



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 24 August 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 24 August 2023**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge and welcome the member for Sydney's guests in the Speaker's gallery today. As Speaker, I am very pleased that they are in the gallery for what I am sure will be a significant introduction and second reading speech by the member for Sydney of two very important bills. I know that they are all invested in some way. I thank them for coming.

## *Bills*

### EQUALITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LGBTIQA+) BILL 2023

### CONVERSION PRACTICES PROHIBITION BILL 2023

#### First Reading

**Bills introduced on motion by Mr Alex Greenwich, read a first time and printed.**

#### Second Reading Speech

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

That these bills be now read a second time.

At the heart of the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 and the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 is the truth that LGBTIQA+ people exist and are struggling. They should be recognised, protected in law and allowed to thrive. The *NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027* identified significantly poor health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTIQA+ people in this State due to chronic exposure to discrimination and stigma. The strategy reported that most LGBTIQ people in the State face high levels of distress, with two-thirds experiencing a mental health condition, one-quarter having had suicidal thoughts and almost one in 10 self-harming at some stage in their lives. Other conclusions included more harmful patterns of drug and alcohol use, and higher exposure to abuse, neglect, assault, and domestic and family violence. Over half of LGBTIQ+ high school students felt unsafe at school due to their sexuality or gender identity. These findings are confronting. They are the lived experience of those we all represent, and they demand urgent reform.

The Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 and the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 will remove discrimination embedded in law and strengthen protections for LGBTIQA+ people. The bills amend 22 existing Acts and create a new Act. Reforms follow best practice in other States and Territories. They provide New South Wales with an unprecedented opportunity to be inclusive, welcoming, safe, affirming and respectful. I thank everybody in the gallery for joining us here today. I especially acknowledge the team from Equality Australia, led by Anna Brown and Ghassan Kassisich, who have audited some 500 pieces of New South Wales legislation to help inform the bills.

I will now take the House through specific provisions, starting with the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023. There is a long history of LGBTIQA+ people being told that they are broken and need to be fixed. Part of that history involves futile and damaging practices to change or suppress sexuality and gender identity. Many people think that LGBTQ conversion practices no longer happen because society is more inclusive and accepting, and the medical and psychological professions have denounced pathological views of homosexuality, bisexuality and the trans experience. But the practices are alive and well, with a 2018 joint report from the Human Rights

Law Centre and La Trobe University finding up to 10 per cent of LGBT Australians vulnerable. These practices have not disappeared; they have just changed form.

The past domain of institutions, psychiatrists and psychologists practising aversion or electroconvulsive therapies and psychoanalysis has morphed into a more subversive approach, often disguised as spiritual healing and mental health support. But the ideology is the same: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people are broken and can be changed. We are not broken; we are loved, and the law should reflect that. It is emotionally destructive to be told that you are bad, sinful and to blame for who you are and that you need to change something intrinsic about yourself. It can destroy self-worth and confidence and lead to health and mental health challenges like addiction, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide.

LGBTQ conversion practices manipulate people who are vulnerable, or struggling to accept who they are, leading to feelings of failure, hopelessness, shame and of being condemned. A 2021 La Trobe University report on conversion practices titled *Healing Spiritual Harms: Supporting recovery from LGBTQA+ change and suppression practices* found that survivors commonly experience complex, chronic trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. The Australian Medical Association and the Australian Psychological Society have strong statements denouncing conversion practices, deeming them ineffective and harmful. We cannot let LGBTQ conversion practices continue to hurt people in this State.

The Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 will create new standalone legislation to prohibit LGBTQ change or suppression practices, based on the Victorian laws. The laws were designed by survivors to keep people safe, while keeping communities of faith together. They have the support of peak survivor groups SOGICE Survivors, the Brave Network and ambassadors and Bridge Builders International. While I respect the Government has begun consultation on its own bill, I submit that the work has already been done and this legislation is consistent with Victoria. Anti-Discrimination NSW is willing to administer the law and, most importantly, the survivors back it.

The bill defines change or suppression practices as "practices, sustained efforts and treatments directed at a person with the intention to change or suppress that person's sexual orientation or gender identity". Of course, there are explicit exclusions for what constitutes a change or suppression practice. Health practitioners who practise according to every other area of health care by using reasonable professional judgement in line with legal, professional and ethical standards, and established standards of care, or who provide genuine client-centred and trauma-informed support to someone discovering their gender, are excluded in recognition that health practitioners may need to facilitate sensitive discovery discussions with patients. Such conversations, grounded in genuine therapeutic intent, not conversion intent, are not change or suppression practices.

Exclusions make it clear that expressing a belief or religious principle to an individual is not a change or suppression practice. Religious teachings, religious preaching and open and difficult conversations between parents and children about sexuality and gender identity will not be captured. Private prayer, of course, is not banned. What is prohibited in this legislation is chanting at or praying on someone; exorcisms to expel the gay or trans away; and assertive efforts, be they through counselling or pastoral care, that try to stop someone being who they are. The bill creates three mechanisms to prevent or respond to change or suppression practices: education, a civil response scheme and criminal offences. Education and the civil response scheme are the focus of the bill and will be overseen by the Anti-Discrimination Board.

Under the civil response scheme, people will be able to make reports to the President of the Anti-Discrimination Board about change or suppression practices and the president will determine the appropriate response depending on its seriousness. The president may take no action if there is insufficient evidence, or the concern has been dealt with or should be dealt with in another way. If the president considers it is appropriate, the board can provide education to the responsible person or, if all parties agree, the president can bring them together to talk through concerns and come to an agreement.

Where a report indicates serious or systemic change or suppression practices, the president can investigate. Parties can come to mutual agreements, or the president can issue a compliance notice or accept an enforceable undertaking. Compliance notices and enforceable undertakings are lodged with the Civil and Administrative Tribunal for compliance. The president will be able to refer matters to the NSW Police Force, the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or the Ombudsman. Police will be responsible for criminal offences set out in the bill.

There is a very high standard to reach for criminal offences: intent, injury and neglect. Consent is not a defence. Higher penalties exist for practices that cause serious injury and there are separate offences for advertising change or suppression practices or taking someone outside of New South Wales to undergo one. Most reports will result in education, bringing parties together to work through concerns. This is deliberate and in line with survivors' desire for the scheme to keep LGBTQ people and their communities together. Many LGBTQ

people have faith and want to remain part of religious communities. They seek protection from harmful and ineffective attempts to change or suppress who they are or who they love. The bill further recognises harm from change or suppression practices by making them grounds for apprehended domestic violence or apprehended personal violence orders and making them identified risk factors for children and young persons under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act. Victims and survivors of a change or suppression practice will have access to the Victims Support Scheme.

All major parties have committed to banning LGBTQ conversion practices. My bill reflects best practice and the needs of victim-survivors. I acknowledge and thank advocates and survivors of conversion practices that join us here today, including Anthony Venn-Brown and Chris Csabs. Whether it is through this bill or through a Government bill, reform will be achieved in this Parliament as a result of their leadership. I also thank the Health Services Union for its support of my legislation and acknowledge Adam Hall, who is in the gallery.

I now move to the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023, starting with changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Anti-discrimination laws aim to protect us from discrimination, bigotry, inequality, harassment, vilification and violence, and ensure that we can live with dignity and in peace. Discrimination remains a challenge for all LGBTIQA+ communities, and the health strategy identified its toll on health, mental health and wellbeing. New South Wales once led the country in discrimination law but has fallen behind, in what the Public Interest Advocacy Centre described as going from "leader to laggard". I welcome the Attorney General's commitment to send the Anti-Discrimination Act to the NSW Law Reform Commission for much-needed review to make it modern and fit for purpose, and to protect all vulnerable communities. While a rewrite of the Act is needed, the process will take time. The bill will provide interim legislative protections within the current framework of the Act that we should introduce now to close loopholes that leave LGBTIQA+ people vulnerable.

The Anti-Discrimination Act protects trans men and trans women but it does not protect non-binary people. Non-binary people are part of the trans community and might sit inside or outside of the male or female spectrum. All trans people deserve the full protection of the law, and the bill would extend the protected attribute to all of them. The protected ground for homosexuality is limited to lesbians and gay men, excluding people who are bisexual or asexual. New South Wales is the only jurisdiction in Australia without anti-discrimination protections for bisexuals. The bill would replace "homosexuality" protected attribute with "sexuality", to include homosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality.

The bill introduces two new grounds for discrimination: variations of sex characteristics and sex workers, two groups especially vulnerable to discrimination. Having variations in sex characteristics, or being intersex, refers to people with innate variations of primary or secondary sex characteristics that differ from expectations. Their experience of discrimination adds to challenges caused by medical interventions in infancy that have changed their bodies to fit norms without their consent, causing lifelong impacts. Many sex workers are part of or supportive of the LGBTIQA+ community, and they have always marched with us. During consultation, stakeholders unanimously agreed that the bill should protect them.

Discrimination and vilification against sex workers is common and takes many forms, including a refusal to provide goods and services. The bill defines a sex worker as a person who provides sexual services on a commercial basis. The definition covers a range of services in return for payment or reward, including participating in sexual activity like erotic entertainment, BDSM work and pornography. Discrimination against sex workers will be outlawed, including discrimination in the course of doing sex work. I thank the Sex Workers Outreach Project and the Scarlet Alliance, who also join us here today, for their sustained advocacy in progressing these protections.

Despite education being fundamental to development and wellbeing, private schools have unchecked exemptions to discriminate against students, teachers and employees on all grounds but race. LGBTQ+ students are most vulnerable. LGBTQ+ students can lawfully be targeted, sent to counselling, suspended, expelled, asked to leave or have bullying against them ignored. Excellent teachers can be fired. Students' education is suffering to protect the right to discriminate. The bill would remove all exemptions for private education authorities from the Act. The bill would also limit sweeping exemptions that permit religious bodies to discriminate in employment, like firing trans carers or bisexual cleaners, to employment that is relevant to religious practice.

I can be elected to the New South Wales Parliament but could be fired as a teacher at the secular private school I went to, because of my sexuality. Sam Kerr can kick goals for Australia in the World Cup but could be fired as a soccer coach in a private girls' school for embracing her partner. Surely this is no longer acceptable in a modern New South Wales, and we do not need a review to tell us that. Exemptions that allow religious bodies to discriminate when providing adoption services should be repealed. Decisions about adoption should put the best interests of the child ahead of discrimination.

Sport is vital to health, mental health and social inclusion. The bill would harmonise trans discrimination exemptions in sport with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories. Discrimination in sport would be limited to where it is reasonable and necessary, never against children under 12, umpires or referees, and only for activities that involve competition, strength, stamina or physique. Provisions that allow discrimination against trans people in superannuation would be repealed, in line with Commonwealth law. The bill inserts new requirements in anti-discrimination law for government agencies to better reflect diversity in data collection, which is especially important for school forms that only recognise one mother and one father. Ignoring different types of families is discrimination.

I now move to gender-affirming care and acknowledge the work of the Gender Centre, ACON TransHub, Equality Australia and many others who are with us here today who have helped in drafting the provisions. New South Wales has world-class health care, but not everyone can access the health care they need. Young trans people face significant barriers to gender-affirming care that other young persons do not for treatment with similar outcomes or risks. Those barriers and negative impacts were identified in the report entitled *The Voices of LGBTIQ+ Young People in NSW* that was conducted by the Advocate for Children and Young People, who also joins us in the gallery today. Gender-affirming care covers a range of measures that are respectful and affirming of a person's sense of gender, from psychological support and counselling that explores gender expression and social transition to family support and medical interventions.

Not everyone seeking health care for gender questioning will receive gender-affirming care, and not everyone receiving gender-affirming care will receive medical interventions but, where medical interventions are in a child's best interest, they should not be held back by ideology and discrimination. The prospect of experiencing a puberty that does not align with one's gender can be highly distressing. Strong evidence from over at least a decade shows that gender-affirming medical care can reduce depression and suicidal ideation in young trans people. But without support from both parents, children can only access gender-affirming medical care through the courts. Although the courts generally approve requests, courts are difficult to access for young people, who end up missing out on the care they need.

While children and young people accessing other medical and dental treatment need to show they are Gillick competent—that is, that they understand the risks and benefits of a treatment and are able to give informed consent—that approach is rarely adopted in gender-affirming health care. The bill would legislate Gillick competence by clarifying in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 that a young person who is 16 or over is able to make a decision about their own medical and dental treatment as validly and effectively as an adult. Medical practitioners would still be required to assess decision-making capacity and ensure there is informed consent, as is the case with adults. Children under 16 will need a parent's consent, or their treating medical practitioner would need to ensure that they are capable of understanding the nature, consequences and risks of the treatment and that the treatment is in the child's best interest.

The changes are not specific to gender-affirming care but instead legislate the current approach to health care and consent for all children and young people so that there is clarity for all treatment. NSW Health will still be able to issue guidelines for specific treatment or procedures, and a parent will still be able to challenge treatment in the Federal Family Court. There have been instances of some doctors considering some forms of gender-affirming care as "special medical treatment", which requires NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal approval for persons under 16, regardless of informed consent or parental approval. The bill would remove the need for special medical treatment to be approved by the tribunal if another court has already approved it. Denying timely access to gender-affirming treatment presents enormous risks to health and welfare. We need to remove baseless barriers that are preventing health care so young trans people can get on with their education and the things they love.

I now move to the changes to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995. Trans people do not need surgical intervention to be who they are. Some may use hormone therapy, voice therapy or a social transition to affirm their gender. The cost of surgery, recovery time and health risks, including sterilisation, can be deterrents for many. And, for many, surgery is simply unnecessary to live an authentic life. But New South Wales is Australia's last jurisdiction to require reproductive organ surgery before a person can alter their record of sex, leaving most trans people without accurate documentation. Incorrect State documentation forces trans people to reveal their private information and personal experiences whenever they need to show a birth certificate—such as when they are applying for a job, a loan or a course, or accessing services—exacerbating already high rates of stigma and discrimination and making it difficult to get on with life. Because Commonwealth laws allow trans people to update their sex on their passport and with Medicare, inconsistencies in identification can prevent access to entitlements like superannuation and can impact health information like vaccination records.

