act, the certificate of analysis gives prima facie evidence of the identification of any substance or plant. For the certificate to be admissible, it must be given by a suitably qualified person appointed under the Act.

Currently section 43 (5) of the Act confers the function of appointing suitably qualified persons on the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. However, as a result of changes to the process, current appointments made under this provision are invalid. This is a serious concern, especially if the evidence relied upon is challenged and found inadmissible due to a technical oversight by the Government. The NSW Police Force work to safeguard our communities from the effects of illicit drug use and distribution. The amendment proposed by the bill is essential to support their tireless efforts and ensure that previous and future convictions are not open to challenge.

Schedule 1 [1] to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 will amend section 43 (5) of the DMT Act to vest the function of appointing persons to give evidentiary certificates in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The key reason for such a reform is that, as an independently governed trust, it is less likely than a department of the public service to be impacted by changes. The Executive Director has been selected as the authorised person in which to vest appointment powers, in recognition of the trust's role in training appointed persons and its neutrality from machinery-of-government changes. As a further safeguard, the bill provides for a regulation-making power to prescribe a person as someone with the capacity to make appointments under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act. The regulation-making power offers a catch-all to facilitate future changes that may necessarily arise in the allocation of this important function to an appropriate person.

Schedule 1 [6] to the bill will also retrospectively validate appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act and certificates under section 43. Importantly, there is no defect in the quality of analysis or training of a person appointed under section 43 of the Act, merely a technical error that has been identified following changes in procedure and departmental reporting. The Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Regional NSW and Independent Planning Commission) Order 2020 created the Department of Regional NSW, transferring staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. During this transition, changes were not implemented to correct the outdated reference to section 43 (5) to align with the newly formed department. Effectively, the power to make appointments under section 43 (5) remained the responsibility of a role no longer held by any person. As a result, appointments made post this change are invalid, leaving convictions liable to challenge.

The National Herbarium of NSW is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. Since 1988, the National Herbarium of NSW has offered training to enable experts to identify substances under section 43 of the DMT Act. Appointments under this provision may only be made once a person has completed the training to botanically identify cannabis plant and leaf. Members of the NSW Police Force undertake this training so they can analyse substances seized and present certificates as evidence before a court of the identity, quantity and mass of cannabis. Training from the National Herbarium of NSW will remain the key accreditation to appoint a person to give a certificate under section 43. However, the bill will amend the process by which completion of training is assessed. Previously, secretaries of government departments relied on certification by the Royal Botanic Gardens Trust to assess that a person could botanically identify the required substances. The bill will streamline the appointment process by enabling the trust itself to assess and appoint a trained individual. After certifying a person has completed training, the trust will be empowered to execute an instrument of appointment under section 43 of the DMT Act.

Generally, when an Act of Parliament delegates a function to a specific role, that function may be exercised only by the person holding that role. If the function is carried out by another person, it is considered to have been improperly exercised and of no effect. An invalid exercise of a legislative function will flow through to a subsequent Act. Changes in public departments do not account for the outdated reference to the department secretary. Therefore, certificates issued by a person appointed under section 43 (5), without the authority to make that appointment, will be of no effect. Concerningly, convictions reliant on a certificate of evidence attesting identification of cannabis become vulnerable to challenge or may be overturned by a court of law. [*Extension of time*]

To resolve this, issue, the bill introduces a retrospective amendment to deem the appointment and issue of certificates legally valid, regardless that it may not have been made in accordance with the then law. Parliament has power to make retrospective laws, yet seldom exercises this power in awareness of the potential inequities retrospective laws will carry. The law is tasked to constantly evolve with standards of the society it serves. Despite those concerns, retrospective laws can be justified in circumstances for the common good. This bill exemplifies a relevant circumstance for a retrospective amendment. The appointments made under section 43 of the DMT Act are in good faith and certificates of evidence were issued as if the persons giving these were validly appointed. All the persons purportedly appointed under section 43 following the machinery-of-government changes were fully trained to the recognised standard by the National Herbarium of NSW. This standard of training has been consistent since 1988 and will continue going forward.

The capacity of the persons appointed, nor their suitability to analyse substances to give evidentiary certificates, is not in question. Further, given the issue will not result in substantial unfairness to persons convicted of a drug offence, where a section 43 certificate formed part of the evidence against them, a retrospective amendment is justified on this occasion. Evidentiary certificates give prima facie evidence of the identity and quantity of a substance and are thus important to a conviction under the DMT Act. Without changes to the framework to ensure integrity of these certificates, there is a risk that previous and future convictions made under an unamended section 43 (5) may be liable to challenge. The achievement of efficient and just outcomes across all courts is reliant on a fair application of the rules of evidence. To support the committed practitioners in courts and our hardworking NSW Police Force, this bill will ensure future evidentiary certificates and those issued since the 2020 machinery-of-government changes are valid and enforceable.

Whilst the bill will invoke a technical change in the authority to appoint, it is key to remember that the persons issuing the certificate will remain consistent and held to the same standards of training. A person appointed under the Act will still have to acquire botanic accreditations, as administered by the National Herbarium of NSW. The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, as the chief executive officer of the agency holding responsibility for training and accreditation of persons with such expertise, is the appropriate public officer to hold authority for such appointments. The Minns Labor Government is committed to fair, efficient and just outcomes in all legal proceedings.

As a government, we are wholly committed to ensuring processes function to support the impartial role of the court system in New South Wales. With credibility of the person giving an expert certificate being crucial to the certificate's admissibility before a court, this bill will reduce the impact of future departmental changes. By streamlining the appointment of persons to give certificates under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act, the submission of expert evidence will be unencumbered by procedural changes to prioritise the delivery of accurate and credible analysis certificates.

With the Drug Court of New South Wales in the Sydney CBD set to expand sitting days to a full-time capacity from September, it is more important than ever to ensure legislation offers stable processes to prosecute drug offences and to support rehabilitation of offenders. The bill will resolve the issue of invalid appointments under section 43 (5), safeguard previous convictions handed down, and reduce potential recurrent impacts from



future machinery-of-government changes. For those reasons, and the surety that this will not retrospectively challenge objectives of the DMT Act, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:56):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 and acknowledge that Ms Sue Higginson, MLC, in the other place is our portfolio holder. We oppose the bill and will be amending it in the upper House. The bill deals with an administrative inconsistency relating to the appointment of persons who provide drug certificates. The power to appoint is with a department that no longer exists, so the power is being transferred to the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust rather than a government department or other persons determined in the regulations. All that seems pretty reasonable. However, it is the retrospectivity of this bill with which we take umbrage and which we would like to amend.

The bill is largely administrative in nature, dealing with departmental changes that have resulted in invalidity of a person appointed to test and give evidentiary certificates, a drug certificate, when a person is being tried for drug misuse and trafficking—the person who shows that that substance is in fact illicit and provides that necessary certification. The Act at the moment gives the appointment of a suitably qualified person for the purpose of issuing a section 43 (4) certificate upon the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. This department has not existed since 2020. As I mentioned, there is a retrospective element to the bill that seeks to deal with all certificates issued since the department was dispersed—since 2020—due to concern that validity of the certificates issued since this occurred would be questioned as they were not compliant with the Act and trials that were based on drug certificate evidence could be subject to appeal. The Legislation Review Committee digest notes "inappropriately delegates legislative powers under section 8A (1) (b) (iv) of the Legislation Review Act".

The bill inserts section 43 (5) (b) into the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, which allows a person prescribed by the regulations to appoint individuals who may issue certificates for the result of the analysis of a plant or substance. That certificate can be used in any legal proceeding under the Act as prima facie evidence of the identity or quantity or mass of the plant or substance analysed. This certificate is accepted as prima facie evidence under section 43 of the Act, which removes a need for the appointed certificate issuer to demonstrate their relevant expertise. That may shift the burden onto a defendant to contest their evidence and relieve the prosecution of meeting the requirements for expert evidence under the Evidence Act 1995. Given that potential impact on defendants, allowing regulations to prescribe who can appoint relevant certificate issuers may amount to a wide power of delegation. The Greens will seek to redress that matter in the other place. That is particularly the case for defendants charged with indictable offences that carry custodial penalties under the Act.

The committee went on to acknowledge that allowing regulations to prescribe who can appoint relevant certificate issuers builds flexibility into the scheme. However, it would prefer those provisions to have been drafted with more specificity. In addition, the review said that they should be included in the primary legislation rather than the regulations to ensure an appropriate level of parliamentary oversight. For those reasons, the committee referred the matter to the Parliament for its consideration. The Greens' proposed amendments in the other place will delete schedule 1 [1] and [6].

The Greens believe those who have been convicted with drug certificates that were not compliant with the Act should maintain their right of appeal. That noncompliance demonstrates the incompetence of the previous Government, and we challenge the new Government's attempts to retrospectively change the validity of evidence over the past three years. Appointment powers should be subject to oversight by the Parliament; thus The Greens' amendments will seek to remove the power of appointment from the regulation. The Greens' amendments also remove retrospectivity so that appeal rights are maintained for those convicted in the past three years. The Greens do not support the bill in its current form.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:01):** I contribute to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. In a society where the dynamics of drug use and trafficking are constantly evolving, the need for precise and valid evidentiary procedures within our legal system cannot be overstated. The amendment to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 is a necessary and practical step towards ensuring the integrity of legal proceedings involving cannabis-related cases.

By vesting the authority to appoint individuals to issue evidentiary certificates in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, the bill addresses critical concerns arising from past legislative ambiguities and machinery-of-government changes. Section 43 (5) of the Act empowers the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development to appoint individuals to provide certificates of analysis in legal proceedings pertaining to cannabis identity and quantity. However, the machinery-of-government changes and the creation of the Department of Regional NSW in 2020 introduced unforeseen challenges. The outdated reference to the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development failed to encompass the newly established department, rendering appointments made under section 43 (5) invalid. That legal

conundrum raises serious questions about the validity of convictions in cases where evidentiary certificates were provided by improperly appointed individuals.

The issue at hand became apparent following the machinery-of-government changes in 2020, specifically through the Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Regional NSW and Independent Planning Commission) Order 2020. That administrative order established the Department of Regional NSW and facilitated the transfer of staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to the newly formed department. But the necessary adjustments to account for those changes in nomenclature and structure were not made, leading to a situation where the reference to the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development remained in the legislation, meaning the appointments made under section 43 (5) of the Act were entirely invalid. The consequences of that oversight have the capacity to be profound and disastrous. Convictions that relied on certificates of evidence issued by individuals purportedly appointed under section 43 (5) by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW could potentially be deemed illegitimate and subject to legal challenges.

The bill is not related to the debate around current laws pertaining to the use of cannabis. This situation jeopardises community confidence in the legal system and in the efforts of investigating forces in relevant cases; therefore, the urgency to rectify the situation is paramount. The bill seeks to rectify the issue by transferring the function of the appointment of individuals to issue evidentiary certificates to the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The rationale behind selecting that office lies in its inherent stability and insulation from the fluctuations caused by machinery-of-government changes. Unlike a public service secretary, the executive director's role is enshrined in statute, thus ensuring a reliable and consistent approach to appointments. That strategic decision not only addresses the immediate problem but also futureproofs the process against similar challenges.

The retrospective validation of appointments made under section 43 (5) before the bill's enactment is important. That step is crucial for upholding the integrity of previous convictions under the Act. It protects individuals who were tried and convicted based on evidence provided by professionals who met the required qualifications. While technical flaws might have existed due to improper appointments, the retrospective validation ensures that the validity of those convictions is maintained, preventing potential chaos within the legal system and maintaining public confidence.

Furthermore, the bill reinforces the expertise and credibility of the appointment process by requiring individuals providing evidentiary certificates to undergo training at the National Herbarium of NSW—a component of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. That ensures the suitability of appointees and underlines the appropriateness of entrusting the appointment function to the executive director of the trust. Centralising the different authorities within the appointment process provides stability, consistency and efficiency.

The consultation process leading up to this amending bill reflects our Government's commitment to transparency and collaboration. The involvement of key entities such as the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust highlights the comprehensive approach taken in drafting the bill. That inclusive approach guarantees that the perspectives of law enforcement, government agencies and botanical experts are considered, solidifying the quality and the effectiveness of the proposed amendments.

I commend the Attorney General for identifying the problem and taking action by introducing what is clearly a crucial amendment. The response to the machinery-of-government changes, and the resulting challenges, is a testament to the Attorney General's unwavering determination to clean up the loopholes that have emerged as a result of an abrogation of responsibility by the previous Government and address the potential legal ambiguities caused because of that. I am equally proud to be a part of a government that has demonstrated leadership in modernising our judicial laws and bolstering the public's trust and confidence in our judicial system. By proactively identifying and addressing issues that have the potential to undermine the legal process, our Government showcases its commitment to justice, fairness and accountability.

The bill not only rectifies a technical oversight but also reinforces the principle that no stone will be left unturned in our pursuit of the truth in legal matters. Its introduction reflects our Government's responsiveness to the evolving dynamics of law and order in our State. Our dedication to thorough consultation with key stakeholders underscores our commitment to inclusive governance. As an advocate for my community in this place, I am proud to be a part of this Government's move to reinforce such an important piece of legislation.

The proposed amendment to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 is a legislative response to a complex and evolving challenge and a testament to the commitment of our Government to uphold justice and public safety. By rectifying past ambiguities and engaging with key stakeholders, the bill reinforces the integrity of our legal system and ensures the wellbeing of our communities. The decision to entrust the appointment function to the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is a strategic move that not

only addresses immediate concerns but also establishes a stable and credible framework for the future. As members of this place, it is our duty to support measures that enhance the effectiveness of our justice system and contribute to the overall welfare of our communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:09):** I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985—otherwise abbreviated as the DMT Act, which is how I will refer to it for the remainder of my contribution. The bill amends the DMT Act 1985 to vest the function of appointing persons to give evidentiary certificates under section 43 (5) of Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust or a person prescribed by regulation, and retrospectively validates appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act prior to the passage of the bill.

By way of background, section 43 (5) of the DMT Act gives the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development power to appoint persons to give certificates of analysis in legal proceedings about the identity, quantity or mass of cannabis analysed by that person. A number of machinery-of-government changes impacted the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, which is very much the motivation of the bill. I take the opportunity to endorse and repeat the commendation by my colleague the member for Riverstone of the Attorney General and those on this side of the House who are proactively pursuing these amendments, which should have been made quite some time ago. Like a lot of bills passed in this place, the bill addresses basic machinery-of-government changes. While not as shiny as many other bills, they are probably some of the most important pieces of legislation that we pass as members of the Legislative Assembly.

Relevantly, in 2020 the Department of Regional NSW was created, but changes were not made to enable the outdated reference to the "Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development" in section 43 (5) of the Act to be construed as the "Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW". As a result, appointments of persons under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW have not been validly made. The amendments fix that. Convictions of persons under the DMT Act that rely on certificates of evidence about the identity and quantity or mass of cannabis plant or cannabis leaf given by persons who were invalidly appointed may be unsafe and liable to challenge. Conferring the appointment function on a different secretary of a public service department risks the same issue arising again in future machinery-of-government changes.

The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust under section 13 of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980 is a statutory role that is less likely to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes than the secretary of a department. Appointments under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act are only made once a person has been trained to botanically identify cannabis plants by the National Herbarium of NSW, which is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. Accordingly, the formal appointment function will be conferred on the executive director of the trust, who can make the appointment at the same time as certifying that the appointed person has completed the requisite training.

Schedule 1 [1] to the bill amends section 43 (5) of the DMT Act to vest the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust or a person prescribed by the regulations. Schedule 1 [6] to the bill retrospectively validates appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act and evidentiary certificates given under section 43 of the Act prior to the passage of the bill. Schedule 1, items [2] to [5] of the bill are technical amendments to insert part headings into schedule 3 to the Act. Those have been recommended by the Parliamentary Counsel. Stakeholder consultation led to the establishment of the bill and the work of the Attorney General. The NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust have been consulted on the amendments.

I will speak more specifically to some of the questions around the bill. Why have appointments under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act not been validly made? The issue arose following machinery-of-government changes in 2020. The Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Regional NSW and Independent Planning Commission) Order 2020 created the Department of Regional NSW and transferred certain staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to the Department of Regional NSW. I am advised that changes were not made to enable the outdated reference to the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development in section 43 (5) of the Act to be construed as the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW.

I am also advised that, as a result, the power to make appointments under section 43 (5) remained with the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. That means that appointments of persons under section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW have been invalid. Convictions of persons under the Act that rely on certificates of evidence about

the identity and quantity or mass of cannabis plant or cannabis leaf given by persons who were appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW may be unsafe and liable to challenge under law.

How was the issue of the validity of the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act identified? In 2023 the Department of Regional NSW and the NSW Police Force identified an issue arising following machinery-of-government changes in 2020. That impacted on the validity of appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act 1985. On receiving advice about the issue, the New South Wales Government has acted swiftly to develop and bring forward legislative amendments to address that fact and the matters raised by the NSW Police Force and the Department of Regional NSW. The Department of Communities and Justice worked with the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW, and the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust to develop the legislative amendments by request.

The bill vests the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust has been selected for that role because the trust is responsible for delivering training in analysing cannabis and the executive director role is less likely to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes. Training in botanically identifying cannabis plant and leaf for the purposes of appointments under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act 1985 is delivered by the National Herbarium of NSW, which is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The National Herbarium of NSW has been delivering this training since section 43 (5) was enacted in 1988. [*Extension of time*]

I appreciate the member for Tweed's interest and support over a very long time.

**Mr Geoff Provost:** You could bring people down from my electorate and they could identify marijuana plants straightaway.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I note the member for Tweed's interjection, and I appreciate his support and strong interest in this field. I acknowledge that members opposite are not opposing these reforms. They are working with the Government for these sensible changes that they know are required and have been requested by the Department of Regional NSW and the Police Force. We did much the same in opposition when there were matters of public interest for which legislative change was required. The most important thing is that we worked together to put those changes in place to ensure that legislative amendments were fit for purpose. That is precisely what the bill will do.

Appointments of persons under section 43 (5) of the Act are only made after a person has been trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to botanically identify cannabis plant and cannabis leaf. Members of staff of the NSW Police Force undertake this training to enable the Police Force to analyse cannabis plant and cannabis leaf seized as part of law enforcement operations and present certificate evidence to a court of the identity, quantity or mass of the cannabis under section 43 of the Act. When the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust certifies that a person has completed the National Herbarium training, that documentation forms the basis for a decision to appoint the person under section 43 (5) of the Act to give evidentiary certificates. Secretaries to the government departments who have held the function of section 43 (5) of the DMT Act have relied on the trust certification of persons trained in identifying plants to make appointments.

The bill could allocate the function to the secretary of a public service department, as has happened since it was introduced in 1988. However, this issue has highlighted the impact that frequent machinery-of-government changes have on the legal capacity of secretaries of departments to make valid appointments under section 43 (5) of the Act. The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is an office established under section 13 of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980. Further, the executive director of the trust is less likely than a department of the public service to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes.

Why is the bill validating prior appointments made by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW under section 43 of the DMT Act? The bill is retrospectively validating prior appointments because failure to do so will mean that convictions for drug offences under the DMT Act, which rely on certificates of evidence issued by persons purportedly appointed under section 43 (5) of the Act, may be unsafe and liable to challenge, as I previously stated. Section 43 (5) confers the function of making appointments to the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. In 2017 that department was renamed the Department of Industry, and in 2019 the Department of Industry was abolished by the Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Public Service Agencies) Order 2019. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment was established by the same order, which also provided, subject to the order, the transfer of staff from the Department of Industry to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and provided that references to the Department of Industry were to be construed as references to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House. I commend the Attorney General and the Government for taking proactive steps to have this matter addressed as quickly as possible, as requested by the department and our Police Force. I also again acknowledge that the Opposition does not oppose the bill. Why? Because they know that these are sensible machinery-of-government changes that have been requested by the NSW Police Force and the relevant department.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:24):** I contribute to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. I compliment the member for Campbelltown on his great contribution. I take the words of the learned Attorney General in a media statement on Wednesday 2 August 2023, where he said:

The Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 resolves a technical error identified by the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Department of Communities and Justice to do with appointments of persons to give evidentiary certificates under s 43 of the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985*.

He went on to say:

The Bill amends who can appoint suitably qualified people to issue evidentiary certificates in relation to the identity and quantity or mass of cannabis plant or cannabis leaf.

Schedule 1 [1] to the bill seeks to amend section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to vest the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust or a person prescribed by the regulations. Through schedule 1 [6] we also seek to retrospectively validate appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act and evidentiary certificates given under section 43 of the Act prior to the passage of the bill. Finally, schedule 1 [2] to [5] to the bill are technical amendments to insert part headings into schedule 3 to the Act. Importantly, these amendments have been recommended by Parliamentary Counsel. People may ask why the bill is vesting the appointment function under section 43 (5) to the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. We could surely move it as part of the machinery-of-government changes and just swap it over. The reason is we do not want to run into the same issue we did previously.

I will give a bit of history of how we found ourselves in this situation. Some changes to the machinery of government way back specifically impacted the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. Most importantly, in 2020 the Department of Regional NSW was created but changes were not made to enable an outdated reference to the Secretary of the Department Industry, Skills and Regional Development. It was the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development who was previously issuing those certificates under the Act. If we were to move that to the Department of Regional NSW, there might be other machinery-of-government changes and we could find ourselves back here again.

We know that this Government has come into power after 12 years in opposition and is making some significant machinery-of-government changes. Most notably, last week we split apart the Department of Planning and Environment, and no doubt some other departments that have been mentioned will be affected through future changes. We have decided to vest the power within the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust because the trust is responsible for delivering training in analysing cannabis, and the executive director role is less likely to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes. We can move around various departments and rename them here and there, but it is less likely that we will make any significant changes to the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. Of course, that is where the training occurs.

Training to botanically identify cannabis plants and leaf for the purposes of appointments under section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act is delivered by the National Herbarium of NSW, which is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. That is where it happens, so that is where the power should live. For those wondering, the National Herbarium of NSW has been delivering this training since 1988. That was a significant year in the history of this country because it was the bicentennial. Those who are fans of pub trivia would know—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I thought it was your year of birth.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** No, I am a bit older than that. I am an eighties baby, but I will not give too much away at this point. One of the issues is the retrospectivity of the bill. Normally it is good governance to not introduce a bill that acts retrospectively, but there is an entirely valid and important reason as to why the bill needs to have some retrospectivity. That is because a failure to do so will mean that convictions for drug offences that rely on these certificates under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 could be open to challenge. The last thing we want is the hard work of our great NSW Police Force, police prosecutors and the courts to be wasted by having such offences challenged, effectively putting those who are now convicted drug dealers back on the streets through what is, in effect, a small technical issue with the bill. By making it retrospective, that issue is plugged

and means that everyone who has been appointed to issue those certificates is also retrospectively covered by the bill.

I make the point that there has been extensive consultation with the relevant bodies and relevant people. As I just mentioned, the NSW Police Force, which has done mighty work over the past several years to convict people under those offences, has been consulted, as has the Department of Regional NSW, which was initially created through the machinery-of-government changes that brought us to this issue. The executive director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is happy to take on this role at the point that the bill comes into effect. It is a sign that this Government is happy to back in our police and make sure that it does not unwittingly put people back out on the streets. I note that the bill has the support of the Opposition. We should get on with it, support the bill and congratulate the executive director on their new powers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (15:32):** I join my colleagues in speaking in support of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. It is an interesting little piece of legislation which raises some interesting sidelines which I think are quite useful. I was intrigued and pleased to hear that the Opposition is supporting the legislation. The shadow Minister made a generally informative and brief speech, but I did not hear him say anywhere in his speech, "Sorry that we got this wrong and that you have had to fix it up because we did not get it right in our consideration of the changes to the machinery of government." These things happen; I accept that. I accept that sometimes there are oversights in these processes. In this bill the Government is fixing an oversight that took place when the machinery-of-government changes were undertaken which meant that there is an issue of the identification of cannabis plants potentially not being undertaken by a person who is appropriately accredited.

I note The Greens' contribution to the debate. They raised a couple of important issues that need to be answered. I know that they will be answered in the other place, but I want to come back to those issues. Before I do, I want to talk about the legislation itself—there are a couple of interesting aspects to it—by way of a slight tangent. The people who are trained to undertake this work are trained and accredited by the Royal Botanic Gardens, which is very important. I understand that a lot of them work in various different places around the State, but a number of them are employed by Local Land Services [LLS].

Agronomists work around the State and have a huge degree of expertise on plants, including weeds and cannabis, as well as native plants and pastures. A lot of us from country areas who are familiar with the work that LLS does would not have thought about them doing that work. I think it is quite interesting that they might be called on to provide this sort of expert evidence to the police when they raid a crop and seek that assistance. I am sure all of us from country New South Wales would know of occasions where crops of cannabis have been found in our regions, and we probably had not thought much about who makes the legal identification that enables prosecution to occur. It is an interesting aspect of it.

In a lot of ways we are lucky that we have got that staff of agronomists and so on in regional and rural communities. It is very lucky that they survived the previous Government. I was a member in the other place during the early period of the previous Government when LLS was created by absolutely smashing the resources that used to be available for country and regional New South Wales when it came to things like agronomists. In fact, under the previous Government, 30 rural communities lost their agronomists as the previous Government went through a massive cost-cutting exercise that ended up in the abolition of Catchment Management Authorities.

Those organisations would have been incredibly useful in the work that they could do to implement the Basin Plan, which is up for public discussion at the moment because of changes that the Federal Government is proposing to make. Catchment management as part of land management is vitally important for our State. Catchment authorities, weeds authorities and so on have a range of government-funded positions. My colleagues would be interested to know—and I am sure the member for Cessnock is well aware of this—that network of experts of extension officers, agronomists and those sorts of things were put in place by Labor governments.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That we used to have.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** That we used to have. They were put in place by Labor governments. I think I said in 2014 that it was 60 years ago. It has been a few years since then, so it is getting close to 70 years ago. That was an independent, government-funded resource that was available to landholders and, interestingly, would have been available for this sort of work as well. But it was smashed by the cost-cutting put in place by the previous Government. At the time I certainly talked a bit about the implications of that sort of thing.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You did.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I thank the Opposition for acknowledging my active interest in this over time. It is something that I remember well. It is interesting to look at the way the links work and how important it is to have networks of people across New South Wales who can undertake independent work and be accredited for the sort

of important work that needs to stand up in a court of law on occasion. That is what the Government is doing with this bill. This legislation rectifies a fault that would have potentially enabled people to challenge their convictions on cannabis offences in court over the past few years since those machinery-of-government changes were made. I note that the Government and the Opposition acknowledged that it was an entirely reasonable aspect of retrospectivity because no-one at the time of those offences had any doubt whatsoever as to the validity of the identification of the cannabis that was made. That was not up for argument, because it had been made by people who were appropriately trained and were thought to have been appropriately accredited.

So I found the argument put forward by The Greens a little bit difficult to understand. I am sure that members would be interested to know that I probably personally agree with a lot of The Greens' positions on cannabis. I am quite liberal. I live next to the Australian Capital Territory, which has some fairly liberal decriminalisation laws on cannabis. I think they are effective. But you do not campaign for more liberal drug laws by seeking to embed a situation where people can challenge previous convictions on the basis of an error made in machinery-of-government changes that meant that people who thought they were accredited may not have been properly accredited. That is not the appropriate way to go about advocating for drug law reform or changes to the process. In my view, arguments that suggest that it is an opportunity to let a few people get off convictions for things is not the best way to go about advocating for drug law reform. So I reject that argument.

It is important that we give certainty to the work the police—who are operating under and enforcing the laws of the day, which we oblige them to do—have done. We need to back them up with the assurance that their hard work and that of prosecutors in bringing these actions in courts is not undone by a silly mistake, essentially, that is not consistent with the intention of the laws. If we want to then have a discussion about whether we should follow the Australian Capital Territory's lead and discuss with all the interested parties the prospects of decriminalisation of small quantities of cannabis, by all means, go out and do that. It is a legitimate, reasonable discussion. They have done that in the Australian Capital Territory. They have decriminalised small quantities of cannabis. There are specific amounts. People can grow up to two plants without being subject to criminal charges. It is not legal; it is only decriminalised. It is still a criminal offence to sell or grow large quantities. That is still punishable in the Australian Capital Territory.

It is a live debate. As I said, my personal views probably support decriminalisation. Let us not beat around the bush: I do support decriminalisation for small use. But we need to have a proper discussion about it with the community. We need to talk to the police and the police union about how they see that flowing through, whether they think that will make their job easier or harder, and how it flows through to people in terms of education about drug driving, which is a serious problem. Obviously, we cannot then let people think that it is okay to have any quantity of drugs in their systems when they are driving vehicles, and we cannot allow it to be something that encourages use to an unhealthy extent. [*Extension of time*]

It is worthy of community discussion and something we should engage in, but not by seeking to amend this legislation. That is what The Greens foreshadowed wanting to do in the upper House—effectively leaving in place an unintended loophole for people to fight to overturn their convictions in the courts by spending huge amounts of money on lawyers. That is not a legitimate way to go about it. Where does that end? We not only would be talking about people convicted for having personal possession of small amounts but also could be talking about people convicted for having large plantations. In my view and, I think, the majority of the community's view, that is not an acceptable way to deal with this issue. The Australian Capital Territory's somewhat more liberal laws on cannabis certainly have not led to the Monaro region having anywhere near the highest numbers of prosecutions for cannabis use or possession around the State.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** It is too cold.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** The member opposite suggests that it is too cold. In fact, unfortunately, proof would show that people can grow cannabis around our region. Some plantations have been found at times in areas around the Australian Capital Territory in New South Wales. I note that the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research stats for the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area show that 122 people in the year to March 2023 were convicted of the use or possession of cannabis. In the Snowy Monaro Regional Council area, there were 49. That is interesting when we consider that Snowy Monaro also has the resorts area, which might see more action, we might think.

**Mr David Mehan:** Stereotyping.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It could be stereotyping. That is true. That is possibly right, although I hasten to add I am an active user of those resorts—not the drugs—as a skier. I frequent the Snowy Mountains in the winter, and in the summer when mountain biking. I do not want to stereotype people. It shows that, even though we are next to the Australian Capital Territory, there has not been a huge uplift in prosecutions for use or possession of cannabis in our area. It is totally unreasonable to criminalise someone with cannabis for personal use. It puts them

into a justice system that can alter the course of their lives and make things quite negative for them. That is not particularly good. But we should make those changes only after we have discussed them with people directly involved in enforcement and the activities around it. That is not appropriate for this piece of legislation. It may be appropriate to raise those issues in the course of debate, as I have, but not to try to reject fixing a loophole and suggest that it is an inappropriate use of retrospectivity to justify it. I strongly disagree with those arguments.

It is an important piece of legislation that gives certainty. The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is a sensible person to put in charge of the responsibility for issuing those accreditations. I suspect that it would be a brave government that ever tried to abolish the Royal Botanic Gardens, so I am sure that position is safe. To the point made earlier about whether it is appropriate to have regulation-making power in the bill, I point out that the Parliament can reject regulations. Regulations are laid on the table and can be disallowed. So the power remains with the Parliament, but we are able to move on quickly without having to make a legislative change every time a new person needs to be appointed to this position. That is an eminently sensible way of going about it. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:47):** I contribute to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. I do not want to lengthen debate, but I felt it would be appropriate to contribute. The object of this bill is:

... to amend the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to—

- (a) provide that certain persons may appoint a person to give certificate evidence relating to the result of a plant or substance analysis, and
- (b) provide that appointments made before the commencement of the proposed Act are taken to be, and always to have been, validly made.

The bill fixes an existing problem in section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985: the power to appoint an expert to provide certificates in relation to plants, particularly cannabis, being conferred on an office that no longer exists. The bill fixes that problem by referring the powers to the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust and validating any appointments and evidentiary certificates made prior to commencement of the Act.

The growing of cannabis, particularly in my neck of the woods, has been an art for many years, even though it is illegal. There was great sadness in certain sections of the community when the HEMP Embassy at Nimbin, in the Lismore electorate, burned down a number of years ago. Admittedly, the firemen could not attend the scene for some time—there were some issues with that. But eventually the embassy burnt to the ground. Michael Balderstone is, I believe, the ambassador of the HEMP Embassy up our way. I believe that rebuilding is underway. There are plenty of experts in my area who could easily identify the plants, no less.

The bill tidies up an issue that arose from the machinery-of-government changes. It protects us against challenges to drug convictions on the grounds that certificates were signed by improperly appointed persons. The bill effects a small but necessary change. It is retrospective in operation. I know that we really do not like retrospective legislation here, but I think it is necessary for the protection of prior drug convictions. It does not adversely affect the rights of anyone convicted of drug-taking offences. It fixes the existing problem. Obviously, the Opposition will be supporting the bill. There is one thing I wanted to raise here. I think the newest party in the upper House—the free marijuana party, I think it is—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Legalise marijuana.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** The legalise marijuana party. I am sort of in two minds here. My electorate is probably one of the most elderly electorates, with around 30 per cent of the population over the age of 65. I know this is not contained in the legislation, but a lot of them have been taking medicinal cannabis. I understand that under the current testing regime for driving, whether you have had normal marijuana or medicinal cannabis, you will still fail that test. As technology increases, we should be able to amend that. Personally, I have seen a number of elderly people who have suffered chronic back pain, with arthritis and things like that. Their lives actually improve by 50 per cent, at least. It is a shame, with all the technology we have got out there, that we do not place a little bit more emphasis on that. I am not promoting the use of marijuana, but I think that medicinal cannabis has changed people's lives. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House. I stand proud to support the Government in its proactive cleaning up of the mess of the past 12 years.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I apologise to members in the Chamber. I am not very good at poker faces. I did get some laughs, in the nicest way, out of listening to the member for Tweed.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You are very well respected, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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



**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:52):** I, too, recognise the good nature and good spirit that has been present in the House as we worked through this particular piece of legislation. I contribute to debate on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023. For those people out there who might want a technical explanation of what this is going to do and how it is going to work, I suggest you read other people's speeches because that is not what I am going to do. In essence, we had government departments changing their name, changing their name and changing their name again. Sometimes that means that laws have to change because a person's title or the name of their position or role has changed.

During 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, there were changes, changes, changes to some departments. Unfortunately there was a tiny little line in one of the pieces of legislation that did not get changed at the same time. In really simple terms, that meant that under that piece of legislation, the person who could appoint, name, identify or put onto the list properly qualified and trained people who could identify a cannabis plant and a cannabis leaf—which, in essence, is most of our Police Force, if not all of it—was not able to properly authorise the list. That meant that for a couple of years, as people were being charged with offences around cannabis possession, cultivation and growth, and the qualified and trained individuals were assessing and recording the product, and then that statement was being presented in court, there was a little loophole in the legislation.

But, to quote *The Castle*, there was no loophole in "the vibe" or the intent. The purpose and the meaning of the legislation was exactly as was previously prescribed. The vibe of who would appoint and authorise those people was exactly as intended. The qualifications and the skills of the people doing that work were exactly as they were the day before, the day after, yesterday, today and tomorrow. It was the same qualification right across the board. There is no change here to the law of what is lawful and unlawful around the possession, growth and cultivation of cannabis. There is no change to the vibe or the intent of what was intended by those laws. It was simply that, when the name of one department got changed to a different name, a single line in a piece of legislation did not get changed at that time.

It raises a question, where people have been charged with possession, cultivation or production of cannabis over the past couple of years and, ultimately, their charges have gone to court, whether or not the paperwork was correct and true. To that end, this particular piece of legislation is going to do something that normally I would stamp my feet and protest against, which is to make a retrospective announcement that the vibe was the same. Although the law had that one missing little phrase or word, those people were properly trained. They were properly qualified, and the conduct and behaviour of the person with the cannabis or growing the cannabis or supplying the cannabis was still operating outside the law.

I hope that, in this instance, members of this House and the other House can comfort themselves that the intentions of all the laws of New South Wales are consistent and that the retrospective nature of this particular piece of legislation can be accepted and agreed to. I appreciate that just a moment ago my good friend the member for Ballina made a contribution saying that The Greens would seek to amend the bill in the upper House. I understand that. But we are not changing the vibe of any law here.

If there was a street sign on my street that said it was a 60-kilometre zone and at some stage someone realised the font was the wrong size, so all those people who got charged with going more than 60 kilometres per hour could question their crime in court, the vibe of the speed sign was that it is a 60 zone. If we were in this place saying that it was 60 but we are going to change it to 50, and then we are going to go back through the videotape and find all those people who were doing 55 or 56 or 57, I would have a massive problem with retrospectivity in that instance. But if it was 60 and there was something minutely wrong with the sign and it was changed to still be 60, and no-one who did less than 60 was ever affected, then I would accept the retrospectivity of that. That retrospectivity, in essence, is a big part of this particular bill.

It is unusual and it is unfortunate, but it is important that we get this piece of legislation up and running. It is important that we get it through all parts of the Parliament and we let our police get back to doing their work. It is important that we let the law stand as it was intended, under the same vibe, the same purpose and the same intent as it previously was, and that we get this tidied up. Let us face it: Us good, them bad. We had 12 years of those opposite being a bad government and 12 years of us being a good opposition, and now we are the Government and we are going to fix the mess. We are going to fix the mess with regard to the budget. We are going to fix the mess with regard to laws. We are going to fix the mess with regard to the teacher crisis and the health worker crisis. We are going to do all of that, because we have to fix the mess.

I am not even going to call this particular law or bill a mess. It would be difficult for legislation to keep up with the many changes in the departmental regimes over the last couple of years of that sad, sorry Government that was on its way out. I had my office ringing various departments and Ministers' offices saying, "Hey, we have this constituent issue and we think it's yours. Is it yours?" The response we would get was, "I don't know. Since the last change, we're not really sure. We'll have to find out and let you know."

That could sometimes take days. Then we would finally bed down whose responsibility certain things were and there would be another toss of the cards and candles up in the air. Down they would come, and we would have to go through that process again. This is one of the great problems, and one of my pet hates, about government departments and agencies. I sincerely cross my fingers and hope that the new Minns Labor Government is not guilty of the constant name-changing of departments.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** You renamed one the other day.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I take on board the interjection. In the early days of a new government there will be some renaming and structural changes, but I sincerely hope that, once we have done it, we can lock it in. So much time is wasted with people changing their email address and getting new business cards and letterheads printed. At the other end, all 500 of a person's contacts have to change the email address and the name and title on their contacts list. So much time is wasted. This is an important, simple piece of legislative change. It is going to be retrospective. In keeping with the contributions of some members before me, I think that at some time in the future, people will be reading *Hansard*—particularly my contributions, because they are always interesting—and they will wonder why this House was debating cannabis possession. They will be thinking, "What were they doing back then? Why was this a legal argument inside the Parliament of New South Wales?" But that is for the future. We are here today.

I commend the bill to the House. I commend the Attorney General, who I think is doing an outstanding job, for his wonderful work. I had a few questions about him coming into the role, but I think he has been superb. He has been at this lectern most days and, if he was being paid by the word, he would be the richest person in the Parliament. I applaud the Attorney General, and I appreciate that the NSW Police Force brought the issue to our attention. I appreciate the work of all of our police and law enforcement agencies. I say to people that the vibe of the law is that you are not supposed to have it—at the moment, in 2023—so don't have it. Then you won't have to worry about this law. Adios.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:01):** I speak in support of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023, and I will drill down into some of its technicalities. The bill is derived from section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, which confers a power on the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development to appoint suitably qualified persons to give certificates for the purposes of section 43. The power in section 43 (5) of the Act to appoint suitably qualified persons to give certificates for the purposes of section 43 was introduced by the Drug Misuse and Trafficking (Amendment) Act 1988. The amendment was an efficiency measure to increase the number of persons who could analyse cannabis plant or leaf to enable proceedings for cannabis offences to proceed without the prosecution having to call the analyst who analysed the cannabis plant to give evidence in court without threshold legal arguments about whether the analyst was validly appointed.

At the time of the 1988 amendments, section 43 of the Act only provided for an analyst employed by the New South Wales Government for the purposes of the Act, or an analyst as defined by the Therapeutic Goods and Cosmetics Act 1972, to analyse and provide evidentiary certificates of analysis about a substance. The second reading speech for the 1988 amendment bill stated that following the discovery of extensive cannabis plantations on the North Coast, a problem with an inadequate number of analysts to analyse substances for the purposes of the Act was identified. Agronomists trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to botanically identify cannabis plants were identified as suitable persons who could give certificates for the purposes of the Act, but only with respect to cannabis plants. The second reading speech stated that the involvement of those persons would be of great assistance to the police and the government analyst, both of whom faced a huge workload.