The bill would introduce the world's best practice for trans people seeking updated documentation. It would replace part 5A of the Act, which currently limits altered records of sex to surgery, with a new part, which would

enable alteration with affirming documentation. A person who is 16 or over would be able to alter their record of sex through the registrar with a declaration and a statement from an adult who has known them for at least 12 months. For persons under 16 who have the support of both parents or a sole parent, the parents or parent can apply to the registrar with documents demonstrating that the child consents and has undergone counselling. These provisions are consistent with legislation that has recently passed the Queensland Parliament.

Parents and guardians who do not constitute all parents and guardians, and children without parental support, will need to apply to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal to authorise the alteration, with decisions made in the best interests of the child. Applicants will be required to identify a sex descriptor—either "male", "female" or another sex descriptor, such as "non-binary". Residents born outside New South Wales will have similar options to get their sex acknowledged in State records. There are provisions to alter a trans person's record of sex on family members' birth certificates or on marriage certificates by application from certificate holders. These certificates are important legal documents used for inheritance, insurance and superannuation, and should reflect a person's true sex.

The trans experience is not a mental illness and has always been a part of human diversity. People who are trans live healthy, functioning and meaningful lives, with good relationships and jobs, contributing to their communities like anybody else. In 2013 the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition [DSM-5], recognised that being trans is not a mental illness and dropped "gender identity disorder" as a classified mental illness. In 2019 the World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization endorsed two new diagnostic codes for gender incongruence in the eleventh edition of its International Classification of Diseases [ICD-11], which transferred medical care for trans people from the mental health chapter to a new chapter, on sexual health. The State's Mental Health Act provides legal definitions for mental illness for the purpose of treating someone under the Act against their wishes. Certain words and conduct are specifically excluded, such as "sexual orientation", religious activity, and consuming alcohol and drugs. Trans people are still seen by some as pathological, creating greater risks for them being forcibly institutionalised. In line with DSM-5 and ICD-11, the bill makes it clear that gender identity and gender expression do not indicate mental illness.

New South Wales sentencing laws recognise that crimes motivated by hatred or prejudice because a person belongs to a particular group can be aggravating factors in sentencing. The Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act provides examples, but these examples do not include all LGBTIQ+ people, with trans people and people with variations in sex characteristics excluded. Trans people and people with variations in sex characteristics are at heightened risk of violence, and the bill makes it clear that crimes motivated by hatred for them can be aggravating factors in sentencing. The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act and the Children's Guardian Act include principles that guide decisions affecting children, including consideration of a child's culture, disability, language, religion and sexuality. My bill would add gender identity and variations in sex characteristics to the list.

Five Acts in New South Wales authorise body searches without consent. These are the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act, the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act, the Court Security Act, the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act and the Sheriff Act. The laws have safeguards to preserve subjects' dignity and privacy by requiring searches to be conducted by a person of the same sex as the subject. While some laws clarify that, for a trans man or trans woman, this means the sex they identify with, others are silent on this and all are silent on intersex and non-binary people. Some provisions assume sex characteristics, like breasts, are associated only with particular sexes. Being searched by a person of the same sex is not always appropriate or possible for trans and intersex persons.

Trans and intersex people may be more comfortable with persons of different sexes conducting searches on different parts of their bodies, and they may be more comfortable with a person of any sex who appears more sensitive and less intimidating. Body searches can be highly intrusive, especially for trans and intersex people. My bill would better protect their dignity in body searches across all five Acts. Trans and intersex people would be given the right to elect a particular officer or a particular class of officers to conduct the search, to the extent reasonably available. If they do not elect, they should be searched by a person of the same sex as they identify. I understand from talking to police that these changes would provide welcome clarity in protecting dignity and reducing the trauma of an unwanted body search. They will, of course, need corresponding officer training.

Decriminalisation of sex work in New South Wales began in 1979 under the Labor Wran Government and continued in 1995 under the Carr Government. But there remain in the Summary Offences Act outdated offences that still criminalise some sex workers, add to stigma and discrimination and are unnecessary. Under the 2023 Labor Minns Government, we have the opportunity to provide further updates. There is an offence for knowingly living off the earnings of sex work, with adults living with a sex worker who do not have other sufficient lawful means of support specified. The offence could incriminate a sex worker's partner who becomes incapacitated, an adult child who lives at home while studying or a housemate on a low income. Exerting coercive

conduct or undue influence to "cause or induce" someone to "commit an act of prostitution" or surrender any proceeds from it is an offence. The offence creates complications and risks for sex worker businesses in recruitment, sex workers talking about their work with friends and support services helping a person starting in sex work. The offence does not address sexual servitude, which is addressed in the Crimes Act.

There are offences for sex work, including soliciting in massage parlours or on premises used for saunas, steam baths, physical exercise or photography. These have little purpose. We know that sex work can occur in massage parlours and saunas without any injury to society, and the offences only drive practices underground. Offences for advertising place unnecessary hindrances on sex work, much of which has moved from street spaces to online platforms. Offences for solicitation by both sex workers and clients near homes, schools, churches and hospitals are out of date. These rules were imposed at a time when high volumes of street-based sex work were occurring in Darlinghurst while it was undergoing gentrification. Street-based sex work is no longer as visible, with much more of the industry now online.

Offences for public acts of sex work, defined as sexual intercourse and masturbation, in view from a school, church, hospital, public space or home are covered by existing offences in the Crimes Act for public sex acts. These summary offences have no community relevance or benefit, and Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data shows they are rarely used. Retaining them risks ad hoc or discretionary use on marginalised sex workers, including those who are trans and of First Nations. Maintaining offences is inconsistent with the decriminalised framework. Decriminalisation keeps sex workers and the community safe, preventing STI transmission and ensuring good relationships between sex workers and police. My bill will repeal all summary offences.

For personal reasons, someone may not wish to disclose their LGBTIQ+ status or history to their family, work colleagues, friends, neighbours or associates. Where the person is in a violent and abusive relationship, threats to out the person can be used as a unique form of coercive control on LGBTIQ+ people. The bill would make threats to out a person's sexual orientation, gender history, HIV diagnosis, variations in sex characteristics or sex work as a form of domestic abuse for the purpose of making an apprehended violence order or an apprehended personal violence order. I told you the bill amends a lot of Acts!

New South Wales laws ban commercial surrogacy in the State and anyone domiciled in the State engaging in commercial surrogacy. While the ban aims to protect participants, it has not stopped couples and singles, whether they be LGBTIQ+ or not, from seeking commercial surrogacy overseas. Because children born out of commercial surrogacy are born through unlawful arrangements, those children are denied the full protection of the law in New South Wales. The courts have no power to issue parentage orders for children born out of commercial surrogacy overseas, meaning the law recognises the child's birth parents in another country, who have relinquished parental responsibility through a lawful court process and are not biologically related or involved in the child's upbringing, even when its parents here are biologically related to the child.

I understand that there are mixed views on commercial surrogacy, but no-one can be comfortable with laws that deny children the basic protection of legal parentage because of the circumstances of their birth. Parentage orders currently do not prioritise the best interests of these children. My bill would not lift the ban on commercial surrogacy in the State, but it would remove a ban on commercial surrogacy arrangements outside of New South Wales and empower the courts to issue parentage orders to intending parents of children born from these arrangements, if it is in the child's best interests to do so. The bill would also give the Supreme Court the power to issue a parentage order once a child has reached the age of 18 to ensure adult children can have their parents recognised for legal purposes like wills and powers of attorney.

Stigma and discrimination contribute to disadvantage, while workplace participation helps alleviate it. Encouraging LGBTIQ+ employment is a step towards equality. My bill would ensure that all LGBTIQ+ people are covered by public sector employment laws that facilitate the employment of disadvantaged groups. Rule 26 of the Government Sector Employment (General) Rules allows government sector agencies to modify recruitment processes to employ people from a list of disadvantaged groups. The bill would add trans persons and persons with variations in sex characteristics to that list. Section 63 of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 makes each New South Wales government sector agency responsible for workplace diversity. My bill would require the Public Service Commissioner to create a minimum diversity and inclusion standard for all public sector agencies. The standard could include targets and quotas or gender affirmation leave, something the Pride council of the Public Service Association has raised with me, and something that was highlighted in the Pride in Protest submission to my bill.

The bill would ensure that the definition of workforce diversity in the Act includes sexual orientation, being of trans experience and having variations in sex characteristics. State laws still contain archaic and stigmatising language to describe people with HIV and AIDS, using terms like "infected", "suffering from" or even "status", which are contrary to dignity, respect and public health outcomes. The bill would modernise the language for HIV and AIDS. Language in New South Wales law does not unambiguously apply to all genders.

Descriptions of people, relationships, families, and bodily attributes and capacities are gendered, making the way provisions deal with trans men, trans women, non-binary people and those who do not fit gendered stereotypes unclear. The application of words like "brother", "sister", "maternity" and "breasts", when limited to women, is not clear in its application to some trans people. Gendered language should be replaced with inclusive language, but this requires extensive work across the entire legislative portfolio. My bill will include interim measures to expand interpretation principles for gendered language under the Interpretation Act 1987 to ensure references to relationships and body attributes or capacities through gendered terms are inclusive of all relevant relationships and people, regardless of gender. This will make our legislation clearer.

I thank the many organisations and individuals who helped make today's introduction a reality. Firstly, I thank my mother, Carolyn, who joins us here. She had the idea for me to do this bill. She was frustrated seeing the LGBTIQ+ community constantly under attack and said to me, "We must move forward with legislative gains." Thanks, Mum. I thank the extraordinary Tammie Nardone, my policy and research expert who has managed the drafting instructions, stakeholder management and legislative process for this bill, a process that started very soon after the voluntary assisted dying bill passed.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Woo hoo, Tammie!

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** Absolutely. I thank the Parliamentary Counsel, Annette O'Callaghan, for being so responsive and detailed in the many drafts of the legislation. I thank the team at Equality Australia for working with LGBTIQ+ stakeholders to audit State legislation and provide comprehensive joint submissions on what changes we need, and I especially thank Ghassah Kassiseh for his work in advising throughout the drafting process. Teddy Cook from ACON and Eloise Brook from the Gender Centre helped us ensure the provisions relating to trans and gender-diverse communities address their urgent needs. I thank BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation and CEO Shane Sturgis, who is here, for their work showing how many LGBTIQ+ First Nations people can experience intersectional discrimination. I thank Morgan Carpenter and the team from Intersex Human Rights Australia for their ongoing consultation throughout the process. I thank all the other organisations and people joining us here in the gallery, including the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, who made submissions to inform this legislation.

I thank the New South Wales Government, the crossbench and The Greens for facilitating the introduction of this bill today. I especially thank the Attorney General and the Minister for Health for their constructive and consultative approach—an approach we will continue to have as the Parliament considers this legislation. I also acknowledge the interest and passion for reform from many members of the Opposition. The bill covers a lot of overdue territory, and that is because New South Wales has never embarked on a process of comprehensive LGBTIQ+ reform. While the Government and colleagues consider and consult on the best way forward for these reforms, I have one simple message: We're here, we're queer, and it's time the law caught up. I commend the bills to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I too acknowledge the member for Sydney's mum. We are all thankful that you are here.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Members*

**MEMBER FOR ROCKDALE**

**MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER**

**MEMBER FOR ORANGE**

**MEMBER FOR CHARLESTOWN**

**MEMBER FOR GRANVILLE**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Rockdale, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Orange, the member for Charlestown and the member for Granville all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope the members have a fabulous time with their friends and families.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to guests who have joined us in the gallery today. I welcome a guest of the member for Sydney, Jacqui Scruby. I welcome guests of the member for Cootamundra, mayors and general managers representing councils from the Central NSW Joint Organisation. The member for North Shore will come to order. I welcome guests of the member for Prospect, representatives of Aspect Western Sydney

School, in particular the student Anthony Bonacrus and his parents. Aspect is an autism-specific service provider that has arranged for students to carry out work experience at the member's electorate office. I thank the member for Prospect for facilitating that.

I welcome my guests, members of the Toronto-Macquarie Men's Probus Club. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Kiama, Rotarians from Gerringong and Bomaderry. I acknowledge guests of the member for Wakehurst, year 11 Legal Studies students from The Forest High School. I welcome a guest of the Premier, Tomas Cvetkovski, a disability rights advocate. I met Tomas as I entered the Chamber, and it was a delight to welcome him. I also welcome a guest of the member for Oxley, Dunghutti Elder Uncle Les Wright.

#### *Rulings*

### UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**The SPEAKER (11:05):** Members will recall that yesterday during question time a point of order was taken regarding unparliamentary language. I will say again that offensive name-calling is not appropriate and is beneath the dignity of this place and beneath the dignity of us as elected representatives. Members may disagree with one another, and at times disagree robustly. I recognise that in the heat of the moment impromptu comments can be made, but we should be able to conduct debate without resorting to name-calling or personal attacks. As members know, I do not and will not tolerate offensive personal remarks. I have reached out to the members involved, although I have not had the opportunity to have a full discussion at this stage. I report that in discussion with the member for Coogee she has indicated to me that she will withdraw the remark and that she will make a statement to the Chamber following question time. I thank members for their understanding. It is a difficult environment in this place at times. I acknowledge that it is not always easy to rein in impromptu comments, but I appreciate the assistance that members provide.

#### *Question Time*

### BROADMEADOW PRECINCT PROJECT

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:08):** My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property. Last month the member for Newcastle told representatives at a Property Council lunch that he had been knocking on the Minister's door every day to see the business case for the proposed Hunter Park precinct. When I asked the Minister a related question on 3 August, he said that he understood that "the Acting Secretary of the Cabinet Office has been instructed to arrange for an urgent examination of all current major Hunter region development processes involving State government agencies". Did the Minister provide any statement or information as part of the Broadmeadow governance review?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:09):** As I made clear when I was last asked the question, these matters have been referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and, as such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this time.

### ESSENTIAL WORKERS

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Government's progress on giving essential workers a pay rise after a decade of the former Government's wages cap?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:10):** It is a great question and an important one for essential workers in this State and the provision of frontline services to the taxpayers of New South Wales. I inform the House that the previous Government's regulation imposing the wages cap, compromising the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission, will expire on 1 September 2023. I can tell the House that it will not be renewed, consigning it to the dustbin of history for the first time in 12 years. That means the Government has busted the wages cap and most public sector workers will receive a 4.5 per cent increase in wages in 2023-24. This means the highest pay rise in over a decade and 60 per cent higher than what was promised under the previous Government—60 per cent higher. Nurses, police, doctors, public servants and hospital workers have accepted the offer and negotiations are continuing with teachers—you would be aware of that, Mr Speaker—firefighters and paramedics. We are approaching them in good faith.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We want to take New South Wales teachers from being the lowest paid teachers in Australia to the best paid teachers in Australia. These changes will have dramatic and real implications for our essential workers delivering world-class public services for the people of New South Wales. A registered first-year nurse will receive an additional \$2,694 a year, a paramedic will receive an additional \$3,189 a year, a second-year



corrections officer will receive an additional \$2,800 a year and a school support officer will receive an additional \$2,484 a year. To put that in context, with inflation running high this is life-changing for many public servants. The reason we need to do this—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —and the reason it was conspicuously and continuously rejected by the previous Government is that we had an unparalleled situation where we were struggling to retain and recruit essential workers in New South Wales. We lost 7,678 nurses in a single year—in one year. You cannot run a health system while losing that quantum of experienced health professionals every 12 months. We are 1,000 police officers short of authorised strength. We know that one in five teachers were leaving the profession in the first five years of their tenure in the New South Wales public school system and resignations were outstripping retirements for the first time in the history of public education. [*Extension of time*]

These are important agreements that have been struck between the Government and public sector unions. At a time of increased inflation, it is important that we can provide salaries and conditions to keep people providing essential services for the people of New South Wales. But, unfortunately, we have not been able to agree to every request that has come across our table. There is a senior public servant who is demanding a whopping 13 per cent pay rise every year—\$22,000 a year—and that is the Deputy, Deputy, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Bronnie Taylor. She has written to the New South Wales Government demanding a \$22,000 increase in her salary. So, 12 years—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business rises on a point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Will you stop the clock, Mr Speaker?

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The material that is—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Stop reading your podcast.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Are you going to come on?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will come to order. What is the point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order goes to relevance. The question was related to essential workers being given a pay rise. Talking about members of Parliament is completely irrelevant to the question. The Premier has strayed from the subject matter of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Members will stop trying to assist the Chair by interjecting to ask the standing order number. It is not necessary to specify the standing order when taking points of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Bronnie Taylor has written to the Government. She wants a 13 per cent pay rise. I have to tell you; she is threatening industrial action. If we do not agree to increase her pay, she is going on strike. Of course, someone cannot go on strike if they have not yet started working—and that is the real dilemma that we find ourselves in. But the member's question is a serious one. We have been able to sit down in good faith with the public sector workers in New South Wales, retain and recruit the people we need to provide world-class public services and we never want to see a day when those opposite darken the doors of government and reintroduce that damning and dreadful wages cap on the people of New South Wales.

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

#### NURSING WORKFORCE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (11:15):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given that the former Perrottet Government delivered record funding of \$33 billion for Health in the 2022-23 budget, including a Health army of 10,000 full-time equivalent workers and the creation of—

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** —1,000 extra nurse positions, will the health Minister commit today to the people of New South Wales that he will not cut a cent of that funding in the upcoming budget and, importantly, will deliver and keep funding every position that the previous Government created?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:16):** This Government stuff is weird—I thought the Dixers came from this side. It is weird. I will have to talk to my staff; they are sending the member for Hornsby stuff now. I am glad that

the member for Hornsby talked about the 10,148 healthcare staff that the former Government announced back on 7 June because I have a terrible habit of still printing things out. I still like it—it's a weird concept, paper. When he got up yesterday to speak about the 10,148—

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** When the member for Hornsby got up yesterday to talk about the 10,148 staff, which he has referenced in his question, I thought, distinctly, "There was a media release on this." I thought, "I've seen it. I'm sure the Government wouldn't have announced 10,148 healthcare staff without saying something about it." I found it on my desk, and I said to my staff—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. He will cease talking to the member for Canterbury.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order goes to relevance. It is a very simple question: Will the Minister commit to funding all the positions that the previous Government created?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I love this.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant at this stage. It is not a yes-or-no answer, however much the member for Hornsby might like it to be so. There is no point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I found the media release and I said to my staff, "I'm really annoyed. Health and you said that those 1,112 nurses were only temporarily funded?" Health said, "Yes, that's correct." I said, "Well, he's saying that's not the case." So then I pulled out the release and I thought, "Where have I missed it?" I went through it line by line, word by word and there was not one mention—not one mention—of cutting 1,112 nurses, of embedding \$1 billion worth of cuts into the Health budget, of making sure that frontline healthcare workers had their wages suppressed for 10 years, or of doing nothing to support frontline paramedics and nurses. This is evidence of a government that was completely out of touch. I will have a lot more to say on the 1,112 nurses, but I will never take advice from a government that has done so much damage to health care in this State that we have 1,112 nurses who are going to be sacked in the next 12 months unless we fix it.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. The Minister's time has expired. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

#### NURSING WORKFORCE

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:19):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is rebuilding essential services and reinvesting in health workers in New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:20):** I thank the member for Granville, who lives in a part of Western Sydney where the pressure on our health services is enormous. The electorate is very lucky to have you as an advocate. It delights me to talk about what we are doing in relation to health care and the challenges we face. Only nine months before the election, there was the big announcement of 10,100-odd healthcare workers. So I did not expect, when I asked, "How are we going? How is the rollout?", to then hear the answer—pause, wait—"Minister, we've got an issue." I said, "What's happening?" The answer was, "We have to tell you that, incredibly, the employment of 1,112 of them—nurses—expires on 1 July 2024." Adam Hall from the Health Services Union is in the gallery today. He and his union know better than most the enormous amount of pressure on health services at the moment.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order: I ask that you request the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Mr Speaker, Adam Hall knows the enormous amount of pressure on the allied healthcare system and on our paramedics, admin and kitchen staff. Our nurses know how much pressure is on them and our midwives. When I made one of my very important unannounced visits last night—to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital—I met Peter, the admin staff, a couple of paramedics and the nurse in charge, Catherine. Not one of them said to me, "No, we have too many staff." I do not remember hearing that when I went to—*[Extension of time]*

I went to Royal North Shore Hospital the other day. You should spot it every now and again, member for North Shore; I think it is in your electorate. I went to the emergency department, met the patient experience officer and went to the triage nurse and said, "I'm here to look around and engage with the staff." They did not say,

"Minister, we have one big solution for you. We know exactly what we need to do. In about six months' time, can you cut 1,200 nurses?" Amazing. That is probably not a reform I am going to sign up to. I do not think the special commission of inquiry we announced today, a landmark inquiry that will look at the way in which we fund—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, you upheld my previous point of order. I ask you again to request the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair, as is required under the standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Once again, I uphold the point of order. I am sure the Minister will do his best to comply with the standing orders.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Mr Speaker, I do not think any healthcare workers, when I make the unannounced visits, say, "What we need right now—we need it in the next few months, and we must have it—is 1,200 nurses gone from the system." That is not what we tend to hear. We do not hear that.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** As we have during the past few months, over the next few weeks we will continue to work diligently to clean up the mess that those opposite have left us. But I will not take advice from the member for Hornsby—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Minister keeps pointing across the Chamber and not directing his remarks through the Chair. It is unparliamentary.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired. My tolerance for points of order of that nature is evaporating rapidly. As a result, I will be much less inclined to hear points of order or to uphold them.

#### NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:26):** My question is directed to the Premier. Considering that only a small proportion of flood-affected people in my electorate have been supported through the Resilient Homes Program, when will the Premier announce further funding under tranche two?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:26):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question and for the engaging and constructive way in which she has approached the New South Wales Government on behalf of her constituents in relation to reconstruction in the Northern Rivers. It is a big task, and I appreciate the meetings I have had with the member for Ballina, with other members on the North Coast from across the political spectrum and with members from the Central West who have been hit by the flooding emergencies.

I say by way of preamble that the Government has made decisions in relation to flood reconstruction across New South Wales by appointing a Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Lismore, with responsibility for reconstruction not just in the Northern Rivers but wherever there are natural disasters or emergencies in New South Wales so that the State can learn from resilience and reconstruction in those communities and apply those lessons when there are terrible natural disasters across New South Wales in future. I have also made a decision to appoint Simon Draper as secretary of the Premier's department in New South Wales. Simon will continue as CEO of the Reconstruction Authority, doing both roles. That was at his request. He believes there needs to be leadership in the rollout of public funds and reconstruction in those communities. I have endorsed that decision. It is important that we do not try to reinvent the wheel or onboard senior leaders when there has been so much tumult and turnover when it comes to management.

To the specifics of the question, the Government has spent \$314 million of the \$700 million Resilient Homes Program in tranche one. That was a fifty-fifty split between the Commonwealth and State, with \$350 million from both jurisdictions. It was meant to accommodate the needs of roughly 2,000 households. I inform the House that 477 offers for voluntary buybacks have been approved, 251 offers have been accepted but just 70 contracts have been settled. Getting the contracts submitted is an elongated process. But the previous Government and the Commonwealth Government made significant undertakings for more funds to build up the community. A release was put out in November last year indicating that a further 4,000 houses—so 6,000 in total—would be eligible for tranche two.

We are working with the Federal Government. We know more needs to be done on three key areas: communication, which has not been up to scratch but I am hopeful that the appointment of the member for Lismore and Simon Draper will go a long way to dealing with that; coordination between the States and local government; and, finally, funding. The budget will be handed down in several weeks and we will have more to say about it then.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister inform the House of the Government's plans to address the challenges in housing and to ensure people in New South Wales can buy or rent a home?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:29):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. He understands more than most members the need to introduce reforms to support the delivery of more homes in the Macarthur region in south-western Sydney to provide a good start in life for so many people—so many young families and so many first home buyers. The member for Campbelltown understands all too well that well-located homes close to jobs, education and opportunities are important for that good start for families in life.

But when we came to office, the incoming government brief provided some sobering statistics and a reminder of just how far the previous Government had let housing supply slip. Working men and women and their families now face the prospect of the great Australian dream of home ownership slipping through their fingers. Renting has become even harder because of the lack of housing availability. That is because members opposite, during their more than decade in government, had their own political wellbeing at the forefront of their minds rather than the wellbeing of those who needed good homes and good jobs in well-located communities. They were looking after themselves rather than looking after future generations, and they should be rightly condemned for that record.

Members opposite seem to be in perpetual opposition to delivering more homes—and that continues to this day. I will return to that later. Unlike members opposite when they were in government, the Minns Government has a laser-like focus on delivering more well-designed, well-located homes in well-built communities for the future. We have started already because we are determined to get this right. We have started with an audit of government-owned land to identify properties available for housing. Members opposite do not like reflecting on their record. They do not like it at all, but they should hang their heads in shame. Their record on housing is disgraceful. Five Ministers were responsible for various parts of the planning system in New South Wales when we came to government, and now we have one.

We have brought staff from the Greater Cities Commission and the Western Parkland City Authority into the Department of Planning to focus them on delivery. We have introduced incentives to support and encourage the delivery of more social, affordable and market housing. We have expanded the capacity of government agencies to deliver more affordable housing projects through additional self-assessment and planning pathways. We have provided support for 74 councils to get more young planners into the system. We have Landcom focused on delivering build-to-rent trials in regional New South Wales, on the South Coast and in the Northern Rivers. *[Extension of time]*

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We have also reformed first home buyer stamp duty arrangements and we are delivering on the task of rental reforms. Those plans are already delivering results, such as the 135 affordable homes that will house around 270 people in Ryde in the Lachlan's Line project. That project will be delivered by Landcom and will provide well-located housing near to jobs, giving opportunities to people. I mentioned earlier that members of the Coalition were focused on their own political wellbeing rather than the wellbeing of people who need housing. They were not content to join with the Federal Greens and oppose the Albanese Government's Housing Affordability Fund. A new cross-factional coalition has emerged among the Liberals—the anti-housing coalition.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We would think that the party of Menzies, who relied on and encouraged home ownership, would be supportive of more housing supply, but, no, not them.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** There he is—the chief opposition himself.

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question is about the Government's plans to address housing challenges. It has nothing to do with the former Government's policies. It has everything to do with this Government's plan. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Here comes the next episode of "Don't despair, it's Alister: the podcast"—how the Menzies tradition is served by opposing housing supply and keeping people out of homes and jobs. The member for Oatley has been on both sides of the equation on one development. The only thing that changed was the electoral boundary. At least Lucy Turnbull gets it. She understood that the previous Government left people behind when it came to housing supply. She recognises and supports any pathway, including using Landcom, to deliver more homes in New South Wales.

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:34):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government walk away from the revised Murray-Darling Basin Plan if the Commonwealth Government implements forced water buybacks?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:35):** Some facts need to be put on the table: Forced water buybacks from the Commonwealth have nothing to do with whether we sign up to the agreement or not. We could pull out of the agreement and the Federal Government could do forced water buybacks on New South Wales tributaries and rivers. That is not related to us signing up to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement or not. Is that not the case? Members opposite are saying we should withdraw from an agreement that has absolutely nothing to do with whether the Commonwealth can come in, or otherwise. By signing up to the agreement we get \$700 million worth of funding from the Commonwealth to support the sustainable diversion limit programs, which we believe will return 52 gigalitres of water to the environment, with no material effect on industry, particularly primary industries on the Murray and the Darling river systems. Why would we not sign up to \$700 million from the Commonwealth—more money and more time? It is not related to buybacks from the Commonwealth or not.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Yes, it is.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No. The member is wrong. I have followed this issue for a long time. Former Premier Gladys Berejiklian was a strong supporter of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. The former environment Minister publicly identified himself with continuing to sign and support the agreement. I have never heard about anyone from the National Party. The member for Murray is different. She has been publicly antagonistic to the project for a very long time.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** That's harsh.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I think she would agree with that. I have never heard the National Party stand up previously and say that we should pull out of the agreement.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. I am sure they want to hear the point of order.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The question is fairly specific around whether the Government will walk away.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am rejecting the premise of the question.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The Premier has not said that. The question is—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. I understand the point of order. The Premier is in order. He will continue his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We are not going to withdraw from the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement because it is not related to whether the Commonwealth can do water buybacks or not in New South Wales. I make the point that just because Victoria did not sign up does not mean the Commonwealth cannot execute buybacks in its jurisdiction. Opposition members have a fundamental misunderstanding of Commonwealth-State relations in relation to this, which is quite troubling when we consider they were in power for the past 12 years.