Accordingly, current subsections (3) and (4) were introduced into section 43 of the Act by the 1988 amending Act to authorise an appointed person to analyse a plant submitted to that person and give a certificate of the result of the analysis, and to provide that a certificate purporting to be signed by an appointed person be considered prima facie evidence of the identity of the plant analysed and the quantity or mass of that plant, where the plant identified is cannabis plant or cannabis leaf. The 1988 amendments conferred on the director-general of the then Department of Agriculture and Fisheries the power under section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act to appoint persons considered suitably qualified to conduct analysis and give certificates of such analysis for the purposes of proceedings under the Act.

The present situation has arisen not due to any defect in the quality of analysis of plant matter by a person purportedly appointed under section 43 (5) of the Act or any defect in their training, but because of an inadvertent technical error following a machinery-of-government change. Persons trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to botanically identify cannabis plants have been appointed under section 43 (5) as suitable persons to give evidentiary certificates since 1988, when the provision was introduced. That is still the case today. A person's training accreditation from the National Herbarium of NSW is the key documentation required to make these appointments.

All persons who have purportedly been appointed since the making of the Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Regional NSW and Independent Planning Commission) Order 2020 have been trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to botanically identify cannabis and were appointed on that basis. Accordingly, the New South Wales Government is introducing this bill to retrospectively validate the appointments of persons under section 43 (5) of the Act. Given the issue has arisen due to an inadvertent technical error, the Government considers that a retrospective amendment to address the issue is justified.

The bill will take steps to reduce the risk of future machinery-of-government changes inadvertently leading to invalid appointments by vesting the function of appointing persons to issue evidentiary certificates under section 43 (5) of the Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust or a person prescribed by regulation. The National Herbarium of NSW is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust and continues to deliver training on how to botanically identify cannabis plants. When the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust certifies that a person has completed the training, that documentation forms the basis for a decision by the secretary of the relevant department to appoint the person under section 43 (5) of the Act to give evidentiary certificates.

As the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is undertaking the critical steps of training and certifying that a person is suitably trained and qualified to botanically identify cannabis, the executive director of the botanic gardens has been identified as the appropriate person to undertake the appointment role under section 43 (5) of the Act. The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is an office established under section 13 of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980. As the chief executive officer of the agency with responsibility for training and accreditation of persons with botanical expertise, the executive director of the trust is an appropriate public officer to make such appointments.

The Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust is less likely than a secretary of a department to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes, as the trust is less likely to be abolished or merged with other government agencies by way of machinery-of-government changes than departments of the public service. In addition, as a further safeguard, the bill provides for a regulation-making power to enable regulations to prescribe a person as a person who may make appointments under section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to facilitate any future changes that may be necessary to ensure that this function is carried out.

As previously noted in this debate, this is a retrospective bill in order to enable the legislation to catch up with the name changes that have happened. It is important to acknowledge that there is some cleaning up involved in the bill, but there are also some safeguards added to make sure that this does not happen each time there is a name change. We need to put these positions in safe places so that they cannot be challenged and so that, when drug matters go to court, the identification of cannabis plants is not subject to any challenge based on the appointment of the person who has certified that determination.

The bill is retrospectively validating prior appointments because failure to do so will mean that convictions for drug offences under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act that rely on certificates of evidence issued by persons purportedly appointed under section 43 (5) of the Act may be unsafe and liable to challenge. It confers the function of making appointments on the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. In 2017 that department was renamed. The bill protects this position so that it is not subject to name changes in the future. For that reason, I support the bill.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:12):** The Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023 will amend the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, otherwise known as the DMT Act, to vest the function of appointing persons under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act in the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, or a person prescribed by regulation, and to retrospectively validate appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act prior to the passage of the bill. Section 43 (5) of the DMT Act provides that any appointed person analysing any plant submitted to the person may give a certificate of the result of the analysis. This section provides that in legal proceedings under the DMT Act the production of a certificate purporting to be signed by a person appointed under the section is prime facie evidence of, first, the identity of the plant analysed and, secondly, the quantity or mass of that plant, without proof of signature or appointment of the person appearing to have signed the certificate, but only if the plant is identified as cannabis plant or cannabis leaf.

This section of the DMT Act gives the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development power to appoint persons to give certificates of analysis under section 43. In 2017 the department's name was changed to the Department of Industry. In 2019 that department was abolished and some of its staff transferred to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment by the Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Public Service Agencies) Order 2019. References to the Department of Industry were also to be construed as a reference to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

The Administrative Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Regional NSW and Independent Planning Commission) Order 2020 created the Department of Regional NSW and transferred certain staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to the Department of Regional NSW. However, changes were not made to enable the updated reference to the "Secretary of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development" in section 43 (5) of the Act to be construed as a reference to the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW. As a result, appointments of persons under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act that were made by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW are invalid.

In 2023 the Department of Regional NSW and the NSW Police Force identified an issue arising out of machinery-of-government changes in 2020 that impact on the validity of those appointments. On receiving advice about this issue, the New South Wales Government has acted swiftly to develop and bring forward legislative amendments to address it. This is the core business of our work. Where there is a gap, we must act as legislators to fill it to ensure that no-one else is caught by it. Therefore, the Department of Communities and Justice worked with the NSW Police Force, the Department of Regional NSW and the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust to develop these legislative amendments.

A conviction for an offence under the DMT Act that relies on a certificate given by a person purportedly appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act may be unsafe and liable to challenge. Accordingly, the bill retrospectively provides that appointments made under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act were validly made. Given the frequency with which machinery-of-government changes occur, it would be prudent to vest the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act in an appropriate public officer who is unlikely to be impacted by future machinery-of-government changes. Accordingly, the bill will confer the power to make such appointments on the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust under the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980, or a person prescribed by regulation. Section 43 (5) of the DMT Act was enacted in 1988—it has been around for almost as long as I have been alive.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You are trying to make us all feel old.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** You are welcome, Minister. The section was enacted to enable persons trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to botanically identify cannabis plants to be appointed to give certificates under section 43 (4) of the DMT Act. The National Herbarium of NSW, which is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, continues to train persons to botanically identify cannabis plants for the purposes of the DMT Act. This training qualifies a person as suitable to be appointed for the purposes of section 43 of the DMT Act. The executive director of the trust is an appropriate person to make such appointments and is less likely to be impacted by machinery-of-government changes than a secretary of a public service department, as we have recently found.

It is in the public interest that convictions for drug offences that were validly and properly obtained should not be overturned on the basis of an error that occurred following a machinery-of-government change. It is also in the public interest that the appointment function in section 43 (5) of the DMT Act be vested in a position that is qualified to determine whether a person is a suitable person to provide certificate evidence about the identity and quantity or mass of cannabis plant or cannabis leaf and that is less likely to be impacted by future machinery-of-government changes.

As we have heard, only legislative amendments can rectify this issue, which is why it is important that we address it in this place. The bill will commence on assent. The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust will be responsible for appointing persons to give evidentiary certificates under section 43 (5) of the DMT Act. So far, many affected stakeholders have been consulted and their opinions sought in the development of this policy, including the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, the NSW Police Force and the Department of Regional NSW. This comprehensive consultation has ensured that further amendments need not be made. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:19):** In reply: I thank the following members for their contributions to debate: the members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Prospect, Ballina, Riverstone, Campbelltown, Leppington, Monaro, Tweed, Cessnock, Camden and Liverpool. I will briefly address some of the matters raised during debate. The member for Ballina raised the issues of delegating the appointment function under section 43 (5) of the Act by regulation and the retrospective impact of the bill.

The bill provides that the appointment function will be exercised by the Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. The executive director will exercise that function, not delegated persons. The Government considers that the inclusion of the regulation-making power to prescribe persons to make appointments under section 43 (5) of the Act is an appropriate safety mechanism to ensure that appointments may be made in the unlikely event that the executive director is not in a position to do so. That will ensure that there is

no gap in capacity for persons to make these appointments. Section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987 provides that both Houses of Parliament may disallow a regulation. This Parliament will therefore have power to scrutinise and monitor any regulation that prescribes a person to make appointments under section 43 (5) of the Act and to disallow such a regulation if it thinks that a prescribed person is not appropriate to make such appointments.

With respect to retrospectivity, as I explained in my second reading speech, the National Herbarium of NSW has been training persons to identify cannabis plants for the purposes of this legislation since 1988. A person's accreditation from the National Herbarium of NSW is the key documentation required to make the appointments. All persons who have purportedly been appointed since the making of the 2020 administrative order have been trained by the National Herbarium of NSW to identify cannabis plants and were appointed on that basis. The suitability of persons purportedly appointed to issue evidentiary certificates since the 2020 machinery-of-government changes is therefore not in question.

The reason there is a question about the validity of the certificates that support convictions of persons is the inadvertent technical issue resulting from the 2020 machinery-of-government change concerning the identity of the public servant who makes appointments under section 43 (5) of the Act. Given that the issue has arisen due to an inadvertent technical error, the Government considers that, on this occasion, a retrospective amendment to address the issue is justified. The bill will resolve the issue of invalid appointments made under section 43 (5) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 since 2020 and reduce the likelihood of the issue arising again following future machinery-of-government changes. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **ICAC AND LECC LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jo Haylen, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (16:24):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill proposes amendments to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, which I will refer to as the ICAC Act, and to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, which I will refer to as the LECC Act. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission are effective, strong and independent bodies. It is in the public interest that our integrity agencies are equipped with appropriate legislative frameworks that enable the efficient and effective exercise of their principal functions. The bill is a continuation of that commitment. In this speech I will deal with the provisions of the bill thematically for the benefit of members, including outlining the significant work done to make the case for the reforms contained in the bill.

Before turning to the substance of the proposals in the bill, I speak briefly about the commencement of its provisions. The bill will commence on the date of assent, except for item [2] of schedule 1, which will commence on the day that is three months after the date of assent. The delayed commencement for those specific provisions, which relate to time standards for the preparation of reports by the ICAC, is intended to allow the ICAC time to implement and comply with the amended provisions prior to them coming into effect. Schedule 1 to the bill makes amendments to the ICAC Act.

The balance of the bill seeks to implement Government responses to the recommendations of the Joint Statutory Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption—the ICAC Committee—in its reports entitled *Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*, released on 20 October 2022; and *Review of Aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*, released on 15 December 2022. The Government tabled its response to both reports on 28 June 2023. Additionally, the bill includes amendments to the ICAC Act and LECC Act that improve the administrative functioning of both

agencies. Both the ICAC and the LECC, and their inspectors, have been consulted on the bill and are supportive of its measures.

The bill inserts new subsections into section 57C of the ICAC Act. This amendment broadens the existing powers of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The ICAC inspector's principal functions are set out in section 57B of the ICAC Act. These include issuing reports and recommendations as a means of dealing with complaints of abuse of power, impropriety and misconduct about the ICAC, and dealing with conduct amounting to maladministration by the commission or officers of the commission. To assist the inspector in these functions, section 57C of the ICAC Act empowers the inspector to investigate any aspect of the ICAC's operations and conduct of the officers of the ICAC, and includes powers to require production of relevant information and documents.

The bill inserts into section 57C new powers of the inspector to require the ICAC to respond to any report or recommendation made by the inspector in exercising the functions under section 57B. Specifically, under this new provision the inspector has the power to require the ICAC to provide advice about whether it intends to implement the inspector's recommendation or report and, if not, the reasons for not doing so. If the inspector is not satisfied that the ICAC has duly and properly taken action in relation to the inspector's recommendation or report, the inspector must inform the ICAC of the grounds for this dissatisfaction and give the ICAC the opportunity to comment on this. If the inspector is still not satisfied, the inspector may make a report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament about the issue.

These new powers recognise the significance of the role of the inspector and create a more formal process for communication between the ICAC and the ICAC inspector. This process will provide enhanced transparency into these specific accountability mechanisms for the inspector overseeing the ICAC. It is noted that the Inspector of the LECC has similar powers. The new powers in section 57C give effect to a significant part of recommendation 3 of the ICAC Committee's report entitled *Review of Aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*. Recommendation 3 also recommended that the Government consider amending the ICAC Act to broaden the definition of "maladministration" under the ICAC Act and, therefore, broaden the scope of the inspector's jurisdiction so it is similar to that of the LECC inspector.

The bill does not implement that part of recommendation 3 relating to the definition of "maladministration". Currently, the Inspector of the LECC and the Inspector of the ICAC have similar powers to deal with maladministration through reports and recommendations. Under the ICAC Act, "maladministration" means conduct that involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory, or based wholly or partly on improper motives. This is very similar to the concept of "serious maladministration" under the LECC Act. Under the LECC Act, however, "maladministration" includes additional conduct that, although not unlawful, arises wholly or in part from a mistake of fact or law. In such cases, the LECC inspector is not empowered to remake a decision of the LECC, but they may return the matter to the LECC and recommend it be redetermined. This bill does not amend the ICAC Act definition of "maladministration" to include the concept of lawful conduct that arises from a mistake of fact or law.

The ICAC committee noted that this part of recommendation 3 was not addressed in detail by the committee through hearings or submissions, and recommended only that the Government consider this proposed amendment. There was no strong evidence base in the ICAC committee's report or in the submissions to that committee that there is a need to amend the powers of the inspector in this way. The Government is grateful to the committee for its work and recommendations. However, the Government is of the view that the current definition of "maladministration" in the ICAC Act is appropriate and suitable to both allow the office of the inspector to achieve its statutory functions and to support the ICAC's work in investigating and preventing serious and systemic corrupt conduct in New South Wales. The Government has consulted the Inspector and the Chief Commissioner of the ICAC on all aspects of this bill. Both support this approach to implementing the recommendation.

This bill inserts new section 74E into the ICAC Act. This section requires the ICAC to develop time standards for the release of its reports under section 74 and to report on its own performance against those time standards. Section 74 sets out the main circumstances under which ICAC is empowered or required to prepare a report. This includes in relation to an investigation, a matter in which there has been a public inquiry, or a matter that has been referred to the ICAC by Parliament. Currently, the ICAC must publish section 74 reports as soon as possible after the ICAC has concluded its involvement in the matter. The ICAC must also, pursuant to section 76 of the ICAC Act, publish details of the time interval between the conclusion of a public inquiry and the publication of the relevant report in its annual report. There is, however, no legislative requirement that the ICAC measure its own performance against time standards or explain reasons for any noncompliance with those standards. This bill changes that.

Requiring the ICAC to develop time standards for completing and releasing its reports is an important measure for increasing the transparency and public accountability of the ICAC's reporting functions. This amendment balances increased accountability of the ICAC with the capacity of the ICAC to work independently and flexibly to investigate, expose and prevent corruption involving or affecting public authorities and public officials. Under new section 74E, the ICAC is required to develop and publish on its website the time within which reports under section 74 are to be provided to Parliament. These time standards must include reporting time frames developed by the ICAC, how the ICAC will monitor the progress and preparation of the reports to ensure that they are provided in a timely way, and what action the ICAC will take if the time frames for a report are not met.

The Government recognises that the ICAC undertakes important and complex work, which can involve lengthy investigations. Crucially, the bill does not seek to legislate the time frames themselves. By allowing the ICAC to set its own time frames, the Government recognises that the ICAC is best placed to develop flexible standards that meet its investigative requirements. However, the Government equally recognises the community interest in increased transparency and accountability for the timeliness of investigations conducted by the ICAC. The Government understands that the ICAC's work regularly requires a level of confidentiality and secrecy in order to be effective. For this reason, new section 74E only requires ICAC to publish reasons for any noncompliance with the time standards at the time the relevant report is released and in its annual report. To require the ICAC to divulge this information earlier risks interfering with the confidentiality and integrity of the ICAC's investigations. The new section 74E time standards requirement gives effect to recommendation 1 of the ICAC committee's report entitled *Review of aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*.

The bill amends the current information protection provisions in sections 112 and 114 of the ICAC Act to better accommodate the welfare of witnesses before the ICAC. Currently, sections 112 (3) and 114 (3) of the ICAC Act allow a witness who is summonsed to appear and give evidence to the ICAC to disclose certain matters to a registered medical practitioner or registered psychologist. Such disclosures would, without these provisions, be prohibited under the ICAC Act. These information disclosure exceptions are central to ensuring the wellbeing of witnesses before the ICAC. On 23 February 2023 the ICAC inspector released a report entitled *Special Report 2023/01: Audit of the welfare of witnesses and other people involved in ICAC investigations*. The Government wishes to place on record its thanks to the Inspector of the ICAC, Ms Gail Furness, SC, for the work she has undertaken to complete that audit and the focus she has brought to witness welfare.

It is obvious to all that being involved in an ICAC investigation can be a source of significant stress and turmoil for individuals who find themselves in that position. The report recognised that the current exemptions only applied to witnesses before the ICAC and not to persons who were required to produce information to the ICAC under sections 21 and 22 of the ICAC Act. The notices issued under these sections are routinely used by the ICAC to obtain evidence from witnesses and other persons. The result is that those persons are prohibited from making any similar disclosure to a health practitioner or registered psychologist. The wellbeing rationale that applies to witnesses also applies to persons required to produce information. Consequently, the inspector recommended amending the ICAC Act to remove this legislative inconsistency.

The Government has heard this recommendation and agrees with the proposal. There is no reason not to provide a limited exception to allow people to seek confidential medical support. This bill gives effect to the inspector's recommendation and amends sections 112 (3) and 114 (3) to exempt from the information protection provisions of the Act not only a person who has given or may be about to give evidence at a compulsory examination or public inquiry but also a person who has been issued a notice under section 21 or section 22 to produce information to the ICAC. As was the case previously, only disclosures to a health practitioner or registered psychologist for treatment purposes are given an exemption under the Act. This amendment does not change the substance of this protection, but merely the scope of its application.

Recommendation 5 of the ICAC committee's report entitled *Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC* was that the Government consider amending the ICAC Act to allow the inspector to serve a maximum of two terms. The Government accepted that recommendation. The bill amends clause 4 (2) of schedule 1A to the ICAC Act to increase the maximum term of the inspector and assistant inspector from five years to 10 years. This amendment will permit, but not require, the Government to extend the term of the inspector and assistant inspector, consistent with the approach of similar bodies in Western Australia, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia.

In its report, the ICAC committee noted that while there are good reasons for limiting the terms of the commissioners of the ICAC, including agency capture, those reasons do not apply to inspectors. Further, the ability to extend the term of the inspector will assist with ensuring the retention of institutional knowledge at the ICAC in the transition between commissioners. The rationale behind this amendment to the ICAC Act applies equally to the LECC commissioner. As I will shortly note, the bill seeks to make a similar amendment to the

LECC Act. This bill introduces savings and transitional provisions to enable the maximum term of the current commissioners to be increased by up to 12 months. The purpose of this amendment is to allow the Government to stagger the commencement dates of incoming commissioners. This, in conjunction with the provisions to increase the term of the inspector, is intended to assist with ensuring that institutional knowledge is retained and passed on when new commissioners are appointed.

Currently, the terms of the chief commissioner and the commissioners are due to expire at the same time. This creates obvious issues for handover and the continuous effective function of the ICAC over that period. Recommendation 2 of the ICAC committee's report entitled *Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC* was that the terms of the commissioners and the inspector be staggered. This amendment, and that which increases the maximum term of the inspector, gives effect to that recommendation. Taken together, those provisions would allow a comprehensive staggering where the expiry of the chief commissioner, commissioner and inspector terms could be aligned to occur over an extended period. That amendment has the support of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC.

The bill also includes a minor textual change to clauses 2 (4) and 2 (5) (b) of schedule 3 to the ICAC Act. The bill updates two references to "a Commissioner" as the employer of staff of the ICAC, which should be "the Chief Commissioner". Schedule 2 to the bill makes amendments to the LECC Act. Under clause 1 of schedule 1 to the LECC Act, currently it is only the Governor or the Minister who may make an acting appointment to the office of the Chief Commissioner, Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner of the LECC.

The bill inserts a new clause 1A into schedule 1 to the Act that allows for the chief commissioner to appoint a commissioner to act as chief commissioner for a period of no more than 30 days. The new clause 1A also allows for the chief commissioner to appoint an officer to the commission with special legal qualifications to act as a commissioner, other than the chief commissioner, for a period of no more than 30 days. Those acting appointments may be revoked by the chief commissioner and will be automatically revoked in the event of an acting appointment to the office being made by a Minister or the Governor. A person who is subject to an acting appointment made under clause 1A is entitled to be paid the remuneration, including any allowances, to which a person who holds the office is entitled.

The power of the Minister to make an acting appointment under clause 1 (5) is currently limited to an illness or absence that does not exceed four weeks. The bill amends that subclause so that the relevant period is 30 days rather than four weeks in order to make that power consistent with the new power to be conferred on the chief commissioner. The amendments will allow for administrative convenience when short-term acting appointments need to be made. Except as I have outlined, the amendment does not impact the existing powers of the Governor or Minister under the LECC Act to make short-term acting appointments. That amendment has the support of the LECC and the Inspector of the LECC.

As I foreshadowed, the bill amends clause 5 (2) of schedule 2 to the LECC Act to increase the maximum term of the LECC inspector and assistant inspectors from five years to 10 years. That ensures that the LECC inspector's term is the same as that of the ICAC inspector, which is also increased by the bill. That amendment has the support of the LECC and the Inspector of the LECC. In conclusion, the amendments proposed by the bill honour the Government's commitment to ensure the effective functioning of strong and independent integrity agencies in New South Wales. As I have noted previously, the bill is supported by the ICAC and by the LECC. They have been consulted on its terms and approve of the proposed amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:42):** I make a brief contribution on behalf of the Opposition to debate on the ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill implements Government responses to the Joint Statutory Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption reports entitled *Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*, released on 20 October 2022; and *Review of Aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*, released on 15 December 2022. It also makes changes to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016. I thank and recognise the members of the committee and particularly recognise the committee chair, the member for Port Macquarie.

The changes are all designed to improve oversight over the ICAC and increase the powers of the ICAC and Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] inspectors. The Opposition broadly supports the changes and takes almost no issue with what is brought forward. The bill strengthens the powers of the inspector to make sure that ICAC continues to do its job well for the people of New South Wales. The bill admirably attempts to introduce some time standards for the provision of ICAC reports. However, the ICAC sets the standards, and past performance clearly indicates that some independent oversight of its reporting is required. This legislation is not sufficiently strong to ensure that another outrageously long reporting period like that of the inquiry into former



member for Willoughby Gladys Berejiklian is not repeated. It should never be repeated, and that is why the Opposition will be introducing amendments to the bill.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (16:45):** In reply: I thank the member for Willoughby for his contribution to debate on the ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As members will be aware, the bill amends the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 to implement a number of recommendations arising from a variety of reports. I will deal with the proposed amendments during the consideration in detail stage.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Tim James.**

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:47):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2023-067D in globo:

**No. 1 Commencement**

Page 2, clause 2, lines 5–8. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

This Act commences on the date of assent to this Act.

**No. 2 Timeframes for completing reports under section 74**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 26—

**[1A] Section 74 Reports on referred matters etc**

Omit section 74(4)–(8). Insert instead—

- (4) The Commission must provide a report prepared under this section to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament—
  - (a) within 6 months after the conclusion of evidence before a public inquiry, or
  - (b) the later date decided under subsection (6).
- (5) If the Commission considers that, because of exceptional circumstances, it will not be possible to provide a report within the period specified in subsection (4) (a), the Commission must provide a statement to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament that specifies—
  - (a) the reasons, including details of the exceptional circumstances, the report will not be provided within the period stated in subsection (4) (a), and
  - (b) that the Commission is seeking an extension of time, to the date specified in the statement, for the preparation of the report.
- (6) If the Commission provides a statement under subsection (5), Parliament may, by resolution of both Houses of Parliament, grant an extension for the preparation of a report under this section to the date specified in the resolution.
- (7) For subsection (6), the date specified in the resolution may be—
  - (a) the date requested by the Commission under subsection (5) (b), or
  - (b) an earlier date decided by both Houses of Parliament.

**No. 3 Publication of information about time within which investigation and reports to be completed**

Pages 3 and 4, Schedule 1 [2], line 27 on page 3 to line 7 on page 4, proposed section 74E. Omit all words on the lines.

**No. 4 Reports under section 74**

Page 4, Schedule 1 [3], lines 10 and 11. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (bb) for each report prepared under section 74 for which an extension was sought under section 74 (5)—
  - (i) the reasons the extension was sought, and
  - (ii) whether Parliament granted the extension, and

- (iii) if Parliament granted the extension—the date by which the report was required to be provided and was provided to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament,

The ICAC and LECC Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 is not sufficiently strong to ensure that the ICAC does not repeat the outrageously long time it took to report on the inquiry pertaining to Gladys Berejiklian and others. Members of my community in Willoughby were outraged at the manner in which the ICAC treated their former local member. Indeed, I think the overwhelming majority of the people of New South Wales would agree that she was subjected to a process that was unacceptably and unjustifiably long. No-one should be denied procedural fairness like that; we are all entitled to a fair and just process and due accountability. The bill attempts to introduce some time standards for the provision of ICAC reports but, crucially, the ICAC itself would set those standards and self-report on its performance.

It is reasonable to say that past performance indicates that some independent oversight of ICAC's reporting is warranted. It is sensible and justified to have extra protections to prevent the failures in Operation Keppel from being repeated, and the amendments seek to address those issues. Amendment No. 1 is consequential to amendment No. 2. If amendment No. 2 is successful, then it will repeal and replace the Government's new section 74E, which allows time for the ICAC to set time standards for adoption by the commission. That Government provision does not commence for three months to allow the ICAC time to develop the time standards. If Opposition amendment No. 2 is successful, then the Act can commence immediately and there will be no need for a three-month wait.

The Opposition disagrees with the Government's new section 74E. New section 74E would continue to allow the ICAC to set the times when it delivers its reports after an investigation without any oversight, control or otherwise by the Parliament. The ICAC is a creature of the Parliament. Yes, it is independent of the Parliament, and rightly so; however, it must conform to basic expectations of its performance by the public as represented by the Parliament. Recently, in the delivery of a report into corruption that it was investigating, the ICAC has shown itself to be seriously wanting. It requires a more prescriptive approach than suggested by the Government's proposed amendment and the previous reports of Parliament. I am, of course, referring to the dereliction of timely reporting by the ICAC into the investigation pertaining to Gladys Berejiklian.

The chronology is telling. Let us go through it briefly. In May 2016 the ICAC lawfully intercepted telephone calls between Mr Daryl Maguire and Michael Hawatt. In July 2018 Mr Maguire gave public evidence before the ICAC and resigned his seat in Parliament shortly thereafter. Nearly two years later, in October 2020, Gladys Berejiklian first gave public evidence before the ICAC. A year later, in October 2021, Ms Berejiklian was publicly identified as a person of interest and gave evidence for a second time, with all evidence in the public inquiry concluding on 1 November 2021. The ICAC did not hand down its report into the matter it called Operation Keppel until 29 June 2023—a full 20 months almost to the day after the conclusion of evidence in the public inquiry.

The Government's bill introduces time standards for the provision of ICAC reports but, again, it allows the ICAC to set those standards and report on its own performance. Time standards are all well and good for judges to manage, but they are not really appropriate or sufficiently effective when the whole State is waiting on a senior elected official's fate to be decided. I note by way of example the national benchmarks that courts report against. For the Federal Circuit Court, magistrates' and children's courts, no more than 10 per cent of lodgements pending completion are to be more than six months old and no lodgements pending completion are to be more than 12 months old. For supreme courts, the Federal Court and district, county, family and coroners' courts, and all appeals, no more than 10 per cent of lodgements pending completion are to be more than 12 months old and no lodgements pending completion are to be more than 24 months old. It is therefore, in our view, reasonable and justifiable for the ICAC to hand down its reports within six months of the conclusion of public evidence in an inquiry.

It should be known that the system of hearings in the ICAC is what is called an "inquisitorial" rather than the traditional "contested" mode of hearing in court. The difference is that a judge in a contested hearing knows nothing about the evidence or issues in the matter prior to the commencement of the hearing which is, with a few exceptional instances, always held in public. Good judicial practice involves delivering a judgement within six months of a hearing when the judge has effectively a standing start at the commencement of that hearing. By contrast, an inquisitorial hearing like the ICAC is directed and guided by the commissioner presiding at the hearing. Counsel assisting is not independent of the commissioner but assists the commissioner to inquire into the circumstances within the terms of reference determined by the commissioner with the assistance of counsel assisting. The evidence is obtained by the investigators employed by the ICAC as directed by the commissioner.

A commissioner therefore does not have a standing start like a judge does at the start of a public hearing but has been working on the case from the very inception of the investigation. Therefore, the Opposition's

amendment proposes, as an alternative to guidelines for the delivery of judgement, a new section 74 (4) (a), which requires the good judicial practice of six months' delivery of judgement after the conclusion of evidence in a public hearing as the outer limit, recognising the considerable advantages that a commissioner of ICAC has over a judge. When a judge finishes a case, she or he is given further hearings to conduct but often still delivers judgement within six months of the hearing. By contrast, an ICAC commissioner not only has a deep understanding of the case before public hearings but also can defer other hearings until a report is concluded. Accordingly, the imposition of a six-month time limit for an ICAC commissioner is very reasonable.

But, recognising that issues can occur to commissioners like sickness, urgent matters that may interrupt the preparation of a report and the like, a mechanism is included in the proposed amendments whereby new subsections (4) (b) and (5) to (7) allow for the ICAC to request further time upon the provision of details for requiring—in exceptional circumstances—more than six months. Parliament is able, by a resolution of both Houses, to agree to such an extension. Those provisions strike a very good balance between just and timely determinations by the ICAC, which is fundamentally in the public interest. Even the staunchest defenders of the ICAC, like the Hon. Anthony Whealy and Geoffrey Watson, SC, could not justify the delays in the Berejiklian matter. Whealy, a former assistant commissioner of the ICAC and usually staunch supporter of the ICAC, said that Operation Keppel was "unjust" to Berejiklian. Of the delay he said:

... [it left] a nasty taste in the mouth that reflects back on the criticism of ICAC in NSW, of being a kangaroo court. What we're concerned about is delay and the impact delay has on public perceptions of efficacy of a public corruption body

He also said:

It's really a black mark against ICAC.

Watson, who has acted as counsel assisting at a number of ICAC inquiries, said:

I'm appalled at this. The inquiry, which was not terribly complex, took too long to conduct and now this delay, which undermines public confidence in ICAC. It's very damaging ... This isn't just unfair to the public, this is unfair to Gladys Berejiklian

The Government's new section 74E would not prevent a repetition of those undue delays that have been roundly criticised, and rightly so. The Opposition's amendments would ensure such an unjust saga is never repeated. Amendment No. 3 is consequential upon amendment No. 2 because it removes the alternative proposed by the Government in its new section 74E. Amendment No. 4 is another consequential amendment to the six-month rule. It alters new section 76 (2) (bb) of the bill so that it allows for a time of either six months or such further time as resolved by Parliament under an extension of the six-month period.

Let us learn the lessons from the ICAC's flawed investigation during Operation Keppel. The bill needs to be strengthened to safeguard basic procedural fairness and the timely administration of ICAC's reports. ICAC plays an important role in ensuring integrity in government, but it needs due oversight by the Parliament. Its inquiries have the power to place careers and lives on hold, as we have all seen. In fairness to everyone involved in an inquiry, it needs to be conducted and concluded in a timely manner. It is time for the Parliament to exert some control to require a more than reasonable six-month reporting time line. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (16:56):** I speak in debate on Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2023-067D. The Government does not support the amendments. The bill seeks to enact a framework where ICAC develops its own time frames for publishing its section 74 reports and requires the ICAC to comply with those time frames. The proposed amendments undo that framework. Amendments Nos 2 and 3 remove from the bill the requirement that ICAC develop and publish its own time standards for the completion of section 74 reports, as well as the requirement that the ICAC publish any reasons for failure to meet its own time standards on the relevant section 74 report.

The proposed amendments seek to require the ICAC to provide section 74 reports to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament within six months after the conclusion of evidence before a public hearing, or at a later date if exceptional circumstances apply and an extension of time is granted and decided by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. Amendment No. 1 removes from the bill the delayed commencement of the time standards provision. That is in the bill to give ICAC the time to prepare for the development and implementation of time standards. Amendment No. 4 removes from the bill the requirement that the ICAC publish in its annual report details about its compliance with time standards. It replaces that with a requirement that ICAC publish consequential details about any extension sought from Parliament.

I will consider the proposed amendments collectively as they are all designed to implement the same thing—to legislate a specific six-month time frame for ICAC to publish section 74 reports. The issue of time frames for ICAC reports was addressed in detail in the second reading speech. I refer members to the reasons set out in that speech as a supplement to my current contribution. Through its amendments, the Opposition seeks to

remove the parts of the bill that give effect to recommendation 1 of the Joint Statutory Committee on the ICAC's report entitled *Review of aspects of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*. Recommendation 1 of that report is that the Government amend the ICAC Act to require the ICAC to develop and publish time standards for completing section 74 reports and to report on its own performance against those standards. The Government accepted that recommendation. It is a recommendation of a bipartisan, expert committee of this Parliament.

The Opposition's amendments are inconsistent with the recommendations of the ICAC committee. In its report, the ICAC committee considered and rejected the idea of legislating specific time frames for the ICAC. The ICAC undertakes complex and often lengthy investigations. By allowing the ICAC to set its own time frames the Government recognises that the ICAC is best placed to develop flexible standards that meet its investigative requirements. Requiring ICAC to develop its own time standards and measure its performance against those standards will increase transparency and public accountability of ICAC's reporting functions, and reduce delays, without imposing inflexible restrictions on the ICAC. Legislating a fixed time frame for the ICAC to deal with corruption matters, as the Opposition has proposed to do, may impede the ICAC's work and would not reflect the fact that its investigations vary greatly in scope and complexity. For these reasons, the Government opposes the amendments.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2023-067D be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
Noes .....51  
Majority..... 15

**AYES**

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Butler, R  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Di Pasqua, S  
Donato, P

Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D

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

**NOES**

Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J  
Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N  
Hannan, J

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

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

## PAIRS

Marshall, A  
Roberts, A

Minns, C  
Aitchison, J

**Amendments negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.****Third Reading**

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I acknowledge in the gallery Upper Hunter Shire Council Mayor Maurice Collison and General Manager Greg McDonald. They have had a great meeting with the Leader of the House to talk about democracy. They are here now seeing democracy in action. I welcome them.

*Public Interest Debate***SYDNEY METRO WEST**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:08):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Sydney Metro West is a vital part of the metro network that will revolutionise public transport in Sydney.
- (2) Notes the support of the project by the Labor mayors of Inner West, Burwood, and Cumberland councils.
- (3) Reminds the Premier that on 14 February 2023 he said he would "absolutely" guarantee the future of Sydney Metro West.
- (4) Calls on the New South Wales Government to proceed with Sydney Metro West without delay.

I do not want to move motions like this, because we all want to work productively with the Government for our communities, but I have no option. Sydney Metro West is just one more project in a string of broken promises by the Premier and the new Labor Government. When the project was first announced by the then Liberal-Nationals Government, the goal was to build a 20-minute fast train from Parramatta to the CBD to replicate the western line and benefit over three million commuters in the inner west and Western Sydney. There are three promised stations in the Drummoyne electorate, at Five Dock, Burwood North—known by locals as Concord Oval—and North Strathfield. The new stations would unlock transport options for my constituents who live in areas that do not already have access to a station and ease pressure on already burdened stations. That is why any delay or scrapping of the project would be catastrophic for our local community.

It was the forward thinking of the previous Coalition Government that not only announced the project but also planned and started construction on the game-changing piece of infrastructure. I acknowledge the former transport Minister, Andrew Constance, who had the vision and conviction to commit to the project. The stalling of the project is nothing short of outrageous. There is media report after media report suggesting that the Government is contemplating delaying, and potentially scrapping, Sydney Metro West. And all we are getting from the Government is silence. Like everything else in this place, the project is subject to a review. It has been shuffled off to another committee. That is the Labor way: Delay, review and cancel. I am concerned about the impacts of the Government's actions—or should I say inaction—on my community.

Media reports highlighting that the project has been left in limbo have caused angst and frustration amongst residents. My office has been inundated with correspondence from constituents who are concerned by the Government's decisions. They have been raising questions that the Government is refusing to answer. My community is concerned and disappointed and, frankly, I do not blame them. During question time earlier this month, I asked the transport Minister whether she would commit to ruling out the removal of planned stations that have active construction sites already underway. She said:

... the issues that the member raises will be addressed in the report that the Government will receive in October.

Listen to those words carefully: a report that the Government will receive in October. It was not that a decision will be made in October. There could be further delays for months, or even years, before we find out what the new Government plans to do about Sydney Metro West. Households, businesses and communities that are

currently dealing with the impacts of construction will live in limbo until the Government gets its act together and decides what it will do about the project. It is simply not good enough. It is not just those of us on this side of the House who think the situation our communities have been left in is unacceptable; some of the loudest voices criticising the Government are coming from within their own tent. They are fully paid-up members of the Labor Party.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Name them.

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA:** I will name them. There is the Labor Mayor of Burwood, Councillor John Faker; the Labor Mayor of Cumberland City; the Labor Mayor of the Inner West; and the Federal member for Parramatta. From memory, the State member for Parramatta and the member for Strathfield have publicly spoken on the record about the need for Sydney Metro West to be delivered. The chorus does not stop there. Senior Labor figure and former Minister David Borger has been leading the charge for the case for the metro to be delivered without delay. A recent article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* quotes Mr Borger as saying:

Boring machines are already in the ground and on their way from White Bay towards Parramatta. Let's just get on with it.

I agree; he is absolutely right. Let us just get on with it. That is what my community is saying too: Let us get on with it. After listening to local chambers of commerce presidents, residents, small businesses and constituents, I launched a community petition calling on the New South Wales Government to deliver the Sydney Metro West project on time and to retain promised stations at Five Dock, Burwood North—or Concord Oval—and North Strathfield. I was amazed at the response. I take this opportunity to share in the Chamber some of the comments from local constituents. Ian said:

Transport into the City is already congested so we need to continue to improve or develop other alternatives to current trains, buses and Ferries. How can you delay these works after demolishing sites and already building the infrastructure. As a tax payer, and CBD commuter we should have a say in where our money is invested and I say "please" continue these critical works.

From the many conversations I have had, if members of the Labor Party do not get their act together and commit to Sydney Metro West, they will be clearing out their offices at 52 Martin Place in four years' time. People are sick of broken promises and lengthy delays. Let us continue building; let us just get on with it. Voters thought they were getting something different, but it seems they are getting the same old Labor Party—the very Labor Party that, when last in government, cancelled the Rozelle metro after around \$500 million of taxpayers' money was spent without even laying a track. I will not stand for it, the Opposition will not stand for it and my community will not stand for it.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:16):** I welcome the opportunity to draw to the attention of the House the record of cost overruns and project blowouts that the Government has inherited from those opposite. That is directly relevant when we talk about the record of the former Government and its approach to infrastructure delivery. In fact, as the member for Parramatta, I know the record of the former Government all too well. My community knows it too, which is why at the last election it elected a Minns Labor Government to clean up the mess and start making responsible decisions on major infrastructure projects. The former Liberal-Nationals Government's mistakes, failures and bungling are not confined to one corner of the transport space in New South Wales—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order—

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** —their fingerprints are on everything. Can we stop the clock?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I will hear the point of order.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** It would be much quicker if the member just let me take my point of order. She will not lose too much time. My point of order goes to relevance. The motion—

**Mr Paul Scully:** She is 30 seconds in.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** The member for Parramatta is more than 30 seconds into her speech. Would you like me to finish my point of order, Mr Temporary Speaker?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I will hear the point of order without interruption. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** The public interest debate motion is quite detailed and about Sydney Metro West. The member for Parramatta has not yet referred to Sydney Metro West or Sydney Metro, or to any of the points in the motion before the House. I ask that the member for Parramatta be drawn back to the leave of the motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I am satisfied that the member for Parramatta is being relevant. The member has the call.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** The former Government's fingerprints are on everything—on our train services, the metro project, bus services, ferries, light rail services and across Transport for NSW. It is the passengers and the State that have ended up paying the price. Let us examine the mess those opposite made of our train services. The Liberals delivered to passengers the worst on-time running seen since before the pandemic. An independent report that the Government commissioned confirmed what every passenger trying to get to and from work already knows: The train system is neither resilient nor reliable. On the former Liberal Government's watch, passengers ended up experiencing more delays and cancellations, to the point where passengers simply could not rely on train services to get to work on time or get their kids to school. The former Government also presided over an increase in the maintenance backlog from \$440 million in 2019-20 to \$670 million in 2021-22.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Point of order: I remind the member about relevance. The motion is about the metro, not the train network.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I am satisfied that the contribution of the member for Parramatta is relevant to the motion. The member has the call.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** I draw to the attention of the House a series of projects with significant cost overruns. The cost of the overseas-built new intercity fleet [NIF] blew out to \$3.2 billion. It is yet to carry a single passenger. It was meant to be carrying passengers to Newcastle and the Central Coast by 2019, the Blue Mountains by 2020 and the Illawarra by 2021.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for North Shore will come to order.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** The promises of those opposite to passengers are not worth the paper they are written on. In stark contrast, the Minister for Transport has ended the war on workers and, as a result, will finally deliver this fleet—something that the former Government failed to do. The Minns Labor Government has brought this project back on track because it took a step back—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** I would prefer not to have to keep asking the same question here. But the member has still not referred to Sydney Metro. The member has referred to heavy rail, the NIF and negotiations with workers—all things that Labor is continuing to stuff up now. She has not talked about Parramatta passengers.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for North Shore. I have listened to the point of order.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** She is the member for Parramatta who will scrap the metro in Parramatta. I do not want to dissent from the ruling of the Temporary Speaker, but—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for North Shore will resume her seat.

**Mr Steve Whan:** Point of order: The Temporary Speaker has already ruled on the point of order taken by the member for North Shore. The motion talks about public transport in Sydney. It has a broad perspective. I suggest that the Opposition is being disrespectful of the Temporary Speaker's ruling by continuing to raise the same thing.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for Monaro. The member for Parramatta is being relevant and may continue.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** Let us now focus on Sydney Metro. Only the Liberals could take a new flagship transport project and try to turn it into an enormously expensive missed opportunity, with a \$9 billion blowout on the CBD and south-west metro. It has taken a Labor government to step in and rescue this project after those opposite delayed and even considered cancelling it. We should be congratulating the Minns Labor Government for making the tough decisions to deliver the metro service the people of south-western Sydney deserve. Let us look at the \$12 billion blowout on metro west.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for North Shore will come to order.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** All of that money is money that now cannot be spent on new metro lines and new public transport projects to support our fast-growing suburbs. It is a fact that dispels the myth, once and for all, that Coalition members are fiscally responsible money managers. Instead, it reaffirms what those on this side have known all along: You would not trust them to manage a piggy bank—let alone a transport budget. The Coalition is simply not credible when it comes to handling the State's transport expenditure. It created a mess and it should do the decent thing by the people of New South Wales and take some responsibility for it—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** I would like the Temporary Speaker to ensure that the member no longer misleads the House. Could the Temporary Speaker ensure that she desists from doing so? Thank you.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for North Shore. There is no point of order.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** She is misrepresenting history and the future. Perhaps she could talk—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for North Shore will resume her seat.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: It is impossible to listen to a speaker in this Chamber because the member for North Shore and the member for Kiama are constantly screaming members down. I ask that the members opposite show a bit of respect for a motion that they brought before the House and they wish to have debated.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** To the point of order: We want her to talk about the motion. Maybe the member for Auburn could talk about the motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for Auburn. I totally agree. The member for Parramatta will complete her speech in relative silence. The member for North Shore will come to order.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** The former Government lost all credibility when it comes to talking about transport or major projects. We will not be taking any lectures on Sydney Metro from the Liberal Opposition. In contrast, our Government is taking a responsible approach to delivering this project. I support the metro project. The people of Parramatta and New South Wales can be confident in the knowledge that the Minns Labor Government is looking at the project closely to make sure we are getting the most we can out of it for our community. That is exactly what a responsible government does.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:23):** It is a delight to follow my neighbour in Parramatta on this important motion. I am pleased to hear that she is a supporter of this important project. When it was to be built, we all know that the member for Parramatta would have been there with bells on to cut the ribbon on this important project. It makes sense because metros are tried and tested. I can speak to my own experience in my electorate of Ryde, where it has been an enormous success for the Macquarie University precinct. We have seen the booming Macquarie Park business centre take off because of the great work done by the previous Government in delivering Sydney Metro Northwest.

I am pleased to see the planning Minister in the Chamber. Off the back of Sydney Metro Northwest, this important public transport infrastructure, troves of new housing have been built in my electorate—well in excess of 50 per cent over our target. That is why it is so important. It is not blue-sky thinking. We have a tried and tested model. We have seen its success. To walk away from Sydney Metro West, as this Government is proposing, is not only short-sighted, lazy policy, but it is politically expedient for a government that has found itself in the unfortunate position of having overpromised before the election and is now being left with no option but to quite clearly underdeliver.

We have already seen broken promises from this Government. When it comes to Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers, there have been backflips. We have seen it with regional travel cards. The member for Coffs Harbour, who is in the Chamber, will appreciate how important that is for his electorate. Pay increases for teachers and nurses are running into trouble, with broken promises. The Government is not honouring the deals made before the election. Those opposite talked about the restoration of integrity and good governance, but that is out the window. We have seen that throughout question time this week. The Government said privatisation was off the agenda, but we know it is back because of the mass sell-off of public land. There is also the 180-degree backflip on the State-building infrastructure of Sydney Metro West.

All new governments earn a mandate based on what they say before an election. But what I find particularly disappointing about this Government is that it seeks to hold up the mandate it swore by breaking promises. That is not how it works. You must be honest about your intentions before the election, not change your tune after the election. It is time that those opposite honour the deal they made with Western Sydney before the election. It is time that they honour the deal with the 10,000 direct jobs that were to be created as a consequence of the construction of this project and with the 70,000 people who were promised indirect jobs during construction of this project. It is time to honour the deal with all those communities who voted for Labor at the election off the back of the Sydney Metro West promise, which they believed would be safe if this mob was elected.



Unfortunately, they have a chequered past when it comes to the metro. I can speak to my own experience in North Ryde with the north-western metro. Former Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley, who is a good friend of the member for Parramatta, made multiple visits to Ryde before the 2019 State election to object and protest. It was all politically expedient. The Labor Party never had an alternative plan. It thought it could blow it up before the election. Funnily enough, all these years later, the metro is now the catalyst for this current Government's housing supply woes.

Those opposite are achieving their targets only because of the work the former Liberal and Nationals Government did—which is a great legacy. Imagine how we would fail as a State if this Government walked away from nation-building infrastructure. If it continued to push ahead with and invest in a fair and valid housing supply program and, at the same time, walked away from a project like this, you would see a city that constantly grinds to a halt. You need to build infrastructure to sustain your growth. You would fundamentally lose the confidence of the communities you need to take on your journey to deliver those important outcomes for the housing supply.

A station has been proposed for Sydney Olympic Park, not far from my electorate. It would be a great opportunity to get people in the fast-growing suburbs of Meadowbank and Melrose Park on metro lines. That is being threatened because of this Government's mismanagement and overpromising before the election. Projects like stage two of the Parramatta Light Rail are already under pressure. Please do not tell me that Sydney Metro West is the next one on the chopping block. Let us not forget that the Government has been silent on new schools for places like Melrose Park and Macquarie Park. Before the election, the Government made all sorts of promises about schools; after the election, we have heard nothing. We do not have even a site. It is time to honour the deal on the Sydney Metro West, which is quickly emerging as the latest in a litany of not only broken promises but also broken dreams.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:29):** It is incredible that the Opposition has had the temerity to come to the Chamber today and move this motion. While I am happy to give the former Government credit for starting work on the Sydney Metro project—and even say that it started well—in recent years we all became too used to regular reports on billion-dollar blowouts on projects like the Sydney Metro, the Sydney Light Rail and the Parramatta Light Rail. And the list just goes on and on.

**Mr Matt Cross:** What about Metro Northwest?

**Mr WARREN KIRBY:** We will get to that, don't you worry. We all became accustomed to delays in procurement of rolling stock, with trains delivered years after they were promised. All too often the former Government tried to explain away why the trains it purchased would not fit on the tracks or why trams were cracking, causing safety issues. It is abundantly clear, when we look at the track record of the former Government, that management was out for a very long lunch. Those opposite had lost control of the capital program and, as a result, the projects were costing more, running late and undermining public confidence in public transportation.

Indeed, one of the reasons the people of New South Wales voted the former Government out was that they had lost trust in the Liberals to deliver major projects. The people of Riverstone, the people of Penrith and the people of Londonderry were sick and tired of being promised projects that would all too often be bungled. The existing metro inexplicably ends at Tallawong, just 2.5 kilometres short of meeting up with the T1 rail line at Schofields. That is why the Opposition is very bold in bringing this motion to the House today. Some would say that the Opposition may not have even listened to the election results. The Minns Labor Government listened to the community. We will focus on getting the metro back on track to give the community the certainty it deserves.

We will also continue to plan for the future of the metro network. As we said at the election, we will fund the business case for a Sydney Metro extension for the Western Sydney Airport line from St Mary's to Tallawong via Marsden Park and Schofields. We will prioritise the areas that most desperately need it—growth areas like my electorate. That extension will help connect people in my community with the future aerotropolis and future Bradfield City Centre, forever shifting the centre of gravity away from the CBD and anchoring the future of our city in the western suburbs. For people in my electorate, that will mean future job opportunities in new industries and finally the connection to the heavy rail at Schofields that should have happened in the first place.

The Opposition said it would fund business cases, but the community did not vote for those promises because they knew they were not worth the paper they were written on. One could fund all the business cases in the world, but the important thing is to have the confidence of the community and the industry to deliver the projects in the end. Unlike the Opposition, the Minns Labor Government believes that the Sydney Metro must be delivered in a cost-effective way. Given its track record of multibillion-dollar blowouts—that is billion with a "b"—and multi-year delays, I am not going to take advice on the metro from the Opposition. Desperate to win an election, members opposite wrote cheques they simply could not cash. They would have us believe that having delivered one metro line—which stopped short—in 12 years, suddenly they could deliver four more business cases. In contrast, we were elected to stem the bleeding and restore the public's faith in our transport system.

The Minns Labor Government has acted and initiated the Sydney Metro Review. We have brought in a rescue team to get this program of works back on track. The review is all about restoring confidence in this important project. That is a methodical and responsible way to manage mega projects, and I believe that the community would agree. We will have more to say about metro projects in the coming months. But one thing is clear: We cannot and will not be rushed into making a decision without doing the hard work to guide our thinking. The former Government wasted far too much money, time and effort, and simply lost the confidence of the community. The Minns Labor Government will not make the same mistake.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:33):** It gives me great pleasure to support the motion of the member for Drummoyne today. With this motion, the member is fighting for her community. With this motion, the NSW Liberals and Nationals are fighting for Western Sydney. The motion is an opportunity for the Government to get on record its support for this motion and for Sydney Metro West. I note that paragraph 4 of the motion calls on the New South Wales Government to proceed with Sydney Metro West without delay. I am happy to update the House that only this side of the House is 100 per cent committed to the metro west. Those opposite are not on record, as an entire government, about whether they support it or not.

I welcome the visitor in the gallery and the people watching at home, which I understand includes my wife—hello, Gessika. But for those people who will be reading *Hansard*, I think it is really important that they understand what is going on in the Chamber right now. If we look at Sydney Metro West and the stations it goes to, we have Westmead metro station, which is in the electorate of Granville. I do not see the member for Granville in the Chamber. Parramatta metro station is in the Parramatta electorate—of course, we heard from the member for Parramatta and she is on record supporting it. We then go to Burwood North Station, which I believe the constituents of both the member for Drummoyne and the member for Strathfield will be using. Sadly, I do not see the member for Strathfield in the Chamber.

But who is in the Chamber? Whose electorate has Burwood North Station, North Strathfield metro station and Five Dock Station? It is the member for Drummoyne. It is great to have the member for Drummoyne in the Chamber. It is disappointing when we look to see whether the Premier, the Treasurer or any Government Minister supports Sydney Metro West. I did a Google search and I could not find anything on record about whether they support it or not. But I did find something interesting: On 13 April 2023 the Government announced a comprehensive independent review into the Sydney Metro project. But, when it comes to reviews, one review is clearly not enough. On 15 August 2023 the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure created a second review. That is two reviews into the metro. Members should think about that. When it comes to this project, we need to have certainty. Those opposite are not clearly on record as supporting it. What do business leaders think about that? According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*:

Business leaders have warned cancelling the Sydney Metro West rail megaproject would damage the state's economic reputation, likening it to the Victorian government's decision to can the Commonwealth Games.

That is typical Labor. It does not matter if it is New South Wales or Victoria—Labor cancels the project. *The Sydney Morning Herald* went further. It printed "The Herald's View", which stated:

During its previous years in state government, delay became Labor-speak for never going to happen. This regrettable history makes the *Herald* nervous about Premier Chris Minns' repeated refusal over recent days to guarantee the Metro West line from the CBD to Westmead will go ahead...

Of course, if those opposite need any confidence in whether or not the project should go ahead, I have a couple of quotes that are of interest:

We need the Metro. Everyone knows we need the Metro. The Parramatta local government area is predicted to double in population by 2050, so we do need to have the infrastructure to support that.

Who said that? It was the member for Parramatta. There we go. Who said, "In the end, I can't see the Government walking away from the metro, but hopefully we can find a way to deliver it"? It was the member for Strathfield. [*Time expired.*]

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:38):** I contribute to debate as Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and someone deeply committed to building transport systems in our State that work for our communities—that are done in respectful, conscious ways where we actually investigate them and we do not just announce things and do reports later. This motion is a cheap attempt by the Opposition to try to embarrass the Government, when in fact it is the Opposition that should be deeply ashamed of its record on the management of the Sydney Metro West project. There is no doubt at all that metro has the capacity to transform Sydney if it is done the right way. But it must represent value for money and must successfully integrate with the wider transport system.

The Government is proposing to amend the motion to reflect the prudent and methodical approach the Government is taking to Sydney Metro projects. When we were elected, we established the independent review

to understand the nature and size of the challenges ahead of us. The review was also set up to advise us on what we needed to do to rescue important projects for the people of Sydney. That is what responsible governments do: they listen, they take advice, they consider the options and then they take action to deliver for their communities. The review is being led by Mike Mrdak, one of the most experienced industry experts in Australia, having worked in infrastructure, transport and regional development in both the public and private sectors. His co-reviewer is Amanda Yeates, a former deputy director-general of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, where she was responsible for delivering that State's transport infrastructure program. The Sydney Metro Review will provide us with the necessary independent, expert advice about where to go from here, providing a road map to ensure we maximise the community benefit of this generational investment.

The Government has already acted after receiving the interim report's recommendations and expects its final report on Sydney Metro West in October this year. It will make recommendations for getting the maximum value out of the project so we can deliver the best projects for our communities. That includes looking at better land use, urban renewal and better integration with the wider transport network. The report will also make recommendations on procurement strategy, better delivery models, project governance and passenger impacts. It will advise on the best way to resuscitate Sydney's major transport infrastructure pipeline, and it will look at how metro services can build resilience into the overall public transport system.

Responsible governments make plans in consultation with experts. We welcome the recommendations of the interim report of the independent panel on Sydney Metro to explore the feasibility, value for money and alignment with station options, including the potential for an eastern suburbs extension to accommodate where 80,000 people are about to be living. The Government will explore these options at the appropriate time. It will not announce new stations or extensions without doing the preliminary work behind it. Unlike the former Government, which would announce first and work out the details later, the Minns Labor Government will take a methodical approach to rescuing Sydney Metro.

It was clear to anybody who was paying attention that the previous Government lost control of its infrastructure program. It is also apparent that, when faced with the reality of its mismanagement of projects, instead of addressing the issues, it pretended everything was okay. Everywhere you look, you see spiralling costs, waste, delays and project outcomes not being met. Nowhere is this more the case than with Sydney Metro. As I foreshadowed, we intend to make amendments to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (3) and (4) and inserting instead:

- (3) Recognises the Government is conducting an independent review of Sydney Metro projects to examine value for money, delivery models, project governance and passenger impacts.
- (4) Acknowledges this review is necessary given the significant cost blowouts.

As we have found with receipt of the interim metro review that was conducted, the former Government failed on the basics. It was not that the metro projects that it selected were bad, it was that it failed to put the arrangements in place to ensure that the right planning was there at the beginning and that the projects did not spiral out of control. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:43):** I appreciate the member for Drummoyne advocating for the Sydney Metro West. As we know, the member is new and cannot be held accountable for the Liberal Party's record on public transport. It is interesting that we find ourselves in a world where the Liberal Party is advocating for public transport. The former Government privatised our buses and spent billions of dollars to fund private tollways. But here we are. This does not mean that the new Government should be excused for walking back the commitment to metro west. It is incredibly frustrating to see toll projects like the Western Harbour Tunnel press ahead at huge expense to the people of New South Wales, while doubt is being thrown on a transformational public transport project like metro west. On behalf of the Greens, I move:

That the amendment of Dr Marjorie O'Neill be amended by omitting paragraph (4) and inserting instead:

- (4) Acknowledges it is the responsibility of the Government to invest in public and active transport to serve and support people and communities across New South Wales.

Fast, connected and safe public transport is at the heart of an efficient, socially just city. Our ailing public transport network and traffic congestion brings stress to people across our State; it costs families precious time and has a negative impact on economic activity. Encouraging public and active transport can address these issues and have a positive effect on pollution, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Imagine life in a city where going to work each day did not mean getting into a car and paying a toll, getting stuck in traffic and having the stress of finding somewhere to park or, for that matter, the stress of cramming yourself into an overcrowded bus or train carriage as service after service is cancelled or running late. Imagine instead being able to walk or cycle to a nearby station where fast, reliable and affordable public transport is available to get people

where they need to go. This is the kind of visionary approach we need for building new transport infrastructure in Sydney and across New South Wales.

That is why we are so disappointed that the metro project has stalled. It is especially disappointing to the people of Western Sydney, so many of whom have put their faith in the new Labor Government to improve public transport facilities and infrastructure. Right across our city, we should be moving away from car dependence. That means urgently investing in public and active transport. The notion that governments can spend billions on polluting tollways like WestConnex and the Western Harbour Tunnel that have budget blowouts and that will induce traffic and bring cost to communities through ever-increasing tolls, but potentially cancel a transformative public transport project like metro west, is outrageous. I am glad to see that it appears we are only discussing a review and not the cancellation of the project, but I appreciate the concerns of the member for Drummoyne.

The idea that the Government might cancel the project says everything about what is wrong with transport planning in New South Wales. This issue impacts my own community directly, as the approved metro west line runs right through my electorate, with a stop already under construction at White Bay. The Government needs to make sure the review is conducted in good faith so that new stations can be introduced along the line. I note that there is a significant gap between the White Bay station and the next one at Five Dock. We want to make sure that, during this review, the Government looks at impacts on local communities and makes sure that this project is not cancelled but improved.

My community is no stranger to these projects; they have caused much disruption. We have endured a great deal through the construction of the WestConnex tollway, which has caused property damage to many homes and buildings, intrusive dust, noise and vibration at all hours, and major traffic and transport disruptions. It has involved dealing with a contractor that has been all too ready to hide behind planning approvals and government contracts, insisting upon non-disclosure agreements when residents have raised concerns. I am very keen to see the metro west project push ahead and the station at White Bay delivered. We know a transformative public transport project like this will deliver significant benefit to the community, rather than more cars and pollution from a tollway. To add more doubt and disrupt the community further in terms of whether the project will be delivered would be a very unfortunate outcome.

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:48):** In reply: I thank the member for Parramatta, the member for Ryde, the member for Riverstone, the member for Davidson, the member for Coogee and the member for Balmain for their contributions to this important debate. Only one Labor member, the member for Parramatta, put on record that she supports this project. She says she supports metro west, and I totally agree with her. She should support it, because it will drastically improve commutes and access to public transport in her electorate, like it will in the Drummoyne electorate.

So I ask the member: Do you think subjecting communities like ours to extended delays is acceptable? This Labor Government cannot say one thing before the election and then abandon our communities after the election. It is simply not good enough. I call on the Premier to tell my community and other communities in the inner west and Western Sydney the truth about the Government's intentions for this project. As the member for Balmain so eloquently put it, further doubt about this project is very unfortunate. Let us not forget that this is the same old Labor that spent 500 million taxpayer dollars on the Rozelle metro without even laying a track.

**Ms Anna Watson:** So don't worry about due diligence, don't worry about getting it right?

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA:** That is your track record and this is an important project for my community.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** There is no track record.

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA:** There is no track record, because those opposite did not lay one. Thank you, member for Kiama. Whilst I deeply respect my colleague the member for Strathfield, I am disappointed that he did not contribute to this debate. I am sure that his community would have appreciated his point of view, because this project has numerous benefits for his constituents, as it does for people in my electorate. I thank the member for Balmain for her contribution to this debate. I look forward to working constructively with her on matters that affect our communities, as we have neighbouring electoral boundaries. The Opposition will support the amendment proposed by the member for Balmain on behalf of The Greens. The Opposition does not support the Government's amendment to the motion on the basis that we are concerned about the impact of further construction delays. Businesses and town centres where construction is taking place are already suffering. They cannot be subjected to further extended delays. I note the review is being handed down in October, but that is not when we will find out the future of this project.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for Drummoyne has moved a motion, to which the member for Coogee has moved an amendment, to which the member for Balmain has moved an

amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Balmain to the amendment of the member for Coogee be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question now is that the amendment of the member for Coogee as amended be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....51  
Noes .....33  
Majority.....18

**AYES**

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

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

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

**NOES**

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

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)

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

**PAIRS**

Aitchison, J  
Minns, C

Roberts, A  
James, T

**Amendment as amended agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I welcome to the public gallery members of the Rotary Club of St Ives, hosted by the member for Davidson. We are glad to have you here.

*Community Recognition Statements***TEEJ**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:01):** Teej is a collection of three Hindu festivals dedicated to the mother goddess, Parvati, and her male consort, Lord Shiva—celebrations particularly significant for Nepalese and North Indian girls and women. Teej festivities mark the beginning of the monsoon season and are celebrated with dancing, singing, music, rituals and colourful traditional dress. Teej also recognises women's struggles for equality and empowerment. Parramatta is home to a significant Nepalese population. Therefore, it was a pleasure to attend the Nai Academy Australia's Teej festivities. I congratulate the three Nepalese Australian women who were recognised for their contributions to our community: Jamuna Gurung, for education and social service; Narinikunja Australia, for art, culture and social service; and Dr Archana Koirala, for her contributions as a paediatric and infectious diseases specialist working at the New South Wales Immunisation Specialist Service at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

**BRI HUGHES**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:02):** I congratulate Dubbo woman Bri Hughes on her recent success at the World Beauty Fitness and Fashion competition held in Sydney. Bri's journey began over seven years ago, when she decided to take back the reins of her life and prioritise health and fitness not only for herself but also to set an example for her daughter. After seven years of hard work and discipline, Bri recently took to the stage to compete against other athletes from around Australia. She took second place and earned plenty of admiration from those around her for the results she achieved. Bri's goal has been about not only the competitive nature of the sport and putting her best foot forward but also being a role model to those in her community. She coaches at the gym that she manages and coaches other athletes who train alongside her. I congratulate Bri. Her journey has inspired so many, and her commitment to striving for excellence is truly admirable. Here's to celebrating this well-deserved victory and looking forward to her amazing accomplishments still to come. I am sure she will continue to inspire us with her determination and passion.

**PENRITH COMMUNITY CABINET**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (18:03):** It was my pleasure to welcome my Labor parliamentary colleagues to Penrith at the end of July for our first Community Cabinet of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. A key plank of our election was to be accessible to the people of New South Wales, and it was an overwhelming success, with a lot of positive community and local business feedback. On Sunday 30 July it was a clear winter's day when we held a community barbecue in Lions Park at Emu Plains. The community were extremely impressed that they had such unfettered access to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for the Environment and member for Granville—and the ability to share a sausage sandwich cooked by our Emu Plains Lions. It was then on to business. On Monday we held a stakeholders' meeting. We also held the Community Cabinet meeting and took questions from our community. We also recognised two local teachers with local appreciation awards. I thank everyone involved.

**DOREEN WILSON**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:04):** I recognise Doreen Wilson, a 90-year-old great-grandmother who represented Australia in performance gymnastics in Amsterdam at the World Gymnaestrada. Doreen was joined by her teammates, the Eastern Greys and the Taree Gymaroos. The World Gymnaestrada, held every four years, is the world's largest general gymnastics exhibition. A performance rather than a competition, the seven-day event draws a massive 19,000 participants from 60 countries. With the theme of "Tell the world about Australia", the Eastern Greys' and Taree Gymaroos' performance featured akubras and blow-up crocodiles. It was Doreen's sixth time performing at the international event. She first took the stage in 1991 as a member and coach of the Taree Gymaroos, which she founded. Doreen has embarked on numerous successful ventures over the past seven decades, from launching children's gymnastics programs in regional towns to a fitness program for over-50s that has since been taken up by Gymnastics Australia and rolled out nation wide. I congratulate Doreen. She is an absolute inspiration. I thank her for her dedication to gymnastics. I also congratulate the Eastern Greys and Taree Gymaroos—their performance looked spectacular.

**LAYLA AND NATHAN CATTELL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:05):** I acknowledge the remarkable efforts of Nathan Cattell and his daughter Layla in raising awareness for suicide prevention and supporting the charities #talk2mebro and the Shaka Project. The duo's contributions are truly deserving of recognition from the Shellharbour electorate. After experiencing the devastating loss of a loved one to suicide, Layla and Nathan embarked on an incredible journey, covering over 107 kilometres by running from Killalea Regional Park to Bendalong on the South Coast. Undertaking such a challenging and gruelling task is no small feat, but they were determined to honour their loved

one, Cody, in a meaningful way. I express my heartfelt gratitude to both Layla and Nathan for their unwavering dedication to their marathon run and for their commendable efforts in promoting awareness for men's mental health. Their actions have made a significant impact, and they serve as an inspiration to each and every one of us.

#### **ROB MASON**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:06):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Rob Mason from Minnamurra. Mr Mason is a firefighter currently stationed in the Shoalhaven. He has set himself a challenge of running 1,200 kilometres across our State in 12 days. The previous record for this run stands at 19 days. On Thursday 21 September 2023, Rob will begin his run from the New South Wales border, west of Broken Hill, with the aim of reaching Bondi on the New South Wales coast—and he will do it seven days faster than anyone else has ever achieved. Rob is passionate about helping to raise much-needed funds for the Burns Unit at the Children's Hospital at Westmead. As a firefighter with 23 years on the job, he has seen a lot of injuries to children caused by fires. Rob's running career started in 2008. It culminated in his favourite event—the Coast to Kosci race that starts on the beach at Eden and finishes on top of Australia at Mount Kosciuszko. Rob won it last year, and doing 1,200 kilometres in 12 days was born out of Rob's Coast to Kosci win. To learn more, please visit [www.robmason.run](http://www.robmason.run).

#### **BOB WITTRIEN**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:07):** It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge Bob Wittrien for being a member of the Glenbrook-Lapstone volunteer bush fire brigade since its inception in 1969. During his 54 years of service, Bob has filled many roles, including trail cutting, hazard reductions, fire spotting from the tower, firefighting, and search and rescue. Bob was involved as an operational firefighter in the Blue Mountains from 1969 up to and including the Christmas fires of the 2001-2002 season. His trade background enabled him to be actively involved in the maintenance of equipment and vehicles and station modification back in the days when the brigade had to supply and modify its own vehicles and maintain them in operational readiness. Bob has been an inspiring mentor to many. His unique historical knowledge of the brigade's development over the past 54 years has proven to be invaluable. Bob has deservedly been the recipient of many RFS medals—too many to mention here. He has been described as friendly, outgoing and ready to help whenever he can. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Bob for his outstanding service to our community and wish him a very happy birthday for his ninetieth.

#### **LEGACY WEEK**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:08):** I acknowledge that this year Legacy Week is running from 27 August to 2 September. For a century now, since its founding in 1923, Legacy Australia has been at the forefront of helping the families of deceased veterans. Legacy ensures that family members can access health, education, medical support and community support. Legacy is still caring for tens of thousands of widows who have lost their loved ones and have been affected by their partner's service in the Korean War, Malayan Emergency and Vietnam War as well as campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and in peacekeeping operations around the globe. I particularly acknowledge Richard Grimsdale, the Chairman of Legacy Eastern Region, who has been a part of Legacy for 28 years. I thank Richard for his contributions to our local community. They are much appreciated. I encourage everyone to support Legacy Week and, if they are in the eastern suburbs, to drop in to my electorate office. I am selling badges and hope to see everyone there.

#### **SKYE GOLDING**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:09):** I take this opportunity to recognise one of my constituents from Nowra, Skye Golding. Skye is a first-year apprentice pastry chef who is part of the team at Decadence Cakes Gifts and Treats. This shop is not far from my electorate office and my staff and I have sampled a few of their delicious creations. The Bake Skills Australia regionals were held in June and it was Skye's first ever baking competition. I am told it was her incredible flavour combinations that impressed the judges. Skye's creations included coffee eclairs, raspberry and mascarpone eclairs, blueberry tarts and a whipped honey mascarpone and pistachio tart—though it was Skye's flawless eclairs that secured her convincing win. Skye will now bake off with the best at the national competition in a few months. Congratulations to Skye and the team at Decadence Cakes. I am looking forward to trying another delicious creation very soon.

#### **PICTON SWIMMING CLUB**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:10):** Today I proudly recognise the achievements of our Picton Swimming Club members at the recent 2023 NSW Metropolitan Swimming Club Championship. Jayden, Mitch, Matthew, Alfie, Callie and Heidi represented our community with remarkable skill and determination. Their dedication and hard work resulted in impressive performances. Jayden secured a silver medal in multiple events, including the 14 and under 200 metres individual medley, 50 metres freestyle, 100 metres freestyle, and 100 metres breaststroke. Meanwhile, Mitch achieved three top positions in the 16 and over category, excelling in

the 400 metres freestyle. Matthew, Alfie, Callie and Heidi displayed their prowess in the pool, earning commendable results in their respective age groups. Together, they achieved a total of 19 personal bests—a testament to their continuous improvement. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our Picton Swimming Club members for their outstanding performances at the NSW Metropolitan Swimming Club Championship.

#### **KEN SHARP**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:12):** Recently I was running onto the field for a Friday night game of soccer with my team, the mighty Quakers Hill Soccer Club, when I noticed the referee standing in the middle of the field, whistle clenched between his teeth. The ref was Ken Sharp, a robust 78-year-old. Ken is an imposing figure as he oversees local football matches for the Blacktown & Districts Soccer Football Association [BDSFA]. He is a stalwart of the association. In fact, Ken's refereeing tenure is so long that even those in the association are unsure when he first picked up the whistle. Ken officiates a minimum of six weekly games—an impressive number by any standards—and is a favourite for the local school competitions. The BDSFA takes great pride in its referee program and the calibre of its officials, who turn up week in and week out to make sure players are well behaved—especially those over 35. It is so important to acknowledge that referees play an integral role in sporting competitions, especially legends like Ken. Kudos to Ken for his unwavering dedication to the sport he loves.

#### **BAPS HINDU TEMPLE, KEMPS CREEK**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:13):** This week the Leader of the Opposition, New South Wales Senator Maria Kovacic and I had the opportunity to visit the new BAPS Hindu temple site at Kemps Creek. This \$41 million site will become a central place of worship and faith for generations to come, allowing thousands of community members from across Sydney to celebrate their culture, traditions and religions. Everyone in New South Wales has the right to practise their religion without fear of violence or persecution and this temple represents a safe, open and welcoming place for the BAPS community to enjoy. The site itself is enormous and in the growing region around Badgerys Creek this temple will see significant use throughout the week, hosting religious prayers, community workshops and many other important cultural events. The BAPS community has contributed so much to our State. I thank each and every person for their continued work to support the community through their many outreach programs. I particularly thank Kunal Patel, Maytrik Thaker and Parth Patel for their warm welcome. I look forward to returning to the site when construction has finished and enjoying it with the rest of the BAPS community.

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE AND MAJOR EVENTS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (18:14):** I acknowledge the NSW Police Force and the work that it has done on recent major events in New South Wales. On 13 August the iconic City2Surf took place. I understand that an estimated 80,000 people were registered for the event, with even more along the course to cheer on the runners. NSW Police Force Operation City2Surf was in place to ensure the safety and the security of participants and event staff and spectators, and to minimise the impact to the local community. Last week over 75,000 people were at Stadium Australia to watch our Matildas in the world cup semifinal. Allianz and CommBank stadiums were also opened to fans to enjoy the game, as well as countless other venues right across New South Wales. While our Matildas did not come away with the win, our police were there, working with security and venue partners to make sure fans could cheer on their team safely. I thank the NSW Police Force for its efforts at our major events in this great State.

#### **SINGLETON RUGBY CLUB LADIES DAY**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:15):** I publicly thank the Singleton Rugby Club Ladies Day Organising Committee for the recent fundraising to assist those impacted by the Greta coach crash tragedy. The Bulls event was held at Rugby Park on 1 July to coincide with the Hunter rugby matches against Medowie and Nelson Bay, and raised an impressive \$11,500. The Ladies Day Organising Committee, which includes Kristy Hedley, Maggie Mulholland and Beck Lojszczyk, were concerned that the occasion would be held only three weeks after the bus tragedy and might not be timed appropriately under the circumstances. However, local businesses, sponsors and the community rallied behind them to ensure the event not only went ahead but also was supported so that it could achieve its objective. The \$11,500 from the Singleton Rugby Club Ladies Day continues to bolster the bus tragedy fund, which until recently had received \$2.2 million in donations while distributing \$877,000 to crash victims. The Bulls are committed to community engagement and support through various initiatives. I look forward to their future efforts.



### KAILPODH FESTIVAL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:16):** The month of September brings the Kailpodh Festival celebrated by the Kodava people of Kodagu in India. The festival celebrates the completion of the sowing of crops and means that people must remain watchful and protect the crops. The weapons and tools used to protect the crop are taken and decorated on this day and pooja, or prayers, are offered to Kaveramma, Lord Igguthappa and family ancestors. Celebrations are topped off with traditional foods and games or sports that bring families and communities together. I congratulate the committee of Sydney Kodavas on its hard work in ensuring that this important festival is celebrated to pass on Kodava traditions and culture, and to bring together Kodavas living in Sydney. For several decades these families have been coming together to ensure that people like me have a connection with and an appreciation of our cultural heritage and identity. I thank the elders for all their efforts over the years.

### COMPUTER PALS FOR SENIORS NORTHERN BEACHES

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:17):** I acknowledge the fantastic work of Computer Pals for Seniors Northern Beaches, of which I am a proud patron. This organisation has assisted over 3,000 local seniors to navigate and upskill in the digital realm for over 28 years. Computer Pals is a not-for-profit association and is run entirely by volunteers. Presently 23 volunteer trainers are giving valuable tuition to 60 seniors in both the Narrabeen arts and community centre and the local War Veterans Village, both up the road in Narrabeen. The trainers happily give up their free time to help seniors in the community understand the wonderful mysteries of the internet, email, different technology platforms, social media and much more. In fact, I should have called them when I was transitioning into our electorate office—I am not sure the previous member used a computer. I give a big thank you to president John Peachey and the entire management committee for their selfless work. They make the world a better place. Now I have just turned 50, I might actually qualify to join.

### EMILY AND SOPHIE CURTAIN

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:18):** I congratulate Emily and Sophie Curtain on their selection in the 2023 National Rugby League Women's [NRLW] West Tigers squad. They are the first twins ever to feature in the same NRLW team—and what a debut for the Tigers this season, with a whopping 36-8 victory over the Parramatta Eels at CommBank Stadium. Emily and Sophie have played rugby league together since the under-8s, playing juniors with Eagle Vale St Andrews based in my electorate. Since her debut in 2022, Emily has established a fierce reputation, kicking the winning field goal that gave the Tigers their maiden women's title. Now joined by her sister Sophie, an experienced young forward in her own right, the Tigers will be hard to beat. Emily and Sophie are only two of many sporting prodigies in my electorate, and I look forward to the upgrade of their alma mater, Eagle Vale High School, to include a specialist sports high to nurture the next generation of talented athletes in the south-west and Macarthur.

### PHILIPPA BECKER

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:19):** Most of us will have had a principal who we have a particularly fond memory of, one who helped us on our way, made a complex issue far more simple or was particularly good at making school a very special place. Manly Village Public School has had one of those wonderful principals for the past eight years in Ms Philippa Becker, and I pay tribute to her as she concludes her time at the school. Ms Becker started in July 2015 as the Principal of Manly Village Public School, and after eight wonderful years she will be moving on. Students and families will remember Ms Becker's kindness, attentiveness and open-door policy. They will also remember the handwritten personal notes of encouragement on all the students' school reports each term. I have had the privilege of working alongside Ms Becker. She has been an enthusiastic, capable and passionate leader of the beautiful Manly Village Public School, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

### PRIVATE JOHN SHIELDS

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:20):** This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. On 18 August I attended an event held in my electorate by Private John Leslie Shields to honour the service and sacrifices of our veterans in Vietnam. It was a very special occasion for him to share with the community and his grandsons. Today I recognise the service of Private John Shields of Picnic Point. John was conscripted 57 years ago as a young man. During his time in Vietnam, he risked his life numerous times to deliver first aid during battle and in active minefields. This year he was recognised with a medallion for his immense courage, selflessness and mateship. His courage and bravery continue to shine through in his dedication to sharing his experiences and the long-lasting impacts of war on veterans. I thank John for his invaluable contributions to his community and to this nation, and remember those who fought alongside him. Lest we forget.

### TAYLAH IVERACH

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:21):** It is an honour to recognise Ms Taylah Iverach, the winner of the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Zonta Young Indigenous Woman Award for 2023. Taylah is a proud young woman of the Dunghutti Nation and the school captain at Melville High School. She inspires her peers and her community. After experiencing grief at a young age, Taylah committed to becoming a heart specialist and providing medical services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in New South Wales. That selfless endeavour makes Taylah an inspiration within her region. Zonta International aims to empower and celebrate women while improving their health, education and professional status. The award is about engaging with our Indigenous community in a constructive way and helping them achieve their dreams. Taylah is a deserving recipient of the award who has made a marked contribution to the wider community through leadership programs and completion of secondary education. Taylah connects deeply to her Indigenous heritage and language and has a clear vision of her career goal of studying medicine. It is an outstanding achievement. Well done to Taylah.

### CENTRAL COAST SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:22):** Huge congratulations to everyone involved in the Central Coast Science and Engineering Challenge held at St Edwards College over two days in July. The school auditorium was abuzz with activity across both days as students from across the coast tackled eight different engineering challenges. Special thanks go to Rotary Central Coast and the fantastic team of volunteers who coordinated, measured and judged a wide range of activities. I also thank the passionate science and technology teachers who coordinated the excursion while supporting students on the day. Students built towers of paper and straw, constructed balsawood aeroplanes, designed an electricity network and completed a number of other creative activities. It was great to see students so intensely engaged, and discussions indicated many of those students are on track towards a career path in science or technology. The grand finale challenge was the destructive bridge test: to build a bridge that would support a road and carry a weighted load across a fixed span, until destruction. I congratulate the overall winners on the day I attended, MacKillop Catholic College, with St Eddies coming a close second.

### HAPPY HEARTS WALKING GROUP

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (18:23):** I recognise the Happy Hearts walking group at Cronulla, which has been providing an enjoyable way for people to be active and connect with others for over 17 years. It was founded by Sandra Hudson in 2005 as one of the local Heart Foundation walking groups that aim to help free Australia of heart disease. Easily spotted in their red shirts, members of the group meet at 7.00 a.m. three times each week at North Cronulla for a medium-pace walk of up to an hour, followed by coffee and a chat. The group has been a great social outlet for members, who also get together at other times for activities like book clubs, trivia and outings. I know Sandra well through her hard work advocating for the new MRI facility at Sutherland Hospital. I congratulate her on leading the Happy Hearts walking group over so many years.