#### STATE BUDGET

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:38):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will he please update the House on the sustainability of the New South Wales budget and the risks ahead?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:38):** I am delighted once again to talk about the sustainability of the budget—the sustainability that we on the Government side of the House will ensure. I have spoken before, as have many in this place, about the challenge that this Government faced because of the spending, the wrecking and the roting of the budget and the budget figures by the former Government and the unfortunate mess it left us. I have spoken about the fact that the budget was totally out of control and that the

former Government left us with the two biggest deficits in the State's history. They have left us with the largest debt in the State's history, \$129 billion—the largest debt one government has ever bequeathed to another. We have spoken about the underfunded promise: the \$700 million shortfall for kids living in out-of-home care. Shame on them. Cyber security was left unfunded. The \$136 million Active Kids vouchers were left unfunded and \$196 million per year was cut from TAFE.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Misleading.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Misleading—thanks for helping me. We have discovered this week the \$27 billion worth of new promises that the big-spending former Treasurer rolled out.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Where is the list that adds up to \$27 billion?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I thank the Leader of The Nationals for punctuating my next point in advance, and that is that members opposite are in a total state of denial. A couple of weeks ago on 2CC the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, his deputy, said:

You look at a budget; you look at what you need to fund; you prioritise things over, you know, one another to get, you know, what you need to get done. So that black hole is there because of choices that they've made.

Wow, that is a great deputy. She went on to say:

It's this same sort of narrative, as well, from Labor, saying that, you know, we've left them this imaginary black hole. Being in government's all about choices.

Then a couple of weeks ago on 2DU, the Leader of The Nationals said that the Premier "is pointing to the fact that he's been handed a record debt—blah, blah, blah—which is all a load of bunkum".

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** And absolutely correct.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Stop digging, mate. You are up to your neck. And then in a doorstep the Leader of the Opposition said, "Well, they don't need to necessarily pursue revenue measures if they stick with the budget we gave them." Unreal. Fantastic.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** What's the point?

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The point is, Mr Speaker— [*Extension of time*]

Whilst Opposition members are embarking on a course of denial, one member of the Opposition is embarking on a course of non-denial. That is the former Treasurer, the now shadow Minister for Health. Yesterday and today, when the Minister for Health was talking about the fact that 1,100 nurses were left unfunded—the cruellest hoax of all, to fund them and then take the funding away mid term—there was no denial.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: The point of order concerns relevance. This has nothing to do with the question at all. When you are in government, you actually have choices to make.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Dubbo. I have considered his point of order and I do not uphold it. Government members will come to order and stop trying to assist the Attorney General. The member for Dubbo will be placed on a call to order if he continues to interject.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** On sustainability, Mr Speaker, yesterday you were very generous to the member for Hornsby and allowed him a long and luxurious statement to the House. It was not really a personal explanation, but you gave him ample opportunity to say three words: "That's not true." But he did not. I know he has a habit of being seditious to his leader, but if he keeps embarking upon his course of not denying things that are true then there will be no place for him in the Liberal Party. He will have to change his ways or make sure he gets all his colleagues to do what he does: Stop denying things that are true.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Tim James:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** We have a contest. I call the member for Dubbo. Government members will come to order. The member for Dubbo will ignore interjections and not take the bait. I will maintain order in the House.

#### SNOWY HYDRO LEGACY FUND

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:44):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund has legislated guidelines around how and where the funding can be spent. Will the Premier rule out legislating changes to that fund?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:44):** The legislated guidelines for Snowy Hydro were completely ignored by the previous Government and trampled over by The Nationals in particular. They have a shameful record when it comes to the provision of services, particularly to the bush. We will have more to say about the budget when it is released in a month's time. Members opposite can wait until then. It is curious that there is a grab bag of questions today. It is almost like members opposite had an idea of where they were headed and then at the last minute yanked it and thought, "What's in the bottom drawer?" Tim, what is your question? Let us see what yours is. It will be some random question from the bottom drawer. Members opposite are not even disputing it, so obviously in a tactics meeting they had an idea and called out, "Who's got a question? Anything will do." We will announce the budget when it comes down in September.

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** That is disappointing.

**The SPEAKER:** It depends on your perspective; I am quite okay with it. Members will come to order. Government members are having way too much fun, and the member for Lakemba is not helping.

### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:45):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister inform the House about how the Government is reinvesting in our essential services and how the NSW Police Force's newest recruits—congratulations to them, by the way—are keeping our community safe?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:46):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his ongoing support for the New South Wales police, particularly in his local community. I would also like to deliver to him the good news that, as of last week, he will be seeing five new probationary officers. The Fairfield City Police Area Command will receive five of the new graduates who graduated in Goulburn last week. They will be on the streets of Fairfield keeping his community safe, so I congratulate him.

Community safety is one of the Minns Labor Government's top priorities. Our Government will take every necessary measure to make sure that our community is protected. Our newest probationary constables should be so proud of the important work they do and the valuable part they play in our community in keeping our streets safe. I am pleased to say that the Labor Government will deliver 50 extra NSW Police Force officers in the north-western Sydney region and an extra 50 officers in the south-western Sydney region over the next four years to ensure that our community remains safe. That is because we are investing in the vital frontline services that our community needs.

This is a government that cares about Western Sydney, unlike those opposite. When those opposite were in government they were openly hostile to the people of Western Sydney, starving them of transport, health facilities and vital community infrastructure. This Government also cares about delivering frontline services to the community. We are not the party that was planning on sacking 1,100 nurses. We are not the party that did not fund the Northern Rivers reconstruction. We are not the party that left a \$70 million shortfall in cybersecurity and a budget black hole. We are certainly not the ones who piled a massive debt of \$180 billion onto the shoulders of future generations.

I could go on, but I am here to talk about the NSW Police Force and the great work that they do, so I will spare those on the other side of the Chamber for now. A robust and well-supported police force is critical to any successful community in providing proactive policing, tackling domestic violence, going after organised crime, keeping our roads safe and much more. That is why, as the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, I will have a forensic focus on recruiting and training more police officers to do the highly skilled and dedicated work that underpins our community and our safe and secure lifestyle. [*Extension of time*]

Last week I had the honour of standing across from the most recent police recruits as they attested at the police academy in Goulburn. I was joined by the Parliamentary Secretary and the member for Mount Druitt. It was very cold. The 159 members of class 359 have been deployed across this State from Byron Bay to Broken Hill and all the way to the southern border. The pride in their families' eyes was something to behold. We too hold that pride as the Government of New South Wales. I told those recruits that, as members of the Labor Government and as leaders in our communities, we are so proud of the work we know they are going to do on our streets and in our communities. We hold that very dearly.

It was a delight to stop and speak with the recruits and hear about their next locations. They were incredibly excited about their new careers. Importantly, the 159 new probationary constables are joining the front line of

defence against domestic violence, which, sadly, as we all know and have spoken about many times in this place, dominates the workload of our general duties officers. I have been advised that that vital work in our community is anywhere between a staggering 40 per cent to 70 per cent of the workload, depending on the command. I know that the officers are going to play an important role in turning the tide on that insidious community epidemic of violence through the NSW Police Force's important domestic and family violence reforms. The Government will continue to support our police across New South Wales. Again, I thank the member for the question and I look forward to meeting the new probationary constables. I congratulate all 159 of them.

### **BROADMEADOW PRECINCT PROJECT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:51):** My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property, and the Minister for Sport. I am not asking him about ICAC. I am not asking him about what anyone said. I am not asking him—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Virtually everything that came out of the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition in purporting to ask his question is in breach of Standing Order 128. He should either ask a question or remain silent. He does not need to make commentary. He does not need to preface his question with disorderly remarks.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. If the Leader of the Opposition continues to state what he is not going to ask, we could be here a long time. The Leader of the Opposition will ask a question that is within the standing orders.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** My revised question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property, and the Minister for Sport. Without disclosing what he actually said to the Broadmeadow governance review, did the Minister make any contribution at all to the review?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:53):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Members opposite are all over the shop today. They are shooting everywhere. They cannot even target.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The Cabinet Office has completed its review of governance, assurance and decision-making processes for the Broadmeadow precinct project in the Hunter region. That was announced on Monday. The Leader of the Opposition should be familiar with that. The review found that there were no major issues with the processes.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: I take a point of order regarding direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The report of the review is in the public domain. I am asking a simple question. Without wanting to know what he said or what his contribution was, did the Minister make any contribution at all to the review?

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

**The SPEAKER:** I understand what the Leader of the Opposition does not want to know. He will resume his seat. I am not sure that I need the counsel of the Leader of the House, but I will hear him on the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition has not specified a standing order.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** He said it.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** He may well be trying to get to Standing Order 129, but the Minister was giving a response to the question. He does not have to answer it in the way the Opposition leader wants him to. He simply has to answer directly relevantly. He was halfway through.

**The SPEAKER:** At this stage the Minister is in order.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Is the clock stopped?

**The SPEAKER:** I did not stop the clock. The member can seek an extension if she feels that the Minister needs additional time. The Minister will continue his answer.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The nightwatchman is struggling today. When someone is lower in the order, that is what happens. The review recommended that the pause on the New South Wales Government work on precinct planning should be lifted to reduce delays and provide certainty to stakeholders and the community. The review made four recommendations to ensure ongoing transparency and robust governance. The Minister for



Planning and Public Spaces has already committed to implementing those recommendations. The outcome will give the community and stakeholders confidence in the processes around that critical work.

#### PENSIONER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:56):** My question is addressed to the good Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on the range of concessions and rebates available to help pensioners with the cost-of-living crisis?

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (11:56):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. He is such a ferocious advocate for the people in his community. With the cost of living rising sharply all over Australia, it is becoming increasingly difficult for pensioners to make ends meet. The Government has a range of concessions and rebates that can help lower day-to-day living expenses and ease some of the financial burden on pensioners. The pensioner concession scheme is one such scheme. It eases the cost of living for eligible pensioners by subsidising council rates and charges. The pensioner concession scheme was introduced in 1972 and the New South Wales Government is pleased to continue to support pensioners in that way some 50 years later. With a new financial year upon us, it is a timely reminder to everyone that that support is available.

Eligible pensioners can receive a rebate of up to \$425 per property, including \$250 for all ordinary rates and annual domestic waste charges, \$87.50 for annual water rates and \$87.50 for annual sewerage rates. Some councils, like the City of Sydney, Blacktown City Council and Sutherland Shire Council, provide voluntary additional rebates that pensioners may apply for. The New South Wales Government funds 55 per cent of the pensioner rebate, with the remaining 45 per cent funded by local councils. Anyone with a Pensioner Concession Card can receive the benefit. Some recipients of veterans' entitlements—like war widows, totally dependent partners or veterans holding Totally and Permanently Incapacitated and Extreme Disability Adjustment Gold Cards—are also eligible to apply.

Eligible pensioners are encouraged to apply to their local council for assistance. Pensioners only need to apply once as long as they remain eligible. Should a person become an eligible pensioner after the day on which the rates are made, they can apply to council for a proportionate concession for the year. Anyone experiencing difficulty paying their rates is encouraged to contact their local council to discuss their situation and find out more about their council's financial hardship process. Councils are encouraged, bearing in mind the cost-of-living crisis, to be considerably sympathetic to those people who are in that difficulty. [*Extension of time*]

Councils are encouraged to work with ratepayers experiencing financial hardship to identify possible solutions to managing debt. The pensioner concession scheme is one way the Government is helping with the cost of living. There are a number of other concessions and rebates available for older people and people with a disability who live in New South Wales. When people are doing it tough, this is meaningful assistance the Government can provide by being disciplined about the State's expenses. Any assistance the Government provides needs to be considered. Why? Because of the budget disaster left to us by those opposite.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** There was \$7 billion worth of unfunded promises; the biggest debt in the State's history, north of \$180 billion; the pork-barrelling of money into National Party electorates; the member for Bathurst's private expense account, revealed in this place yesterday—

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

See what they did to poor old Tooley when he lost his chequebook? Who needs enemies when you have the National Party?

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat while I hear from the member for Port Macquarie.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This has absolutely nothing to do with pension rebates. I ask you to bring the Minister back to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will continue his answer.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The member for Port Macquarie has no more mates left in the National Party, that is for sure. To fund essential services, the Minns Labor Government is being careful and making necessary decisions to fix up the holes in the budget left by The Nationals.

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

**MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:01):** My question is directed to the Premier. This week we saw his Government cave in to Canberra over water buybacks on the failed Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Pursuing buybacks will decimate communities—they will, we know that—and agriculture in rural New South Wales. Why will he not fight for the rural people of New South Wales? Daniel Andrews fights for his State; why can't the Premier?

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Good question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:02):** I reject the premise of the question, obviously. We believe we are fighting on behalf of regional communities and fighting for a sustainable river network in regional New South Wales. Interestingly, so did the previous Government. That is unambiguously the case. In 2019 former Premier Gladys Berejiklian signed up to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. A couple of months before, former Deputy Premier John Barilaro said he was going to rip it up, but then it was signed on to by the Liberal Premier of New South Wales. It was interesting that, when the member for Murray asked her question, a member on the Opposition front bench said, "Good question." But we do not know the National Party's view about the Murray-Darling Basin.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** What's yours? You're in government.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We support it. We signed onto it.

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

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. We have reaffirmed our commitment to the Murray-Darling Basin, but if they buy back—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth will resume his seat. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time. That was not a point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It was not, but it was very illuminating nonetheless, Mr Speaker. I will put this into context. We are being criticised by the member for Murray, which is fair enough; she has never supported the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. There was suspect, speculative criticism by the Opposition about the same plan, but the member for Tamworth has just said that they support the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The National Party has never said it would walk away. We signed up at MinCo. If the Premier would like to go back to the record and have a look at our support for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth will resume his seat. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the second time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I want to make it clear. There is no distinction between the current Government and the National Party on this issue. We support the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. This is the reason why: Buybacks are immaterial whether you sign onto the agreement or not. The Andrews Government decision to not sign up to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement is not material as to whether the Commonwealth will step in and pursue buybacks in any event. Signing up to the agreement gives us access to \$700 million so we can submit our water resource plans. This is important, because if the water resource plans are submitted and they are accredited by the Commonwealth there is no need for private buybacks from the Commonwealth. [*Extension of time*]

The water resource plans are late. They have not been submitted by the previous Government. We have been waiting a long time. My understanding is they are meant to be in place and operational by mid-2024, but members need not take my word for it. They can take the words of the Federal Inspector-General of Water Compliance, who goes by the name of Troy Grant and was appointed by the previous Commonwealth Government. I think he will do a good job. He is a former Deputy Premier of New South Wales, and he has popped up in a public service job. There you go. That is an interesting appointment. Mr Grant said that water resource plans—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The previous Government submitted all 29 water resource plans.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth will resume his seat. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the third time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I do not know who the previous Minister for Water was. I presume it was the member for Tamworth, but he has done a terrible job by any objective analysis. Troy Grant has said that these fine-grain plans for specific parts of the basin, which are used to demonstrate compliance, are already three years

late. He said, "As it currently stands, New South Wales are getting a free pass because they are late with their plans. It really isn't a fair playing field across the basin." He also said that South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory have submitted their plans.

**Mr James Griffin:** Point of order—

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** What possible point of order? I am trying to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I cannot possibly presume to know what the point of order is before I have heard it.

**Mr James Griffin:** All of the plans were submitted. The point of order is about the reflection of truth.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Manly will resume his seat. I call the member for Manly to order for the first time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Seven New South Wales surface water plans were withdrawn by the New South Wales Government—presumably by the member for Tamworth. He does not even know what happened in his previous portfolio. [*Time expired.*]

### CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:08):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister update the House on what action the Government is taking in regional New South Wales to ensure safer construction sites?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:08):** I thank the hardworking, relentless and fantastic member for Wallsend for her important question and her strong advocacy to ensure that workers are safe at work. I particularly thank her for raising with me the many concerns she has regarding the Hunter and regional New South Wales. Last month I travelled to Newcastle to bring attention to the risks facing the construction industry. As I am sure members would be aware, construction sites continue to be some of the most dangerous workplaces in the country, with falls from heights being the leading cause of death at building sites. Falls from heights are the number one cause of traumatic fatalities on New South Wales construction sites, with 16 people killed between 2018 and 2022. Those stats are terrible, particularly when it comes to young workers aged between 20 and 29, who experience the highest number of falls. Those aged over 50 make up the highest number of fatalities.

While I was in Newcastle, I met with a number of organisations and stakeholders, including Hunter unions, to listen to their grave concerns about safety issues on Hunter construction sites. I also note that the NSW Building Commissioner recently described the conditions at two Newcastle building sites as "a nightmare" and "appalling". This month SafeWork inspectors completed a campaign in the Newcastle and wider Hunter area. SafeWork NSW issued numerous notices at those sites in relation to electrical risks, falls-from-height risks, unsafe scaffolding and other issues. Further compliance campaigns are planned in the Newcastle region during 2023.

Newcastle is a community that is still mourning the loss of Harry McWilliam, a young construction worker. Earlier in the month, three young workers in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands fell from heights on construction sites in a short span. One died from his injuries. They are young workers, and reading the stories is absolutely devastating. It is not about politics; all members have a responsibility to all of those in their electorates. [*Extension of time*]

I take this opportunity, and I know all members will join me, to convey our deepest and most sincere condolences to their families, loved ones and colleagues. I was also in Batemans Bay, where I was joined by the hardworking member for Bega to attend an early morning toolbox talk with SafeWork inspectors and civil construction workers at the South Batemans Bay Link Road project. In both of my July visits to the regions, I met with dedicated SafeWork inspectors in Newcastle and Wollongong. The work they do to make sure workplaces in the State are safe and that lives are protected is critically important. I thank them for all their work.

On the New South Wales-Victoria border, SafeWork NSW has been hard at work with its Victorian counterparts on a safety blitz across construction sites. The blitz has been focused on two critical hazards in the construction industry: falls from heights and exposure to silica. As this Government knows, every single injury and death caused by falling from heights is preventable if the right safety measures are in place. In the current blitz, SafeWork inspectors and their Victorian counterparts visited numerous construction sites to ensure compliance with work health and safety duties. Inspectors will also seek to ensure that employers are identifying high-risk crystalline silica work and preparing hazard control statements prior to commencing work.

Our inspectors are ensuring that businesses and workers are aware of the risks and that appropriate control measures are put in place for construction workers' safety at work. Inspectors take a zero-tolerance approach.

There was one particular moment from my visit to Batemans Bay that stayed with me. I was told that a dedicated work health and safety Minister had not made a visit to the area since John Della Bosca was the Minister. I acknowledge the Premier, who has ensured that there is a dedicated Minister for Work Health and Safety. I am the first work health and safety Minister to visit that region in over a decade. The Government will have more to say about this issue.

*Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:14):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) That the time allocated for Government business be extended until the consideration of any Legislative Council messages regarding Government business is concluded.
- (2) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of private members' statements to consider any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business, including the option for the Speaker to leave and resume the chair on the ringing of one long bell.
- (3) If any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business are received before or during private members' statements, for business before the House to be interrupted, for the consideration of the message forthwith.
- (4) The House to adjourn without motion moved.

I apologise for making provision to keep the House back, but there is a bill being amended by the Legislative Council. I have been advised that the Legislative Council is unlikely to be able to consider it in the time normally allocated for government business. I wanted to give members who were planning to leave this afternoon as much notice as possible that the House may continue to sit to the convenience of the other place.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 90 to 120 will lapse tomorrow.

*Personal Explanation*

**MEMBER FOR COOGEE**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:17):** By leave: I seek to make a personal explanation under Standing Order 62. In the heat of the moment yesterday, I chose not to withdraw a comment. However, I have reflected upon my comment and my actions towards the Leader of the Opposition. I put on the record that my comment towards the Leader of the Opposition yesterday was made in response to his actions of leaning across the table and signalling—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order so that I can hear the point of order.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** She said she was going to withdraw it. She has not.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not need assistance from the member for North Shore.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Standing Order 62 is not an avenue to make attacks on other members of this Chamber. It is an occasion for the member to show contrition about a matter. I draw the Speaker's attention to Standing Order 62. You have the ability to withdraw leave if you believe that it is not appropriate. I ask that the member for Coogee be directed to behave in an appropriate fashion.

**The SPEAKER:** I do have that ability. It is a significant privilege afforded by the House. From my understanding of what happened—and I have a good understanding, having had reports from the Clerks and having reviewed what happened—at this stage I cannot rule that what the member for Coogee has said constitutes an attack on the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is where she is going.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not quite sure where the member for Coogee was going. I cannot project that. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I understand his concern, but we cannot make assumptions. I will hear further from the Leader of the House on the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The Government showed the member for Hornsby considerable latitude yesterday, well beyond what is in the standing orders.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** It was a personal explanation.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** There was no personal explanation at all—and the member knows it. Opposition members should be patient and allow the member for Coogee to withdraw her remark and explain the circumstances in which she made it.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Alternatively, next time we will move that the member for Hornsby not be heard. Opposition members should be reasonable.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** No. I will not entertain debate on the matter or a review of what the member for Hornsby may have said during his personal explanation yesterday. This is getting a little silly. I discussed with the member for Coogee what she would say. I had no concerns about her intended comments, and I cannot project ahead to rule that she will offend against Standing Order 62. At this stage, I have not heard anything that contravenes the standing orders. The member for Coogee may continue.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** I maintain that women in this place deserve respect and dignity—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, given that I raised the point of order yesterday and I approached you and made the formal complaint about how it was handled, I would like to be heard. I ask you to consider your position under Standing Order 62. Talking about the treatment of women in this place goes well beyond giving a personal explanation. Further to that, Standing Order 74 (2) allows the Speaker to intervene to prevent a quarrel between two members. This is clearly now a point of conflict; it is no longer a personal explanation. I ask you to withdraw leave from the member for Coogee.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Miranda for her advice. I ask members to assist me—and, indeed, the House—in this matter. I have had a discussion with the member for Coogee. I accept that she is presenting her position under Standing Order 62, her personal explanation, in good faith. And I believe—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** There is no accountability.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for North Shore to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A. The member may return to the Chamber when the House resumes at 2.30 p.m. It is hard enough to oversee proceedings without those kinds of interventions.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for North Shore left the Chamber at 12:22.]*

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** It is important for me to provide the context in which I made the comment, and that is what I am trying to do. In the heat of the moment yesterday, I chose not to withdraw the comment. I have reflected upon my actions. I put on record that I made the comment in the context of the Leader of the Opposition leaning across the table, signalling to shoosh the Minister and telling her to stop talking. In the broader context—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat or she will also be directed to leave the Chamber.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** In the broader context, I remain deeply concerned about the way in which women in this place continue to be treated—in particular, the seeming tactic of Opposition members whenever female Ministers have the call of talking over them, dismissing them—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat. I will manage the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** I call upon the Leader of the Opposition to reflect upon his actions yesterday as the leader and the standard that he sets.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coogee will resume her seat.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** I have no problem in this place.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Badgerys Creek will come to order. The member for Coogee will conclude her contribution. We will deal with the broader context later. The member's personal explanation is causing more concern for members and for me, as the adjudicator, than we would like.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Out of respect for you and for this House, I withdraw the comment.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Coogee.

*Sessional Orders*

**SESSIONAL ORDER 97**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:24):** By leave: I move:

That for the remainder of the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the routine of business for sitting Tuesdays provided for in Sessional Order 97 be amended by moving general business notices of motions (general notices) from item 2 to item 11, with the Speaker to leave the chair at its conclusion.

That is a recommendation from the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee to deal with business on Tuesdays. The giving of notices of motions while members are coming into the Chamber for question time is unworkable. The motion simply moves the giving of notices of motions subsequent to question time in an effort to speed up proceedings. If the House carries the motion, on Tuesdays question time will commence at 12 o'clock and notices of motions will be given later in the day.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House. The Manager of Opposition Business has indicated that he agrees with the motion, and it is in accordance with the desires of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. I thank the House in advance for allowing this change.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Personal Explanation*

**MEMBER FOR COOGEE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:26):** By leave: I make a personal explanation in response to the comments of the member for Coogee. I gestured yesterday at the entire front bench, male and female members. They were shouting at me in a disorderly way—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Not me.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** The member for Heffron is an honourable exception. They were shouting at me in a disorderly way. I could not hear what I was saying. It was not a misogynistic gesture. It was not a sexist gesture. I am outraged that the member for Coogee, who does not have either the courtesy or the courage to stay in the Chamber to listen to this personal explanation, would make that slur.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I will deal with the matter. I am coming close to withdrawing my consent for the Leader of the Opposition's personal explanation. I have no idea why the member for Coogee is not in the Chamber. I will put the matter in context. I observed only part of what happened yesterday. I had no concerns about the actions of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Hear, hear!

**The SPEAKER:** Hang on. Let us contextualise what happened. Not everybody sees everything that happens in the Chamber. I can see clearly what is happening in front of me. The Leader of the Opposition was in an exchange with the Minister for Transport. The exchange had been going on throughout the day. The Minister for Transport was responding to the Leader of the Opposition. It is very difficult to say whether the Leader of the Opposition was gesticulating to the Minister for Transport or to other members. I did not consider the action to be offensive. However, it was probably out of order in the interests of maintaining orderly conduct in the House. I was satisfied that it was in order within the normal operations of the House.

I understand the member for Coogee called out an inappropriate comment that was impromptu and not scripted. She has acknowledged that and withdrawn the comment. The way in which she articulated herself further caused the Leader of the Opposition some concern. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that, as Speaker, I did not consider his action to be inappropriate. I was not on the back bench to observe it from that angle. I ask all members to consider these matters in context—in this case, during a quite heated question time.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I assure the House that any gesture I made was not intended to be—and I believe was not—gendered, misogynistic, sexist or patronising. I would never make such a gesture.

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge that. That is the way I took it. However, I do not have the perspective from the chair that I used to have from the backbench. I think we can all agree to move on. I accept the withdrawal by the member for Coogee and I accept the position of the Leader of the Opposition as to his intentions.

### *Bills*

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSFER OF WATER) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 29 June 2023.**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:32):** I lead for the Government in debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 and represent the Minister for Water in the other place, the Hon. Rose Jackson. I acknowledge the incredible advocacy of the member for Murray on water issues. I have been in this place for 12 years. Obviously, the member for Murray has not been here all that time, but you would have to go a long way to find someone who has discussed, advocated and agitated on water issues more than her. It is important that the House acknowledges her sustained advocacy on behalf of her community and the people of New South Wales.

In opposing the bill, I make clear that I sympathise with the member for Murray's concern for her community. I understand that the member is seeking to ensure that the recovery of environmental water does not negatively impact on regional communities' water security and their ability to have a strong economy. We acknowledge her as a genuine and passionate advocate for her community. As a Minister with a regional portfolio area, I appreciate the many challenges regional communities are facing following drought, bushfire, COVID and floods. Just this week I met with the member for Murray, as I have done a number of times, to talk about significant health issues in her community, so I know firsthand the level of her advocacy and the commitment she shows to the people she represents.

The Government is committed to taking meaningful action to protect communities from the potential impacts of the non-strategic buyback of water by the Commonwealth. While we share many of the same goals, the approach taken to achieve those goals by the New South Wales Government differs to that of the member for Murray. The Minister for Water, a tireless advocate in this portfolio, is aware of the concerns that have led the member to introduce the bill. The Minister met with the member in Deniliquin a few weeks ago to better understand the views of her community, and I know the Minister is very in touch with regional and rural issues. That is why the New South Wales Government continues to call for ongoing investment in and prioritisation of water recovery by the Commonwealth through projects rather than buybacks.

The Minister for Water has said that the New South Wales Government supports the Commonwealth Government's commitment to deliver the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full. However, she has also been clear that this cannot be achieved without more time, funding and flexibility. That flexibility would unfortunately be hampered by the passage of this bill. We are massively behind on delivering our commitments under the Basin Plan due to neglect and delays caused by the previous Government over the past decade. We are directing our efforts to working effectively with other water Ministers in the Murray-Darling Basin, because that is where the robust negotiations and decisions to protect New South Wales communities take place.