### WE ARE STUDIOS

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:24):** We Are Studios is a community-based organisation empowering artists who live with a disability to reach their creative potential. Rosalind, Ebony and Jordan met with me to discuss their amazing work. We Are Studios recognises that many existing arts programs are not tailored to meet the creative needs of people with disabilities. The organisation seeks to bridge that gap by delivering programs that offer career opportunities for beginner, emerging and established artists, which are led by experienced mentors. The programs are supported by the organisation's strong partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales. I am pleased that We Are Studios will be launching its 100 per cent disability-led art studio on 23 September at the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre, where its first exhibition will be held. I congratulate the wonderful team at We Are Studios for creating spaces that provide autonomy, self-expression, creativity and pathways to employment for artists living with a disability.

### PORTIA ROBERTS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:25):** I congratulate Portia Roberts, a local year 10 student in my electorate, on recently achieving her goal of representing Australia as part of the Auroras, Australia's national dragon boat team, a goal she set when she was seven years old. This month the team competed in the sixteenth International Dragon Boat Federation World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Pattaya, Thailand. Portia and her squad mates competed strongly on the international stage, winning a bronze medal in the under-18 open and a silver medal in the under-16 mixed class. Her passion for dragon boating began when, aged 11, Portia used to watch her parents and grandparents from the shoreline while they trained with Deepwater Dragon Boat Club in Saratoga. Whilst Portia had to wait until she was 12 years of age to become a junior paddler, she quickly flourished

and over the next four years represented New South Wales twice before being selected to represent Australia with the Auroras Juniors. There to cheer Portia on were her proud parents, Justine and Jason, who have supported her all the way through. I again congratulate Portia and wish her every continued success chasing her dreams in the future.

### **VARDAVAR FEAST**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:26):** It was wonderful to attend the 2023 Vardavar feast with the parishioners and cultural committees of the Armenian Apostolic Church of the Holy Trinity in Wentworthville on Sunday 16 July 2023. The Vardavar festival celebrates the feast of the transfiguration of Christ and is a significant festival for our Armenian community, with its origins tracing back to the pagan period when it was celebrated to commemorate the harvest season. Following holy mass, members of the parish community and cultural committees came together to celebrate the festival through vibrant displays of Armenian culture. There were traditional dances, games, songs and theatre performances, as well as a delicious Armenian barbecue and a ceremonial release of doves. It was also great to hear from the guest speaker, Ms Nora Sevagian, executive director of the leading Armenian-Australian media organisation and member of the Armenian Relief Society of Australia. I thank Reverend Father Miuron Avedisian, the parish priest, and the members of the parish community for their hospitality. I congratulate them on hosting a vibrant and welcoming 2023 Vardavar feast celebration.

### **MIRACLE BABIES FOUNDATION**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:27):** I extend my heartfelt appreciation for the outstanding work of the Miracle Babies Foundation, Australia's leading organisation supporting premature and sick newborns and their families. Every year in Australia around 48,000 newborn babies require the help of a neonatal intensive care unit or special care nursery, with 27,000 of those babies born premature. The experience of having a baby come early, or not as expected, is life changing for those entire families. Without the support provided by the foundation, that can lead to lifelong effects on the wellbeing of those families. I congratulate chief executive officer Kylie Pussell, chief operating officer Danielle Hodgson, the Miracle Babies Foundation board and the rest of the team for the work they do. It was an honour to attend their supporter thankyou morning tea on Wednesday 16 August, and I look forward to being an ardent supporter of their work into the future. It was clear from that event that they have gone from strength to strength as they assist new mothers in their times of need.

### **DRAWING US TOGETHER INITIATIVE**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:28):** I recently had the pleasure of attending the Drawing Us Together initiative, celebrating Indigenous culture through the creation of a children's storybook written by Badimaya and Ukrainian woman Bianca Stawiariski. Students from Condell Park Public School, Chester Hill North Public School and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Villawood submitted excellent artworks to be featured as illustrations throughout the book. I commend the students, their parents and teachers for all their hard work. I thank Bass Hill Plaza for hosting the great initiative. Special mention must also go to Uncle John Dickson, a local elder, and his partner, Auntie Liz, as well as Rhys Simonds from Bass Hill Plaza.

### **ANNE OLIVER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:29):** Today I recognise Anne Oliver. Moving to Goulburn in 1989 with her husband, Anne quickly demonstrated her ongoing interest and passion for the game of netball by participating as a player, umpire and coach, and volunteering with Goulburn and District Netball, undertaking the roles of umpires coordinator, president and secretary. Anne made a return to teaching at The Crescent School, which is renowned for its exceptional standards in providing a learning and development environment enriched by individualised plans for students with disabilities. Anne taught at the school between 1990 and 2014. She is well accustomed to the values of supporting and giving back. I congratulate Anne on her enormous contribution to the Goulburn community, and on utilising her wonderful attributes, professional skills and passion to encourage and support others.

### **AUSTRALIAN SOUTH EAST ASIAN NETWORK**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:30):** On Saturday 24 June 2023 I took part in the celebration of Refugee Week and the first anniversary of the Australian South East Asian Network [ASEAN]. I was joined by the Assistant Minister for Defence, the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite, MP; Senator Dean Smith from Western Australia; and my colleague Julia Finn, the State member for Granville. The event was a great success and was spearheaded by its founder, Sawathey Ek, OAM. I have known Sawathey for many years, including before entering Parliament in my capacity as a lawyer. There were a few special highlights that were out of the ordinary for a multicultural event, including the special signing ceremony of the memorandum of understanding between the local communities, and the panel discussion. Besides the variety of food tasting, the event offered opportunities for young people to shine. I congratulate the young people appointed as ASEAN youth ambassadors, including

Christina Mao, Dylan Ek, Danny Khov, Khim Greenaway and Angel-Lina Khov. I congratulate all the volunteers of ASEAN and its host, the Lao community.

### ST GEORGE COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:31):** I inform the House that the thirteenth annual St George Community Awards have now officially opened. I remind members of my local community that they can nominate a well-deserving local resident for any one of the following award categories: individual volunteer achievement, youth achievement, community group achievement, business achievement, multicultural community, senior volunteer, sporting and environmental. Volunteers are the backbone of our community, whether they are running the local canteen or uniform shop, or coaching weekend sport. Beyond that, volunteers dedicate their time and effort without asking for any praise or recognition for their endeavours. I say a big heartfelt thankyou on behalf of my community to all the hardworking volunteers. In previous years we have recognised school principals, firefighters, nurses, doctors and teachers. Our community awards are an opportunity for us to say thank you to all our volunteers.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### NSW PACIFIC AWARDS 2023

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (18:32):** There is a common saying that I will now borrow: Not every hero wears a cape. Let me also add to that that not every hero gets a blockbuster movie. But the heroes that do wear capes and costumes and that do feature in a few too many movies—the heroes that we can all name, like Spider-Man and Superman—are, of course, not real. Rather, the real heroes are those who make a real impact on the people in our community and who give so generously their time and energy to improve the lives of others. However, they are unsung in our local community. They seek neither recognition nor reward, but they are certainly worthy of both. Their actions do not always make the headlines, nor do they get the reward that they thoroughly deserve.

But last month I was pleased to attend—along with the member for Liverpool and numerous councillors—the annual NSW Pacific Awards at Ottimo House in Denham Court. Now in its sixteenth year, the awards ceremony is hosted by the NSW Council for Pacific Communities [NSWCPC] and is the pinnacle event on the Pacific calendar. What started 16 years ago as a small community event at the school library in Minto has now morphed into the State's premier community achievement awards for Australians with Pacific ancestry. This year's theme was recognising and celebrating unsung heroes in our local community. The awards are an opportunity to shine a light on the achievements of Pacific Islander Australians and the immense contributions they make to Pacific culture and heritage and to the broader community.

New South Wales is proud to have such a strong and diverse Pacific community. I am even prouder to represent so many of them in my electorate. There is, indeed, a long history of people from Aotearoa and the Pacific Islands making New South Wales their home. Our State has the largest population of Pacific Islander Australians in the country and my own backyard of south-west Sydney has the highest concentration of Australians of Pacific ancestry. Our Pacific community plays an important role in the local community through their involvement in sport, church, charity and advocacy, and small business—just to name a few. Their contributions enrich our State and add to our diverse fabric and social character. As the member for Macquarie Fields, I am proud to call many in the Pacific community my friends.

The awards showcased the strength and success of the Pacific community in south-west Sydney, where there is no shortage of amazing and extremely talented people. Of the 38 finalists represented on the night, I am proud to say that 14 were from the Campbelltown area. I congratulate all the finalists and award recipients. It was great to see so many local unsung heroes getting the recognition that they deserve. Unsung heroes are the backbone of every community. They are the people we know—our families, friends and neighbours. If the past few years of the pandemic have taught us anything, it is that those unsung heroes make enormous personal sacrifices and commitments to keep us all safe and make our lives so much better. We should acknowledge their efforts and ongoing contributions because it is not only the right thing to do but also reminds us that, through acts of community service, we grow stronger together as a community and as a country.

I thank the NSW Council for Pacific Communities for hosting the special event, as it does every year, in particular its chairperson, Ms Mal Fruean, and the entire executive team. They have all worked extremely hard to advocate for the Pacific community and our wider community. Mal is an inspirational leader whom I have known for a very long time. She does an immense amount of work, and her community involvement is really inspiring. Mal is a true leader for our local community, and I know she will continue to do so many more great things in the

future. The 2023 NSW Pacific Awards night was a tremendous success and a pleasure to attend, as it has been every year it has been held. It started in the school library; it is now held in a big function hall. That shows the immense level of support it has across the State. Events such as the NSW Pacific Awards showcase the proud multicultural communities that make our State great. I again congratulate the NSWPCPC on bringing the community together to recognise our unsung heroes and the achievements of so many Australians of Pacific ancestry.

### **COST-OF-LIVING SUPPORT**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:37):** I regularly receive correspondence from constituents in the Wahroonga electorate regarding the rising cost of living. They range from seniors and families with children to young people and students. It is well established that one of the best ways to bring down the cost of living is to bring down inflation, which of course is a matter for the Federal Government, although it has no plan to do so. However, there are many ways in which State governments can assist people to ease the burden of rising costs.

The former New South Wales Liberal Government launched many programs to help people across the State, from Active Kids, Creative Kids, First Lap and Back to School vouchers to toll relief, as well as giving first home owners the choice to opt out of stamp duty in favour of a smaller annual payment. Those programs and legislative changes were highly beneficial to many people in my community who were concerned about the cost of living, as well as the broader community. Those initiatives would all have continued if the Coalition Government had been re-elected, but it is disappointing to see the Labor Government roll back many of them.

On 1 July the repeal by Labor of the NSW Liberals' First Home Buyer Choice legislation came into effect, with all properties valued over \$800,000 attracting a large lump sum stamp duty payment. Unfortunately, with median house prices almost double that amount across Sydney and the Central Coast, first home buyers now have to save more and wait longer to achieve the dream of home ownership. Then there is the Coalition's previous assistance to families with children. Nothing develops children, builds resilience and promotes healthy habits like learning to swim, playing community sport or engaging in music and artistic endeavours.

The importance of community sport and the arts to the health of our school-aged children can never be overstated. Therefore, cutting funding for the healthy cultural development of our kids should be the last resort, not the first. Labor does not have its priorities right. The Liberals continued two \$100 annual Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers as well as First Lap vouchers for every family in New South Wales during harder times for the State than now. They continued during a global pandemic, record drought, record bushfires and record floods. The Labor decision to end those vouchers for most New South Wales families has only contributed to the great burden on families due to the rising cost of living.

Since 2017 the former Liberal-Nationals Government invested more than \$2 billion in grassroots community sport through infrastructure grants and programs. The Active Kids vouchers were a first-in-the-nation initiative, commencing in January 2018. About a million vouchers have been used each year in New South Wales since then and did not exist anywhere else prior to that. It has been the most successful sports participation program in Australia's history. It is the sort of program that will produce the next generation of stars like the Matildas, who will now not have the opportunities that the previous Government gave them. Other jurisdictions started but never imitated the Coalition's program, which was the best in the nation.

The former Government had committed to continuing the successful program. In a study into the effects of the Active Kids voucher program it was concluded that it significantly increased children's physical activity levels, and those increases continued over a six-month period. The introduction of the program saw children who took part in one or more organised sports or physical activities at least once over the past 12 months significantly increase from 68 per cent to 77 per cent between 2016 and 2019. As the former Minister for Sport, I met with many small community sports organisations in Penrith, Wollondilly, Goulburn, Riverstone, East Hills, Leppington, on the South Coast and across the State. They all told me that the Active Kids vouchers were important for young children to be able to play sport because they helped families fund those activities.

In the 2022-23 State budget, more than \$943 million was committed to grassroots community sport through infrastructure grants and programs, including the Active Kids voucher program. But this Government has only committed to 100 new preschools this term, one fifth of the 500 preschools the former Government had earmarked, and will not confirm a time frame for delivering a year of free pre-kindergarten for all children. Its \$22 million package does not match the \$282 million that was being rolled out by the previous Government. It is so important for our families, seniors and young people to have the cost-of-living programs that the Coalition introduced, which this Labor Government is unfortunately cutting.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:42):** The member for Wahroonga knows full well that the \$190 million for the Active Kids vouchers was not budgeted by the former Liberal-Nationals Government. This Government

is continuing the program in a means-tested environment, which is really tough but an economically responsible decision on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

### HOWARTH DRILLING PTY LTD

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:42):** I again make a contribution about a significant injustice in this Chamber in 2014. I say at the outset that I was a participant in that injustice. At the time members were all on summer break and Parliament was recalled to deal with a couple of matters that the O'Farrell Government deemed urgent. One of them was to respond to the violence on the streets of Sydney with regard to king-hit punches, which were leaving people severely damaged and sometimes dead. The other matter that was brought before the House on that day was the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill 2014. When members arrived to participate in that incredibly unusual day, the printing press was working overtime to produce the bills to hand to opposition and crossbench members of the day.

The Government did not provide any pre-briefings or opportunities for non-Government members to consider the bills' contents and/or engage with external stakeholders. I was on the other side of the House that day, and ultimately I cast my vote in support of the two bills. The consequence of the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill continues to be felt in the Cessnock electorate. I speak on behalf of one company that was devastated by the actions of the Parliament on that day: Howarth Drilling Pty Ltd. It is a stark reminder of why we should not rush legislation through this House. Howarth Drilling was a family-owned business that had been in operation for 25 years. Not long prior to the introduction of the bill they had received an offer to have their business bought out from them for \$20 million, so it can be assumed that was the value of the company.

Howarth Drilling was owned and operated by Terry and Warwick Howarth. It achieved industry recognition, holding two Australian and world records for drilling performance. Howarth Drilling was selected to represent Australian-made drill rigs to be sold into China. Terry and Warwick did not attend expos and talkfests; they provided boots on the ground with real exploration to match company status specifications and put them on display for interested Chinese investors. It commenced drilling EL 7270 in 2010—known to most of us as the Doyles Creek mine. Howarth Drilling was the preferred contractor for all drilling services on EL 7270.

In 2012 Howarth Drilling was valued at \$20 million by way of a planned acquisition by an external company. It was an active participant in NuCoal's innovative concept of a training mine and looked forward to implementing its underground rig training at the Doyles Creek underground training facility, the first in Australia to train coalminers to work safely and effectively in underground coalmines. Howarth Drilling had 19 permanent employees at the time, 10 of whom were family. On top of that, it subcontracted 10 casuals. The company was about to celebrate 25 years of business in 2015, and was looking forward to the first of the third generation commencing employment with the company. It purchased four new deep hole exploration rigs in 2013, with three new underground rigs under construction, in preparation for the work that it was going to do at Doyles Creek mine.

But in 2014 Howarth Drilling encountered a challenge that it just could not overcome: the Parliament of New South Wales. In testimony, Mr Warwick Howarth wrote, "The treachery of O'Farrell's veiled agenda, the instrument known as the NSW mining amendment Act." Howarth Drilling was unique and almost unheard of in this new millennium. It was family owned and operated in the most challenging form of drilling: deep hole exploration. In his second reading speech on the bill in this House, then Premier O'Farrell described the fact that ICAC had handed down its report into Operations Jasper and Acacia and that ICAC had made the recommendation that innocent affected parties should be provided with compensation. The only way to compensate Howarth Drilling would be to buy out the company, which by that stage had gone bankrupt and been destroyed. But Premier O'Farrell failed to acknowledge companies like Howarth Drilling at all. [*Time expired.*]

### TWEED VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:48):** I am known as "Mr 100 per cent for the Tweed". Members would be aware that one of the largest health infrastructure projects in regional New South Wales is well underway in the Tweed electorate. The brand new \$723 million Tweed Valley Hospital is about six months away from opening its doors, a milestone that has been 7½ years in the making since it was announced. Construction has powered on despite the challenges of a global pandemic and devastating floods in the region. The first intake of patients is expected early next year.

This state-of-the art hospital will transform healthcare services in the growing Tweed region now and into the future. It is a project, I am proud to say, that was made possible by funding provided by the previous New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. Not only will there be 200 extra beds and an extra 16 new emergency department treatment spaces beyond the number provided at the existing Tweed hospital; the new hospital will

also include two major new services: an interventional cardiology service, and an integrated cancer care service with radiotherapy and PET scanner. The hospital has been designed in close collaboration with staff and the community, and it is a project that will deliver world-class healthcare facilities to the Tweed.

Many in my electorate are keenly awaiting the opening day, with my office regularly receiving inquiries about when construction will be completed and the doors will be open. The project has been a major employer for our local area as well, with the construction employing hundreds of local tradespeople. Construction has now entered one of its busiest phases as both the internal and external works power ahead. It is an impressive facility to drive past. Recently released drone footage adds further perspective, with excellent views from all angles of the full footprint and striking, contemporary design.

Importantly, one of the project's final boxes to be ticked last month was the announcement of free car parking at Tweed's hospital and the health facilities across regional New South Wales from 1 August 2023. Free parking for patients, visitors and staff at Tweed Valley Hospital was promised by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, and the New South Wales Labor Party included the same commitment in its submissions to the Parliamentary Budget Office during this year's State election. While it was disappointing not to be a part of the formal announcement by the Minister for Health that the New South Wales Labor Government has honoured that commitment, it was pleasing that members opposite have recognised the importance of free car parking at hospitals and health facilities in regional New South Wales.

Working at or visiting a hospital can be extremely stressful. Removing the extra cost of parking will help staff, patients and visitors focus on treatment and care. Thousands of people will use the new Tweed Valley Hospital every day when it is completed. I am proud to have been a longstanding champion of the free car parking. Even Adam Hall, a great member of the Health Services Union, or the HSU, is very pleased with that. I have a lot of respect for Adam.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Glad to hear it.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Absolutely. He is a fine gentleman and works very hard for his members in the union. The investment in health infrastructure is critical for our region but investment in people and the cost of living is just as important. I am incredibly pleased that staff, patients and visitors will not have the unnecessary stress of parking fees when they attend our new hospital. Some on the other side of the political divide have used this as political clickbait but I have always remained steadfast in this important commitment. I am proud to deliver this win for hospital staff and the entire Tweed community, who will rely on this hospital for decades to come. I look forward to being able to update the House again early next year following the opening of the hospital. It was a long and arduous saga. It was debated. As I said, I came to this place 16-odd years ago. With big announcements like that—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Thank God for a Labor government.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Yes, absolutely. I think I am the only National Party member who worked in opposition. I think there were only a couple of current members here then.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Yes.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I must admit, in those days Reba Meagher was my health Minister; Carmel Tebbutt was another. I have a lot of respect for both of those people. I got on well with them, and we achieved a lot. I will not mention Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald. Both sides have—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** We won't mention Gladys Berejiklian or John Sidoti.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** We both have ones. I think the hospital is a fine collaboration. As opposed to my good friend Anastacia Palaszczuk, who recently said that Queensland hospitals are for Queenslanders, we are building a hospital in New South Wales for all Australians. That is something we can be very proud of. Once again, 100 per cent for the Tweed.

### SWANSEA CHANNEL DREDGING

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (18:53):** Over the past eight years I have addressed this House many times about the disgraceful lack of dredging of the Swansea Channel by the former Liberal Government. For years I have made budget submission after budget submission to multiple former transport Ministers, calling on them to fund the dredging of the Swansea Channel. I also extended invitations so that they could see the impacts of the shoaling firsthand. Each and every time it fell on the deaf ears of a government that simply did not take this important issue seriously.

When the former Government did finally recognise the urgent need to provide funding, the channel had shoaled up and was no longer safely navigable. In July 2021 the issue was so blatantly obvious that even the

former Liberal Government was forced to announce \$6.2 million to conduct emergency dredging in five waterways across New South Wales, including the Swansea Channel, which it claimed was the priority. It should come as no surprise that, despite the funding announcement, those opposite failed to spend a single cent of this promised funding on dredging of the channel.

The Liberals' negligence has put the safety of boaties at risk, with countless stories from boaties who have got stuck in the channel. It has also placed additional pressure on the local Lake Macquarie Marine Rescue volunteers, who do a fantastic job and often have to respond to vessels attempting to navigate the channel. The lack of a safely navigable channel has placed a handbrake on our region, with local marine businesses and local yacht clubs recounting stories of dropping visitor numbers. One example of this is the Royal Motor Yacht Club at Toronto. Its annual Heaven Can Wait regatta, which raises money for the Hunter branch of Cancer Council NSW, has seen declining participation over the years, year on year. It was so refreshing to be joined by the new Minister for Transport, my friend Jo Haylen, who actually took the time to visit the region and announce that finally, after years of delay, the project to dredge the Swansea Channel is underway.

I am pleased to say right now as we stand in this House that dredging works at the Swansea Channel are underway. The Minns Government has provided \$1.5 million to dredge 30,000 cubic metres of sand via two dredging campaigns. The first campaign is underway right now, and it will dredge 15,000 cubic metres of sand. This dredging will provide a 30-metre-wide channel to the depth of minus 3.5 Australian height datum and allow for vessels with a draught of up to 2.5 metres to travel through the channel safely. A second dredging campaign to be held in autumn of 2024 will remove a further 15,000 cubic metres of sand. This sand will be repurposed to address local erosion issues on Blacksmiths Beach. I know the community has waited a long time for this project. I am so proud to say that the Minns Government upon being elected immediately set to work on delivering this important project.

The announcement of these works has been welcomed by the community and boaties right around the State. Swansea Channel and Lake Macquarie is one of the premier waterways in Australia. For too long it has been inaccessible. With these works we are opening up that waterway for everybody to enjoy once again. I can assure the community that work does continue on developing a 10-year dredging strategy, and I look forward to working further with the Minister for Transport to deliver on this important work. Unlike our predecessors, this is a government that takes this issue clearly and will deliver for the people of Swansea.

I am so proud to be able to say in this place that the Minns Labor Government stood by the promise it took to the election of March 2023. One of the first things it did was set about ensuring that one of the most beautiful lakes in our midst is now able to be navigated safely, and we as the people of New South Wales are able to enjoy that to the extent that we should. I also acknowledge that the member for Gosford is in the Chamber. She is another great advocate for the waterways in her area. She tells me that dredging has begun in her area of Ettalong.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** The dredge has arrived.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The dredge has arrived. Together we have fought for dredging, and it is only a Minns Labor government that has delivered it.

### **SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:58):** Delivering infrastructure and getting things done for our local community is important to me. As members would recall, I was able to fight hard and secure more than \$700 million to provide for a new hospital at Shellharbour. Early works are underway, and I look forward to seeing the new hospital service our growing community. But before the final design is completed and services are decided, a number of issues need to be resolved to the community's satisfaction. I want to use the time of this House to reiterate those concerns that I have raised both in the last parliamentary term and in this term of Parliament.

The first issue is the missing helipad. The current Shellharbour Hospital has a helipad. At present, when the new \$700 million hospital opens it will not have a helipad, which makes absolutely no sense. I have been contacted by both paramedics and patients—some of whom needed an air ambulance—to express their deep concern about the Government's plans not to build a helipad as part of the new hospital. The Government advises that under its plan, helicopters will land at Albion Park airport and patients will be transported to the new hospital by road. Let us put to one side the fact that the site of the new hospital on Dunmore Road can often be very busy, with a school and train station also on that road.

The new hospital will have expanded emergency services, an intensive care unit and surgical services. The Government has yet to make clear any plans to provide greater emergency access to the site. I cannot understand why it would penny pinch on a relatively small and modest item of capital expenditure as part of a new build that



facilitates urgent emergency critical care for patients. Seconds and minutes matter. To be absolutely clear, in his answer to my question on the issue on 30 June, the Minister said:

The project design will enable the construction of a rooftop helipad in the future. In disaster emergency response situations, helicopters will be able to land in the grounds next to the Harbour Hospital.

The key words are "in the future". It makes no sense to build a new hospital without a helipad when the existing hospital has a helipad.

The second issue I raise is the delivery of maternity services. The southern Illawarra is the fastest growing area of New South Wales outside south-western Sydney. A new hospital is an opportunity for a new beginning. I am not naive about these issues. Birthing services require specialist staff, such as obstetricians, anaesthetists and paediatricians, to ensure they are safe. But if those challenges can be overcome in other regions and remote parts of New South Wales, it should be far from impossible at Shellharbour. It just requires political will to ensure we attract the right teams to the area. Speaking of political will—or perhaps a better description would be "political won't"—during the New South Wales election campaign the member for Shellharbour committed Labor to returning birthing services to Shellharbour Hospital. When I asked the Minister for Health about the issue, he said:

A range of maternity services will be provided at the new Shellharbour Hospital.

It would be charitable to say the Minister's answer was disappointingly light on detail but, knowing the Minister as I do, I will let it pass on this occasion. I asked a similar question of the former Minister for Health. Suffice to say Minister Hazzard was slightly more detailed about his position on maternity services. He said:

Maternity services will be provided to expectant mothers on a daily basis at the new Shellharbour Hospital for both pre and post birthing care. These services will include midwifery-led clinics, doctor-led clinics, midwifery group practice (MGP) clinics, the establishment of an MGP in-home ante-natal and post-natal service both in-person and virtually, lactation support clinics, gynaecology clinics, women's health physiotherapy and childbirth education classes.

The new Shellharbour Hospital has been designed with the future in mind. There will be opportunity, should it be possible, for expanded or new services in line with the needs of the community. Birthing services will remain at Wollongong Hospital in the short to medium term due to the specialist services and staff that are required to maintain a safe birthing facility for mothers and their babies.

Both of those answers are not good enough and do not satisfy local residents, who want to see birthing services returned to Shellharbour Hospital. I make a comment about the existing Shellharbour site. The new hospital will see a surge in additional staff as services expand. Once decommissioned, the existing hospital site should be redeveloped to accommodate key frontline worker housing for an expanded health workforce. The site is perfectly placed. It is close to public transport, shops and the new Shellharbour Hospital. To date, the Government has not offered a view on what will happen to that land. Unlike most other government departments, NSW Health is not obliged to divest dormant or surplus-to-requirement assets to Property NSW.

I call on the Government to work with Shellharbour City Council and other stakeholders to redevelop the site for expanded health workforces in the future. If we want to attract and retain the frontline services we need, we should use those opportunities to address one of the greatest affordability barriers. Those opportunities should be seized to build the community we need and the services we require.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:03):** I commend my good colleague the member for Shellharbour, who is in the Chamber. The member for Kiama is speaking about her electorate. He is not meant to speak about anything but his own electorate in his private member's statement. I acknowledge the incredible work of the member for Shellharbour and her fantastic advocacy for a public hospital, rather than a private hospital, in her electorate.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 76. I make very clear that the hospital service is in my electorate. For the member for Shellharbour to carry on as she has is unnecessary.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Gosford may continue her response.

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** I would like to continue. I commend the member for Shellharbour for her incredible advocacy on this important resource in her electorate. Planning is still underway for this public hospital, so it was very interesting that the member for Kiama said the Labor Government had not committed to a number of things to do with the hospital. The Labor Government will deliver a fantastic resource in Shellharbour thanks to the advocacy of the member for Shellharbour.

#### **BLUE MOUNTAINS WOMEN'S HEALTH AND RESOURCE CENTRE**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:05):** Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre in Katoomba. I sat down with some of its staff to chat about the amazing work they do. We also discussed their plans given the recent funding they received under the joint State and Federal governments' Sexual Violence Project Fund. The Blue Mountains Women's Health and

Resource Centre was established in 1981. Since then, its services have grown in size and outreach. It now runs myriad programs, which are all aimed at helping women in every aspect of their lives.

In 2015 I spoke in this place about the centre's brilliant work coordinating high school programs that educated students about domestic and sexual violence prevention. Again, I will share some of the fantastic work the centre continues to do to protect and promote women's health and safety in the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas. On a day-to-day basis, the team at the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre run several programs aimed at providing a holistic approach to women's health. There is a dedicated carers group, which offers women responsible for the care of others a safe space to openly discuss their mental wellbeing and exchange valuable resources.

The centre also facilitates Yoga in a Chair, which provides yoga that is tailored to individuals with limited mobility and newcomers to yoga. Recently the centre started a women's walking group, which meets on Mondays and Wednesdays, so women can go for a walk and talk about anything that is on their mind. This week it will hold its first neurodiverse peer support group. Front and centre of these programs—and those are just some that are on offer—is a focus on community and wellbeing. But the work does not stop there. Along with workshops and classes, the centre offers a number of health and social services. Two doctors and one nurse work part time at the centre so visitors can receive trauma-informed medical advice, and a team of counsellors and mental health professionals is dedicated to providing necessary mental health support to people of any age.

The centre's healthy waitlist is indicative of the great need in my Blue Mountains community. From my first day in this Chamber, I have fought for the protection and promotion of women. Devastatingly, last week we lost another woman to domestic violence. Again, we are painfully reminded of its prevalence in our society. Drew Douglas is the thirty-fifth woman to be killed this year in an act of domestic violence. I extend my sincere condolences to her family and friends. However, we cannot just keep sending our condolences; we need action. One in three women have experienced some form of physical violence from the age of 15, and one in five have experienced sexual violence. We know also that certain groups are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence, such as women, children, First Nations people, LGBTQI+ people, older women and people with disability.

Funding from both the Minns and Albanese governments will expand the capacity of organisations like the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre to tackle those alarming statistics on a local community level. The centre understands that domestic and family violence does not occur in isolation. Providing women with equal educational and financial opportunities is crucial, as is educating young people around consent, providing domestic violence and emergency situation training to businesses, and offering free access to a washing machine, dryer or shower. The new funding will go towards educating and empowering women to know their rights and helping them to access the resources that are available.

The Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre plans to use the Minns and Albanese governments' funding to contribute to an effective, coordinated health and safety response for non-fatal strangulation victim-survivors, as an extension of its Ending Violence, improving Equality program—or EViE—which is run by a group of young women. Studies have shown a strong correlation between non-fatal strangulation and eventual domestic violence related homicide. The centre has identified the need to provide preventative measures in addition to the support it gives to survivors through holistic and trauma-informed support services.

Raising awareness and destigmatising violence in our community will mean women and children are better equipped to speak out if they are victims. We know that these are sometimes difficult conversations but, growing up in a generation where conversations like this were swept under the rug, I have seen firsthand the damage that can cause. I acknowledge the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the Minns Labor Government for their commitment. We know that community groups and organisations are an integral part of enacting change, but it takes support from all levels of government to move forward. I also acknowledge the relentless and life-changing work of the centre's staff and management committee, a lot of whom work on a voluntarily basis. I particularly thank those I spent time with last week: Cherie, Ailie and Kerry. I know the funding means a lot. I am pleased our State and Federal governments are imagining a future where our young people can genuinely expect better.

### **BOOST YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:10):** I commend the member for Blue Mountains for her private member's statement. Both she and I have a very keen interest in the prevention of family and domestic violence. Tonight I bring to the attention of the Parliament a similar private member's statement about a groundbreaking mentoring program called Boost that is designed to combat domestic and family violence offences among adolescents. The program was developed by the Australian Community Support Organisation in collaboration with the NSW Police Force, Youth Justice NSW and the University of Wollongong. It has demonstrated promising outcomes in tackling this pressing issue. Whilst a great many programs have been set up

to help victim-survivors, the Boost program was established to break the cycle of violence by assisting young offenders.

Recent research by the Australian Institute of Criminology has revealed a troubling correlation between adolescent offenders and their propensity for continued violent behaviour into adulthood. In the Illawarra region, Boost has made a significant difference since it was established in September 2022. With 40 participants engaged in mentorship and group activities, the program has delivered over 1,500 hours of youth mentoring. Notably, only seven of the 40 participants—a mere 17.5 per cent—have breached their apprehended violence orders [AVO] during the program. These figures stand in stark contrast to the distressing statistics revealed by police data, which indicates that without intervention 23.3 per cent of young individuals in our region face new domestic and family violence related charges, while a staggering 54.5 per cent face additional non-domestic and family violence related charges within a year of their initial offence. Furthermore, among those charged with domestic and family violence related offences, an alarming 59.3 per cent reoffend within just 90 days of their first offence. The program provides a promising solution to address the root causes of violent behaviours.

Initially piloted in the Illawarra, Boost has since expanded its catchment area to include the Sutherland shire due to its success. The overwhelming demand for mentors has resulted in a waiting list of young people eager to engage with the program. Boost's intensive six-month intervention equips young individuals between the ages of 14 to 17, both male and female, with a deep understanding of their involvement in violent behaviours. By helping these young people to identify triggers, thoughts and feelings that lead to AVO breaches, the program empowers participants to develop new prosocial and respectful alternative views. Mentors play a vital role in establishing close relationships by providing comprehension of reasons for AVO breaches and effective strategies to prevent recurrence.

I will share the inspiring stories of two young individuals from Shellharbour who have benefited immensely from Boost. Jason, a 16-year-old First Nations male, overcame disengagement from education and employment through the program. With guidance from his mentor, Jason transformed his life, fostered a strong connection to his culture, improved his family relations and set ambitious goals for his education and future employment. The same goes for Ajay, another 16-year-old First Nations male, who faced significant challenges, including awful substance misuse and a lack of awareness about his Aboriginal heritage. Boost provided the necessary support for Ajay to rebuild his self-esteem, establish a healthy relationship with his mother, secure full-time employment and embark on a journey of personal growth and cultural exploration. These stories exemplify the potential that Boost has to effect change, uplift communities and create a safer future for our young people.

Key stakeholders, including the NSW Police Force, the Department of Communities and Justice, and the courts, have already recognised the program's remarkable impact and emphasise its critical importance. I applaud the Commonwealth Government for its initial 12-month funding of the Boost program, but I now call on my own government to reinvest up to \$800,000 so we can have another 12-month pilot. This is a program that is working, and it is working because it is fantastic. It is identifying young offenders, aged between 14 and 17, to stop the cycle. Once the cycle is stopped, it works for generations to come. It is a worthwhile, necessary and urgent investment that young people need not just in the electorate of Shellharbour but also across the State. I thank the dedicated Boost mentors, who do an outstanding job. I do not want the program be discontinued due to \$800,000.

#### TRIBUTE TO MARCUS PRENTICE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:15):** This evening I speak about an incredibly valued member of our local community. In December last year, Marcus Prentice sadly passed away at the age of 49. Marcus was and still remains a big part of the Concord community. He was known by so many and is missed by all. Marcus sold *The Big Issue* outside of Coles in Concord for 11 years and was a part of The Big Issue organisation for over 20 years, raising awareness about homelessness. Marcus made an impact on people and became a friend to many over the years. He would greet you when you walked past. He had a beautiful and friendly nature, and he would speak to all and pat every dog that walked by. If during a walk with your dog you realised that you needed to make a quick grocery shop, he would look after your dog.

The regard in which Marcus was held by our local community was demonstrated by the influx of locals leaving flowers and tributes outside Coles upon the sad news of his passing. Community members raised over \$20,000 for his funeral. I acknowledge Melanie from the Concord Mums Unite Facebook Group and Adele from the Love Life Store and Cafe in Concord West for organising the GoFundMe page so that locals could donate to Marcus' funeral and ensure he had the send-off that he deserved. I am told that Adele supported and was a great friend of Marcus, and I acknowledge her for her humility and her kindness.

The City of Canada Bay council held a fundraising event in April this year to celebrate the contribution of Marcus to our local community. It was a huge success, and also raised awareness and over \$26,000 for the

independent not-for-profit organisation The Big Issue. Many local businesses and community members supported through attendance at the event and through kind donations. Our community showed its generosity as it came together to support a worthy cause. I thank those who contributed.

The Big Issue runs social enterprises to create work opportunities for people who are unable to access mainstream work. These include The Big Issue Magazine, the Women's Workforce, The Big Issue Classroom and the Community Street Soccer program. In addition to the fundraising event for The Big Issue, the City of Canada Bay council celebrated Marcus' contribution to our local community with the unveiling of a plaque on Majors Bay Road earlier this month. His plaque will stand forever where he sold *The Big Issue* in Concord and will serve as a commemoration for him.

At the unveiling of the plaque I met Marcus' father, David Prentice, who travelled from Tasmania for the day. We had a long conversation about Marcus, about how he was really looking forward to turning 50—he was just a couple of weeks short—and how he was really excited to go to Tasmania. It really does break your heart. David told me that he was absolutely blown away and grateful for the outpouring of love that he received from our community following Marcus' death. To David, and to all of Marcus' family, friends and loved ones, I say that I am thinking of them and I hope that they find comfort in their grief to know they have the love and support of a whole community and suburb. Marcus had such an impactful life in our local community, and he will forever be missed. Vale, Marcus Prentice.

### TRIBUTE TO ZVONIMIR "RALE" RASIC

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:19):** Tonight I pay tribute to a remarkable Australian who, through his contribution to sport in this country, left his indelible mark on the world of football and the Liverpool community. Born in a small village called Dole in the former Yugoslavia, Zvonimir "Rale" Rasic grew up as an orphan. A lifelong player of the game, he began his soccer career playing in Yugoslav clubs, having been selected for the national youth team at just 17 years of age. After migrating to Australia in 1962, firstly to Melbourne, he played football for the Footscray Yugoslav United Soccer Team for four years in addition to stints representing Victoria in the national league.

While he was undoubtedly a successful player, his contributions to soccer as a coach and manager following his exit from the field in 1966 are what truly crafted his enduring legacy. Rale's coaching career began with Footscray, followed by Melbourne HSC, St George Budapest, Marconi and the Pan-Hellenic Soccer Club. In the early 1970s, he moved to Sydney to coach various teams, leading St George to the New South Wales grand final and the Tokyo International Tournament in 1971. From 1986 to 1988, his teams won the national championships and the National Soccer League Cup final. His notable achievement, however, came about by virtue of his appointment as coach of the Australian national team in 1970 at the relatively tender age of 34, just eight years after landing in the country. He famously guided the Socceroos to their first appearance in the FIFA World Cup, where they were knocked out in the group stage after losing two games and drawing one. Australia would not advance this far in a FIFA World Cup again until 2006, when, coincidentally, Rale was a presenter for the SBS coverage.

Controversially, however, he was sacked by the Australian Soccer Federation just after the world cup and replaced by former English player and coach Brian Green. Rale attributed his replacement to what he perceived as Australia's longstanding prejudices within the Australian Soccer Federation at the time. That could also explain his lifelong and fervent advocacy for social cohesion and multiculturalism. In 1989 Rale Rasic was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame and, in 2002, was awarded the Australian Sports Medal and Centenary Medal for services to soccer. He received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2004.

A visionary and a mentor, he united Australians of all ages and walks of life around the game. No clearer was this the case than in Liverpool and across south-west Sydney, where soccer continues to be a pillar of our sporting tradition and a source of community, mateship and friendly competition. His legacy in Western Sydney can be highlighted by his intense involvement with amateur and professional teams across our region, including with amateur team the Fairfield Bulls and renowned professional team the Marconi Stallions. He coached Marconi to the Australian championships in 1972 and to the New South Wales grand final in 1973.

As Rale himself said about his infamous sacking as national coach in 1975, "They took from me something I was doing better than anybody else. I was a true-blue Aussie, and nobody can deny that." That is an apt characterisation of his contribution to our country that few could say better. Over the past month, we have seen football fever truly grip our nation. For many in my community, it has been a long time coming. In the words of the great Johnny Warren, Rale "told us so". I extend my condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and the players that have achieved sporting greatness under his guidance. As a community and as a nation, we are truly better for his contribution.