We have been clear that the Commonwealth must look at new and innovative ideas to meet the water recovery targets under the Basin Plan without causing significant impacts to regional communities. However, if the Commonwealth Government follows through on its intent to pursue water recovery through buybacks, then we must ensure the buybacks are done strategically. We will demand that significant support is provided to our local and regional communities to mitigate the negative social and economic impacts that may result.

Our efforts do not stop here, though, as we will need to continue to hold the Commonwealth to account in the way it rolls out any buyback program so we can ensure we are getting the best and fairest deal for our regional communities. No-one in this House can unsee or forget the devastating images of the Murray-Darling Basin during the last drought—the worst on record—when parts of the river system that the member for Murray knows so well looked like a moonscape. With another dry spell on the way, we cannot become complacent. That is why the New South Wales Government supports the delivery of the Basin Plan in full to ensure that enough water remains in the river system to protect its health, particularly in times of drought. We seek to protect our rivers and our wetlands as well as support thriving communities through robust and constructive negotiations with the Commonwealth.

Let us be clear. We are in this situation today because of the perpetual undermining of the Basin Plan by the National Party, which has dragged its feet on delivering on its commitments. It is obvious that there is a lot of work to be done to get New South Wales back on track. We fear the bill may create unintended legal and constitutional issues. Attempting to place trade restrictions on New South Wales licence holders triggers a raft of legal issues. For example, the bill calls for assessments of socio-economic impacts and environmental impacts, but it is not clear who is responsible for carrying out the assessments, and no time frames are prescribed. The bill risks legal and constitutional challenges by the Commonwealth in the High Court, which is not a risk the New South Wales Government is willing to take.

While I understand why the member for Murray has brought forward the bill, we are concerned that it will only further complicate the already extremely complicated way in which water is managed in New South Wales. If the bill were to pass, it would apply to all water licences in New South Wales, adding further unnecessary red tape, time and money to the process of transferring water licences across the State. Only last year a parliamentary inquiry found that water trading in New South Wales was already too complicated and complex, and we do not want to make that situation worse. Our communities want strong and collective leadership from governments working together to forge a pathway to deliver the Basin Plan. The New South Wales Government is determined to do exactly that.

The bill has a complicated relationship with Commonwealth water policy and legislation, meaning it raises the potential for a protracted, costly and damaging dispute with the Commonwealth, including constitutional litigation. This may have effects unintended by the member for Murray. By effectively removing the option to willingly sell water licences the bill reduces the ability and flexibility of water users, including irrigators, to manage their business their way. That removes opportunities for water users to droughtproof their business, diversify their assets or pay down debt. With New South Wales on El Niño alert, now is not the time to take opportunities off the table.

As I said from the beginning, I have known the member for Murray for some time. The member is a genuine and well-intentioned advocate for her community. However, on this occasion, I do not believe that the bill will work. The Government supports many of the same principles that the member is asking for, but seeks the flexibility to negotiate robustly and constructively with the Commonwealth. As members know, this is happening because of 10 years of delay and neglect by the former Government. We have much to do in New South Wales and we are focused with getting on with that. For all those reasons, I urge members not to support the legislation. But, once again, I recognise that the member for Murray is an incredible advocate, not just for the people of Murray but for all people living in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:39):** The Opposition supports the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 and will move amendments to improve the bill so that it more closely reflects the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council Agreement of December 2018. "To promise decentralisation, population growth and expansion of agricultural production without adequate funding and programming for water resources is to pay lip service to the problem." Those words were spoken in this place 42 years ago by a man respected on both sides of politics who had a vast knowledge and deep awareness of the issues around water security in this country. I am talking, of course, about Ian Armstrong, a former Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals. He has an enduring legacy when it comes to securing vital water infrastructure across New South Wales.

Before I am accused of living in the past, let me assure members that this is not about reminiscing about times gone by, nor is it about being unable to move with the times. I remind the House of Mr Armstrong's comments to illustrate just how enduring the issues around water are, and how there are no easy fixes when it comes to addressing the ongoing challenges associated with water security in Australia, particularly when it comes to the Murray-Darling Basin—the largest and most complex river system in the country. The fact that we are still debating water management in 2023 is not because of inaction. It is not necessarily because previous governments—on both sides—made good or bad decisions. It is because water and the issues impacting it are constantly changing.

Technology has advanced over the past 30-odd years at a rate that is arguably faster than at any other time post-industrialisation. The climate is not what it once was. Farming practices have evolved, populations have grown and altered, and the waterways—and the environment in which they exist—are a living organism that is constantly shifting. As these things change, so must we. We must be agile. We must keep an open mind when it comes to effective water resource management and, in doing so, acknowledge and accept that our lakes and riverways—the beating heart of our nation—are many things to many people. That is especially true of the rivers and lakes that form the Murray-Darling Basin, and it is why restoring water to the basin is complex, to say the least.



There are no simple solutions. As the Murray-Darling Basin Authority states, "The aim of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is to bring the basin back to a healthier and sustainable level, while continuing to support farming and other industries for the benefit of the Australian community." Let me repeat that last part, "while continuing to support farming and other industries for the benefit of the Australian community". That says so much but appears to mean very little to the Commonwealth Government and its State counterpart here in New South Wales, neither of which seem to understand the catastrophic consequences of arbitrarily buying back water without appropriate checks and balances. Neither the Commonwealth Government nor the State Government seem to have a plan going forward. It is time for this Government to stand up and fight for the communities of regional New South Wales and push back against any Federal plan that may literally wipe basin towns off the map.

Yes, protecting the environment is a noble and important cause; it is one we are all invested in. But we must be wary of short-sighted and ill-thought-out responses to what are undoubtedly longstanding and ongoing issues. When it comes to the notion of unfettered water buybacks in the Murray Darling Basin, we must first and foremost follow this suggested course of action through to its logical conclusion. As the saying goes, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." When it comes to buying back water from New South Wales entitlement holders without proper checks and balances, we must always be mindful of the law of unintended consequences. Of course, no one is questioning the intentions of those seeking to recover environmental water as part of the Basin Plan. As I just noted, restoring, protecting and enhancing the environment within the basin is something we all want to achieve. But to do so through unconstrained water buybacks is—pardon the pun—to open the floodgates to disastrous and, in some instances, irreversible consequences for rural and regional communities. That is too high a price to pay.

The amendments to the bill that I will propose are pragmatic. By outlining specific and tangible parameters around buying back water, we can provide measurable, achievable, transparent and meaningful answers to questions relating to the impact of permanently removing water from the consumptive pool. That will lay the groundwork for a way forward that addresses the concerns of all stakeholders and, above all, provides certainty for those who literally rely on the basin to live. To quote Mr Armstrong once again, an assured water supply for agricultural and industrial use results in:

... economic and social stabilisation of rural communities; employment opportunities in agriculture, commerce, and industry; the generation of positive and progressive community attitudes to local development ... and a more diversified and assured supply of agricultural produce for national markets associated also with more stable prices for such products.

It naturally goes that the loss of an assured water supply, which is what the uncertainty around unchecked buybacks would bring about, would result in the reverse and—dare I suggest—perverse outcome.

Consider for a moment what such an outcome would look like for the 2.3 million Australians in rural and regional communities, from the very young to the very old, who call the basin home. Let us begin with the primary producers, many of whom are only just beginning to make headway again after dealing with the aftermath of last year's devastating floods. Add to that the fact we are now staring down the barrel of another drought, and it is clear that those farmers are already facing an uncertain future as it is, without the Commonwealth Government adding to that uncertainty with ill-considered water buybacks. How can these men and women on the land possibly plan for the future when this sort of cloud hangs low over their heads? How do they invest their hard-earned money into planting crops and renewing equipment when the Commonwealth threatens to upend everything with the stroke of a pen—all as the New South Wales Labor Government sits idly by and does nothing to help them?

Given the agricultural sector in the basin—our nation's food bowl—is worth somewhere north of \$22 billion each year, the loss of productivity associated with buybacks would be profound, leading to an economic downturn that would start at the farm gate and lead all the way to the main street of town—even to George Street in Sydney. Now is most certainly not the time to compound the already burdensome cost-of-living pressures so many households are currently facing. Investment in areas impacted by buybacks would dry up while local industry would become non-existent. Businesses would board up their windows, banks would leave town for good and "for sale" signs would pepper the front yards of residential streets. Populations would dwindle and schools would lose students, followed quickly by teachers. Childcare centres would fold, along with local nursing homes. The already challenging task of recruiting and retaining doctors, nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals would become almost insurmountable.

It does not take a genius to figure out that, as people pack up and move out, government funding, service provision and infrastructure investment would evaporate. Tourism, which is worth around \$11 billion per annum in the basin, would quickly disappear. I make no apologies for painting this bleak and dystopian picture. If unchecked water buybacks go ahead, this is the reality facing many rural and regional communities whose survival depends on continued access to water from the Murray-Darling system. We must learn from the lessons of the

past. We have already seen the negative socio-economic impacts associated with the removal of water from farming. Let us not let history repeat itself.

While the socio-economic impact of unfettered buybacks would be profound, I want to also highlight the potential unintended consequences for those from the more than 50 different First Nations that live in the basin. We need appropriate safeguards to ensure that First Nations people have been adequately consulted and their opinions heard in relation to any potential cultural impacts of increased water flow stemming from possible future buybacks. Arguments about what is best for the health and ongoing sustainability of our river system are varied, but there is one thing we can all agree on—that the preservation and sustainable utilisation of the Murray-Darling Basin is vital to the nation's environment and prosperity. However, removing water from the consumptive pool without assessing the socio-economic and cultural impact, and without demonstrating measurable environmental outcomes, is not the answer. We need a considered and rational process that takes a detailed and methodical approach to ensure livelihoods are not lost, cultures are not disturbed and environmental outcomes are realised.

That does not have to be a zero-sum game. We can realistically achieve all of these outcomes without arbitrarily buying back water entitlements. That leads me to an important point that is often lost in this debate. What many who have had limited exposure to life on the land may not realise is that our farmers are at the forefront of conservation. As stewards of the land, they are the original environmentalists. Primary production and protecting the environment are not two mutually exclusive ideas; they are very much interconnected. Farmers take pride in their work and their land. Why would they not? It is in their best interests that this vital asset be nurtured, both now and for future generations. I have seen firsthand the work that farmers in my electorate and around the State are doing when it comes to world's best practice sustainable agriculture and farming. It is work that not only yields financial returns but positive environmental outcomes as well. I mention this to highlight the fact that there are many and varied ways to protect and enhance the environment in the Murray-Darling Basin. As the water system itself evolves, along with the environment in which it exists—both natural and man-made—our plans and strategies around effective and appropriate water management must also evolve.

I acknowledge that if you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem. This is not about being obstructionist. The amendments I am putting forward today are about finding ways to properly identify the consequences, both intended and unintended, of removing water from the consumptive pool. This will enable us to find a balance and identify a middle ground that does not make a challenging situation even worse and, what is more, these amendments will provide a level of certainty for those whose very livelihood depends on reliable and assured access to water from the basin. Fundamentally, when it comes to water buybacks, the negative flow-on effects for communities who rely on the Murray-Darling Basin for their socio-economic wellbeing are too great. We must learn from the past, heed the warnings of the future and together find a solution that benefits everyone. To do anything else is not only foolhardy but also counterproductive. As Ian Armstrong once said, "Country people have long memories."

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (12:53):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. As previous speakers have done, I acknowledge the member for Murray for introducing the bill and for her long commitment to these issues. I listened with interest to Opposition members speak on the bill and I will be interested to see the amendments they are proposing. I do not doubt the genuine nature of their comments, but I have to say that, over the years that I have been observing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, I have found the Opposition's positions on it to be a little contradictory at times. I suspect that, in many respects, the member for Murray is in this place because many people in her community did not see The Nationals and the Liberal Party provide consistent positions on much of this issue over the past decade or so and they felt they wanted someone who—as much as I sometimes disagree with her—always has a very clear view on these issues and makes it very clear to her community.

I have a bit of a history in this water space. For four years I was the CEO of the National Irrigators' Council and for two years after that, before being elected to come back into this place, I was on the board of Murrumbidgee Irrigation as an independent board member. So I come into this place with quite a long history of involvement in the Basin Plan and some of the challenges. We see a lot in the media about the failure of the Basin Plan. I want to be really clear: In large part, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan has already succeeded in obtaining the water that it was originally scheduled to get for the environment. In fact, it has already achieved 98 per cent of the surface water and 92 per cent of the groundwater against the original Bridging the Gap target. So, with apologies to those who know the plan in detail, I want to go through some of the basics for people who might be watching my contribution now or reading it in *Hansard* later on.

There are a number of different components to the Basin Plan. It is a very complex plan. Originally, a target of 2,750 gigalitres of water was set to be obtained. That came out of the Basin Plan in 2012. Prior to that we saw a lot of buybacks occur, which were largely untargeted. That led to some significant, negative socio-economic impacts because at that planning stage of the Basin Plan there were really not good enough

methods in place to deal with the socio-economic impact. Indeed, I think most people who have watched the plan over the years would agree that the structural adjustment assistance, such as it was, provided to regional communities was quite poor and often poorly directed. If there are ever to be buybacks by the Federal Government then it really does need to be accompanied by structural adjustment work with regional communities that builds on where regional communities feel they should be in the future and ensures that they have a say, with a long-term focus on jobs, not just on photo opportunities of cheques being handed over to local groups that do not employ people—which is often what happened in the past.

There are a number of components to the Basin Plan. There is a lot of focus currently on the 450 gigalitres of upwater. The upwater component of the plan is part of the sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism which was in the original plan. It was put there because South Australia was not happy with the original target of 2,750 gigalitres. Frankly, at the time, it was sold to South Australia as being something that would be achieved and it was sold to New South Wales—I was the agriculture Minister for a part of the negotiation period—as an upper target, not necessarily one that has to be achieved. There has been a fair bit of discussion over the years since, which has served to set that target as a non-negotiable for a lot of people. It is certainly the case that the Federal Government sees it as that at the moment.

But the news that we are not within any striking distance, at all, of achieving the targets originally set to be achieved by 2024 is not new. In fact, when I was CEO of the National Irrigators' Council, I pointed out many times—including in written submissions which I made on behalf of the organisation for the Review of the Water for the Environment Special Account and for the Productivity Commission's reviews of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan—that we needed to take action. The fundamental reason we are nowhere near achieving those targets is because the previous New South Wales Government, the previous Victorian Government and some of the Commonwealth governments over time basically just kept pushing things out to the never-never. They failed to take on some of the serious targets of achieving the sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism supply and constraint measures, and the efficiency measures. We need more time for those things.

Critically, in the past couple of days the Commonwealth Government has agreed that the time frames need to be extended to achieve some of those things. There are people in the community who wish the Basin Plan would just go away, but that is not a realistic thing to think. The Basin Plan is here to stay. As many of the submissions I mentioned before point out, it has always been a danger that, if we were not able to achieve the Basin Plan targets and the 450 gigalitres through the efficiency mechanisms, or other things that achieve the outcomes—and I will come back to them—then a future government would say it wanted to buy back the water.

The member for Murray was absolutely right in her second reading speech: Right now, it is against the law for the 450 gigalitres to be recovered through buybacks. That requires a change to the legislation in Federal Parliament. The Opposition talks about the 2018 ministerial committee agreement around protecting communities and socio-economic impact. That agreement was actually about the efficiency measure projects, which had that test applied to them. Unfortunately, that agreement stopped most of the efficiency measure projects from being proposed. In fact, people in areas like the Murray-Goulburn in Victoria said, "We don't want a bar of on-farm efficiency projects."

If we look for areas that have been reasonably successful in this task, with all due respect to my former board colleagues—including the partner of the member for Murray, who has had a long involvement in Murrumbidgee Irrigation—Griffith is an area where we have seen farmers most readily adapt the efficiency projects and make their operations futureproof. That is assuming that they do not lose all the water from their allocations in the long term. That is really important. It is important for government to take additional time and encourage the efficiency projects that can help us to meet the Basin Plan objectives.

It is also absolutely vital that government seriously addresses the supply and constraint measures. That is another aspect of the Basin Plan. We have a target that we can achieve, which is colloquially known as "downwater", of 605 gigalitres. That amount has been taken off the 2,750 gigalitres of the original Bridging the Gap measures. That amount needs to be met by supply and constraint measures, which must be assessed as being equal to that amount of water. Currently, in the Commonwealth legislation, if that amount is not met by 2024, we could see the Commonwealth undertake buybacks to achieve it. There is nothing to stop the Commonwealth from doing that. It can also, as it has already announced, make some targeted buybacks to meet the Bridging the Gap gap, which is still there.

There are several components of this issue. It is not as simple as saying, "Let's stop any buybacks from occurring in the long term." In question time today the Premier made it absolutely clear that the New South Wales Government does not want to see buybacks, because it recognises the impact on communities and food supply. For instance, 84 per cent of our vegetables come from irrigators. That cannot just be replaced through some other mechanism, unless we want to bring them in from overseas in tins, and I do not think any of us want to see that. We need to work much more constructively than the previous Government did in this area. [*Extension of time*]

We need to see some effort to meet the 605 gigalitres of the supply and constraint measures from the sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism. Some of that involves vital constraint measures. They are controversial for people because, in layman's terms, they are basically about getting permission to flood people with man-made floods over various periods of time. But right now the constraint measures are absolutely vital. Even if we add all the water that the Basin Plan put in place, including the 450 gigalitres, we could not deliver it because we do not have the capacity in the rivers to deliver that water downstream. Those constraint measures were a prerequisite measure in the Basin Plan and are also part of the 605-gigalitre supply and constraint measures. They must be given higher priority by government. Otherwise we risk buyback occurring in valleys, including in the southern basin.

The southern basin valleys have met every target to date. They need to be given an assurance they will not pay the price because of governments failing to deliver their priorities. That is one of the fundamental problems with the way some of the Basin Plan work has been done over the past decade. We have a responsibility that is separate from the cost. The responsibility to deliver the measures was with government and, frankly, the last Government in New South Wales failed to take action on them. The Coalition Government at the Federal level failed to act on many of these issues.

Frankly, the Labor Government in Victoria does not want to act on these issues and seems to think it can push them out to the never-never as well, so I am critical of it as well. The price for the failure is paid by communities and irrigators. That is simply not fair, because in most cases they are not the ones holding up the work on the supply and constraint measures. We need a government that is committed to that work but, right now, in 2023, we all know it is impossible to achieve those measures by 2024, so the time frames need to be extended. That aspect of the Federal Government's announcement in the past few days should be welcomed.

We need to see the efficiency measures worked on again. Murrumbidgee Irrigation is undertaking one of the biggest projects in New South Wales right now. It will save a significant amount of water and return it to the environment. We hear a lot from South Australia about these things. South Australia's contribution to 450 gigalitres is negligible. The 450 gigalitres that we hear a lot about, and the work on efficiency measures, are all designed to achieve what are called "schedule 5 outcomes" in the Basin Plan. Those are largely environmental outcomes designed to benefit rivers in South Australia.

We simply will not achieve those outcomes by, for instance, making a large water saving around Dubbo, because only 7 per cent of that water ever gets down the Darling River, and it will not help to achieve the schedule 5 outcomes. In talking about these issues, it would be sensible for governments not to get fixated, as the media often does, on the number of gigalitres in the Basin Plan. They should return to the outcomes that we are trying to achieve from the Basin Plan. Where are the wetlands we are trying to keep alive? They are not all in South Australia. They are not all at the mouth of the Murray. Many of them are in Victoria and New South Wales. We need to look at how we achieve the outcomes for those areas of our environment and river system.

If we ended up with 3,200 gigalitres of additional water in the river—remembering that we have already taken out of the system one in five litres which used to be available for irrigation to achieve what are already some positive environmental outcomes, which needs to be acknowledged—we would not necessarily have more native fish, because we need water coming out at the right temperature. We need to make sure that there are not barriers to native fish passage. There is a range of complementary measures. If we want clear water, we have to make sure that we do not have feral pigs hacking up every single catchment across the State. There are a lot of complex issues in this matter. While I have a lot of sympathy for the aim of the member for Murray of ensuring that we do not get buybacks, I think we need to address it in a much more holistic way over time.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:09):** I welcome this opportunity to speak on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. At the outset, I refer to previous speakers' contributions to debate. The member for Cootamundra spoke at the beginning about wanting to be clear. I think I speak for every member in this Chamber when I say that we all seek to drive positive environmental outcomes when it comes to the Murray-Darling Basin. We recognise the fragile ecosystem that is the Murray-Darling Basin. In my inaugural speech, I spoke about the need to drive positive environmental outcomes, and it is my belief we can do that while at the same time safeguarding our communities and safeguarding production. I also recognise comments around the stewardship of primary producers, their feelings and their actions towards land and water they are protecting and take care of.

I acknowledge the member for Monaro, who spoke of the Commonwealth seeking time to complete actions required to follow up the 2,750 gigalitres and the further 450 gigalitres. I recognise that has been a challenge as well. The member referred to the actions of the previous Government. Over the past four years it has been my experience from working with communities on these projects that they were very much traumatised by drought, as well as by COVID. But at the heart of this debate—which I think is lived experience for the member for Murray

and both of our communities—is the impact of unfettered buybacks, to which the member for Cootamundra referred, on our communities; it is the uncertainty that that contributes to communities.

The bill sets out to give an assurance to communities that there are safeguards and that the State of New South Wales will work with and safeguard our communities against further traumas associated with the completion of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We speak of the traumas of the drought, but I know the member for Murray will be very much aware from her lived experience that it goes back well before the drought. It goes back to the early days of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the traumas that all of our communities along the Murray-Darling Basin have experienced, particularly around the uncertainties associated with those unfettered buybacks.

The recent announcement by the Federal water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan places the matter of water buybacks squarely before us. In the face of looming and fragile deadlines, the Federal Government has put together a deal to keep Australia's \$13 billion Murray-Darling Basin Plan functioning. It is not without controversy. Key points include allowing widescale resumption of Commonwealth buybacks of irrigation licences to return 450 gigalitres of water to the environment; extending the June 2024 deadline for recovery of the 450 gigalitres target to December 2027; and pushing out deadlines for the members to complete planned or new major infrastructure and water saving projects, with an extension from June 2024 to December 2026. The parties to the plan will be moving ahead—minus Victoria—with the revised road map. In negotiating this new phase, and in return for letting New South Wales off the hook for delivery of its infrastructure commitments, the Government is changing this State's long-held position of opposition to water buybacks.

The Coalition has been opposed to widescale buybacks because they have the impact of reducing the amount of water available for farming. This leads to environmental damage of land devoted to food production with ongoing financial harm to local economies of regional communities. It is not just economic harm but social harm as well. The political landscape has shifted across Australia since 2018 when basin water Ministers reached agreement that they would not use water buybacks as a tool to satisfy the required 450-gigalitre environmental water-saving target, recognising the economic and social harm that would result. Not long before the Federal Government announcement, the New South Wales Premier confirmed he did not want to see water buybacks used for water recovery. Here we are 11 years into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

I now turn to speak briefly to the bill itself. Schedule 1 amends the Water Management Act 2000 by inserting after section 71Z new section 71ZA. Subsection (1) reads:

- (1) This section applies to a transfer of an access licence to—
  - (a) the Commonwealth or the State, or
  - (b) a Minister, public servant, agent, public authority, agency or subsidiary of the Commonwealth or the State.

Subsection (2) places the onus on the Minister to not register a transfer to which new section 71ZA applies in the Access Register unless—

- (a) an assessment has been undertaken that demonstrates the transfer causes neutral or positive socio-economic impacts and neutral or positive environmental impacts in the relevant area, and
- (b) a report on the assessment has been published on a publicly available website.

In so doing, the bill seeks to introduce a new test and a corresponding definition for assessing socio-economic impacts of the proposed transfer. The Minister must have regard to seven factors:

- (a) production output levels,
- (b) employment levels and diversity,
- (c) individual and business incomes,
- (d) costs of carrying on businesses,
- (e) changes to working conditions, including hours worked and health and safety conditions,
- (f) psychological wellbeing levels, including in relation to stress, happiness, security, family harmony and the ability to undertake leisure activities,
- (g) access to, and the level of provision of, social services.

As a regional member, I have a strong understanding from rural communities—and I know the member for Murray would have as well—that their wellbeing is frequently stretched beyond normal endurance. Our State and nation look to these primary producers to continue their essential work under conditions of terrible drought, bushfire, flood and tempest. Our communities have already given so much when it comes to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. There is a cost to every element of improving management of the basin while supporting farmers and their communities and endeavouring to provide improved environmental management and outcomes.

The Water for the Environment Special Account [WESA] funds the recovery of environmental water in the Murray-Darling Basin. Established with \$1.775 billion to be spent over the initial 10 years from July 2014 to June 2024, its aim was to increase the volume of the basin water resources made available for environmental use by 450 gigalitres, while also easing or maybe removing constraints to deliver the environmental water. There have been two reviews of the WESA strategy, the second of which was provided to the former Minister for Resources and Water on 20 December 2021 and tabled in the Federal Parliament on 2 August 2022. The review nailed the cost uncertainties. It noted:

- **Putting aside program and timing limitations, the estimated cost to recover the full 450 GL through efficiency measures is between \$3.4 billion and \$10.8 billion.**

Today's *The Border Mail* carries the stories of distressed farmers. Bungowannah farmer Andrew Watson says the revised plan would mean disaster for irrigators:

If we keep going down this path, we'll have to import all our food from overseas because we're discouraging people to grow food and fibre ...

Buybacks just don't work – they wreck communities.

No matter what compensation you pay, once you take the water away, you take away the only avenue farmers have for production and it just doesn't work.

Earlier this month the member for Murray asked the Premier in question time about water buybacks. [*Extension of time*]

At that point the Premier said, "We do not want buybacks used for water recovery." Today in this House I heard the member for Monaro repeat that. I take that on good faith. At the same time, members of my community raise concerns with me. They see uncertainty. They hear the words of the Government but they question it. They say, "Is this not a Government that is being like Pontius Pilate—washing its hands and letting the Commonwealth move ahead with unfettered buybacks?" At the end of the day our communities seek certainty, and the bill provides that.

Water buybacks are an unwelcome strategy based on looking for a quick fix to problems of infrastructure, process and politics. The member for Monaro spoke about connectivity, and across the system we can look to Menindee to see how important it is to get that connectivity—to get fishways and passages installed to help drive positive environmental outcomes. That will not be achieved through buybacks. The legacy of buybacks will be damaged farms, distress to those who work the land, water price gouging in times of drought, higher prices that we will all pay for our food, and cost-of-living increases. In the end, those additional buybacks come with no guarantee of better environmental outcomes for our precious river systems.

The Labor Government has indicated that it does not support the bill. The member for Keira spoke about taking meaningful action. He said that the bill has unintended constitutional and legal impacts and further complicates water licences. I call on the Government to provide assurance beyond simple words. Government members should give evidence to the communities of their preparedness to take action against buybacks. If members opposite do not support this bill, they should put forward their own legislation that will provide the necessary safeguards and certainty that our communities deserve. I support the bill.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:21):** I support the Government's position on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. Nothing about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is ever without contestation, but I understand what the member for Murray is trying to do and why she wants to do it. I put on record that I acknowledge the good work that the member for Murray has done in this area, and she comes to it with a good heart and a good mind. But if it was easy, it would have been done.

I have also served in the Federal Parliament, so I had a little bit to do with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, not that I was actively embedded or involved in it. I watched all its incarnations, even in 2004 when the National Water Initiative was first struck. That became Australia's blueprint for national water reform. State and Territory governments are primarily responsible for managing water within their own areas and jurisdictions, but there was agreement between the Federal Government and the States and Territories that the Federal Government would provide national coordination and leadership. That would drive the policy settings and the legal settings, and it was all about managing water resources sustainably.