## MR PERFECT BARBECUES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:23):** Tonight I speak about an initiative that I have been involved with in Orange for nearly three years that I am confident has had a positive impact on the lives of many men in the community. It is called Mr Perfect, and it is a men's health barbecue. Its mantra is "more than a BBQ"—and it certainly is more than just a barbecue. I did not come up with the modest name of this non-for-profit community organisation; founder Terry Cornick did when he kicked it off several years ago on the northern beaches of Sydney. However, I did choose to be the local host of these regular men's catchups when I saw a gap in the delivery of grassroots services for men's mental health options. Mr Perfect barbecues are now sizzling right across Australia, led by enthusiastic local hosts who do an amazing job and provide an option in their local communities for men's mental health support.

I cannot take all the credit for the success of the Orange Mr Perfect barbecues. I am fortunate to also have the assistance of other community-minded blokes—namely Glenn Floyd, a mineworker and local councillor on Orange City Council; Matt Barr, a registered nurse at the local hospital; and my brother-in-law, Gary Sanders, who is also a mineworker. Between us, we host these free monthly men's barbecue lunches. I have even seconded two of my sons, Mathew and Sean, to help out on occasions. Usually held on the first Sunday of each month in the picturesque Cook Park in Orange, we cook the barbecue between 11.30 a.m. and 2.00 p.m., flipping snags, rissoles or kebabs and washing it down with ice-cold bottled water or cans of soft drink whilst we get together, talk and check on how everyone is going. It is a simple formula: Create an environment that men are attracted to and feel comfortable attending—a barbecue in the park. We put on a free lunch whilst encouraging or inviting blokes to attend.

There is something primal about men gathering around a fire while cooking and enjoying food. It has been happening for thousands of years; it is in our DNA. It helps create an environment conducive to conversations and discussions, where any problems anyone is having can be openly discussed without fear of judgement, embarrassment or humiliation. The last barbecue we held earlier this month attracted over 50 men. On average, we usually get approximately 30 to 40 men. Many are regular attendees; however, we also get new men coming along every month, and I am always interested in listening to their stories, experiences and reasons for attending.

I have enjoyed watching some of the friendships that have been formed over years from these barbecues. Many of the men also catch up for a coffee on a weekly basis and have now become close friends. I have observed men who have developed so much over the time that they have been attending the barbecues. They are often reluctant to engage or communicate when they come initially but have now grown so much in confidence and self-esteem, leading conversations, greeting newcomers or helping with the cooking or food preparation. It is extremely satisfying to see that growth in many of those men. We also hear stories from men about why they have been attending the barbecues and how much they look forward to attending. Many mark the date in their calendars. It gives them a positive event to look forward to, which is inspiring.

From experience, a lot of men feel isolated. That can manifest in depression, anxiety or other mental disorders. It might be that they are going through a stressful separation or family law proceedings or have pre-existing medical conditions. Those are some of the motivations for why the blokes attend. Then again, I have spoken to men who have attended just to help out, blokes who want to pop down for a chat, or some simply might just be hungry—all is fine. The objective is to get as many men there as possible. As I have stated, the barbecues are a lot more than just a barbecue. They are a useful vehicle to draw men together in a non-judgemental, safe space where men feel comfortable attending, can talk openly about matters impacting their lives and can find commonality with other men and build rapport while establishing friendships.

I know that we are on the right track when the feedback I hear is so positive. It is much more than a barbecue. It provides a free, informal, drop-in, non-judgemental, safe place for men to attend, open up and talk about their problems or issues without fear, while eating a rissole or sausage sandwich with other like-minded men. I recently met with the new CEO of Mr Perfect, John Mooney, and we discussed the importance of the barbecue. I congratulate Mr Mooney on his appointment. I am sure that he will do an outstanding job taking Mr Perfect to the next level. If anyone is in Orange on 10 September, they should pop down to Cook Park and catch up for a chat and a free sausage sandwich. They will not be disappointed.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:28):** I thank the member for Orange and the Mr Perfect team for the fantastic work they are doing in supporting men's health. It is great that the member has managed to take the time and to make great connections. I congratulate all the men who participate in those ongoing friendships and look forward to what the initiative will become in the future.

## MULTICULTURAL MEDIA

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:29):** Today I recognise the importance of our multicultural media to our State and our local communities across New South Wales, including the Oatley electorate. As many members in this House know, we rely on the media every day to inform, educate and enlighten us. The media are, for many of us, our first port of call to learn about developing stories that impact our daily lives. The media, often noted as comprising the fourth estate, wield immense power in our society, possessing the explicit capacity to influence, inform and advocate. In a country like ours, a free, open and unbiased press is a central pillar of our democracy, as it is through the media that social, legislative and cultural change can occur. With that sentiment, I highlight the importance of multicultural media to our diverse, vibrant and thriving society. Engaging with multicultural media is something we can all do better, but we have a strong track record.

As a member of Parliament, a former Minister for Multiculturalism and now shadow Minister, I have always tried to make a concerted effort to ensure that multicultural media outlets are treated with the respect they deserve, reflecting the high esteem in which they are held by our many multicultural communities. Multicultural media played a crucial role during the pandemic in providing information to communities across the State in a challenging time. The pandemic provided one of the greatest challenges for the media as a whole, as the fast-changing health advice along with the rise of misinformation created a significant degree of confusion and uncertainty in the community. But, throughout it all, many in our community—particularly those with little to no English, like my mother-in-law, who was born and bred in Lebanon—relied on accurate and targeted information to ensure that their lives and livelihoods were protected from the impacts of the pandemic.

I am proud of our track record of supporting multicultural media in this great State. During our time in government, I was proud to support a number of initiatives to help multicultural media, including new funding for language services that ensures that all key government announcements can be translated and shared with multicultural media; a requirement for council partnership grants to allocate 10 per cent of promotional budgets to advertising with multicultural media; and frequent briefings with multicultural media in conjunction with NSW Health, ensuring that health advice was provided in a timely and consistent manner. I conducted regular interviews with multicultural media to ensure that our diverse communities were kept up to date with priorities and initiatives designed to make their lives better. We advocated across government for agencies to increase their engagement with multicultural communities, utilising the immense reach and power of multicultural media outlets to do so. We also hosted the annual Premier's Multicultural Communications Awards to recognise excellence in the multicultural media industry. That is fantastic and they will continue this year.

Engaging with our multicultural media outlets is about not only adding their emails to a distribution list but also ensuring that we partake in media and non-media communication activities, making sure we deliver information to the platforms and media our multicultural communities use most. Multicultural media play such a critical role in our communities, in the Oatley electorate and across New South Wales, connecting people to their culture, identity and language whilst also keeping them informed of important messages. We are committed to further increasing engagement with multicultural media outlets. We believe that to truly connect with people in this State we must go to them, not make them come to us.

Engaging with multicultural media is crucial to increasing our cultural understanding of the many vibrant communities making up our great State. Multicultural media provide us with on-the-ground insights into the important issues facing the State's diverse communities. They play a crucial role in advocating for their communities to all levels of government, giving us in this place the ability to tailor our services to community needs. On behalf of all members in the Chamber, I express our deepest thanks and appreciation to the many multicultural media outlets that serve our great State. I say to them that my door and our door is always open. I am committed to continuing our great work together.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:33):** I thank the member for Oatley for his statement. On behalf of the Government, I commend all our multicultural media outlets across New South Wales for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic, their continued advocacy for their communities, and for providing information to their communities and working with the Government to continue to grow our understanding and acceptance of the great migrant communities across our State.

## UNCLE WES MARNE

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:34):** It is my pleasure to speak today about Uncle Wes Marne, who is a Bigambul Elder, an educator, a champion of Aboriginal culture, an advocate for vulnerable young people, a storyteller, a poet, an artist and, at 101 years young, a pillar of the community in Greater Western Sydney. He has overcome great adversity in his life, including living through the Stolen Generations period and World War II, serving in the Korean War, being unwelcome in the education system, and recently surviving a bout of COVID-19. I have attended many community events over the past 20 years where Uncle Wes has performed smoking

ceremonies and acknowledgement of country, and regaled us with his stories. Just recently he came to Penrith to open Community Cabinet with an acknowledgement of country. I admit that I was once publicly chastised by him when giving a presentation. I said that I was not qualified to speak on behalf of Aboriginal people because I was not Aboriginal. Uncle Wes piped up and said, "Sister, I don't want to hear you say that again. Do you so thoroughly know your heritage that you can make that statement?" Quite dumbfounded, I looked at him, and said, "Actually, no." I then apologised, and I never did that again.

Uncle Wes was born in 1922. He grew up in southern Queensland until he was nine years of age, when his family was forced to move from tribal lands and live on Deadbird Mission on the New South Wales Northern Tablelands. Uncle Wes moved to Western Sydney in the early 1960s and ever since has resided there, where he has become an esteemed senior leader in our local community and highly respected by all. Among his many accomplishments is being, in 2011, a proud recipient of the first Department of Education Nanga Mai award for the love of learning. The Nanga Mai awards celebrate and recognise innovation, excellence and achievement in Aboriginal education in New South Wales public schools, school communities and Department of Education offices. In 2016 his show *Fire Bucket* premiered to a sell-out audience at the Sydney Festival. He has also shared his stories orally as part of Urban Theatre Projects' *Blak Box* during the Sydney Festival in 2019. To commemorate his 100th birthday Uncle Wes released a book of 50 poems called *Through Old Eyes*.

In addition to all his work in education, the arts and culture, Uncle Wes is also a mentor to young people, often taking at-risk youth under his wing and treating them as his own family, and a regular visitor to young Aboriginal men in prison, helping them to regain confidence and to advocate for themselves. In recognition of his significant contributions to the community, Uncle Wes was awarded the Australia Medal at Government House by Her Excellency the Governor, the Hon. Margaret Beazley. As then mayor of Penrith, I was honoured to provide him a reference. He was further honoured by Blacktown council, who bestowed a Key to the City on Uncle Wes to mark his 100th birthday. Uncle Wes received a University of Western Sydney community award during the university's autumn graduation ceremonies in 2012. Uncle Wes, honorary fellow and Aboriginal Elder, said that he feels incredibly privileged and honoured to have received such recognition for his commitment to community and culture. And it is our honour and privilege in Western Sydney that Uncle Wes chose us.

#### BEROWRA DISTRICT HALL

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (19:38):** Berowra District Hall is a highly valued and historic community building in my electorate. It was originally constructed as a school building and was ready for that use on 10 August 1898. Finally the growing Berowra Public School could relocate from a room in a local resident's boarding house, where it had commenced in 1894, to this purpose-built school building. As the village's population grew, the school grew. To keep up, the school building had several extensions. At one stage, classes were even held on its verandah. The school building has nearly been lost to bushfires on many occasions. Twice in one week in October 1937 the head teacher, with the support of several of the senior boys, successfully fought off fierce bushfires that were threatening the school.

Further growth in the area necessitated the acquisition of a larger site for the school. An old farm was purchased in nearby Hillcrest Road and a new four-room school building was erected there. On 16 October 1952, Berowra Public School was relocated. Berowra residents had been in desperate need of a community hall since their original one was accidentally destroyed by fire on Christmas Eve 1929, so the Berowra Progress Association made an approach to then Hornsby MP, Syd Storey, who was also their local councillor. On 18 September 1953, Storey arranged for the former school building and land to be dedicated as public recreation and Hornsby Council took over the management.

The old school building took on the name of Berowra District Hall and when it was refurbished it had capacity for 200 people. It hosted numerous community meetings for local groups such as the local Garden Club, Orchid Society, Red Cross, Girl Guides, various churches, senior citizens clubs, Progress Association meetings, dance classes, local theatre productions and even political gatherings. A piano was installed, which proved very popular for the hall's social gatherings—this included a few wild parties. The management of the district hall fell to a council officer who lived locally, Mr Chas Woof. He was joined by a committee of three community members. By the late 1970s, the maintenance of the district hall had not been kept up and the old building had fallen into disrepair. It had reached the point where the council decided it was not worth the effort to retain and proposed to demolish it with a view to build a new community facility on the site. That proposal was eventually dismissed after a community meeting and the historic hall was saved, but was still in a terrible state of disrepair.

In the early 1980s, four Berowra Lions Club members—Don Smith, Vince Collins, Ernie French and Ray Kellow—attended a Lions club conference on Norfolk Island. On the island they saw a wonderful example, led by the local Lions club, of a historic hall restored to become a valuable community facility. They returned from their conference with this concept in mind for the Berowra District Hall. Through the leadership of Don Smith, the Lions club convinced Hornsby Council to support its proposal and in 1984 the Berowra Lions

Club took over the management and maintenance of the district hall. This agreement happened in the nick of time as the old building was destined for the wrecking ball in a matter of days.

The local Lions club had several skilled tradesmen amongst its membership, and they immediately undertook a major rebuild, repair and restoration project on the historic building. Local builder Derek Hurdman led the restoration work and David Lyons did all the electrical rewiring. John Little and Ernie French painted the building both inside and out. After six months of extensive voluntary work, the hall was restored and ready for the community to use once again. Costs associated with the project were paid for by the Lions club, supported through a council grant. The project to save the Berowra District Hall, undertaken by the members of the Berowra Lions Club, was extremely important and greatly appreciated by the local community as the old hall was, and still is, a highly valued heritage building in a prominent location.

Since 1984, the Lions club has independently managed the hall bookings of the Berowra District Hall. Throughout that 40-year period, the club has continued to maintain the building to an excellent standard, and it has hosted literally thousands of bookings. Some of these are regular bookings and others are one-off events. In July 2018, the significant and long-time contribution of local builder and Lions Club member the late Derek Hurdman was recognised by having the main room officially named in his honour and memory as the Derek Hurdman Room.

Many past and present Lions club members have volunteered their time to help administer the hall bookings and maintain the Berowra District Hall, and I thank them for their extraordinary efforts. I especially thank and recognise the current hall director, Les Howe, club president Brian Engert, OAM, and club secretary Colin Hunter for their significant and ongoing contributions, not just to the hall but to our community in Berowra in the Hornsby district. This year the historic Berowra District Hall celebrates its 125th year—1898 to 2023—and this simply would not have been possible without the work of generations of committed Berowra Lions Club members. On behalf of a very grateful local community, I thank the Berowra Lions Club for what it has done to save the hall, to maintain it and to continue its operation. I hope that continues for many years into the future.

#### KEIRA ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (19:43):** I celebrate a number of important achievements in my local electorate. First, the outstanding accomplishments of Shakamoto, a local Illawarra band, which recently took out first place in the YouthRock band competition that recognises the musical talents of students across New South Wales. The band consists of four friends from Keira High School in my electorate—my electorate is obviously named after the beautiful mountain—who have combined their musicianship and mateship to take out the statewide contest with their original song, *Whale the Creator*.

I am pleased to inform the House that, as a result of the competition, Shakamoto has now won the opportunity to record an original song, as well as \$1,000 for musical equipment and another \$1,000 voucher for the band members' school. I offer massive congratulations to Hamish Kettley, Callum Finlay, Orlando Bards and Aiden Knight on their outstanding performance at the competition. They have done themselves, their community and their school proud. Additionally, congratulations to all the other bands that competed in the competition and that are continuing to contribute to the next generation of musicians in New South Wales.

I also recognise the accomplishments of a group of amazing female athletes from the Illawarra at the recent Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League National Championships. I am pleased to inform the House that five Illawarra locals have been selected, following their stand-out performances at the tournament, to represent Australia in an overseas test match later this year in Papua New Guinea. The inaugural Australian secondary schools championships sees talent from across the nation compete in the hope of being selected for the Australian side and is a testament to players' hard work and commitment to the sport. Congratulations to Kasey Reh of Figtree High School, who not only was selected to play for Australia but also received the Player of the Championship award in recognition of her exceptional performance throughout the tournament.

I congratulate Charlotte Basham of Illawarra Sports High School, who was awarded Player of the Final and was also selected to represent her country later this year. Additionally, I offer massive congratulations to Warilla High School's Indie Bostock, St Marys Star of the Sea College's Evie McGrath and another representative from Figtree High School, Caley Tallon-Henniker, for their selection to play for Australia later this year. I know all of those players are considered rising stars in their field, with both Kasey and Indie spending the recent pre-season training with the Dragons National Rugby League Women's team on development deals. Charlotte, Evie and Caley were also given the opportunity to train with the Illawarra Steelers' Lisa Fiaola Cup side this past season.



Like most Australians, I have spent the past weeks following the Matildas' journey through the amazing FIFA Women's World Cup and I am overjoyed to see women's sports continue to be embraced by my community. I take this opportunity to congratulate all our local players who competed in the tournament and convey best wishes and support from everyone in this place to all who will be representing Australia later this year. It is timely that I deliver this speech while multi Paralympic champion and medallist Liesl Tesch is in the Chamber to check that I am saying everything right. I thank the member for Gosford.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Go the girls in sport!

#### TRIBUTE TO TERENCE KENNETH GIDDY

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (19:47):** I honour the memory of the late Terence Kenneth Giddy and acknowledge his colleague Paralympian Liesl Tesch. Terence was endearingly known as "Terry". He was a remarkable individual who redefined the boundaries of human achievement, donning the green and gold on the world stage and becoming a hometown hero for Kempsey as a six-time Paralympic medallist. Terry's story is one of resilience and courage. He was born on 2 April 1950 as the second of four children. It was at the age of 15 that tragedy altered the course of his life when he was left a paraplegic after a tree-felling accident. But even that did not stop our Terry from pursuing his love of sport. Terry's first competition was the 1969 National Games, before taking flight towards the big leagues at the 1970 Commonwealth Paraplegic Games. That merit alone earned him three gold medals and a silver, starting what would soon become an inspiring career of unbreakable spirit.

In 1972, Terry headed to Germany to compete at the Heidelberg Paralympics, taking home a silver in the Men's 100 metres Wheelchair 4 event. In 1984, Terry struck gold. In an inspiring display of tenacity following a few years plagued by illness, the Kempsey star returned to the Paralympic stage at the New York/Stoke Mandeville games, taking top honours in the Men's Discus 4 event. Four years later, Terry claimed silver in the same event at Seoul, then nabbed a silver medal in the Men's Discus THW6 and bronze in the Men's Shot Put THW6 event at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics.

It was not until 2004 that Terry decided to turn in following the flare-up of a back injury, or so we thought. It was never the end for him. In 2006 he made a resurgence at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games as Australia's oldest ever athlete, placing seventh in shot-put. To echo the sentiments of Chris Nunn, the head coach of the Australian athletics team at the Sydney Olympic Games, "Terry may have travelled thousands of miles in economy class, but his contribution has always been first class." This resonated in his campaign about work safety for WorkCover during and after the 2000 Summer Paralympics, and in the opening of Big Terry's Little Gym, which trained powerlifters to win world titles time after time. He shaped perceptions of those living with a disability and what they can achieve.

Terry's legacy is one that resonates with me. Prior to politics, Terry was my patient. I worked hand in hand with this great man, helping him achieve his own goals in the wake of injury. He was dedicated to completing the exercises and, no doubt, he shared those techniques with the powerlifters he mentored. Terry was not just a patient. He was one of my friends. With each visit, he lit up the treatment space with a classic remark or two. To work so closely with an inspiration was a highlight, and to have the privilege to have known one of my hometown heroes in a way not many get to do is a memory I will always cherish.

If anyone was to think Terry's list of accolades ended in the sporting codes, I ask them to bear with me a second longer as I recall his latter lifetime achievements that will go down in Australian history. In 1988 Terry received an Advance Australia Award. Then, in 2000, he received an Australian Sports Medal. That year, he also carried the Sydney Olympic torch, before receiving an Australia Day award and being gifted the wonderful "key to Kempsey".

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** That's how you know you've made it.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** Absolutely. Looking beyond the medals and records, Terry's life story teaches us about the power of the human will. His journey reminds us that setbacks can be transformed into opportunities and that, with perseverance and the right mindset, one can defy expectations. Terry Giddy from Kempsey was more than a Paralympian; he was a beacon of hope, an ambassador of determination and a true embodiment of the idea that our limitations are only as powerful as the spirit that drives us to overcome them. His life story will forever remind us that greatness is within reach, and it is the journey that truly defines our legacy. I thank him for inspiring me personally and our wider community. Rest in peace, Terry Giddy.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:51):** With tears in my eyes and a hand on my heart, I say vale to the amazing Terry Giddy. It is a privilege to be in the Chamber, because Terry Giddy was a friend and mentor to so many of us wheelchair users. He blazed a trail and led from the front. He was an incredible human being. He was a big man with a big heart who made a big impression on so many people. I thank the member for Oxley for his contribution tonight. I know that he has had the honour of working with Terry, as so many of us have.

In the world of Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT and in the Paralympic movement in Australia, Terry will be remembered as someone who blazed a trail at a time when the Paralympics did not exist and then when there was no funding for the Paralympics and they had to sell raffle tickets. I imagine the people of Kempsey bought a number of raffle tickets to support the man. To travel overseas as a paraplegic was also a huge step. He was so talented and transferred from sport to sport, representing his region, States and nation in basketball and track—in the olden days they raced in their hospital wheelchairs—and throwing the shot-put, javelin and discus as well. He was a beautiful human being. Vale, Terry Giddy—friend, teammate and absolute legend. He has left a legacy that has given me space to be where I am and space for so many of us to make a difference in the world.

### IRAN PROTESTS

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:53):** As the member for Prospect, I have been fortunate to meet with many community groups from multicultural and culturally diverse backgrounds across Western Sydney. On numerous occasions I have shared their rich diversity, culture, history and language—qualities of our communities that should be recognised and spoken about in this Parliament. In my discussions with them, many have also shared stories about their struggles and the struggles of their ancestors, as well as their ongoing efforts to advocate issues that continue to affect their communities and loved ones.

In particular, I have seen incredible levels of dedication and advocacy from the Armenian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Iranian communities, who engage in extensive well-established social and political initiatives as a means of empowerment. Recently, I met with representatives from the Australian Supporters of Democracy in Iran, which was formed to support democracy, peace, stability and freedom in Iran in the face of a totalitarian and oppressive regime. The organisation also advocates for the principles of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, and its members fight for women against fundamentalism and discriminatory practices that seek to control their human rights.

As we approach the first anniversary of the Iranian people's uprising for freedom, it is necessary to recognise the nationwide and international efforts that have been undertaken in the campaign towards achieving a free, peaceful and democratic Iranian nation for its peoples. More than 750 protesters have been martyred by security forces. Nearly 30,000 people have been arrested, tens of thousands of civilians have been injured with no access to medical treatment and medicine, and approximately 1,500 people—many of whom, if not most of whom, are women—have lost both or one of their eyes due to direct gunshot wounds. These protests, and the sheer volume of individuals who have risen to fight against the Iranian regime, bring to the surface the deep frustration, hurt and anger felt by Iranian communities in Iran and in Australia.

At the core of this uprising are the Iranian and international women who have come together in solidarity for the uprising and in support of a government whose practices are not deeply rooted in misogyny and oppression. In the face of the regime, communities across the world have witnessed the bravery and courage of Iranian women and children. Following the profoundly tragic death in custody of Mahsa Amini, women erupted in protest across Iran, tearing off their hijabs, cutting their hair and crying "Women, Life, Freedom".

This women-led revolution, which began as an outcry against the regime's brutal and oppressive treatment of women, has evolved into a much larger revolutionary movement calling for a regime change that is being recognised and supported around the world, and particularly in Western Sydney. Unfortunately, the regime is using a two-pronged strategy to contain the uprising and its calls for a democratic and free nation. The first is the torture, imprisonment and murder of individuals, with the distinct motive of suppressing actions. The second strategy is the manipulation of information to mislead supporters of the pro-democracy movement, particularly at an international level. Despite this, it is clear that the call for change is growing. Having organisations in Western Sydney, across New South Wales and in Australia who advocate for the democratic rights of women internationally is imperative in the global fight for freedom.

The experiences and concerns expressed by the Australian Supporters of Democracy in Iran are not isolated. Throughout Western Sydney, acts of social and political activism occur daily. Our Armenian community has established strong and affluent organisations such as the Armenian National Committee of Australia and the Armenian Youth Organisation, which advocate for the autonomy and sovereignty of their indigenous culture, land and history. The Assyrian National Council, the Assyrian Democratic Committee and the Assyrian Cultural and Youth Association engage in dedicated efforts to preserve their indigenous heritage.

Only one month ago, we saw massive changes and challenges in Iraq affecting the Chaldean community, especially those concerning Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako as patriarch of the Chaldean Church in Iraq. We support him and everything he does. I am proud to stand with and support the diverse communities in Western Sydney, including the Iranian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian people, as they continue their efforts to advocate for the democratic rights of their loved ones and families.

### NORTH SHORE BEARPIT PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:58):** Each year in this very place I welcome local primary school students from across my community to participate in the North Shore Bearpit Public Speaking Competition, where they are able to put their oratory skills to the test in the oldest Parliament in Australia. Excitingly, this year we had a record number of schools participating, which just goes to show that this event is going from strength to strength and that the schools and the students who participate are enjoying the challenge of crafting their own speeches and then delivering them with confidence. After completing several rounds at their school, the finalists from each school are invited to present their speeches in this Chamber.

It is such an enjoyable day, with students encouraged to bring friends and family along to witness their speeches. The parents and grandparents in attendance enjoy the day just as much as the students. I know that because I have had many of them stop me on the street, in car parks, and even at ALDI on a weekend to tell me how proud they were of their children and how much they enjoyed being in this place. I have also had a couple of requests for more time with Peter Tuziak, who does such a great job during his presentation to the students, parents and staff. Some of the topics chosen are close to my heart, such as whether we should ban sugar—which is a big problem for me; I shudder to think of the implications of a world without sugar—were dramatically presented by the students.

All students spoke with poise, some with great humour and many of them with dramatic gesticulation and movement. They were all incredibly inspiring. I have to say, the calibre of the speeches was outstanding. I will be so bold as to say that they were better than many of the speeches delivered in this Chamber during business hours. One of the speech topics that I was really taken with was "Should kids be able to vote?" The array of responses to this question was astonishing. While some initially painted a dark dystopian future of politicians blackmailing kids for their vote with the promise of candy, others painted a utopian society where kids could help decide on the future that they truly want. These students displayed amazing insight and capability on the day, as I am sure they do every day.

I acknowledge Archie Manns and Harrison Thomas from Mosman Preparatory School, Zara Edgecliff-Johnson and Isabelle Morrish from Beauty Point Public School, Chester Johnson and Lulu Chidgey from Marist Catholic College North Shore, Ava Van Zyl and Livia Giannotti from Neutral Bay Public School, Eloise Duxbury and Eloise Chambers from Loreto Kirribilli, Charlotte van der Ploeg and Fredrika Hall from Queenwood, Xavier Kyngdon and Spyridon Giallussi from St Aloysius' College, Harry Johnson and Amelie Cauchois from Middle Harbour Public School, Isabella Pails and Lily Lambkin from Mosman Public School, Elle Holbrook and Poppy Grispo from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School, and Ben Walton and Harry Klineberg from Shore School.

I thank our three judges. They had the toughest job on the day. It was an arduous task to choose our winners and runners-up. I give special thanks to our very own Serjeant-at-Arms, Simon Johnston, who joined us on the day, *North Shore Living* magazine editor Michelle Gillio, and Mosman Collective's Anna Usher. They gave wonderful feedback to the students, who were grateful to have people with such expertise, skill and knowledge providing them with their insights. I thank the Parliament staff who assisted on the day, including the catering team and the front desk staff. My team and I particularly thank Peter Tuziak, who engaged the students in a wonderful mock session where they debated the topic "Should kids be able to vote?" I am happy to report that it passed with a large majority in support—we should all be a little concerned. We can thank Peter for stewarding that legislation through our mock parliament. A special thanks to my team, Emily, Chris and Lisa, who as always worked very hard, months in advance, with the schools and with the Parliament to organise this event.

I congratulate our winners and runners-up for this year's North Shore Bearpit Public Speaking Competition. In stage two our runner-up was Charlotte van der Ploeg from Queenwood, who spoke on the topic "If I could have one superpower, it would be...". Our winner from stage two was Ben Walton from Shore School, who spoke on the topic "I couldn't live without...". Ben gave a loving and very funny speech about how he could not live without his siblings—even if he was the favourite. Our stage three runner-up was Harry Klineberg from Shore School, who spoke on the topic "An act of kindness can change the world." Our winner from stage three, with a simply fantastic speech, was Fredrika Hall from Queenwood, who spoke on the topic "Should kids be able to vote?" I congratulate them all.

I am already looking forward to our next North Shore Bearpit Public Speaking Competition. I thank and congratulate everyone who participated in their school competitions. I particularly thank the teachers and school staff who work to make sure that this competition can be rolled out across our schools. I know it is a lot of effort and work, but for me this is the hope of our future. The way in which our children are able to articulate their views, thoughts and passions and know that they can share them with us to influence outcomes is incredibly inspiring. It is probably the best day of the year for me in this role, and I encourage even more local primary school students to get involved next year.

## BLACKTOWN CITY PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACES

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:03):** Today I am speaking on planning and public spaces policy challenges, focusing on the creation or upgrade of CBDs with reference to the Blacktown area. I thank Premier Chris Minns for his confidence in appointing me as the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces. I relish the opportunity to work with Paul Scully, the member for Wollongong, and Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The Minister has embraced the challenges faced by New South Wales to improve both the quantity and quality of housing supply, whilst considering this growth in the context of building sustainable and liveable communities. The challenges are great but the Minister, his team and the staff of the department are focused on delivering sustainable and growing communities.

The population of the Blacktown City local government area has been growing at an extraordinary rate for decades. The compounded growth since 1949 has been 3.75 per cent. This equates to an average of 5,111 people per annum for the past 74 years. A total of 378,220 have moved into the Blacktown City area. I know a lot of members in this place talk about their growing constituencies, but 378,000 is a high number for one local government area. The population is expected to reach 612,000 by 2041 at an annual growth rate of 10,000 people per year. It will pass Tasmania's population by 2035, in just 12 years' time. It is important that the population growth is matched by corresponding improvements in soft and hard infrastructure. If Blacktown City is to have a population larger than the State of Tasmania, then how does Blacktown CBD compare to Hobart CBD?

The previous Government and the Greater Cities Commission have constantly spoken about the 30-minute cities, but from Blacktown City's perspective they have failed to deliver. Blacktown City has the opportunity to become an innovative and vibrant CBD of the future. Four major property owners control some 45 acres of land in the central business district. Three are community-based organisations and one is a major property developer. Blacktown City Council sold off a major portion of the central land of the CBD to the property developer Walker Corporation. I am concerned that, at this moment, it seems Walker Corporation is more focused on trying to buy up land rather than engaging with locals to see what we would like. Over 1,000 residents have either attended forums or expressed interest in developing a new concept of the CBD. The old-fashioned CBD does not suit the expectations of the community or accommodate the liveable city concept over the next 50 years.

The nature of jobs is transforming. How jobs are performed or when work is undertaken is dramatically changing. Automation and AI is reducing manual labour, which is being replaced with the growth of the professional services economy. Working hours and work environments are also changing with globalisation. Globalisation previously resulted in job losses from offshoring, but now Australians in professional fields such as accounting, law, IT, marketing and the medical sciences are winning contracts across the world. What used to be a night shift on the factory floor is changing to a night shift in an office environment via telecommunications technologies, crossing many time zones. The central living districts, the CLDs, need to present a viable 24/7 alternative. CLDs mix home life, work, play, entertainment and study in a location that is easily accessible for people within a 20-minute radius. New CLDs need to be safe, incorporate environmental design principles, provide parking and be accessible, particularly for people with mobility issues or other disability challenges.

The people of Blacktown love their festivals and street parades. Regardless of where they are located, festivals generally cause parking and movement nightmares. With 45 acres of land surrounded by major State roads, rail and bus transit ways, and parking potential, the Blacktown CBD provides a great opportunity for development into a modern city of the twenty-second century. It is time for Blacktown City Council, Walker Corporation and other landowners to stop looking at Blacktown as a series of small lot-number blocks and to work together to deliver a strategy that meets the needs of residents into the future. They cannot treat the residents as simple people by saying that billions of dollars in construction costs will generate short-term and long-term jobs and, therefore, they should be happy with whatever is proposed. They ignore the community at their own peril. It is time to build cities that match the future needs of the people. That is what the Minns Labor Government is working towards under the stewardship of Paul Scully, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

## CASTLE HILL DISTRICT RSL SUB-BRANCH

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (20:08):** On 13 August 2023 I attended a lunch organised by the Castle Hill District RSL Sub-Branch to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. The event was held a few days before Vietnam Veterans Day. The Vietnam conflict for Australia commenced in August 1962 when the Australian Army Training Team arrived in Vietnam. During the conflict more than 60,000 men and women saw active service. Some 523 servicemen tragically lost their lives. Of the 60,000 men and women who served, 15,200 were conscripted into the army. The conscription process was by birthday ballot drawn using wooden ballot balls. Australia commenced the process of withdrawing its troops from the conflict in 1970. On 22 April 1970 Prime Minister Gorton announced that the 8th Battalion, Royal Australia Regiment would be withdrawn. On 18 August 1971 Prime Minister McMahon announced that the remainder of

the troops would be withdrawn by the end of the year. Finally, on 11 January 1973, Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck proclaimed the end of Australia's involvement in the war.

The keynote speaker at the Castle Hill District RSL Sub-Branch lunch was Colonel Don Tait, OAM, Rtd. Colonel Tait is a highly respected member of the Castle Hill community. Colonel Tait served in Vietnam. He was a captain when, at the end of 1967, he was posted as a forward observer to 102 Field Battery, 12th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery for active service in Vietnam. Colonel Tait provided information at the lunch concerning a number of matters, including the Ba Ria Memorial within the Phuoc Tuy Province. The Battle of Long Tan took place in a rubber plantation near Long Tan in the Phuoc Tuy Province. The Ba Ria Memorial was inaugurated on 26 January 1973. The inscription on the memorial is important to understand. It records:

This memorial inaugurated on 26 January 1973 was erected by the Vietnamese people in recognition of the 49,738 members of the Australian Armed Forces who served in Phuoc Tuy Province from 1962 to 1972 beside their Vietnamese comrades in common struggle for freedom and especially the 494 Australians who lost their lives in the struggle.

At the inauguration, Chairman Nguyen Cook declared:

All great battles the Australian Soldiers have fought, all roads, bridges and hospitals remained, as so many strong memories which will never fade. The correct conduct and behaviour of Australian Troops and their contact in relation to the Phuoc Tuy Province people was good at all levels. The Australian soldiers offered assistance, whilst at the same time respecting sovereignty of a country under aggression.

The memorial was destroyed when the North Vietnamese forces occupied Saigon on the 30 April 1975. Colonel Tait also spoke about the awards system that was used in relation to the Vietnam conflict. Colonel Tait read from *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1975*, a book by Ashley Ekins. It states:

The Australian Government issued honours and awards according to a quota or ration system measured against average strengths of the three Australian services ... The quota system was presumably intended to maintain the perceived value and standing of the honours and awards, whilst constraining commanders from seeking to bolster the image of their own unit and indirectly, their own leadership. Despite these aims, as in previous conflicts the quota system led to a number of inconsistencies and inequalities.

Paul Ham, an Australian author who specialises in conflict, war and politics, is the author of *Vietnam: The Australian War*. He said:

... the Australian military awards system singularly failed to recognise many deserving soldiers ... Some highly placed defence personnel even claimed that the scales used to determine the awards were 'wrong.'

Colonel Tait, as I indicted, is highly respected. He stated:

To put it mildly the awards and honours that were given to veterans from Vietnam were appalling, and we are still getting them, which fifty years on does not say much about the honours and awards system.

I agree entirely with the views of Colonel Tait, and I thank him very much for the keynote speech. The service men and women who have served in defence of our country and other nations that share our values deserve our gratitude, appreciation, thanks and respect. On behalf of my community, I pay respect to and honour the service men and women who have served our nation, including those who served in Vietnam. I honour those who have served in times of conflict and in times of peace, both at home and abroad. Those who lost their lives will never be forgotten. Lest we forget.

## CENTRAL COAST CANCER SERVICES

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:13):** Recently I had the great pleasure of catching up with the Chair of the Central Coast Cancer Council, Ros English, OAM, who is a cancer survivor herself. Apart from discussing the great work that Ros and the team at the Central Coast Cancer Council do, we discussed the priority around acquiring a PET scanner for the Central Coast. Under the former Coalition Government, record investment was made into the Central Coast Local Health District, which included a half-a-billion-dollar redevelopment of our two major hospitals, at Gosford and Wyong. As part of that development, infrastructure was put in place for a "bunker" in Gosford Hospital for the acquisition of a PET scanner.

While we can provide the necessary treatment for cancer at our fantastic facilities at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, including a \$6.5 million expansion of the cancer service at Wyong Hospital committed by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, any patient who requires a PET scan must either travel to Newcastle or Sydney or use a private provider. Unfortunately, the Central Coast Local Health District is the only radiology training site without a PET scanner, impacting the ability for patients to access vital medical screening. For obvious reasons, that is far from ideal, given that we can provide a wide range of cancer treatments at these fantastic facilities on the Central Coast.

If anyone has a loved one who has experienced a cancer diagnosis, to say it is stressful is an understatement. I speak from personal experience. There is an added pressure on cancer patients and their families because they

must either wait for weeks or leave our region to receive a PET scan, which adds stress to the entire situation of being diagnosed with cancer. Given that one in three people will experience some form of cancer and that our hospitals have received and finalised their development upgrades, it is obvious that the next step needs to be taken. I share some testimonies of locals who have needed PET scans but were unable to access them. Mr Robert Feeney is a 71-year-old gentleman with small bowel neuroendocrine carcinoma, which requires ongoing FDG and PET scans. As Robert cannot afford the private cost of a PET scan, he must travel to Newcastle frequently to get them done—an hour-plus journey in each direction, added to Robert's treatment.

Another gentleman, Darrell Bushby, required a PET scan to assess cancer progression. Unfortunately, Darrell had to travel to Royal North Shore Hospital to get the scan at a time when he faced limited mobility, and his family had major difficulties in transporting him there for the scan. As someone whose wife not only worked in oncology but also is an oncology patient, I can speak from firsthand experience with regard to the added anxiety that can be caused through potentially delayed advice for health services. Waiting for a diagnosis and updates can be unbearable. The worry that every day lost could make a difference weighs on the minds of not just the patient but also the family. That is just one of the many reasons why having a PET scanner on the Central Coast is vital for cancer patients and their families.

While this Government was in opposition, it talked a big game on health, and I will hold it to that, for the people of not only my electorate but also the entire Central Coast. Three steps must be taken to ensure that Gosford Hospital can acquire a PET scanner. The first step is licensing. The State Government needs to support the Central Coast Local Health District in its application to acquire a licence for the PET scanner. The second step is ensuring that the Federal Government provides the licence to the Central Coast Local Health District for that PET scanner. The third and final step, which is the most important, is the responsibility of this State Government. The Central Coast Local Health District requires \$9.7 million in capital expenditure to acquire the PET scanning unit and will require an additional \$2.3 million in recurrent funding every year to make sure that outstanding staff are employed in that unit. It is important that that funding is not taken from existing funding in the local health district's budget. That would be robbing Peter to pay Paul and reducing existing services.

We have world-leading cancer services on the Central Coast, and we need this final piece of the puzzle to maximise benefits for patients and their families, while also reducing the impact of stress and anxiety. I have met with the outstanding CEO of the local health district, Scott McLachlan. He recognises the important asset a PET scanner would be for our region. I know that this proposal has been provided to Minister Park, so I will be calling on him to do the right thing—the necessary thing—and help to provide a PET scanner for the Central Coast in this year's budget. It is vital that our growing region, with so many cancer patients, gets the PET scanner it needs.

#### **ST CLAIR AND DISTRICT MEN'S SHED**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (20:18):** I speak not just as a member of this Parliament but as a proud patron of the St Clair and District Men's Shed, which this year celebrates its remarkable tenth anniversary. For a decade, the St Clair and District Men's Shed has been more than just a venue; it has been a haven for connection, learning, community engagement and personal, mental and emotional support. Men's sheds, as an institution, have grown significantly in importance across our great nation and beyond. They are not just places where tools are stored and projects are crafted. They are places where friendships are forged, where experiences are shared and where community ties are strengthened. At their core, men's sheds are about the health and wellbeing of their members. They address the challenges of isolation that many men face, especially upon retirement, providing a platform for them to connect with their peers, share skills and contribute to their local communities. Indeed, these sheds have become integral to the fabric of our society, playing a pivotal role in mental health and community cohesion.

My personal journey with the St Clair and District Men's Shed has been one of inspiration and admiration, with a bit of fun thrown in along the way. From its very conception—day one—when I turned up at its launch, seven or eight members arrived. I witnessed firsthand the transformative power of this shed not only for its individual members but also for the broader St Clair community. The projects undertaken, the skills imparted and the bonds formed within those walls are immeasurable. This would not have been possible without its dedicated members. While time does not permit me to acknowledge everyone, I must acknowledge a couple of full-on stalwarts of the St Clair men's shed: the president, Ian Pike; the vice-president, Paul Tarlinton; the secretary, Andrew Moody, who has my mobile number and uses it frequently; and the treasurer, Ian Baistow. These gentlemen have made significant contributions to ensure the success of the St Clair men's shed and I know the community is eternally grateful for their efforts.

Everyone at the shed has an awesome sense of humour and every moment I get to share with them is always a great time. They even managed to get a laugh from our hardworking former Premier, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, who exclaimed that the St Clair men's shed was indeed the best men's shed he had ever visited—and, I have to say, he is right. In addition, I also say to the members of the St Clair and District Men's Shed that their passion,

resilience and community spirit exemplify the best of what New South Wales has to offer. They have not only built community projects but also constructed bridges of understanding, compassion and community spirit. I also note that these men are extraordinary for the fact that they are now welcoming at-risk youth and bringing those young men into their shed. They bring the young men alongside as they work together to create little projects for the community, whether it is objects for sale to raise money for their shed or objects for donation to preschools and the like. They really are extraordinary.

I must also take a moment to reflect on our collaborative journey and the unwavering commitment to secure the resources that our St Clair and District Men's Shed requires to enable the shed to flourish. It fills me with immense pride and satisfaction when I recall the dedicated efforts over the years advocating for the shed and successfully securing funding to ensure it has what it needs. All told, through the former Liberal Government's Community Building Partnership program and other funding sources, I have delivered \$190,845 to directly fuel the growth and capabilities of the St Clair men's shed, which I am extremely proud of. This not only signifies my dedication to the shed and all that the men work towards but also stands as a testament to what can be achieved when we work together, prioritising the needs of our community. I give a shout-out to Bunnings and also Rondo, which have helped incredibly to support our local shed.

In conclusion, this year as we mark the tenth anniversary of the St Clair and District Men's Shed and the thirtieth anniversary of the birth of men's sheds in Australia, I call on my colleagues and the wider community to continue supporting these vital institutions. They represent the very essence of community spirit and resilience. I look forward to witnessing the ongoing positive impact of the St Clair men's shed in the years to come. I also add a note of thanks to the men who last week were very patient with me as I used a drill. Yes, I did—I used a tool.

**Mr Mark Hodges:** A left-handed drill?

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** No, it was not left-handed. I am not that silly. I successfully drilled into a large piece of timber to make the individual pieces, or template, that make up a timber reindeer. The men are getting ready to make reindeer to sell at different places during the Christmas season—again, raising money for their own men's shed. Love you guys. Well done.

#### CENTRAL COAST AGED-CARE SERVICES

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:23):** This evening I offer a massive thank you to everybody who works in the aged-care sector across my electorate of Gosford, the Central Coast and throughout New South Wales. The aged-care sector is so important and delivers so much to so many as a really important stepping stone in people's lives. In my electorate we have BlueWave Living, Peninsula Village, Orana Aged Care and HammondCare, which offer aged-care services for various stages of people's lives. Each one of those organisations is amazing—a family and a home away from home, or a new home, for each and every one of the residents. In the Central Coast region the number of people aged over 85 years will triple in the next 10 years. I also thank the people who work in the aged-care sector for their passion and compassion and everything they deliver to residents in our community. This is an important and growing sector, and the Central Coast is a model future community for our ageing demographic.

Although it will be difficult, tonight I recognise all the loyal and hardworking aged-care and healthcare workers on the Central Coast. Among them there are so many hidden champions that are too often overlooked and who hold our community together with warmth, strength and support, particularly during times of need. One of the largest employers in the Gosford electorate, Peninsula Village, is a prime example of this vital support in our community. This is exemplified by the work of Greg Smith. Ettalong resident Greg has proudly worked meticulously for 26 years for the not-for-profit aged-care provider. Greg has not only seen the village rise from the ground when construction began back in 1985 but has also maintained its grounds over the decades. Greg works as an unofficial yet undeniable leader and role model for staff and village residents, with his care for the village's grounds and for its staff and residents.

These residents are able to enjoy their later years—the sunset years of their lives—in a new but welcoming environment, a home away from home, with Greg ensuring that the grounds he maintains are picturesque and aesthetically pleasing yet maintained to a high safety standard that others aspire to. I congratulate Greg as he celebrates his thirty-sixth year of working for our seniors in the community. I believe Greg's history with Peninsula Village is indicative of the Central Coast's intrinsic values: care and love for nature, for home, for our biosphere's unique flora and fauna, for the history of our lands and for its future, for our Elders, for our aged carers, for our healthcare workers and for the outdoors. But, most importantly, we have consistent love and care for one another. I dedicate my time to these values that grow and thrive in our communities and exude from our underappreciated, loyal aged-care workers, such as Peninsula Village's Greg Smith.

I also give a shout-out to the fabulous team at BlueWave Living. I have a lovely time when I visit my 99-year-old neighbour, who will be 100 years old on 6 November—may she get there and get the letter. When I come through the gates, I feel the warmth and the joy. It was difficult during COVID when visitors were locked out of aged-care facilities, but this facility must be commended for making sure that residents stay protected. I sign in and wear the sticker and walk through the friendly corridors to visit old Ruthie. Sometimes I catch Ruth during a painting activity—occasionally she is rewarded for her painting with a glass of wine—or during a word game activity, when she is lined up with other seniors, having fun, enjoying a bit of a laugh and doing word challenges.

Ruthie takes me to a special area—either inside or, if the day is nice, outside—where we sit and have a cup of tea. I must say that joining the BlueWave Living folk on Anzac Day is particularly wonderful. Everybody walks out, wheels out, hobbles out or comes out on Zimmer frames to join a fantastic ceremony. The love that surrounds these residents from the wonderful staff is absolutely beautiful. I also thank all the other community members who work with aged people who continue to live at home. It is wonderful that we have such a great aged population and such an incredible group of workers who look after them and give them the dignity they deserve in their sunset years.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:29 until  
Thursday 24 August 2023 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**UDIA AWARDS 2023 – HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL, WAVES FITNESS AND AQUATIC CENTRE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I am pleased to congratulate the Hills Shire Council for receiving another award. I spoke about the Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre ("Waves") on 21 June 2023. Hills Shire Council has won another award. It is appropriate I add to my prior statement. I attended the UDIA NSW Coronation, Awards for Excellence on 4 August 2023. Hills Shire Council in the category, Social, and Community Infrastructure (Recreational Facility) won the award for Waves. The judges commented they were "captivated by several aspects that set the facility apart and made it a standout winner." The judges commended the excellent architecture and design highlighting "council's commitment to environmental responsibility and quality." I commend all councillors involved in the project. Special recognition and commendation for the project must be given to the Council General Manager Michael Edgar, Group Manager, Shire Strategy David Reynolds and the Manager Special Projects, Stephen Cullen. As an additional note I congratulate David Reynolds on his recent appointment as the Chief Executive of LGNSW. David's knowledge of Local Government, planning and development will be missed by The Hills Shire Council. We wish David well in his new role.

**KELLYVILLE BUSHRANGERS, BUSHRANGERS DAY, 2023**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I attended the Kellyville Bushrangers, Bushrangers Day at Kellyville Park on 12 August 2023. Mayor Peter Gangemi and Councillor Boneham attended to support Bushrangers Day. Kellyville Bushrangers are a family orientated Club participating in the Parramatta District Junior Rugby League Competition. The club was formed by Parramatta Rugby League to participate in the Metropolitan Cup in 1996. The club entered the Junior Rugby League Competition in 1997. Bushrangers Day supported Supertee and Feel the Magic Charity. The day featured a BBQ, cake stall, facepainting, jumping castle, balloons and football action. Supertee aims to alleviate children suffering and distress through distraction, comfort, and the wonders of imaginative play. Supertee has a goal to help a minimum of 28,000 of our sickest children by providing them with products and services for free. Feel the Magic Charity provides early intervention grief education programs for kids aged 7 to 18 who have experiencing pain and isolation due to the death of a parent, guardian, or sibling. The Charity aims to create a community where grieving kids and their families feel supported, empowered, and can begin to move forward with their lives. Congratulations to Kellyville Bushrangers for Bushrangers Day.

**CASTLE HILL RSL, SUB-BRANCH, LIFE MEMBERS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recently attended the 50th Anniversary of the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam lunch held at the Castle Hill RSL Club. I was privileged to be in the company sub-Branch members who have so courageously served our nation. The keynote speaker was Colonel Don Tait (Retired). We were informed about the inauguration of the Ba Ria Memorial within Phuoc Tuy Province as well as the honours and awards system. To quote Colonel Tait, who spoke with passion, "the awards and honours that were given to veterans from Vietnam were appalling, and we are still getting them, which fifty years on does not say much about the honours and awards system." Life Memberships were awarded to Cheryl Hill, David Hand, and Mike Yeo. Cheryl is the first female President of the Castle Hill and District sub-Branch. David is the past President of



sub-Branch and Director of CHRG. Mike is a past Vice President of the sub-Branch and Vice President of CHRG. Quits for Service were presented to Malcolm Botfield, Phillip Evenden, Paul Harris-Walker and Ray James. I recognise and thank all who served our nation and in particular those who served in Vietnam.

#### **MANISH GUPTA, CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I acknowledge the gathering held on 11 August 2023 at the Grand Bavarchi restaurant, Parramatta, at which attendees expressed their gratitude for Mr. Manish Gupta's invaluable service to the community during his posting in Sydney. Mr. Gupta is a distinguished career diplomat and has been a member of the Indian Foreign Service since 1998 and as Consul General of India in Sydney since May 2019. His 25-year diplomatic career includes holding various positions in Delhi and overseas including Consul General of India in Istanbul, Turkey (2013-2016), in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York (2009-2013) and assignments Dakar (2002-2005) and Brussels (2000-2002). The Consul General's office in Sydney was launched in 1941 as the Trade Commission of India and as the most recent officeholder his legacy has strengthened diplomatic ties and cultural understanding between NSW and India. I wish Mr Gupta well in his future endeavours and I thank Cllr Sameer Pandey, Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta for the kind invitation to attend.

#### **BURMA'S 8888 UPRISING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I acknowledge the gathering held on 5 August 2023, at Granville Town Hall, where the Burmese Community united to honour the 35th Anniversary of the 1988 uprising in Burma. This event held deep significance, serving as a solemn remembrance of the historic uprising that reshaped Burma's trajectory. Attendees paid heartfelt tribute to the courageous participants, reflecting on the sacrifices made for democracy and freedom. Dr. Tun Aung Shwe, the representative of the National Unity Government of Myanmar, shared emotional insights into the challenges faced by those in the 8888 Uprising. In my speech I said "Let this day be reminder that freedom of democracy is the shared responsibility. It is up to us as global citizens to support those who need to break the chains of oppression, and every voice is heard, every individual's rights are respected. Our ongoing support for Burmese people and their struggles for justice and federal democracy is crucial, ensuring that the legacy of 8888 continues to inspire positive change." The gathering resonated as a powerful testament to the strength of collective memory and my thanks go to Mr Saw Lwinoo, President, Australian Karen Organisation for the invitation to attend.

#### **NATIONAL TREE DAY – 30 JULY 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Sunday 30 July 2023 marked National Tree Day. It is Australia's largest tree planting and nature care event with the goal to plant one million native trees. Locally, I was proud to mark this day with Ku-ring-gai Council by planting native trees at Loyal Henry Park in Roseville. Residents and visitors across Sydney's North Shore refer to our community as the 'lungs of Sydney.' This is due to the abundance of trees and our three stunning National Parks – Garigal, Ku-ring-gai Chase and Lane Cove. Events such as National Tree Day serve as an important reminder of our responsibility to protect and conserve the environment for future generations. It's a day to plant, nurture, and cherish trees which over time has become an integral part of the character and beauty of our community. Well done to Planet Ark for their organisation and for establishing this day in 1996. Since then, 26 million trees have been planted by five million volunteers and 10 million of hours of time donated. I look forward to promoting this day on Sunday 28 July 2024!"

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Small businesses are the backbone of our community. We need to do everything we can as a community to support them. I am proud to formally recognise and congratulate the recipients of the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards: Autobahn Diagnostics, Bakealicious By Gabriela, HB Aesthetics, Millin's Free Range Butcher, 8 Knots Café, Kiddiwinks Play Laugh & Learn, Youth Up Front, Surf Dive 'n Ski – Stockland Balgowlah, Two Hungry Bears, Body Shape Female Fitness – Warringah Mall, Salon Purpose, The Sit., Beaches Group, Nordic Fusion, Holixir, Plié Groove 'n Shuffle, SmallPaws Pet Hotel, Pharmacy 4 Less – Warriewood, Wavescape Orthodontics – Dee Why, Optimal Recruitment, Doyle Spillane Real Estate, Corretto Dee Why, Modern Image Landscapes, Beaches Healing, Concept Electrical & Solar, Nash + Banks, Northern Beaches Optical, Movement HQ, Colormaker Industries, Surfboard Souls, The Mind Café, and Alicia Pilates. I also congratulate Northern Beaches Business of the Year, Beaches Group, a construction company which delivers custom renovation and landscaping services. Well done to all involved.

#### **TRIPLE H RADIO 110.1FM - ROTARY MATTERS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Ian Stuart hosts 'Rotary Matters' on Triple H 100.1 FM every Friday from 3pm to 4pm. It updates our community about the work of Rotary, a worldwide service organisation dedicated to the concept of 'Service Above Self'. I encourage everyone to tune in – and if you miss an episode – you can

visit [www.rotarymatters.org](http://www.rotarymatters.org). I joined Ian in his studio on Friday 4 August 2023 to discuss the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA). Also in attendance was Georgia Lowden, a Davidson constituent, staff member in the Davidson Electorate Office and RYLA attendee in 2020. I attended RYLA in 2008, and it was a life changing experience. Rotary District 9685 is holding RYLA in January 2024. It will be chaired by Anthony Durbin of the Rotary Club of Upper Northern Beaches. I encourage all young people aged 18 to 30 to consider applying to their local Rotary clubs. In the Davidson electorate we have four clubs – Belrose, Ku-ring-gai, St Ives and Turramurra. Rotary Clubs serve as a shining example of the power of volunteerism and inspiring others to make a difference. I acknowledge Ian for his service and running this important and insightful program.

#### **CLUB OLD BAR BOWLERS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate the triumphant members of the Club Old Bar Senior Men's bowling quartet. This team comprising of Harvey Phillips, Mick Kilkeary, Lindsay Langtry and Daryl Webster have won the State Senior Men's Fours title at Figtree Sports, Wollongong. They began their campaign in section play with a big 30-7 win over The Hills. This was followed by a 23-18 win over Towradgi. A win in the third game against Parkes saw them safely into the semi-finals. What followed were nail-biting matches, the semi-final was against St. Johns Park, won by just one shot 22-21 and the final against Tathra secured in an extra end 23-22. Amidst intense competition, this quartet displayed exceptional skill and determination, emerging as senior fours champions. Congratulations Club Old Bar Senior Men's! This is a huge achievement; state finals are not easy to win!

#### **DUNDALOO ENTERPRISES AND CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to celebrate a remarkable partnership between Dundaloo Enterprises and Chatham High School – The Food Truck. This collaboration propels individuals with added support needs into the workforce, encouraging skills that resonate locally and beyond. The Food Truck is run by Dundaloo participants and students from Chatham High School support centre. Students can access on the job training and get hands on experience in the hospitality industry in an inclusive way. This initiative stands as a testament to effective collaboration. It embraces diversity, recognises potential, and fuels progress through unity. Thank you, Dundaloo Enterprises and Chatham High School, for your dedication to inclusivity and community betterment - this collaboration demonstrates how unity can create a community where every individual thrives.

#### **MANNING VALLEY PIPES AND DRUMS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Manning Valley Pipes and Drums on their success in the Essential Energy Community Choices Program, securing the first-place funding of \$5000 in zone 20. For years, the Manning Valley Pipes and Drums have been the heartbeat of our local culture, enriching our lives with their unique tunes. This well-deserved financial boost will breathe new life into their endeavours. The funds will be used towards the maintenance and renewal of instruments and uniforms, a key investment in preserving the legacy they have built. Congratulations once again to the Manning Valley Pipes and Drums on your success. I look forward to seeing you in your new uniforms. I can't help but get emotional whenever I hear you play, as it reminds me of Stephen Bromhead and how much he loved your music.

#### **PALM BEACH RSL SUB-BRANCH - MARK FERGUSON OAM**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—On Sunday 20 August 2023, I had the opportunity to attend a Vietnam Veterans 50th commemoration event hosted by the Palm Beach RSL Club. To mark 50 years since the end of Australia's involvement in the conflict, the committee organised a March and lunch, providing an opportunity for veterans and family members to gather. I thank the whole Vietnam Veterans Day Committee for your important work ensuring the service and sacrifice of our veterans is honoured. The events and battles of the Vietnam War are close to home for the Pittwater community. I pay tribute to Mark Ferguson OAM, President of the Palm Beach RSL Sub-Branch, who served in Operation Hammersley and the Battle of Long Hai. Each year on Vietnam Veterans Day, we promise to remember the experiences of those who served, both the battles fought in Vietnam and mental battles back at home. I pay tribute to all the veterans in attendance on Sunday and thank them for their willingness to share their stories - your strength and continued display of the ANZAC spirit makes our community so proud.

#### **JAX TYRES AND AUTO MONA VALE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the team at JAX Tyres & Auto Mona Vale. A few weeks ago, I visited JAX in search of a replacement tyre, as I had suffered a flat the day before. The team were very friendly and attentive, helping sort out my tyre situation in record time. Thank you to Darren Ward, James Darton and the rest of the team. Pittwater is lucky to have such a great service locally, and locals' gratitude is clear in JAX Mona Vale's Google reviews. As put by other happy customers, JAX Mona Vale offer the friendliest and quickest service, accommodating any budget and always going out of their way to answer any

question, even when they are super busy. I'm pleased that acknowledgement of JAX Mona Vale will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country.

#### **JOY NASON**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—It is with great pleasure that I recognise an extraordinary member of the Pittwater community, Joy Nason. Despite a challenging upbringing, being raised in the fundamentalist Christian cult of the Exclusive Brethren, Joy has achieved so much, even chronicling her story in her 2015 memoir, 'Joy & Sorrow: The story of an Exclusive Brethren survivor'. After leaving the cult she was raised in, Joy worked hard to make it in the world, eventually becoming a head teacher at TAFE New South Wales, helping others obtain the sort of education she was denied in the cult. Joy is a well-known local, always working to raise awareness of important issues, and a passionate volunteer for many important causes. Joy is just that, a 'joy' to be around. Joy's story proves the value of determination and a positive attitude. It is a privilege to know Joy and I know that her dedication and passion will continue to inspire others. I'm pleased that acknowledgement of such a remarkable individual will now be preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country.

#### **KIAMA BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Bowling Club on its new outdoor food and beverage area, known as the 'Back Green'. The grass is green, and the area has new tables and ramps built by the Men's Shed from Kiama. This area is intended to be used mainly for social gatherings and can comfortably accommodate 60+ people, so it is perfect for groups to hire out and will also be used for barefoot bowling. They have called it the 'Ray Walker Green' after a former President and life member, who passed about two years ago, but has left a lasting legacy at the Club. I was very privileged to attend the launch of the Ray Walker Green and meet members of Ray's family in attendance. This new area has already been used by local schools and charity groups for community-based events. The Back Green is very popular over summer for 'barefoot bowls' and I know the club is keen on new members joining. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Kiama Bowling Club's Secretary Manager, Mr Andrew Broadwood for his outstanding commitment and hard work.

#### **MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Meals on Wheels in Kiama and across our State. Wednesday 30th August is the National Meals on Wheels Day. This charity and meal delivery service is celebrating 70 years of delivering #morethanjustameal to older Australians. Kiama Meals on Wheels will commemorate this day by hosting a brunch for members and guests at the Sebel Harbourside in Kiama, celebrating 53 years serving our community and thank you to their volunteers for their dedication. The sense of purpose in making a real and tangible difference in our local community, as well as opportunities to make new friends and learn new skills, makes volunteering for Meals on Wheels a rewarding experience. I acknowledge the Kiama Meals on Wheels Manager Joanne North and the amazing group of Kiama volunteers. The mission is supported by thousands of volunteers, who not only deliver nutritious meals to the doors of those who need it but help to combat social isolation. The Meals on Wheels model and its volunteers are critical in supporting older people to live well, meet their nutritional needs, their dietary and eating preferences, providing necessary social connection and wellbeing checks.

#### **KIAMA HIGH SCHOOL UNDER 15S CUP WINNERS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales congratulates Kiama High School's Under 15s Country Cup rugby league side. Kiama High School has its name on the shield for the very first time. In a tough, skilful game of rugby league, the Kiama team clinched the win with a try and conversion on the full-time siren defeating All Saints College Maitland 26-24 on Thursday 17th August 2023. It was a tough game back and forth with All Saints taking an early 0-6 lead. The Kiama team bounced back leading 14-6 at Half time. I acknowledge the Kiama High School players and coach. Peter Quine –Teacher / Coach. 1. Jett Brookfield Team Captain; 2. Asher Chapman; 3. Jarred Milne; 4. Kye Anderson; 5. Dylan Bagnall; 6. Samuel Guevara; 7. Ashton Jeffers; 8. Levii Poching; 9. Lacom Poching; 10. Phoenix Johns; 11. Archie Hollands; 12. Xavier Steel; 13. Keyan Detheridge; 14. Mason Andrews; 15. Reed Palmer; 16. Ashton Moore; 17. Tama Ponga; 18. Oliver Hartley. Congratulations and a massive well done to Kiama High School on this outstanding sporting achievement for the school and these students from the Under 15s rugby league team.

#### **DR TONY MOSCA**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I rise to honour the memory of Dr Tony Mosca, who passed away last month. Tony was a long-time Liverpool resident and local dentist who was well known to and respected by our community. Born in Italy in 1952, he migrated to Australia with his parents at a young age, where he completed his schooling and began his career, graduating with a Bachelor of Dentistry from the

University of Sydney in 1975. In 1979, he founded the Liverpool Dental Centre on Memorial Avenue – where it still serves our community today. Colloquially referred to as "the boss", he was known for his kindness and generosity. After 40 years of service, he retired from his practice in 2019, leaving behind a grateful community. He is survived by his wife Maria, his children Marco, Robert, and Lisa, as well as his grandchildren and extended family. I extend my condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and all those who knew him. I also acknowledge the many dentists that he mentored and brought to the Liverpool Dental Centre to serve our community.

### **SANSKRIT SCHOOL**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I acknowledge the Sydney Sanskrit School, a community language school in Sydney that accommodates over 200 students and 16 teachers over three locations. Established in 2006 as one of the first community language schools, Sydney Sanskrit school aims to preserve the ancient Sanskrit language, which scribes ancient objects of Hindu and eastern literature, spanning everything from philosophy to mathematics. Living up to its motto, "learn Sanskrit with fun", the school delivers a variety of engaging learning activities, including grammar camps, Sanskrit plays, and regular classes. Last month, the school held its 2023 Panniniyam camp, an intensive 40-hour program spanning across 4 days that teaches students aspects of Sanskrit literature, artwork and storytelling. I acknowledge the tremendous contribution of President Karthik Subramanian, Principal Dr Meenakshi Srinivasan, and the Sydney Sanskrit school teachers who, over the years, have successfully enabled Sanskrit learning for children of all ages and backgrounds.

### **VIETNAMESE STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW CHARITY DINNER**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Recently I attended the Vietnamese Student's Association's annual charity dinner. The events aimed to raise money for Children's Hope in Action, which helps disadvantaged children and their families in the Quang Nam province in Vietnam. The event brought together Vietnamese students from universities across Sydney, to celebrate culture and connection and raise funds for an important cause. This year's event featured a variety of food, a fashion show, as well as traditional and contemporary Vietnamese dance performances. There was also a bake sale and raffle to support the fundraising efforts. Congratulations to the VSA Executive for making this event such a massive success. You have continued the tradition of ensuring that the VSA remains an important social and cultural connection point for students of Vietnamese heritage in our community. It was a delight to take part and I look forward to the continued success of our Vietnamese student community.

### **NORPA CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY**

**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'. Most recently 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 Widdjibul 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. Bravo NORPA!

### **A FAREWELL TO WARREN AND JUDY OF LEO'S CAFE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation for the remarkable Warren and Judy Baxter of Leo's Cafe in downtown Lismore. During its 16 years of operation Leo's Cafe has been a fixture for those seeking a quick fix of the best hot chips and gravy going around – not to mention the delicious fish n' chips! Warren and Judy's commitment to providing warm hospitality to all who came through their doors through multiple floods and a pandemic is a true inspiration. However, the same tasty favourites and conviviality will live on through their daughter Cherise Baxter, who has now taken over the reins. As we bid Warren and Judy farewell, I wish to extend my best wishes for their continued success and happiness in the next chapter of their lives.

### **LISMORE WORKERS MASTERS GAMES RETURN FOR 2023**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I welcome the return of the Lismore Workers Masters Games next month after the event was postponed two years in a row, in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in 2022 due to the flooding events and poor weather. The Games will take place over the weekend of 22-24 September. The Masters' Games are a popular multi-sport event that provides an opportunity for mature-age sportspeople to

compete alongside their peers. An estimated 1,000 competitors are expected to attend and they are predicted to generate an estimated \$414,000 in economic activity, which will be much appreciated by our local business community. It is also a great showcase for camaraderie, attracting people from all walks of life who enjoy the social side as much as the competitive events. I would like to acknowledge the Lismore Workers Club for its continued sponsorship of this event since it began in 1999. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the sports convenors: Daniel Rowlands, Kris Van Bibber, Jamie Bressan, Peter Gallagher, Anthony Magarry, Wendy Trudgeon, Julie Carrall, Lynne Sims, Melissa Campbell, Rik Dillon and Dianne McGowan. All your efforts are greatly appreciated.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Miranda's Antara on Wyralla Childcare and Preschool for winning the Outstanding Early Childhood Centre award at the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards this month. Their service caters for children 18 months – 5 years and they have been in business for 11 years. They are no strangers to these awards, previously winning the category in 2019 and 2022 and being finalists in 2016, 2018 and 2020. I congratulate BedsAhead of Caringbah on winning the Outstanding Home Furniture Store award in the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. BedsAhead is a family-run Australian business specialising in making upholstered furniture, including bed heads, bed bases, gas lift beds, blanket boxes, ottomans, valances and scatter cushions. Their products were featured in the winning master bedroom in The Block 2018. BedsAhead were winners in the category in 2021 and finalists in 2015, 2018, 2020 and 2022.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS 2023**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Empowered Living Care on winning the Outstanding Community Service award in the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Empowered Living Care is an experienced disability and aged care provider that support clients in the Sutherland Shire, St George and Canterbury-Bankstown areas. It delivers residential and social support, host immersive events and residential visits covering content of intimate support including personal care, behavioural management, community access, domestic assistance, community nursing services and optimal individual functioning. It describes its vision as follows: "Our vision for aged and disability care is to create a society where all individuals, regardless of their age or ability, are able to live fulfilling and dignified lives. This means that everyone has access to the support they need to be as independent as possible and to participate in their communities to the fullest extent possible."

### **STAR STRUCK IGNITE – GLENDALE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Glendale East Public School, one of 11 schools from the Wallsend electorate, participated in Star Struck Ignite on 16-17 June 2023. Star Struck is a monumental annual performing arts event presented by Newcastle, The Hunter and Central Coast areas of the NSW D of E. It is a showcase of dance, drama, choirs, vocalists, orchestra members and rock bands. This year more than 3,500 students from K-12 had the opportunity to perform and develop an appreciation of the performing arts. Students can also participate in stage management, choreography and props design teams. VET entertainment students gain first-hand professional experience through working with industry experts. The following GEPS participants were Dancers: Matilda Murray, Leila Keirce. Harlee Bambans, Scarlett Forbs, Zahra Forbes, Chloe Gardner, Harriet Miller, Isabella Freestone, Hazel Buckey, Ethan Williams, Lucas Williams, Georgia Hunt, Claire Perrin, Lilly Edwards, Caitlynn Williams, Lilly Olive. Below are the teachers and Support staff who worked with these students throughout: Miss Jill Hugo – Teacher, Miss Alex Kennedy – Teacher, Miss Keeley Gayler - School Learning Support Officer (SLSO). Congratulations on a stunning effort!

### **FROM NEWCASTLE TO NORTHAMPTON – JON BRADY CHASES HIS DREAM**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Novocastrian expat and football manager has lived in England since the age of 17 and for the past 20 years he has called Northampton his home. Now, he is the inspirational Manager of Northampton Town FC – the Cobblers. He was awarded the EFL League Two Manager of the Month award for March 2023. Jon's team finished 3rd this season and gained automatic promotion to League One. Jon Brady played for the Australian Under 17s team in 1990. He started coaching the Under 16s at Northampton in 2016, progressing to the Under 18s in 2017. He was offered the role as Manager in 2021. He was the only Australian coaching in the English Football League until the recent appointment of Ange Postecoglou to Tottenham Hotspur. His club is a family to him – they look after each other. He is committed to empowering his players and getting things done instead of just letting things happen – a truly notable Novocastrian trait. I congratulate Jon and the Northampton Cobblers on this wonderful achievement and wish him and his club all the best in the coming season.

**STAR STRUCK IGNITE – ELMORE VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Elmore Vale Public School, one of 11 schools from the Wallsend electorate, participated in Star Struck Ignite on 16-17 June 2023. Star Struck is a monumental annual performing arts event presented by Newcastle, The Hunter and Central Coast areas of the NSW Department of Education. It is a showcase of dance, drama, choirs, vocalists, orchestra members and rock bands. This year more than 3,500 students from K-12 had the opportunity to perform and develop an appreciation of the performing arts. Students can also participate in stage management, choreography and props design teams. VET entertainment students gain first-hand professional experience through working with industry experts. The 16 Elmore Vale Public School participants were all dancers: Isabella, Matilda, Eliza, Alaska, Blaire, Iyla, Katey, Georgia, Nikki, Isla, Olive, Addison, Willow, Abi, Cloey and Temperance. They were led by Miss Britt Dedman as the supervising teacher. Well done on a fantastic performance. I hope to see you all hitting the boards again next year!

**MS YOGITA PANJWANI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the work of Ms Yogita Panjwani, who has been generously and selflessly giving her time and effort to help the South Asian Australian Association for over 10 years. Ms Panjwani is mainly involved with teaching students at the organisation's St George Girls High School Kogarah Centre. Yogita is an excellent dance teacher and has expertly taught several groups of Hindi school students for over nine years. Her famous choreographed performances include Bollywood, Bhangra and Lezim dance items. The fact that, she has only missed two of her scheduled volunteering days in the last nine years is truly a testament to her dedication and commitment to helping others. The kindness and diligence that Yogita has shown through her volunteering at the association has opened up a new career path in one of the most valuable and important jobs someone can have. I wish her all the best as she currently pursues a university course to become a primary school teacher. I would like to sincerely thank Ms Panjwani and express my deepest appreciation for the wonderful work she does to spread joy and happiness throughout our local community.

**TERESA CHU**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and recognise Hurstville resident, Mrs Teresa Yuk Ying Chu, for her continuous volunteering work for the CASS Huakang Seniors Group in Hurstville. For more than 20 years, CASS Huakang Seniors Group has been assisting the local Chinese community in the St George area. The organisation provides social dancing classes, fitness program and information sessions for senior citizens with a Chinese background. Ms Chu has been a highly dedicated volunteer of Huakang Seniors Group since 2008. She is passionate about helping elderly people escape social isolation, take part in community events and involve themselves in community matters. Teresa has been working as the group leader since 2012 after exhibiting strong leadership in planning group activities and engagement with other volunteers. Ms Chu is truly an inspiration to us all and I want to sincerely thank her for giving up so much of her time and effort to helping out the St George Chinese community.

**STEVE MEAD**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the achievements and contributions of Mr Steve Mead. Not only is Mr Mead a Principal at Carlton Public School, but he is also a dedicated lifelong volunteer with Surf Life Saving NSW. Steve has dedicated many hours as an Active Patrolling member, patrolling at Elouera beach to ensure beach goers can enjoy the surf safely. Remarkably, during the Nyngan Floods crisis last year, Steve was part of the emergency call out team, selflessly volunteering his time to help the devastated community. For his services, Steve was nominated for the 2022 Volunteer of the Year and the 2023 Trainer of the Year for the Surf Lifesaving Sydney Branch. He has already been awarded the Silver Medallion for Beach Management and he is a Bronze Medallion Trainer. Mr Mead is truly an inspiration to us all and the perfect role model for the students at Carlton Public School. I sincerely thank Mr Mead for his distinguished service to our local community and express my deepest appreciation for his commitment to spreading joy and happiness throughout the St George community.

**RECOGNITION OF BROOKLYN ACRES**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise Brooklyn Acres from Wialda, for competing in the Queensland Junior Sedan Championships and excelling in her sport of Speedway racing, particularly over the course of this year. I congratulate Brooklyn on her nomination for the Local Sporting Champions Program, which provides financial assistance to young people between 12 and 18 years to compete, coach or umpire in their chosen sport. I commend Brooklyn for the time she spends travelling significant distances to compete in events and for her ongoing commitment to Speedway racing. I would also like to thank her family,

in particular grandfather Rick Turner, for his enduring support and providing the opportunities for Brooklyn to achieve her best.

### **RECOGNITION OF THE PROVOST BOYS OF WALCHA**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of the Provost brothers from Walcha. Lachie, Benji and Jack each competed at Rodeos from Rockhampton down to Gloucester recently, coming home with various wins and prizes. I would like to make special mention of Lachie, who won the Junior Bull Ride at Rockhampton PBR Junior Academy event, followed by wins at Glowalman Junior Rodeos in Wingham, Nabitac and Gloucester. Lachie was named champion at all three Rodeos as well as qualifying to ride-off in the Supreme Stock Rider. I commend the Provost brothers on taking up such a difficult but rewarding sport and commend their family for giving the boys this valuable opportunity. Whilst they may not be old in years, the boys can justly remark with confidence - they are now 'old hands' or, that 'it aint their first Rodeo!'

### **WALCHA PLAYERS IN THE 16'S CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of Ollie Greig and Darcy Macpherson on being selected to play in the GPS Squad at the NSW Schools Rugby Championships (16s), held at St Gregory's College Campbelltown recently. Ollie and Darcy are Walcha locals attending school at Shore and St Ignatius' College, respectively. I congratulate Ollie and Darcy for being selected into the GPS squad, joining the President's A XV, and for being successful in winning the Championships! The boys were undefeated, winning 31 – 0 against the Independent Sporting Association (ISA). They won 36 – 7 in the Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) preliminary finals and defeated ISA Black team 49 – 19, to win the Martin Pitt Memorial Shield. I commend each of the players on their hard work in their preparation leading up to the Championships and your commitment Rugby, with each of you having bright futures ahead.

### **DAPTO DOGS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I congratulate Greyhounds NSW on their recent announcement to build an \$11 million state of the art Greyhound Racing facility at Bong Bong Road in Dapto, replacing the current track that has operated at the Dapto Showgrounds since 1937. Just in my electorate, there are over 100 greyhound participants and many more across the Illawarra. 'Dapto Dogs' is a brand as iconic as Vegemite and the Victa lawnmower so I am thankful that greyhound racing will continue in Dapto. The new 28-acre facility will host a two-turn track, built to the latest safety standards, modern patron facilities and a 'Greyhounds as Pets' rehoming facility. I am pleased that GRNSW has undertaken to consult with the local community to explore ways in which the site can be utilised for community-based activities. I commend the Dapto Greyhound Club and local participants on their commitment to ensuring the Dapto Dogs are enjoyed for generations to come.

### **WARILLA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Warilla North Public School for their outstanding efforts in establishing a positive and comprehensive learning environment. The dedication and hard work of the entire staff in creating such a nurturing atmosphere are truly commendable. The school's approach to education emphasizes the inclusion of children in various aspects of their learning journey. Their collaboration with the community organization Beyond Empathy to produce 'Student Voice', a student-made video for students, exemplifies their commitment to empowering the young minds. Warilla North Public School's sense of community is truly remarkable. Events like the whole school art show, the breakfast club, and Friday afternoon sport sessions reflect the intentional effort to foster a strong sense of togetherness among students and staff. Once again, I would like to offer my congratulations to everyone involved in making Warilla North Public School an exceptional learning environment. It is evident that the students are eager to be part of a school that offers countless opportunities for their growth and development.

### **WARILLA FLORIST**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to take this moment to congratulate Warilla Florist for being recognised as one of the best businesses in the state of New South Wales. Being 1 of 85 finalists, Warilla Florist won the Service Excellence Award in the florist section of the Sydney Market Fresh Awards. For over 31 hardworking years, they have been servicing Warilla and surrounding suburbs with high quality flowers, and it is fantastic to see a local, hardworking business receive the recognition they deserve. It is amazing to witness a local business flourishing, thriving and being recognized on such a grand stage like that of the Sydney Market Fresh Awards. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour Electorate, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to all the staff and owners of Warilla Florist.

**DUDLEY REDHEAD JRLFC – MIGHTY MAGPIES**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The Charlestown Electorate is home to an absolutely beautiful community. I was given a lovely reminder of this recently, when the Mighty Magpies—the Dudley Redhead Junior Rugby League Football Club—raised \$28,500 for Run DIPG. On 24 June, the Magpies hosted a fundraiser in memory of Amber Hughes, a young woman who tragically passed away after a brain tumour diagnosis. Amber's family has worked tirelessly since her passing to raise awareness and funds for people in a similar situation. Run DIPG was founded by Drs Phoebe Hindley and Matt Dun after their daughter, Josephine Laura Dun, was diagnosed with Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) in 2018. Twenty-two months after her diagnosis, Laura passed away at just four years old. RUN DIPG was founded with the goal of eradicating this most deadly of childhood cancers, and improving outcomes for patients, families and communities by raising awareness, empowering advocates and fundraising to support research. Thank you to all players, supporters and committees for organising a truly special day, which did so much for a wonderful charity and an amazing family!

**CLARE WHEELER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The entire country has been spellbound by the Matildas during their incredible World Cup campaign, and Charlestown Electorate residents have had a local hero to cheer on with midfielder Clare Wheeler. Twenty-five-year-old Clare began playing soccer for the Adamstown Rosebuds at ten years old, before being selected as a thirteen-year-old for the state league and then hitting the Emerging Jets Program. From 2013 to 2020, Clare made sixty-seven appearances for the Jets, before moving to Sydney FC. In twelve appearances for the side, she scored four goals. This brought her to the attention of Danish champions Fortuna Hjørring, who signed her in June 2021. She now plays for the English Women's Super League club Everton. Clare's career with the Matildas started in 2015, when she was selected for the Young Matildas to compete at the under-19s Women's Championship tournament in China. In 2021, she made her debut with the senior team in a friendly against the Republic of Ireland. Congratulations on all your achievements so far, Clare. As part of the Matildas' 2023 Women's World Cup side, you have been part of a transformational moment in Australian sport. We're all so proud of you.

**EMILY VAN EGMOND**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Australia has been thrilled by the exploits of our Mighty Matildas during the Women's World Cup, which has showcased the extraordinary talents of these world-class athletes. For those of us in the Charlestown electorate, it has been especially amazing to see Dudley Redhead United Football Club junior and Warners Bay High alumni Emily van Egmond play such a starring role in Australia's progression through the World Cup. The 30-year-old midfielder was raised in Newcastle, playing for the Newcastle Jets in 2008-09, from 2011 to 13, and again in 2014 and 2021, along with a storied career with other Australian sides and internationally. From 2007 to 2009, Emily played on the Australian under-17s side; from 2008 to 2013, she was on the Australian under-20s side; and since 2010 Emily has made 127 appearances and scored thirty goals as one of our Matildas. On 27 July, she kicked the first goal in the Matildas' match against Nigeria. Congratulations, Emily, on your performance throughout the Matildas' World Cup campaign. You have well and truly entered the pantheon of Australian sporting legends. The Charlestown Electorate, Newcastle and Australia as a whole are so proud of you.

**CONGRATULATIONS PAIGE HADLEY AND OUR ORIGIN DIAMONDS**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—I would like to congratulate our Origin Diamonds on their amazing World Cup victory! A special shoutout to Paige Hadley, a St Marys Senior High alumnus, who absolutely shone on the court. Paige began her career at the Penrith District Netball Association and continues to work with young netballers in Penrith, motivating them to reach for the stars. I, the community, and the rest of Australia are so proud of our Origin Diamonds. They are great representatives for Australian sport, and a huge inspiration to young women across the nation who seek to obtain a career in sport. Congratulations to Paige, and our Origin Diamonds. I look forward to witnessing the great work you continue to do.

**CONGRATULATIONS MATTHEW GALEA**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—Congratulations to Matthew Galea, a Penrith Christian School alumnus who has done incredibly well at the TYR Pro Swim



Championships in California. Matthew won three gold medals, in the 400m, 800m and the 1500m free. He is officially ranked in Australia as one of the top ten fastest all-time swimmers in the 1500m free with an impressive time of 14.57.19. Your dedication and contribution to the sport is inspiring, not only to your community but to young swimmers who seek to reach for the stars. Matthew is already a part of the Australian A Team and is aspiring to compete at the 2024 Paris Olympics! Best of luck Matthew, the community and I are cheering for you!

### **THE ROTARY OLD BOYS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate the Rotary Old Boys, Umina Beach Rotarians, Mr Ian Johnson, Mr Wayne Dowdle and Mr Mel Dodds for completing their drive across Australia to raise fund for Variety Children's Charity. These amazing men brought along a 40-year-old ute marked with number 911 and took part in the Bathurst to Batavia Big Bash. The participants of this event get to share an adventure covered 5,500 km of our beautiful country with mates driving 30 years old plus cars through regional parts of Australia. The Rotary Old Boys had the opportunities to visit local towns, schools, organisations, and the kids. In addition to that, they could see the direct impact of their fundraising efforts, with a range of educational, health and mobility equipment provided to local schools and organisations enroute. It is not a surprise that their story warmed many hearts and opened hundreds of wallets. As a result of their outstanding commitment, they raised more than \$13,000. Thank you, Rotary Old Boys. What a journey you had, and I am certain that these beautiful memories have left a lasting effect in your lives and the people around you.

### **WOY WOY LIBRARY MARKS 75 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to congratulate the team at Woy Woy Library, which celebrated its 75th anniversary this August. As someone who loves reading and learning, I greatly appreciate this event. This beautiful library was the very first library to be established on the Central Coast in 1948. To mark this significant milestone, there is a historic display of images from Gosford and Woy Woy districts in the period of 1940 and 1950, around the time of the formation of the library. Over three quarters of a century, Woy Woy Library has been a reliable venue for generations of families on the Central Coast when they need education and entertainment support. As with other libraries in the area, Woy Woy branch is no longer just an access point to education and information, but also a gateway to social connection. Besides traditional services, Woy Woy library continues to keep up with current social needs such as offering mobile library service, free internet access, eBooks as well as holiday programs and events for local community. I applaud Woy Woy library for over 75 years of outstanding service.

### **EMILY GILTINAN – NSW HEALTH EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY AWARDS 2023 FINALIST**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—With a great pleasure, I would like to congratulate Emily Giltinan of Gosford Hospital for being recognised as an outstanding nurse and finalist in the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2023. The importance of our front-line workers cannot be overstated and to say that I am excited about this award is an understatement. Our medical staff members are unsung heroes, and they deserve every single recognition for their hard work. According to her colleagues in the surgical ward, Emily goes above and beyond to give exceptional care to her patients and her enthusiasm inspires and motivates others. Emily shared: our patients come in for major surgeries and we see them at their most vulnerable. While it's sad when they leave, it's great to see them back on their feet and ready to go home and get on with their lives. As someone who resides on the Central Coast, I am pleased to say that we, Coasties are lucky to have you, Emily. I am so proud of you for your caring nature and work ethic. I wish you a successful career.

### **BANKSTOWN BITES**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 29th July 2023, along with more than 14,500 people, I walked the streets of Olympic Parade, Bankstown, enjoying the multicultural food festival, Bankstown Bites. Bankstown Bites, an annual multi-cultural event, provides an opportunity for community members to enjoy the experience of tasting tours, cooking demonstrations from local and celebrity chefs, food from all over the world, and activities for the whole family. With the suburb of Bankstown being one of the most multicultural suburbs in Sydney, the food festival Bankstown Bites, not only offers a variety of international food stalls and cooking demonstrations but also provides an opportunity for community members to enjoy diverse cultural art and music performances from local students, the Bankstown Art Centre, and the Bankstown Theatre Company. This included a special performance by 'Plate' artist Jayanto Tan and dance artist Ruichi Fujimura, which explored six artists and their rituals surrounding food and placing food in a personal cultural context through performance, ceramics, and multimedia works. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Canterbury Bankstown City Council for organising and hosting this multi-cultural event that has allowed community members to come together and celebrate Australia's rich multicultural food landscape.

**MRS ELEANOR MENTON**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Always thankful and grateful, these were the words Mrs Eleanor Menton shared with me. Mrs Menton's life is one of the many beautiful Australian migrant stories. Mrs Menton's wonderful career as an educator in the Bankstown community. On 28 July 1975, after moving from the Philippines, Mrs Menton started her teaching career with the NSW Department of Education. Her first teaching post was at Glebe Public School where she taught for 10 years. She then moved to Tamworth and taught at Kootingal Public School for 2 years. Eventually, Mrs Menton moved to Bankstown, which she now calls home, and taught at Bankstown West Public School for 29 years. When Mrs Menton retired in 2016, she received a medal and a citation certificate from the NSW Department of Education for her 40 years of dedicated service to education. Even after retiring, Mrs Menton's passion for education hasn't stopped. She is now volunteering her time to help students at St Brendan's Catholic Primary School Bankstown and St Mel's Catholic Primary School Campsie. On behalf of the Bankstown community, I want to thank Mrs Menton for the incredible contribution she has made to education in our community.

**TENDER LOVING CARE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate Yasser Zaki the founder of Tender Loving Care (TLC), on his nomination in the NSW 2023 Community Achievement Awards in the Transgrid Leadership category. Tender Loving Care (TLC) is a prominent National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service provider, driven by a vision to champion the rights of people with disabilities in our society. The Centre's approach has enabled people with disabilities to successfully attain their life goals and foster a sense of empowerment and independence. I am pleased to say that Mr Zaki's passion for helping others and his commitment to making a difference have undeniably left a positive impact on our community. His tireless efforts have not only uplifted the lives of countless individuals but have also contributed to the greater social fabric not only in my electorate but most of Australia. A testament to his leadership and unwavering commitment to affecting positive change, Mr Zaki has collaborated seamlessly with various community organisations. His innovative approach has transformed employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, injecting an air of optimism and tangible outcomes. I am very pleased to have these excellent services in my electorate of Bankstown.

**FAREWELL SUPERINTENDENT DAVID WADDELL – BLACKTOWN POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Farewell and thank you to Superintendent David Waddell for his service as Commander of the Blacktown Police Area Command. Superintendent Waddell concluded his command of the Blacktown Police Area Command on 30th June 2023. We thank Superintendent Waddell for his dedication to the community and congratulate him on his progression as Operations Manager for the Northern Region Command. Superintendent Waddell has had a long and distinguished career in the New South Wales Police Force. He has left a lasting impact on the Blacktown Police Area Command, by demonstrating maturity and a proactive approach to building relationships and engaging stakeholders to support our local community. The Superintendent's operational experience and commitment to law enforcement has assisted in a number of complex and difficult investigations. Thank you, Superintendent David Waddell, for helping bring justice to victims of crime, survivors and their families. We wish you all the very best in your new Command. We welcome Superintendent Kirsty Heyward as she takes up the role of Commander of the Blacktown Police Area Command and I look forward to working with her to continue strengthening the safety of our community.

**ANTHONY BONACRUZ – ASPECT WESTERN SYDNEY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Since 20th July 2023, I have been fortunate to have Anthony Bonacruz, as a member of my Prospect Electorate Office Team. Anthony is a Year 11 student from the Aspect Western Sydney Satellite Class at Gilroy Catholic College, and visits our office every Thursday with his teacher's aide, Shirley. Aspect Western Sydney is connected with a wider network of Aspect Schools across NSW and Australia, which provides dynamic and individualised learning for students on the autism spectrum. For over 50 years, Aspect's satellite classes and independent schools have provided exceptional care and education to students. During his work experience, Anthony has assisted my office to send birthday cards to community members, helped staff draft speeches, and has even learnt how to use the office camera! Anthony has been of great help to my staff and has stepped out of his comfort zone on numerous occasions to learn about new experiences. I encourage all Members to connect with their local Aspect school and host a work experience student. It has been a pleasure to host Anthony for work experience and I look forward to his visit to the Parliament of NSW on Thursday, 24th August 2023.

**SUSAI BENJAMIN OAM**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Cllr Susai Benjamin OAM who was recently awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia on the 2023 King's Birthday Honours List. Susai is a Toongabbie resident in the Electorate of Prospect and was recognised for his service to law and community. Since 2012, Susai has been Honorary Director of Toongabbie Legal Centre (TLC) and is currently acting as the Principal Solicitor. TLC is an important community-based legal centre that offers free legal services to vulnerable individuals in Western Sydney. Susai's contribution to TLC has ensured that the service continues to grow and provide high standards of ongoing care, legal education and training, and law reform advocacy for our community. As a Councillor of Blacktown City Council, Susai has Chaired numerous multicultural and advisory committees, and has also supported thousands of residents with their concerns. This altruism extends to his work with community organisations such as the Multicultural Advisory Council, United Indians Associations, and Ethnic Communities Council of NSW. Congratulations again Susai, on your receipt of this prestigious Award. It has been a privilege to collaborate with you on a professional and personal level for many years, on matters to support our Western Sydney community.

**EDUCATION WEEK AWARDS FOR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO SINGLETON SCHOOLS**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to acknowledge several community contributions recognised during the Singleton Learning Community of public schools Education Week Awards. The volunteers who provide the Breakfast Club for Singleton Heights Public School students and the local businesses that supported Jason Kolatchew to provide Singleton High students with an authentic experience in building a tiny house. School Achievement Award's for Programs and Initiatives were also presented to Broke Public School for the Central Coast Academy of STEM Excellence Partnership, Story Street at King Street Public, Milbrodale Public's 90 for 90 attendance program, the Friday Student Representative Council School Canteen at Mount Pleasant Public, Singleton Public's Primary Mathematics Specialist Teacher Initiative and Singleton High's K-Block Kafe and Zoom with Takahata. Awards for Outstanding Contribution by a Non-Teaching member of Staff were presented to Broke Public School's Jessica Doust, Shelley Mitchell from Jerry's Plains Public, King Street Public's Shelby Fishpool and Bridget Wilkes, Julie Dunn of Milbrodale Public, Mount Pleasant Public's Kylie Shearer, Cass Considine of Singleton Heights Public, Margaret Forbes from Kirkton Public, Singleton High's Jayne Williams, Jasmin Bown, Anne Edwards and Jackie Martin and Singleton Public's Heidi Kolatchew.

**SCONE EDUCATION WEEK AWARDS 2023**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Congratulations to the Scone Schools recognised at the Education Week Awards on Thursday 3 August at Scone High School. To, Lizz Hickey of Scone Public School on receiving the Excellence in School Leadership Award. Excellence in Teaching Awards recipients included Ellerston Public's Amanda Mamone, Laura Bellamy of Belltrees Public, Scone Public's Tanya Williams and Millie Ross, Murrurundi Public's Karen Mitchell and Keegan Pulik, Hannah Purcell of Aberdeen Public and Lenise Crawley of Scone High. Excellence in Education award for non-teaching staff recipients were Shai Blackadder of Scone High, Angela Hjorring of Scone Public, Kyra Hayne of Ellerston Public, Elizabeth Batterham from Belltrees Public, Aberdeen Public's Andrew Easton and Murrurundi Public's Nikki Gorst. Excellence in Student Achievement Awards recipients Evie White and Charlie Moir of Scone Public, Rosemary Baker from Ellerston Public, Renzy Perez of Scone High School, Trixy Perez from Belltrees Public, Elsie Bell of Murrurundi Public and Aberdeen Public's Grace Partridge. The Excellence in Education Award for community members were presented to Scone High School's Lindy Hunt, Jane Sullivan from Murrurundi Public, Scone Public's Darryn Wicks, Anita Faulkner of Blandford Public, Aberdeen Public's Toni Partridge and Sally Mitchell of Ellerston Public School.

**MUSWELLBROOK LEARNING COMMUNITY EDUCATION WEEK AWARDS 2023**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to acknowledge this year's recipients of the Muswellbrook Learning Community's Education Week Awards hosted by Muswellbrook High School on August 1st. Muswellbrook Public School's Karla Kelly recognised for Excellence in Teaching, Angela Sinclair and Kelly Hallett for their Outstanding Contribution as non-teaching staff and Kimberly Feeney for an Outstanding Contribution by a school community member. Award recipients from Muswellbrook South Public included Sharon Lackenby, Olivia Paynter, Chris Hayes, Jamie-Lee Pryke, Kylie Le Grange, Lillian Sher, Jacinda Dever, Michaela Boyd and Leyhton Carroll. Congratulations to Denman Public's Marnie Kempster, Anne Clendinning, Frankie Gee, Isla Whiteman, Jaylene Champion, Renee Wear, Kim Wolfgang, Elijah Ballard, Gail McCormick and Michelle Andrews. Martindale Public School's award recipients Hannah Oakden, Adelaide Richards, Vanessa Richards and Lex Rivers along with Sandy Hollow Public's Renee Roper, Helen Smith, Roslyn Baldwin, Casey Reckwell, Dianne Hayne and Zoe Ayre McCann. Muswellbrook High School's awardees include Elizabeth May, Janelle McLeod, Michelle Ryan, Cassidy Dewson Carvell, Nattapong Teerakaew, Angela Sinclair, Phoebe

Wolfgang, Alex Blayden, Laura Martin and Dominic Tegart. A special mention for Muswellbrook High's Café 15 students who prepared afternoon tea for guests who attended the awards ceremony.

#### **OLI CHANDLER**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Eleven-year-old, Oli Chandler from Gilgandra has earned a place on the NSW motocross team. Oli won the 65CC 10-11 years and placed second in the 85CC 9-12 years at the 2023 junior motocross state championships and will now go on to represent the state at the Australian titles in Darwin racing against Australia and New Zealand's fastest young riders. Oli began his motocross journey when he was given an old motorbike for his eighth birthday. Since then, he has dedicated many hours of training and weekends of travelling to compete. I congratulate Oli on making it on the NSW team and wish you all the best for the Australian titles.

#### **KYNE ALLEN, HUNTER DORING AND BROCK ALLEN**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Wee Waa High School's bowls team won the 2023 combined High Schools North West Champions. The match champions Kyne Allen, Hunter Doring and Brock Allen, played last month in their home town winning 24-2. The boys have now qualified for the NSW state finals which they play in August. The young Wee Waa boys are Wee Waa bowling club juniors and play against the best in the local competitions. I congratulate Kyne, Hunter and Brock on winning the North West Champions and wish them the best of luck in the NSW state finals. I look forward to hearing the outcome.

#### **DUCK CREEK PICNICS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—The committee for the Duck Creek Picnic Races has generously donated \$40,000 to the Macquarie Homestay in Dubbo. Each year for the last 15 years Duck Creek Races have taken place at the Nyngan showground. Nyngan has a population of 2073 and is 160km West of Dubbo. The event attracts travellers from all over, which supports the local supermarkets, pubs, cafes, service stations and accommodation. This year a record 4700 people who attended the event, enabling the committee to contribute such a generous donation. The Macquarie Homestay provides accommodation to those undergoing medical treatment in Dubbo and for their families. This facility relies heavily on government funding and community contributions and is about to commence stage two - another 26 units. The homestay is in such high demand, they are turning away between 130-170 people per month. I thank the committee of the Duck Creek Picnic races for running such a successful event and such a generous donation. I would also like to thank other sponsors and contributors. It is great to see smaller communities getting together to have fun, supporting local businesses, whilst contributing to such a worthy organisation.

#### **ALICIA FOX**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise young local photographer Alicia Fox, who, having been deeply moved by her life experiences with those less fortunate has decided to use her talents to effect positive change in the world. Alicia travelled extensively throughout Peru and volunteered with charities in South, Central and Latin America where she became acutely aware of the positive difference a single person could make. To raise awareness of the human impact of the destruction of the Amazon Region, Alicia embarked on a project documenting the traditional dress and culture of the Amazonians. She wanted people to understand not only the immense environmental destruction, but the human loss and tragedy that paralleled it. Luck was on Alicia's side in Sri Lanka in 2004, when she survived the Boxing Day tsunami. Alicia was profoundly impacted by this tragic event and sought to help people by photographing the devastation of their homes to try to secure funding for rebuilding. During this time Alicia saw her camera as a tool that would enable support for those people impacted. Alicia runs her business as ethically and environmentally sustainably as possible, never forgetting the life lessons she has learnt during her travels.

#### **ROBERT "MORRIE" ANTHONY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to acknowledge Robert "Morrie" Anthony for his longstanding contribution to everyone's favourite lawn bowl's and social hub in the south of the Port Macquarie electorate - the Harrington Bowling Club. Affectionately known as "Morrie", the stalwart member and former Director of Harrington Bowling Club was recognised in April honouring his incredible 53 years of committed service to the organisation. Friends and family celebrated Morrie's impressive milestone on the 27th April 2023 with the unveiling of a dedicated sign at the Club, "The Robert "Morris" Anthony Green". Morrie grew up on his parent's dairy farm off Anthoneys Lane in Harrington. He married his sweetheart Dorothy and raised three children. In 1970, Morrie joined the Bowling Club and served as a Director for eleven years from 1971 to 1982. During this period, it was noted that Morrie played his part in mortgaging the family property, with other Directors, to enable the approval of a bank loan for the Club's essential building extensions. In 2007 Morrie

was awarded Life Membership of Harrington Bowling Club. A keen bowler, Morrie's achievements in lawn bowls include minor singles, men's fours and Number 5 and Number 6 Pennants flags. Congratulations Morrie.

#### **MURPHY HUTCHINGS – 2024 WANDERERS AUSTRALIA JUNIOR CRICKET TOUR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus student Murphy Hutchings for securing a place in the 2024 Wanderers Australia Junior Cricket Tour. At the age of fourteen Murphy will be touring with the international junior cricket squad to England and France to play against the worlds' best batters and bowlers. It is also an opportunity for Murphy to learn new skills amongst a talent pool of expert coaching staff while gaining important match experience against elite clubs, schools and representative country teams in England. Described as a natural talent with so much to offer women's junior cricket, Murphy is already hitting sixers and taking wickets at home for Wauchope Cricket Club and will represent this year in North Coast and Mid North Coast tournaments. Murphy is also a product of the winter academies - a training program which has supported her progression and selection for the Wanderers tour. On tour, Murphy will experience the atmosphere of Lords cricket ground in London well known as the home of cricket as well as visit World War I battlefields of the Somme. Congratulations Murphy and best wishes for your future endeavours in cricket.

#### **BURNING GENERATION**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to acknowledge the work of the young student artists from Batlow in the "Burning Generation" exhibition that has been displayed at the Tumut Visitors centre. I recently visited the exhibition and was impressed with the talent and passion of the young artists: Tilly Connolly, Cat Jackson, Jonny Minogue, Corrinne Jackson, Lillie Linden, Ellisha Olsen, Lilly Barrett. The exhibition will help visitors understand the experience of young people of the Black Summer Fires otherwise known as the Dunns Road Fire that burnt an estimated 333,940 hectares and came very close to destroying the town of Batlow. The exhibition features the work of local young people affected by those bushfires in Batlow, who participated in a series of workshops to build up their skills before presenting these final works. A special thanks to Project Leader Dr Rachel Fox and Andrew McGrath of the Charles Sturt School of Psychology, as well as Claire Harris of Create Hub Riverina, who collaborated with students to bring the exhibition to life. I commend all those who made this happen. We must continue to reflect on the experience of that terrible summer.

#### **KEVIN AND JO MURRELL - BEYOND THE FRONT LINE**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge Mr Kevin and Mrs Jo Murrell from Batlow and their impressive work in helping people research the fate of soldiers during the first world war. Beyond the Front Line was inspired by the Murrell's trip to Europe where they visited Kevin's great grandfather William Wrathall in Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium. Many thousands of ANZACs lay at rest there today. Beyond the Front Line was established soon afterwards and has provided valuable research services for local families in Batlow and surrounds and beyond who seek to learn more about the military history of friends and family. The Murrells have performed this invaluable community service out of respect for the ANZACs and out of care for their families. Kevin said to local media outlet About Regional, "It would be good to share the stories of the little communities. "Places like Tumblong, Humula, Mannus and many others have memorials to our veterans." My electorate has a proud military tradition and part of honouring our fallen is by remembering their stories. I again thank the Murrells for helping our community remember.

#### **INNER WEST COUNCIL – FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP LIVE SITES**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—The sound of fans cheering on the Matildas has echoed across the Inner West over the last month. Congratulations to the Inner West Council for fighting to have community live sites set up to provide the opportunity for people to come together and support the Tillies remarkable run all the way to the semi-final. It's been wonderful to see so many people come out together with such a positive vibe to cheer on the home team at sites all over the Inner West including; Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, Lambert Park, Pratten Park, Mackey Park and the iconic Henson Park. Fans were invited to write words of support, admiration and affirmation to the Matildas on the Inner West Wall of Support. Designed by artists Muralisto, this participatory art station has moved around each screening site and will be used to create a permanent artwork after the tournament. Congratulations to the Inner West Council for leading the way to have these sites set up for our community and well done to the Matildas who have inspired us all with their skill, determination, and authenticity both on and off the pitch.

#### **KIARA TRAN - AMY LARGE YOUNG VOLUNTEER**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulates to Kiara Tran, a recent recipient of the Amy Large Volunteer Award from Inner West Council. Formerly known as Volunteer of the Year Awards, the Amy Large Volunteer Awards honours Amy's long years of service supporting the community

through her volunteer work. They celebrate the enormous contribution volunteers make in the Inner West. Kiara has been described as "an emerging local leader" and has demonstrated an outstanding effort in community volunteering. Completing volunteer work for both the Bill Crews Foundation, and Addison Road Community Organisation, Kiara is an exemplary young person, striving to improve her community. A talented musician, Kiara has undertaken volunteer music performances as part of ANZAC Day Services, Inner West Music Festival, and more. It is wonderful to see the young people of the Inner West contributing their time to support our community. Congratulations Kiara!

#### **IWC AND MARRICKVILLE HIGH – STORYTECH CONNECT**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Marrickville High School and Inner West Council have joined forces to forge strong intergenerational connections between students and seniors through StoryTech Connect. StoryTech Connect is a joint initiative where students will assist seniors with their technology or will act as scribes recording their life stories on paper. Intergenerational connections have benefits for youth and seniors, leading to a higher sense of purpose, improved self-esteem, and reduced feelings of isolation. StoryTech Connect is a 6 week program that kicked off on Wednesday 2 August and is open to any Inner West senior who is over 55 years. The seniors and students will be supported by playwright and screenwriter Ang Collins through the storytelling process. This is a great example of young and old community members supporting each other and building strong connections in the Inner West community. Congratulations to Inner West Council and Marrickville High School for setting up this wonderful initiative.

#### **CAROLINE CHISHOLM COLLEGE - JUNIOR NETBALL TEAM**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend the relentless efforts and spirit of the Caroline Chisholm College Junior Netball Team. These young and determined athletes displayed exemplary skills and teamwork while competing in the prestigious NSWCCC Netball Championships. Though they narrowly missed out on advancing to the Grand Final due to a count back, after finishing equal first in their pool, their dedication and commitment to the sport are evident. It's not just about the wins, but the journey and the values cultivated throughout. To finish equal first in such a competitive pool speaks volumes about their capability and potential. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team, their coaches and the supportive school community of Caroline Chisholm College. You have showcased resilience and sportsmanship of the highest order and you make us all very proud. Well played and here's to many more successes in the future.

#### **TERINA-GRACE, CHARLEE-ROSE AND LIBBY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish to acknowledge and applaud the remarkable achievements of Terina-Grace, Charlee-Rose and Libby, three exceptional Year 12 debating students from Emmaus Catholic College. Their dedication and finesse propelled them to the Semi-Finals of a prestigious debating competition, a feat worth celebrating. With the skilled guidance of Alison O'Connor, an esteemed international debater and public speaker, they honed their skills and eloquently represented their school. Their journey through the competition has been a testament to their hard work, team spirit and commitment to excellence in the art of debate. On behalf of our community, I extend my congratulations to these students and commend Ms. O'Connor for her outstanding mentorship. May their achievements inspire many others to pursue their passions and make their voices heard. Well done and may you continue to shine in all your future endeavours!

#### **INTER BOYS FOOTBALL TEAM – EMMAUS CATHOLIC COLLEGE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish to shine a spotlight on the Inter Boys Football team from Emmaus Catholic College for their commendable achievement in their recent competition. Through determination, teamwork and unyielding spirit, they emerged victorious against Bede Polding College, showcasing their skills on the field. Their victory resonates beyond just a scoreline, it exemplifies dedication, discipline and the pursuit of excellence. To the young athletes who represented their school with distinction and sportsmanship, your accomplishment speaks volumes about your passion for the game and your commitment to representing Emmaus Catholic College. To the coaches, mentors and supportive community behind them, your influence is profound in their success. Congratulations to each player and the entire Emmaus community on this achievement. May this victory be a steppingstone to even greater successes in the future! Well done, team!

#### **CAMDEN TIGERS INDIGENOUS FESTIVAL OF FOOTBALL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On 9 July I had the pleasure of attending the International festival of Indigenous Football presented by Camden Tigers Football Club during NAIDOC Week. It was an action packed day with three trophies up for grabs. The Ray "Frogga" Collins Memorial trophy was taken out by the South Coast Jumbalungs with a 5-4 win over Camden Tigers. The Aunty Joyce Mate Trophy was taken out by the Maori Football Aotearoa, and the Indigenous Cup was won by Camden Tigers Indigenous football program with a 6-2 victory. A huge shoutout to the players of Camden Indigenous Football program and Aotearoa Maori

Football club, as well as ACT Jummalungs football Masters for their energy and inspiration. Following the games, the Camden tigers Gala Dinner was held with all teams to finish the day off with food, drinks, traditional dance and ceremony. Thank you to Camden Tigers football club for holding the festival and I look forward to the next one.

#### **LIVERPOOL OLYMPIC 40 YEARS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On June 17 I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the 40th anniversary of Liverpool Olympic Football Club. With close to 400 people in attendance it was a great night celebrating community and football. Liverpool Olympic was founded by two Steves, Agamlalis and Agiasotis, during a picnic with family and friends at Toowoomb Bay on the central coast in 1982. However, one of its proudest achievements are the at least 22 marriages it is responsible for. A massive high for the club was reaching the 6th round of the Football Federation Cup in 2021 after failing to overcome their cousin club, National Premier League Side Sydney Olympic FC. Congratulations to everyone involved with the club, especially the management committee for putting together a fabulous night. It was a pleasure to being a part of this milestone.

#### **ST ANTHONY OF PADUA**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On Tuesday June 6th, I visited St Anthony of Padua Catholic College in Austral. Principal Lea De Angelis met with me to discuss the fantastic things going on at St Anthony's. I was also treated to a tour of the school grounds. Much like Austral itself, St Anthony's has grown immensely. In only the last couple of years, the school population has doubled! In order to cater for this growth, St Anthony's is undertaking a raft of capital works projects to deliver new facilities to accommodate learning and recreation for their students. This included a suite of new senior sports courts, for the students of St Anthony's to stay active at school. These courts are marked out for basketball, netball, and tennis. With the rest of the building works on track to be delivered at the end of the year, I look forward to being able to visit again and see the project when it is complete!

#### **APPIN MINE DISASTER**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I stand before you today to reflect on a sombre anniversary that still resonates deeply within our hearts—the Appin Mine Disaster, which occurred 44 years ago. The tragic loss of 14 miners profoundly impacted our community, leaving an enduring void that we continue to carry with us. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Appin Public School, the Illawarra Union Singers, and Frank Lachterbach for their poignant addresses during this memorial. Their words have served as a moving tribute, honouring the lives of those we lost and reminding us of the strength and unity that binds our community. Families of the victims have shown unwavering dedication in preserving the memories of their loved ones. Through their tireless efforts, the legacy of the fallen miners lives on, serving as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made. As we gather here today, let us take a moment to remember the lives lost and the impact of this tragedy on our community. May their memory serve as a guiding light, uniting us in solidarity and compassion. We honour the lives lost in the Appin Mine Disaster and pledge never to forget the enduring impact it has had on our community.

#### **NATIONAL TREE DAY**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—National Tree Day proved to be a remarkable event down at Picton Sports Ground. Organised by the dedicated environment team of Wollondilly Shire Council, this community initiative drew a crowd eager to make a difference. We collectively planted over 400 trees, my own team planting over 70 on our own, a testament to the community spirit present in Wollondilly. Volunteering at such events is more than just an environmental duty. It's about enhancing our local spaces and promoting a sense of belonging and responsibility. Seeing everyone come together for a common goal was truly inspiring. Such efforts contribute significantly to improving our environment and leave a lasting impact for generations to come. I believe that each tree planted is not just a step towards a greener future, but also a symbol of our united commitment to caring for the planet. I'm looking forward to more community events like this, where we can come together to make a positive impact. Kudos to everyone involved, your hard work has not gone unnoticed.

#### **TERALBA FIRE AND RESCUE NSW**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—The 2019 bushfire season was the worst New South Wales has recorded with 26 lives lost, 2,448 homes destroyed, and 5.5 million hectares of land burnt. I would like to acknowledge the crucial role fire fighters from Fire and Rescue 458 Teralba played during that time. The efforts of Captain Nathan Goodbun, Deputy Captain Justin Avery along with fire fighters Warwick Moon, Dale Walsham, Troy Hobbs, Matthew Liebrechts, Peter Sullivan, Daniel Miller, Nicholas O'Brien, Dale Lanesbury, Matthew Randall, Barbara Power and Luke Leedham were all recently acknowledged when they received National Emergency Medals for their service to others. During the 2019 – 2020 bushfire season these crew members were involved in local firefighting efforts and were deployed on numerous strike teams around the Mid North Coast including Forster, Port Macquarie and Old Bar where they assisted in fighting bushfires and property

protection. Some crew members were deployed in a multi-agency strike team to the Putty region where they assisted the Rural Fire Service, National Parks & Wildlife and Forestry Corporation fighting bushfires in the area. I thank them for their efforts to keep us safe, not only during that horrific bushfire season but every day.

#### **ISAAC BLISS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Isaac Bliss from Cooranbong, who consistently strives to help the most vulnerable members of the Lake Macquarie community. Isaac joined Southlakes Incorporated back in 2015 and has become an indispensable team member and volunteer with the charity organisation. He frequently goes above and beyond to help clients, doing everything from staying back after the foodbank has closed to talk to people who are feeling lonely, to driving donations to homeless shelters across the state without complaint. There is nothing Isaac won't do for his community. When Isaac was diagnosed with cancer in 2017 one of his main concerns was that he was unable to come in and help at the foodbank for the 10 months he was undergoing treatment. Similarly, Isaac was distraught during the Covid 19 pandemic when he couldn't volunteer due to being immunocompromised after finishing radiation. I have had the privilege of meeting with Isaac on several occasions, he is truly a meticulous and compassionate young man. I thank Isaac for all that he has done and continues to do for the Lake Macquarie community.

#### **KAYUN MUDADANA**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise to congratulate Kayun Mudadana, a seventeen-year-old golfing wonderkid living in my electorate of Holsworthy. Kayun recently represented New South Wales at the Australian All Schools Golf Championship on the Gold Coast earlier this month. The weeklong competition had the best of the best across the entire country, and Kayun performed excellently, finishing 5th in the stroke play event and 2nd in the nett of the stroke play event. Kayun was also part of the winning NSW Boys Team in the stroke and match play events. He also finished one point short of qualifying for the Australian Boys Team. It was an exceptional performance from Kayun and I am keenly following his progress as he takes on the golfing world!

#### **VICTOR CHANG INSTITUTE SCHOOL SCIENCE AWARDS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On Wednesday, 9th August I had the honour to attend and present at the Victor Chang Institute School Science Awards at the ANSTO facility in Lucas Heights. The awards were presented to bright children excelling at STEM subject in high schools across the Sutherland Shire, Liverpool, and Canterbury-Bankstown LGA's. I had the honour of presenting the awards to distinguished pupils alongside Doctor Osvaldo Contreras. I would like to congratulate the award recipients once again in and around my electorate of Holsworthy, including Daniyah Adnan, Dawood Muhammad, Joshua Simpson, Jorja Suga, Vanessa Nissan, Adrian Teogangco, Aidah Alhamwi, Umar Khan, Aiden Maddalena, Thomas Richards, and Gareth King. Their academic achievements are a testament of their hard work and undoubtedly have a bright future in the world of STEM. Through science, dedication, experimentation, and the pursuit of knowledge, they have the power to create a lasting impact and shape our world for the better.

#### **HOLSWORTHY AQUATIC CENTRE WINTER CARNIVAL**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On Saturday, 19th August I had the chance to visit the Holsworthy Aquatic Centre for their annual winter carnival celebration. Drawing participants from all over the electorate, there were an array of swimming competitions with young pupils demonstrating their strong swimming skills for the entire community. The vibrant atmosphere was reminiscent to school swimming carnivals, with proud parents and even prouder participants! A sausage sizzle lunch was provided, and it was such a pleasure to see the carnival go from strength to strength with an ever-growing number of attendees. I would like to congratulate in particular Tony and Nancy Shaw, and Annette Yates for all the work they do at Holsworthy Aquatic Centre. I look forward to productively working with them in the future!

#### **PETA HAIMANOT PYRGIOTIS**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I recognise and congratulate Ms Peta Haimanot Pyrgiotis, a young resident of my electorate of Rockdale, for her outstanding achievement in being selected as the UNICEF Australia 2023 Young Ambassador for New South Wales. UNICEF's global mission to provide humanitarian and developmental aid to children around the world is well known, and the Young Ambassadors serve every year as a conduit between children and young people in our community and the nation's key decision makers. Only one Young Ambassador is selected from each state and territory, and they undergo an 18-month program in leadership, advocacy and community engagement, alongside their work supporting UNICEF's campaigns. Peta was born in Ethiopia and moved to Sydney as an infant when she was adopted. Ethiopia and its neighbouring countries are affected by ongoing unrest and climate issues, and Peta is especially concerned with the impacts of natural disasters, climate change, and the power of education. She is enthusiastic



about the power of women and children to change the world. Peta is an example to others and I wish her every success in her endeavours as the UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador for New South Wales over the next 18 months.

#### **FINLEY HIGH SCHOOL - TOCUMWAL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate the exceptional individuals within Finley High School who have been recognized during Education Week for their invaluable contributions to public education. Veronica McNaught, Robyn O'Leary, Michelle Archinal, Michael O'Leary, Sally Marsden, Nicole Close, Aileen Begbie, Di Sexton, and Jacqui O'Bryan have exemplified unwavering commitment by devoting 30 or more years to the profession of teaching. Their enduring passion has not only shaped young minds but also served as an inspiration to their colleagues and the wider community. I would also like to congratulate Year 11 student Claire Ingram, teacher Jenny Philpot, student support officer Jodi Brown, and P&C President Paul Jones for their well-deserved Special Director Awards. Their contributions to enhancing the educational landscape at Finley High School exemplify the spirit of collaboration and dedication that lies at the heart of education. I would again like to congratulate these exceptional individuals and express my sincere appreciation for their dedication to the betterment of public education. Your hard work and commitment do not go unnoticed, and our community is truly enriched by your contributions.

#### **KATELYN MILLS - LEETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Miss Katelyn Mills of Leeton. At just 20 years old, Katelyn is a face that many people in Leeton know. Named the 2022 SunRice Festival Ambassador, when she raised \$15,000 for a children's charity, Katelyn works at the largest winery in the southern hemisphere as an automation apprentice electrician. She is the only girl in a class of 45 at Leeton TAFE. Katelyn always knew that she wanted to find a career that would keep her brain ticking every day, as well as a job that was hands-on. Katelyn has been supported by her family and mentors throughout her journey. Katelyn was inspired to pursue a trade from her father and aunt, who are industrial electricians; as well as her brother who works in automation as an IT technician. One of Katelyn's mentors is Emma Tyrrell, who is a female electrician and the Leeton Fire and Rescue captain, who encouraged Katelyn to pursue her trade dream. Katelyn, I commend you for being an inspiring young woman who is not afraid to pursue her goals.

#### **BRETT POLKINGHORNE - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Brett Polkinghorne of Griffith. After 34 years of working for PHL Surveyors, Brett is hanging up his hard hat to travel and spend more time with his family. The Polkinghorne family has been a vital part of one of the largest surveying firms in regional NSW and head-quartered in Griffith for 100 years. Brett has witnessed dramatic advances in technology in his time, going from measuring with steel bands to GPS, drones and computers. In 1989, Brett returned from university to become a director for PHL. If you fly over Griffith, you can see many contour banks and straight lines that are representative of his work. Brett and his team have been recognised with state and national awards; including the Sir Thomas Mitchell Award in 2006 for the best survey project in NSW, as part of the state awards for excellence in surveying. Not long after, PHL Surveyors also won the JK Barry Award for the best survey project in Australasia. I commend Brett for his tireless work and wish him well in his retirement.

#### **ZEAK SMITH**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Recognition of selfless volunteering is given to Zeak Smith from the Bathurst NSW State Emergency Service. Zeak is currently in Canada assisting local firefighters battling wildfires burning through Alberta and British Columbia. This deployment is for a period of five weeks during which time Zeak, a Unit Commander, will utilise the skills he has developed with the NSW SES as a supply unit leader. The diverse range of support roles and expertise needed in managing events such as this reflect the value and respect given to our SES Volunteers and the immeasurable contribution of these operational skills in International emergencies. I congratulate Zeak on his extraordinary involvement and on being an outstanding volunteer.

#### **ANDREW FLETCHER**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Acknowledgement of a significant contribution to volunteering must be extended to Andrew Fletcher. Andrew is an SES Member of the NSW State Emergency Service in Bathurst and is currently in Canada assisting local firefighters battling wildfires burning through Alberta and British Columbia. This is Andrew's second deployment to the wildfire emergency having returned from that initial deployment in July. Andrew is currently lending further assistance to our Canadian counterparts as a finance officer. There is currently a need for extensive resources and people on the ground in Canada and Andrew has once again extended his support and skills in backing colleagues who have previously reciprocated in supporting fire events in Australia. Additionally, Andrew can also assist and mentor fellow volunteers who are on their first deployment

through getting them settled and productive quickly and efficiently. Congratulations to Andrew Fletcher on his outstanding willingness to reach out and connect with those in need.

#### **KAYE O'LEARY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Kaye O'Leary of Bathurst on her recent retirement following 56 years as a team member of George Street Medical Practice. In attaining this incredible milestone, Kaye has seen many changes over the last half century in operational procedures, but she has embraced the challenges with enthusiasm and professionalism. Kaye's caring of patients endeared her to people from all walks of life and earned her the respect of not only the community but that of her peers and employees. Helping patients was one of the most rewarding elements of her career and Kaye remained a happy and welcoming presence throughout her time at the practice. Congratulations to Kaye O'Leary on being such a wonderful, caring, and successful achiever in the workplace and may all future endeavours be as enriching as those of the past.

#### **ALVIN LEUNG - NSW STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, I had the pleasure last week of meeting Alvin Leung, a recipient of a NSW Government State Representative Award. The award recognises people who have represented NSW in a competitive field, and I am pleased to inform the House of Alvin's success in the sport of Dragon Boat Racing. Alvin competed at the 2023 Dragon Boat AusChamps on 22 April amidst the picturesque setting of Gateway Lakes, Wodonga, Victoria. Alvin stood as a shining example of dedication and teamwork, representing the state of NSW in the esteemed Premier category. As a local resident in my electorate of Ryde, Alvin's achievements are a source of great pride for our community. Of particular note is Alvin's extraordinary performance in the 500m - Premier Open – 20's category. His unwavering determination and exceptional skill led to a resounding 1st-place victory, showcasing his relentless pursuit of excellence. Alvin's accomplishments go beyond competition; they embody the essence of sportsmanship and perseverance, inspiring all those fortunate enough to witness his journey. With great pride, we honour Alvin's achievements and his role in elevating the NSW State team and the sport of Dragon Boat Racing to new heights.

#### **HANSON SO - NSW STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, I had the pleasure last week of meeting Hanson So, a recipient of a NSW Government State Representative Award. The award recognises people who have represented NSW in a competitive field, and I am pleased to inform the House of Hanson's success in the sport of Dragon Boat Racing. Hanson competed at the 2023 Dragon Boat AusChamps on 22 April amidst the picturesque setting of Gateway Lakes, Wodonga, Victoria. Hanson stood as a shining example of dedication and teamwork, representing the state of NSW in the esteemed Premier category. As a local resident in my electorate of Ryde, Hanson's achievements are a source of great pride for our community. Of particular note is Hanson's extraordinary performance in the 500m - Premier Open – 20's category. His unwavering determination and exceptional skill led to a resounding 1st-place victory, showcasing his relentless pursuit of excellence. Hanson's accomplishments go beyond competition; they embody the essence of sportsmanship and perseverance, inspiring all those fortunate enough to witness his journey. With great pride, we honour Hanson's achievements and his role in elevating the NSW State team and the sport of Dragon Boat Racing to new heights.

#### **DR AMY LEE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, A little bit of history was made in my electorate recently, with Dr. Amy Lee of West Ryde, becoming the first and only Australian ever to earn a Doctorate in Business Administration (International Management) from the Geneva Business School in Switzerland. This noteworthy achievement was celebrated on July 14, 2023, at the esteemed W Hotel in Barcelona. Dr. Lee's academic journey took her across the campuses of Geneva, Barcelona, and Madrid, where she dedicated herself to exploring the intricacies of international business interactions. Her thesis, titled "How does guanxi affect the value chain when Australian SMEs conduct business with China?", showcases her deep commitment to understanding the dynamics between Australian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their Chinese counterparts. Locally in Ryde we have a rich Chinese community, and I am confident her research will play an important role in helping strengthen these relationships. With roots in Ryde, Dr. Amy Lee's achievement clearly resonates strongly with the local community, however it is within the global academic community that her accomplishments most vividly illustrate the potential that can be realised through dedication and pursuit of knowledge. Congratulations Dr. Lee!

#### **RECYCLING AT GUNDAGAI HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise the effort by Gundagai High School's Student Representative Council as they recycle in support of the Gundagai Can Assist Branch. The year 7 to 10 Representative Council members have recycled an enormous 17,000 bottles and cans, equating to \$1,700 in donations to Gundagai Can Assist. Living in regional New South Wales, often with limited access to vital

specialist health services coupled by the need to travel to larger centres is a real issue for our smaller communities. These funds are primarily contributing to travel expenses for rural cancer patients and their families, and I know this money is making a real difference to their lives. We know that recycling plays a major role in protecting the environment and ensures ongoing sustainability by conserving natural resources, and I am pleased to see that our younger generations are positively engaged in this area. I would also like to acknowledge the teachers and staff of Gundagai High School for their continued support and involvement in this important issue. Thank you again to everyone involved in this wonderful initiative.

#### **ILLABO FAMILY JUMPING FOR AUSTRALIA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Norman family from Illabo will have showcased their athleticism and skill after recently representing Australia at the World Jump Rope Championships in Colorado Springs, USA. At just 21 years, Tom Norman is in his 13th year of competition and has competed in five world championships. Tom's passion for jump rope has rubbed off on the rest of the family including his father Murray and sisters Rebekah and Belinda who are all part of a 99-strong Australia contingent participating at the Championships. Over 1200 athletes from 27 countries take to the court for eight days, for a world stage event. Competitive skipping involves a lot of high-level, skilled choreographed moves at lightning speed, including freestyle, Double Dutch and team-based events. Tom and Rebekah won Gold in Double Dutch Pairs Freestyle, with Tom also winning a Bronze in the Single Rope Team Speed relay. I would like to congratulate the Norman family on their determination and dedication to the sport they love and representing Australia.

#### **BRIBBAREE SHOW SOCIETY – AG SHOWS 2022 RESILIENCE AWARD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to congratulate the committee of the Bribbaree Show Society who were recently recognised for their outstanding efforts, winning the Ag Shows 2022 Resilience Award in Dubbo on 17 June 2023. Prior to the 2022 show, the last time the Bribbaree show was held was in 2019, before the severe impacts of COVID-19. Winning this award and having the resilience to bounce back and put on an incredible show in 2022 is a real testament to committee members and volunteers alike. Bribbaree hosts one of the smaller shows across NSW each year, and it is impressive to see such a diverse range of events on offer throughout the day, with a significant amount of attraction for out-of-area visitors. I would like to congratulate members of the committee and the broader community on their outstanding achievement. Without a large amount of support, events like this simply aren't possible. I wish the Bribbaree community and competitors every success for the 2023 show later this year, which is scheduled for the long weekend in October.

#### **TRANBY**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of the Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training Co-operative which has been a pioneer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult education, training and social action for decades. This year they are celebrating 66 years as one of Australia's longest running First Nations owned and controlled organisations. I recently had the pleasure of visiting Tranby as they embark on the establishment of the Tranby Story Centre, a social enterprise for the keeping, making and sharing of Aboriginals stories. Tranby has been host to a long string of iconic moments in Indigenous social and political history and their work continues this important legacy. I want to thank the whole Tranby team – Dr Belinda Russon, Dirk Drieberg, Eleesa Collis, Dion Barnett, Nancy Davis, Jacinta Bailey, Tony Duke, Bernice Hookey, Jenni Mattila, Dr Lisa Sarzin, Jordan Smith, Adam Doughty, Evie Peterson, Gavin Ivey, Brendan Loizou, Promise Laupepa and Rhianna Kinchela-Packer, and the Tranby Board – Kristy Masella, Jason Whitty, Katriina Heikkanen, Hagbarth Strom, Krista Christensen, Lara Tzafaris and Glendra Stubbs.

#### **DARLING ST CHURCH COMMUNITY DOCUMENTARY SCREENINGS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the excellent work of Rod and Lesley Freedman and Rector Mark Leach who together have been hosting community documentary screening nights at Darling St Church in Balmain. I recently had the pleasure of attending their screening that was co-hosted by another excellent local organisation, Climate Change Balmain Rozelle. This screening was *The Weather Diaries*, a moving examination of what it feels like to be a young adult in a world affected by global warming. These screenings provide a valuable opportunity to engage with important questions of justice, democracy and community, with film topics ranging from climate change to human rights. I want to thank Rod and Lesley, Mark and everyone at Darling St Church and in the community who helps make these wonderful events happen.

#### **LUCY HOPE-MOULT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—It is an honour to represent your country on the international stage and an especially amazing achievement to do this at the age of 9 years-old. Lucy Hope Mould recently represented Australia in Karate at the ISKA US Open held at Disney

World Florida. The event saw 5000 competitors from across the world contesting titles. Lucy placed 1st in the flag sparing event and 3rd in clash sparing and sword combat. Lucy is dedicated to her sport showing great discipline, training three to four days a week, as well as maintaining her other school commitments. Lucy began karate classes at Guy's Karate School in Maitland 3 years ago and now competes regularly at competitions. Karate has allowed her to focus her energy and grow in self-confidence, initiative and discipline. Through this hard work she has been able to inspire other children in the karate school to do the same. At a time when women's sport is at the forefront in Australia, it's important to recognise the next generation of women who will be representing Australia. Congratulations Lucy, I am very excited to see all you achieve going forwards.

#### **MACKENZIE ROBERTSON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to 9-year-old Mackenzie Robertson, who has once again taken the brave step to shave her head for charity. This is the second time Mackenzie has donated her hair, the first time was when she was five years old. Mackenzie recently cut off her long braids and shaved her head in front of the St. Paul's Rutherford School Community. Mackenzie also raised \$2000 for Kids with Cancer, surpassing her original goal of \$1000. These funds, generously donated by friends, family, and the school community will financially support families that have a child suffering with cancer. Mackenzie had been growing her hair for two years with the goal of donating it for cancer wigs and she had 80cm of her hair cut off for this cause before the shave. I wish to acknowledge her bravery and selflessness as she gives what she can to people in need and inspires others in her community to do the same. I hope this recognition encourages you to continue doing this. Well done, Mackenzie.

#### **JOHN MCCARTIN AND MORPETH ART GALLERY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I would like to acknowledge Morpeth Gallery resident artist, John McCartin on his recent win in the World Art Awards 2023, held in the United States. Mr. McCartin's landscape "Sunshine and Mist" was selected in the landscape and floral category among thousands of paintings from 79 countries as part of the awards. John also won the Floral realism category with a still life titled "Carnations and Cherub". The World Landscape Art Awards Advisory Committee selects representatives of 20 prestigious galleries from around the world to vote on the 50 painting categories in the competition. Mr. McCartin currently lives in South Australia, however he has been represented by the Morpeth Gallery in his professional painting life since 2011. He has been awarded over 114 international prizes after taking up his impressionistic art style in his late 40's. Congratulations also to Morpeth Gallery and Trevor Richards OAM for his support of so many Australian artists taking their art to the community and the world.

#### **CENTRAL COAST BREWERIES**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate Six String Brewing Co, Erina and Hawksbury Brewing Co of Lisarow for their recent success at the Sydney Royal Beer & Cider Show in Sydney. Six String Brewing won eleven medals, including three gold for their Shreddin' IPA can, Whiskey in The Jar Barrel-Aged Imperial and Tropical Pale Ale. They also received five silvers for their Coastie Lager, Tropical Pale Ale, Dark Red IPA, In Bloom Honey IPA and Shreddin' IPA. They also received three bronze medals for their Pale Ale (can & keg) and Dark Red IPA. Hawksbury Brewing Co won nine medals including one gold for its Pale Ale, four silvers for its Chocolate Coffee Stout, Hazy, IPA and Stout, and four bronze medals for its Super Dry, The Standard, Export Premium Lager, and Prohibition Pale Ale. The Sydney Royal is one of the toughest beer and cider competitions in Australia and it's great to see my local breweries clinching medals across the entire range and showcasing beer brewing on the Central Coast. Congratulations Six String Co and Hawksbury Brewing.

#### **MATILDAS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—The Matildas' history -making run for the FIFA Women's World Cup shows us that sport is so much more than the players and the game, it brings community together and I am very proud to have witnessed this in my own electorate. Throughout the Women's World Cup, the English Lionesses stayed in my electorate of Terrigal and based their training at Gosford's Industree Group Stadium. Despite being a strong rival to our Matildas, my community showed the Lionesses true Australian hospitality, with the Lionesses thanking our amazing community and describing their stay in Terrigal as their "home away from home". Many of our businesses, local Surf Life Saving Clubs and sporting clubs got behind the Matildas including broadcasting the all-important Semi Finals and encouraging family and friends to get on their Green & Gold to cheer on the Matildas as one. Despite conceding to England, the Matildas have accomplished something very special, uniting communities all over Australia and it's a shared experience we will all never forget.

#### **THE PONDS PARKRUN**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I rise to recognise the outstanding contribution of Mary DeLuna and the amazing team of volunteers who organise The Ponds Park run. Every Saturday morning, hundreds of

runners meet at Second Ponds Creek Park to enjoy a supportive environment in which to get out and get active. Whether it be stinging cold or a muggy North-West Sydney summer waiting for them, the community always comes together to run, jog or walk the 5km course. The Ponds Parkrun always reflects the diversity within the Riverstone community, bringing together families from various backgrounds and displaying the rich cultural tapestry that is our electorate. I've had the pleasure of attending the parkrun on a number of occasions, and there are more first-timers each week. It is clear that The Ponds Parkrun has become a hub for new residents and a means through which they can meet new friends and become embedded in this vibrant community. Thank you to the countless volunteers who make the event happen each week, but especially Mary DeLuna for her continued organising efforts. Your commitment to creating an inclusive community environment is not lost on anyone.

#### **JALSA SALANA**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the Ahmadiyya community for their 35th Jalsa Salana (Annual Gathering), the biggest and most successful one yet with more than 4,000 people attending. This gathering is not just a congregation but a celebration of unity, spirituality, and service to humanity. Their guiding principles of "Love for all, Hatred for none" emphasise compassion, kindness, and generosity, striving to build bridges based on mutual trust and respect. It is a testament to their love for humanity, transcending borders, barriers, and beliefs. The way the Ahmadiyya community promotes harmony among different faiths and engages in interfaith dialogue is truly inspiring. What is also inspiring is their commitment to social equality and service to community through their charity, Humanity First, which has made a positive difference in the lives of those facing hardship. During challenging times like the Covid pandemic and devastating floods, the Ahmadiyya community's support in my electorate of Riverstone was invaluable. To Imam Kauser and his entire team at Bait-ul-Huda Mosque, thank you for your wonderful work and for organising this extraordinary event.

#### **INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY 2023**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I am delighted to extend my heartfelt commendation to Rakesh Sheth for orchestrating a spectacular Indian Independence Day celebration at Glory Park in Schofields. The event was an awe-inspiring showcase of cultural vibrancy, unity, and community pride. What truly stood out was the remarkable sense of camaraderie and togetherness that permeated the atmosphere. It was evident that the Indian diaspora in Schofields is a true community, united by shared values and aspirations. The celebration was a testament to their resilience, diversity, and unwavering spirit. The food, performances and hospitality by the hosts were a true embodiment of the vibrant, friendly and inclusive nature of Indian culture, a culture we are lucky to have in the Riverstone community. The Glory Park committee's planning and unwavering commitment to preserving and celebrating multiculturalism in the Schofields community deserve the highest praise. This event was not just a celebration of a historic milestone, but a manifestation of the rich tapestry of cultures that make Schofields a unique and harmonious community. Kudos to Rakesh and the team for a truly memorable Independence Day.

#### **BILL FERGUSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Bill Ferguson, owner of Cumboogle Farming in Dubbo, who has emerged victorious as the recipient of the Best Lucerne Feed Test award at the Feed Central National Hay Quality Awards! Despite facing the trials brought forth by the elements, Bill's unwavering determination has led him to craft the finest quality lucerne hay, earning him this prestigious recognition at the Australian Fodder Industry Association's 'Fodderganza!' exhibition in Bendigo. Lucerne, as many of you are aware, is a tough product to get right. Bill's dedication to his craft is evident in his understanding of the intricacies involved in producing top-tier hay. His success in producing award-winning hay during a year of challenging conditions underscores his commitment to soil health and sustainable practices. Beyond the accolades and recognition, Bill's contribution to his local community cannot be overlooked. His commitment to his clients, including institutions like the Taronga Western Plains Zoo and horse owners along the east coast, showcases his dedication to serving those who rely on his high-quality produce. Congratulations, Bill, on this fantastic achievement!

#### **CONNECTING COMMUNITY SERVICES MULTICULTURAL COOKBOOK**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise Dubbo's Connecting Community Services and its exceptional Migrant Support Officer, Khaled Taleb, on the launch of their Multicultural Cookbook. This cookbook is more than just a compilation of recipes; it's a testament to the vibrant tapestry of cultures that make up our beautiful city of Dubbo. The pages of this cookbook hold the secrets to crafting mouthwatering dishes that reflect the culinary heritage of our diverse residents. From the intricate flavours of an Egyptian meat pie with filo pastry, to the savory delight of a Lamb Haneeth from Yemen, and the aromatic Persian green bean rice from Iran, each recipe carries with it the traditions, stories, and passions of those who call Dubbo home. Khaled, the driving force behind this remarkable project, has highlighted the power of sharing family

recipes to bridge cultural gaps and cultivate understanding. Eighteen recipes were contributed by individuals from a range of backgrounds, including Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritius, Kazakhstan, Fiji, Pakistan, and the Philippines, showcasing the rich mosaic of cultures that enrich our community. I commend Khaled and the team at Connecting Community Services for their dedication and vision in bringing this cookbook to life!

#### **DUBBO RIVERCARE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of volunteer run organisation, Dubbo Rivercare, and congratulate them on celebrating their 21st lap around the sun! Founded in 2002, Dubbo Rivercare has been actively engaged in enhancing the health of Dubbo's rivers and surrounding areas and their milestone celebration is a testament to the commitment of its members and volunteers. Dubbo Rivercare's primary activities include planting native vegetation to restore riparian areas, the removal of invasive plant species and working with local authorities to maintain and support ecological balance. Alongside new plantings, the group have a strong focus on keeping environmental weeds out of the river, especially garden escapees and with their group of volunteers – that range in age from 15 to 80 - regularly turning up to help out at working bees, the river system of the Dubbo area is in good hands. Well done and thank you Dubbo Rivercare for your continued dedication to such a worthy cause.

#### **LEGACY WEEK**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I acknowledge that this year Legacy Week is running from the 27th of August to the 2nd of September. For a century since its founding in 1923, Legacy Australia has been at the forefront of helping the families of deceased veterans. Legacy ensures that family members can access health, education, medical support and community support. Legacy is still caring for tens of thousands of widows who have lost their loved ones and been affected by their partner's service in the Korean War, Malayan Emergency, Vietnam War; as well as campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and in peacekeeping operations across the globe. I particularly want to acknowledge Richard Grimsdale, the chairman of Legacy Eastern Region, who has been a part of Legacy for 28 years. Thank you, Richard, for your contributions to our local community. I encourage everyone to support Legacy Week – and if you're in the eastern suburbs to drop into my office in Double Bay where I will be selling badges and accepting donations.

#### **LA PEROUSE LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—Recently I had the chance to meet with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council in the Eastern Suburbs. The La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council is the representative body for Indigenous Australians in the La Perouse Aboriginal Community, which, in addition to covering the areas of La Perouse, also covers the Eastern Beaches and Eastern Suburbs from Sydney Harbour, Darlinghurst and Watsons Bay to Coogee, Maroubra and Botany Bay. I acknowledge Chief Executive Officer Chris Ingre, who discussed with me the connections between Aboriginal peoples and the lands of my electorate of Vaucluse, Sydney Harbour, and surrounds, and the work of the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.

#### **PATRON OF NORTH SYDNEY RSL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to express my gratitude for the honour of being elected as a Patron of the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch. As the leading advocacy service for Australian veterans, I recognise the outstanding work of the RSL in supporting veterans and their family's well-being by providing them with services and face-to-face support in mateship and camaraderie. The RSL's commitment to our Australian veterans has been possible through the network of over 320 NSW-based Sub-branches operated by veteran volunteers. RSL coordinates special commemorations such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day to remember their service and sacrifice for our country. I acknowledge the president of North Sydney RSL, Alex Wilson and the members of the branch for their outstanding contribution to the veteran community in allowing veterans to keep in contact with their ADF community. Again, I would like to express my gratitude for being part of the RSL Sub-branch and its importance in advocating veteran wellness and support. I look forward to working with the members in continuing to uphold the values of the branch.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF MOSMAN CHANGEOVER 2023**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I Congratulate the Rotary Club of Mosman on a successful dinner event at Northbridge Golf Club, celebrating the changeover of Leadership in the Club. It was a great turnout of club members, along with their friends and family. I especially want to thank Mark Wallis for his fantastic speech during the event and for having served as President for two years concurrently for the first time in the Club's history. The Club achieved many goals in the past two years due to Mark's time, energy, and passion towards the Club. I would also like to congratulate James Humphrey as the newly elected President and wish him success and good fortune in the coming year. I also acknowledge the new Rotary District Governor Christine Owen, the immediate past Rotary Governor Mina Howard, and all the Rotary members and their partners. It was

a fantastic night, and it was great to see members across the community in attendance. I look forward to another fruitful year of the Club.

#### **VALE PAUL DRACAKIS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge with great sadness the recent passing of well-known local jeweller Paul Dracakis at age 83. Mr Dracakis was a successful businessman in the jewellery industry, opening multiple stores under the name 'Dracakis Jewellers' across Manly, Warringah Mall, Spit Junction and Castle Hill. Emigrating to Australia from Greece in 1957 with little money or understanding of English, Mr Dracakis came to be known as one of the leading jewellers in Sydney. Paul's son Peter attributed this to his 'sheer determination, guts and street smarts.' Mr Dracakis was also an active participant in local politics. He was a member of the local Liberal Party and was a close friend and supporter of former Prime Minister Tony Abbott. He also served as a council member on Manly Council from 1983-1987. I recognise Paul Dracakis' significant contributions to both the commercial and political spheres of the local community. I would like to express my condolences to Mr Dracakis' family and friends, my thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

#### **NAVAH CROFTON**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to rising soccer star, 15-year-old Navah Crofton of Maclean who has earned her rightful place in the 2023 Northern NSW Football National Youth Championship squads. Navah takes her position alongside fifteen outstanding Newcastle Jets players, among whom are several promising young Matildas. Navah started playing soccer with Maclean Bobcats FC at age 5. Her natural ability on the field didn't go unnoticed and was selected to play at representative level at ages 9/10 with North Coast Football and part of u/12 and u/14 girls training teams with Liverpool Football Academy in Lismore in 2018/2019. She consistently left a strong impression on her coaches and quickly progressed through the ranks. In 2020 she became the first female recipient of NCF Academy Player of the Year award. The last three seasons have seen Navah transition to the boy's squads, where she currently excels as a commanding captain. Living regionally has been a big challenge with extensive travel to find pathways for Navah to excel, but she is fortunate to have a supportive family and community backing her all the way. I have no doubt Navah is one to watch and I wish her every success.

#### **FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS ASSOCIATION'S CONFERENCE**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—On Monday, I was delighted to open the Financial Counsellors Association's Conference at the Fairmont Resort in the Blue Mountains. The Financial Counsellor's Association is an organisation whose services go well beyond just educating people about financial literacy. Based in NSW, the Association provides a lifeline to those navigating financial turmoil. Financial counsellors are not only the people who advise on budgets and money plans, but they also lend a compassionate ear to those in need - offering emotional support along with their practical advice to help those in difficult circumstances. They link individuals with community and government services as well offering support in emergency relief and domestic violence situations. I commend the Association for provision of tools, resource and professional development opportunities to its members. Life is unpredictable, and financial hardship can befall anyone. Speaking to the Association I was reminded of the impact the financial counsellors had on my own family during difficult times. During a cost-of-living crisis we know that people are struggling and that the need for financial counsellors is growing. I was honoured to attend, open a conference that brought these people together, and express gratitude for their important, life-changing work.

#### **VOLUNTEERS AT ROCKY HILL MEMORIAL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I recognise the Volunteers at Rocky Hill War Memorial. The Memorial is a significant landmark within Goulburn, opening in 1925 paying homage to the men and women of Goulburn who served during World War 1. It is located on a distinct rocky outcrop on Memorial Road, overlooking Goulburn. The memorial has held a very sentimental place in the heart of many locals, dating back to the ANZAC Day commemorations in 1923, where community members and returned servicemen carried parts of the memorial tower to the site. Recognising the need for ongoing work and maintenance a group of four volunteers came together in 2001. The numbers of volunteers grew to nine in 2022 who have worked collaboratively to undertake a variety of roles, including, collection management, exhibitions, tour guiding, maintenance, and gardening. The volunteers believe that the acquirement of the Changi Prison door, William Leggett Memorial and the refurbishment of the change archives have been among their greatest achievements. This group of volunteers have been recognised for their valuable contribution by the Portraits on Main exhibition. I sincerely thank all the volunteers for their work to maintaining the memorial and site to an extraordinarily high standard.

**AUNT EVELYN LITTLE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Today I recognise Aunt Evelyn Little. Evelyn, a well-known Matriarch and Aboriginal Elder, better known to her community as "Aunty Eve", has demonstrated herself as a ready resource for individuals to seek out support from, undertaking a volunteer role at the Goulburn Police Station. Evelyn would avail herself to young people at the station and provide support, a listening ear, and an opportunity to have a yarn. Evelyn has also provided support at the Court House, for those in need. Evelyn was recently recognised for her significant contribution by Portraits on Main. A proud mother of nine, grandmother of thirty-five and a great grandmother as well, from whom she has been delivered a wealth of joy. Evelyn dearly embraced the time with her family. I recognise Evelyn's significant contribution over many years, on behalf of those in community that have received her support.

**PRYDE BUTCHERY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Pryde Butchery in Miranda on winning the Outstanding Poultry/Fish Meat award at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards 2023. Founded in 2021, Pryde Butchery works with a range of local suppliers to provide their customers with the highest quality meat, only accepting products that meet their high standards which is then cut on-site by their master team of butchers. It is their commitment to quality that has earned them a reputation as the butcher of choice for many in our community. I acknowledge the exceptional team at Pryde Butchery who provide quality meats and outstanding customer service. I recognise David DeMarco, Nathan Garziana, Michael Wade, Gary Mason, Julie Marrott, Rod Perkins, Jayden Pizel, Evan Gouverneur and Christian Webb. Small businesses like Pryde Butchery are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Pryde Butchery on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

**PROFESSOR RIFAAT YASSA EBIED OAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Professor Rifaat Yassa Ebied of Sylvania on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to education, in particular, semitic studies. Professor Ebied's journey is quite unique. Subsequently to his arrival in Australia, he played a crucial role in the study and publication of ancient documents, numerous books and articles of edited Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac texts. He was chairman of the NSW Board of Studies Arabic Syllabus Committee from 1981-2001 and was also on the examination and marking committee. Furthermore, Professor Ebied has served as the President of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council and has participated in many international conferences. He has taught across multiple tertiary institutions in Australia and overseas. Professor Ebied has also previously been formally acknowledged for his work through the Premier's Multicultural Awards in 2021 and the Centenary Medal in 2003. I commend Mr Ebied for his highly deserving receipt of the Medal of the Order of Australia and extend my best wishes for the future.

**3 DOORS DOWN**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at 3 Doors Down in Menai on winning the Outstanding Family Restaurant category at the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Formerly known as Rocksalt Tapas, 3 Doors Down is a speak-easy inspired lounge bar that mixes an eclectic décor with soul-filling food and craft cocktails. A family-owned small business, 3 Doors Down has built a reputation of for its outstanding customer service and commitment to ensuring patrons have a great night out the team through their delicious meals including gourmet salads, nachos and custom cocktails that leave your mouth buzzing with flavour. I acknowledge the exceptional team at 3 Doors Down including owners Jai and Hema Upadhyay along with Michael Kerle, Suraj Kathi, Taylor Angelis, Willem Dolder, Rome Vasquez, Tyrone Rhys and Tyra Olney for their efforts. Small businesses like 3 Doors Down are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I again congratulate the team at 3 Doors Down on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

**BYRON SHIRE AWARDS 2023**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I wish to congratulate the deserving winners of 2023 Byron Shire Community Awards. These outstanding members of the Byron Shire community have made significant contributions to our community: Community Initiative of Byron Shire - The Repair Cafe Post-Flood Initiative by the Shedding Community Workshop for their volunteer based, trauma-informed and community-focussed response to the 2022 Northern Rivers floods. Young Community Member of Byron Shire - Zali Spinner (Main Arm flood response) for her efforts to coordinate deliveries of food, water and medication to people living in isolated areas during the 2022 floods. Community Member of Byron Shire - Louise O'Connell for her remarkable work in running the Fletcher Street Cottage service which offers ongoing support for people experiencing



homelessness in the Byron Shire. On behalf of our community, I commend the work of all these incredible organisations and individuals for the difference they make to our community.

### **BYRON SHIRE AWARDS 2023**

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### **VALE VINCE CASTLE, OAM**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to pay tribute to the late Vince Castle of Palmers Channel. Vince was a fine gentleman. Many in my electorate would know his name or indeed worked with him over his life. I remember Vince as a man of the highest morals, honesty and integrity. Vince was born and raised on a cane farm at Palmers Channel. He was known as many things - family man, hard worker, negotiator, orator and at times accomplished practical joker. Vince had a long association with the sugar industry in NSW. He served on Clarence Cane Growers Association for many years serving as Chairman from 1998-2012; he was sat on the NSW Cane Growers Council as Chairman from 2007-2012. Vince's passion for his community saw him support families with children with disability. In 1953 he was instrumental in fundraising to form Caringa School for children with disability. In 2013 he was awarded a Premier's Community Service Award and in 2021 a plaque was unveiled to name the new Caringa building after Vince for his long tenure as Chairman and unswerving service to the community. I offer my sincere condolences to his wife Pat, and family.

### **DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Internationally, Westmead is synonymous with excellence in health and the cutting edge of medical research. This year Westmead Children's Hospital has made history with three boys becoming the youngest patients in the world to receive vector-based gene replacement therapy for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy - a genetic disorder which, due to alterations of the protein Dystrophin, causes progressive muscular degeneration. It causes many patients to require a wheelchair by the age of 12 and sadly is often life-limiting. Three young boys are part of a world-first international clinic trial for children under four. There are only 10 patients worldwide who will be monitored over the next 5 years to gauge the effectiveness of this one-off treatment that has the potential to be life-changing and life-saving. Thanks and congratulations to Dr Lorentzos and the incredible team at the Sydney Childrens Hospital Network on this remarkable project. It was a pleasure to join the Premier and Minister Park in meeting the boys, their families and the medical professionals. Please join me in wishing these boys the very best for a brighter future and hope their participation in this trial opens the door for more children to receive life-changing treatment.

### **ST DECLAN'S COMMUNITY FUN DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend St Declan's Community Fun Day, run by the St Declan's Catholic Church and Primary School in Penshurst. The event was held in celebration the feast of Saint Declán of Ardmore, a patron saint of the Déis in Ireland. The event saw a fantastic turnout, with plenty of students, parents and members of the community coming down to enjoy the sausage sizzle and a cake (or three) from the cake stall. There was also a petting zoo, live music, and face painting for the kids to enjoy. For the parents, a selection of wines and cheeses were on offer. St Declan's has been a community institution in Penshurst, established in 1907 by the Sisters of Charity. It continues to thrive today, focusing on community engagement and challenging its students to reach their full potential. I'd like to thank the Principal of St Declan's, Mr Peter Cranney, as well as Mr Chris Ryan, the Parish Priest of the Catholic Church. The work you do in our community is outstanding. I look forward to attending the Community Fun Day next year!

### **ANYTIME FITNESS CAMPSIE OPENING**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge an outstanding local business owner, Sam Green. Sam recently opened a new Anytime Fitness gym in Campsie, and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend. Located in the heart of Campsie, this new Anytime Fitness will be the pinnacle of convenience, offering 24/7 access. Decked out with the latest in gym technology, Sam's new gym provides a space for everyone,

from beginners to bodybuilders. Supporting locals in their small business endeavours is so important to me, and I was grateful to be invited out. Sam has provided numerous employment opportunities through this venture, enabling personal trainers and fitness enthusiasts to do what they love whilst getting paid. Fitness is so important to both our community here in Oatley, and to New South Wales as a whole. I wholeheartedly believe it is important for all of us to stay active, and going to the gym is one way to pursue personal fitness goals. I'd like to wish Sam the best of luck in his business endeavours and look forward to training alongside him very soon!

#### **AUSTRALIA BANGLADESH BUSINESS FORUM GALA NIGHT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to thank the Australia Bangladesh Business Forum for hosting me at their Gala Dinner and Award Ceremony. It was a wonderful evening full of good food and even better company. The Australia Bangladesh Business Forum was established to promote both diversity and a common voice amongst the business sector in Australia. It continues to foster a strong bond between Bangladesh and Australia, advocating on behalf of multicultural business owners. It was an incredibly insightful evening. I enjoyed several panel presentations by industry leaders, showcasing the latest in business developments and techniques. The work that the Australia Bangladesh Business Forum do for business owners in New South Wales is second to none. I would like to thank Mr Abdul Ratan Khan, President of the Australia Bangladesh Business Forum, as well as General Secretary, Mr Brian Laul, for hosting me and my Parliamentary Colleagues. I look forward to continuing to work closely alongside the Australia Bangladesh Business Forum into the future. I wish them all the best in their endeavours across the next few months.

#### **ARGENTINIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I take this opportunity to recognise the 207th Anniversary of Argentina Independence Day, and an event which I attended in July celebrating this day with Argentinians across Sydney. Argentina's independence from Spain is marked on 9 July each year by Argentineans around the globe and it is celebrated with fireworks, parades and gatherings of family and friends. Argentinians represent over six thousand Australians across the state and it was wonderful to mark this cultural celebration with this community. I wish to thank Mrs. Silvina Laura Aguirre, Consul General of the Argentine Republic in Sydney for the invitation and thank those who attended this event. I would like to make a special mention to local business in Drummoyne, Empanades Che for catering the event with delicious traditional empanadas. This business has shared Argentinian cuisine with our local community for several years, and is well loved by many. Once again, I thank the Consul General of the Argentine Republic in Sydney for hosting the event to celebrate this a special occasion for the Argentinian community.

#### **ISABELLA TARANTO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate Isabella Taranto, a student at Domremy College, Five Dock. Isabella competed in the green and gold as part of Australia's under sixteen Dragon Boat Team, the Junior Auroras, in the 16th World Dragon Boat Championships in Thailand. Dragon boating is a fast, paddle driven team water sport of crews of up to 20 paddlers, plus a sweep and drummer who race in fibreglass boats. The sport is believed to have originated in China more than two-thousand five-hundred years ago. Isabella's dedication to her sport is to be commended and she is to be congratulated for her achievements in representing her community at a state and national level. In April, as the co-captain of the NSW Dragon Boat team, she led the team to winning Gold! On behalf of the Drummoyne electorate, I would like to acknowledge Isabella who is an inspiration to her peers and other young women to pursue their sporting goals and leading healthy and active lifestyles. I wish Isabella all the very best in future. I am sure that her family, friends, local club, and school community are very proud.

#### **ABHI'S INDIAN RESTAURANT**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise a local institution, Abhi's Indian Restaurant. This year, the restaurant is celebrating its 33rd anniversary of opening its doors in North Strathfield. Abhi's is run by chef and owner Mr Kumar Mahadevan. Mr Mahadevan's journey to Australia is an inspiring migrant story; he came to Australia to share Indian cuisine with our communities and before arriving he was formally trained in India by the prestigious Taj Hotel group. He has raised a family in Australia with his wife, Suba, and opened Abhi's in 1990, naming the restaurant after his first son. The restaurant has been in the same location for over 33 years and it really goes to show how much it is loved by our community. Mr Mahadevan's cooking and recipes are adored by people from all over Sydney who come to Abhi's for his authentic Indian cuisine. Abhi's is also an award-winning restaurant recently receiving The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide Hat! I sincerely congratulate Mr Mahadevan, his family and his hardworking team of employees for a wonderful 33 years of Abhi's. Thank you for sharing your food and culture with us. I wish you all the very best!

**NORTH SYDNEY RSL SUB-BRANCH LUNCHEON WITH COMMODORE PETER SCOTT**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I recently had the honour of attending the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch Veterans Lunch on 18 August in Cammeray. The guest speaker was Commodore Peter Scott CSC of the Royal Australian Navy who gave an inspiring and uplifting address. Joining the Navy as a 17-year-old midshipman in 1983, Peter rose through the ranks to become the professional head of the Navy's elite Submarine Arm. A veteran of multiple Special Operations with the Submarine Arm, he also saw war service in Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan during 2006 and 2007. Peter was awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in the Australia Day Honours List 2008, having previously been decorated with the Conspicuous Service Cross for achievements in command of HMAS Collins. Peter is also a published author whose book, *Running Deep: An Australian Submarine Life*, is a candid memoir of his experiences serving our country. I honour Peter Scott for his distinguished service to our country in uniform and thank North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch for its service to our veterans and community.

**SYDNEY ROBOTICS ACADEMY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The diverse extra-curricular life of my Willoughby electorate caters to many interests and the Sydney Robotics Academy in Chatswood is a prime example of this. The Sydney Robotics Academy is the top academy in NSW to provide extracurricular training for VEX robotics. Developed in the United States, Vex Robotics is a programme supported by NASA, Google, and the Northrop Grumman foundation. The Sydney-based Academy aims to develop all-round students of the 21st century who are highly motivated, forward-looking and future-ready. On my visit to the Academy on Monday 7 August, I was so impressed to see the young talent on display. It was such a joy to see the skills of the future nurtured in our young. I am particularly proud of the fact that the teams of the Sydney Robotics Academy represented Australia earlier this year at the Vex Robotics World Championships in the US. I would like to thank Jarod, Jimmy and all the staff and students of the Sydney Robotics Academy for showing me their amazing work.

**VALE MR SEIJIRO FUNAYAMA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I pay tribute to Mr Seiji Funayama of Willoughby who died on 3 July 2023 at the age of 92. Born in Fukushima, Japan, in 1931, Seiji immigrated to Australia and has been credited for increasing the popularity of Japanese food in Australia. In 1976, Seiji opened Tokyo Mart, a Japanese food store that has become a local institution in the Northbridge community. Tokyo Mart brings the best of Japan to Australia, stocking a wide range of iconic Japanese foods and specialties with range of over 5 000 products. With the roaring success of Tokyo Mart, Seiji went on to find a food trading company, Jun Pacific, in 1990, and established a Japanese food supply chain that covers the import, wholesale and retail of Japanese food. Seiji's company Jun Pacific now has 300 employees with branch offices and five retail stores in four major cities across Australia. I am grateful for the rich legacy of Seiji Funayama and the immense contribution he has made to our cultural diversity, cuisine, and community.

**BRIAN HART**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—A warm welcome to the Central Coast and congratulations to Brian Hatch for the launch of his exhibition *Land and Sea Scapes* which will open at the Red Tree Theatre, Tuggerah in September 16th through to October. Brian is a painter and printmaker, began his career as a graphic artist and became interested in painting during his Europe trip. Later he studied painting in Brisbane and New York, then over the years he has received many art grants and held exhibitions in both Queensland and Sydney. He is represented in the Queensland Art Gallery and various regional galleries in Queensland and has his limited-edition prints in the National Gallery in Canberra. Brian moved to Hamlyn Terrace 12 months ago to be closer to his family.

**CODEY BRETHERTON**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Cody Bretherton from Blue Haven is representing Australia in the Obstacle Course Racing world championships in Belgium late September. The 11-year-old will be youngest member of the Australian team competing against 140 countries over the three-day event. The event involves a 3 km obstacle course race event, a 100m ninja line and a 6km obstacle course race team event. Cody is currently back-to-back Australian age champion, qualifying for the world championships. Cody started his training when he was just five years old. Currently training every day as well as weekly with a coach at a gym in Tuggerah. Cody and his mother Jasmine Bretherton are very much excited to be travelling to Belgium for their first overseas trip. Congratulations on all your achievements thus far Cody.

**TOUKLEY HAWKS RUGBY LEAGUE GRAND FINAL**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—** Congratulations to Toukley Hawks Rugby League team claiming back-to-back Central Coast Rugby League premierships for their victory 8-6 over Erina Eagles in the first-grade grand final at Woy Woy Oval. Aaron Heaven left winger put down the first try in the corner for a 4-0 lead and bagged a double with a second try in the corner. The rock-solid defence helped build Toukley's confidence keeping Eagles players just centimetres short of the line on separate occasions. As the full siren sounded Toukley fans ran onto the field to celebrate their team players and players hoisted on top of shoulders. Toukley player Jakob Giles received man of the match with an excellent no-look offload to set up Aaron Heaven's second try. The fans in the community had the town Blue and Gold with support for the Hawks as they put up signs and jerseys with players names and numbers on show through the community. Congratulations to all team players and Coach Jake Fitzgerald for another great win!

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