We often call Australia the driest continent on earth. Antarctica is actually the driest continent, but ours is the driest inhabited continent. We have limited fresh water resources, and two-thirds of our continent is classified as arid or semi-arid. My electorate has the highest rainfall in New South Wales, so it is sometimes hard to imagine that it is such a dry continent. That is why the Federal Government takes the lead on water policy and the States and Territories agreed that that would happen, but not without contestation, because there is always contestation around water, even within that framework of agreement.

I wish I could say that the bill would bring certainty on that ongoing issue but, from my own research, I cannot see that it will. In my mind it gives rise to some issues around constitutional validity, and I hope that that will be looked at. The way I see it—and it is not the intention of the mover, the member for Murray—the bill would significantly slow down or stall New South Wales water users from voluntarily selling their water access licences to the Commonwealth for environmental water recovery under the Basin Plan or for other purposes. I am sure that the member for Murray will talk to that in her speech in reply, but that is how I assess it. I also understand the concern of the member for Murray about the socio-economic impacts of the recovery of the 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water under the Basin Plan. In essence, a lot of that has been at the heart of the contestation that has gone on for a long time under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

I also see a few other issues arising and will give expression to why the New South Wales Government is opposing the bill. On my reading and the Government's reading, it is contrary to the Commonwealth policy underpinning the water-trading rules in the Basin Plan. That may give rise to a potential constitutional debate. That could be a likely scenario, given the contestation that has gone on for years and the history of this matter. It could hinder the Basin Plan implementation and the delivery of some New South Wales commitments under the plan. It could also impose regulatory burdens, and a lot of regulatory burdens already exist in the plan. As members have already heard, it would apply indiscriminately across New South Wales. It would remove some options and flexibility from agricultural and water-dependent businesses, and it could lead to a forced reduction in water allocations in New South Wales as a result of Commonwealth legislation if the water recovery cannot be completed.

The New South Wales Government supports the Commonwealth Government's commitment to deliver the Basin Plan in full. Within its life, it has had quite a few stops and starts, pulling this way and that. I have seen the emotion around it, because water is our precious resource and we need it for households and agriculture. We need to be able to divvy it up in a way that is fully productive for agriculture and enough for households and other needs. States and Territories, including New South Wales, still need to do a lot around purified recycled water. We have not done enough around that. We should also look at all the options to reduce water use. I have visited various farms around New South Wales in my parliamentary and public life. I have looked at how some of the cotton and rice-growing areas minimise water use. In my electorate there are rice growers that use just a little water. I know there is that commitment. We all have a commitment to reduce the amount of water we use in households and in every other area of production.

Quite a bit has been said in the Chamber about buybacks and New South Wales' position on them. New South Wales does not fully support buybacks but, if the Commonwealth chooses to pursue them, it is critical that they are done strategically, are evidence based and represent value for money when compared with alternative approaches; that any resulting socio-economic impacts are factored into the program design; and that safeguards are provided. As I have already stated, the socio-economic impacts are the fault line in that plan as I see it. It is important to have that funding and that flexibility. With those comments, I support the Government's position.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:30):** It fills me with dread to speak today in debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023, knowing that the Commonwealth has advised that to meet water recovery targets all options are on the table and it will proceed down the path of buybacks. It is devastating to regional communities up and down the river systems from the Queensland border to the Victorian border. The previous Coalition Government made it very clear that we opposed, and would continue to oppose, the non-strategic buyback of water because of the detrimental social and economic impact that it can have on regional communities.

The previous Coalition Government consistently advocated for a balanced approach to water recovery through a combination of infrastructure improvements, environmental works and rules reviews. Whilst water buybacks may be the cheapest short-term way of recovering water for the environment, the negative long-term social and economic impacts of water buybacks on regional communities can be, and are, significant. The NSW Irrigators' Council and stakeholders and local government associations up and down the river system have made it abundantly clear that buybacks will decimate their communities. There will be a loss of jobs and a loss of agricultural production. Businesses will no longer be able to support themselves on the back of those losses.

The previous Coalition Government committed to delivering the Basin Plan in a way that protected communities from negative social and economic impacts. In opposition, we remain firmly committed to maintaining the current socio-economic criteria for assessing projects that contribute to the 450-gigalitre target. That was our position throughout government. We took it to the most recent meeting of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, chaired by the current Federal environment and water Minister, where we put a suite of options on the table.

It was very clear the targets that were set in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan were not going to be achieved, given the economic and climatic conditions that had prevailed over previous years. How on earth can someone

clear constraints in a river system when the river is flooded? How on earth can they fix infrastructure like weirs or achieve sustainable diversion limits in times of drought, when there is only a trickle of water down the Murray-Darling Basin? Work had to be suspended when it was physically unable to be done. But the work that had been done by the previous New South Wales Government maintained, in the worst drought, water in the Barwon-Darling and into the Murray. So South Australia got its precious water from the political deal that was done with the Federal Government.

The previous Coalition Government recognised that new Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects were needed to address the shortfall between water savings that were projected and those that were realised when projects were completed. New South Wales had a solid plan going forward to achieve those targets and needed more time and flexibility to deliver that plan. Isn't it ironic that, now there is a Labor government in New South Wales, the Federal Labor Government has agreed to more time and flexibility, and has asked for a review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan? That is exactly what Victoria and New South Wales asked for at the last ministerial council held in Sydney. The exact things that we called for are now occurring.

The landscape has changed politically and now it suits the Federal Labor Government to go down the path of decimating our communities—and still there is no support from the New South Wales Labor Government in relation to opposing buybacks. It is sitting on the fence and saying, "Oh well, look, you know, we may or may not. It's got nothing to do with the funding." We heard the Premier in question time today; he was wishy-washy. The Government should say no to buybacks. It is very clear. The previous Coalition Government looked at enhanced scoring methodology that more accurately recognised the full environmental benefits of the projects that were rolling out. For example, in rescoping the Menindee Lakes project and the Yanco Creek offtake project, the Better Baaka and Better Bidgee programs identified new projects that delivered stronger Basin Plan outcomes that were not to the detriment of our communities. Irrigation organisations are doing fantastic work. Someone can order water upstream and get it delivered on time. Every drop counts. Efficiency measures have been put in place. Recognising the efficiency of water delivery is so critical. The previous Coalition Government had a very strong plan going forward.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Time for consideration of general business orders of the day for bills has elapsed. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Motions*

#### **LIONS CLUBS**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (14:31):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the wonderful work Lions clubs do in providing valuable services to their local communities.
- (2) Expresses its appreciation to the Blacktown City Lions Club for many hours of fundraising to provide community building projects such as access seating and the Dharug book collection.
- (3) Thanks all members and volunteers of Lions clubs for their selfless dedication to volunteering and making a positive change in our society.

It is a great honour to have my very first notice of motion actually called on for debate, after about seven years of being in Parliament. Lions clubs are such important organisations that make a real difference to our society. Lions Australia celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary last year and is going strong. Last year Lions Australia raised \$28 million through community fundraising, donated two million hours of community support and invested millions of dollars into environmental projects. It funded the development of a cervical cancer vaccine and helped fund the bionic ear. It also invests about \$5 million per year in developing young leaders. Lions clubs across our communities create a more liveable society and contribute to supporting people in need. They live by the code "Where there is a need, there is a Lion."

Many MPs today will talk about their wonderful Lions club, so I will firstly focus on the Blacktown City Lions Club. I am a proud member of that club and also a member of the club in Riverstone—they have two MPs in that club, the member for Riverstone and me. Blacktown City Lions Club has been ably led over the past two years by Rachael and Rebel Hanlon, who have done amazing work with their great team. They have worked on community building projects that include purchasing wheelchair-accessible seating and tables to allow people in wheelchairs to sit in comfort on council grounds. At the moment they are raising money for an inclusive special-needs wheelchair merry-go-round so that all children can play together. It is designed with one wheelchair bay and one standing bay side by side so that the wheelchair user can be assisted. They have raised money and purchased books written in Dharug, the local Aboriginal language of the Blacktown area, for the Blacktown library collection. They have also bought table tennis tables, one for outside my office and one for the Blacktown pool. They support the model railway at Nurragingy Reserve.



Recently, the Blacktown City Lions Club held a men's health forum in conjunction with the Apex Club to help promote health and wellbeing awareness. Too often men do not see doctors when required. Or they may be suffering from mental health issues, which can lead to suicide. This can be better addressed by men just reaching out to each other. Mike Shervington was the guest speaker, and there were other presenters. The forum was supported by Club Blacktown, Foundo Blue, Foundation House and the CFMEU. It is another example of Lions clubs bringing different organisations together to support each other.

The club's food collections at Woolworths stores net approximately seven trolley loads of food and hygiene products each fortnight, which are used to support various community groups and food pantries, including the North West Neighbourhood Centre and community care in Seven Hills. They collect glasses at Mount Druitt Hospital, and they upgraded the children's garden. They have funded and supported the Plumpton Rural Fire Service. They also support Doonside Festival and the Blacktown City Show, which turns 100 next year. They sponsored the starting up of the new Schofield Tallawong Lions Club; their motto is "Caring is sharing". Lions members conduct local aged-care facility visits, which include spending an hour talking, listening and sharing. They have also donated knee rugs, scarves and beanies. They have organised Christmas toy appeals and supported the Liverpool Plains Shire Council with the Healthy Harold program in Quirindi.

Lions Rachael and Rebel Hanlon have a down-to-earth attitude and demeanour that endears them to everyone. This has resulted in a year-on-year increase in membership. Their leadership skills empower the Lions team to achieve both collective and individual goals. They undertake all activities with the utmost professionalism and integrity that earn them high regard amongst their peers as community leaders. Blacktown City is blessed to have five other Lions clubs: the Blacktown Ponds Lions Club, Kings Langley Lions Club, Schofields Tallawong Lions Club, Riverstone Lions Club and Mount Druitt Lions Club. They have all done great work in the local area.

Paul and Rissa McInnes have coordinated the Blacktown Ponds Lions Club for many years, including organising toy donations and food drives. They purchased the local school bus and helped rebuild the palliative care gardens at Mount Druitt. The Kings Langley Lions Club is coordinated by John Fernandes and Roland De Leon. They and their team have been doing great work for many years, including coordinating the Kings Langley Festival and Clean Up Australia Day. They have also organised donations to the Turkey earthquake appeal.

The third paragraph of the motion calls on this House to thank all members and volunteers of Lions clubs for their selfless dedication to volunteering and making a positive change in our society. Whether it is selling raffle tickets or cooking sausages to raise money, Lions clubs across New South Wales, Australia and the world support local communities. Lions clubs add vitality, build wonderful community connections and create strong community spirit that makes a real difference to the social cohesion of our local area and areas across the world. I thank the Parliament for supporting the motion.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (14:39):** I speak on the motion brought to the House by the member for Blacktown. I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this wonderful motion and supporting Lions clubs. It is great of him to do so. It is important to recognise the important contribution made by Lions clubs and, indeed, the contribution made to our communities by volunteers in general. There are a number of wonderful, hardworking Lions clubs in my electorates, and members of those clubs volunteer in all sorts of groups. There is the Baulkham Hills Lions Club, for instance. Recently, one of the members of the Baulkham Hills Lions Club, Pratibha Bhanishali, who the member for Blacktown is probably aware of—I see that the member is nodding, so he obviously knows her—made some observations on the club's Facebook page. She said, "We have great community projects lined up", and they have many community projects.

I note that the Baulkham Hills Lions Club recently sent a number of people to the Hills Winter Sleep Out at Bella Vista Farm. I know that because I was there and spent the night at Bella Vista Farm in the cold. Berenice and Stuart from the Baulkham Hills Lions Club registered, and their family spent the night at the Hills Winter Sleep Out. Like many Lions clubs these days, the Baulkham Hills Lions Club also raises funds at Bunnings. There are many pictures of Lions clubs at Bunnings on their Facebook pages. The West Pennant Hills-Cherrybrook Lions Club is another great Lions club in my local area. It has served the local community for 60 years. Bearing in mind that Lions clubs started about 75 years ago, it must be one of the oldest Lions clubs. It was chartered in 1964, and some of those charter members from 60 years ago are still active in the club. The club supports flood relief and Anzac Day, raises funds through barbecues at Bunnings and supports all sorts of communities.

The Castle Hill Lions Club is another Lions club in my electorate. It has served the local community for 50 years and was chartered in 1971. Projects of the Castle Hill Lions Club include disaster relief; Youth of the Year; Wrap With Love, which is where they create and send rugs and quilts to people in Australia and around the world; TAD, which is technical aid for the disabled; and many other projects. We can observe the inspirational and wonderful work of Lions clubs by looking at comments made by members in this House. On 16 February 2016, the member for Hornsby encouraged all members to get behind their local clubs and support

fundraising. I thank the member for Blacktown for listening to the member for Hornsby and now supporting Lions clubs.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** I was a member a bit before 2016.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** It has taken you seven years, but you are now doing it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Order! The member for Castle Hill will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** In 2016 the then member for Myall Lakes, the late Stephen Bromhead, spoke about Lions clubs. The then member for Castle Hill, Mr Ray Williams, spoke in response and made observations regarding Lions clubs. Some of those observations are relevant today. He said:

As a card-carrying member of the Kellyville Lions Club for the past 15 years, I commend the member for Myall Lakes for bringing this issue to the House on behalf of the Lions Club of Taree ... I know, as would the member and, indeed, all members of this House, that the Government provides to electorates almost \$40 million in funding through the Community Building Partnership program each and every year.

He made reference to the then Community Building Partnership grants, specifically with respect to Lions clubs. I hope that the member for Blacktown comments on the Community Building Partnership, which is sometimes used by Lions clubs, in his response. I hope that the Government continues to support the Community Building Partnership.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Don't worry; I guarantee it.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** He is guaranteeing it. More recently, the member for Hornsby spoke about the Berowra Lions Club on 13 October 2020. He spoke about its amazing community spirit of many years. That club commenced in the 1970s. The member for Cootamundra spoke in this House on 29 June 2023 and congratulated the West Wyalong Lions Club on its remarkable achievements in also reaching 60 years. Lions clubs are all over the place. The member for Davidson, who is present in the Chamber—and I thank the member for Davidson; he is an excellent member—spoke about the Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai and its changeover on 27 June 2023. That club was established in 1954. What a great club.

The member for Kiama is another great member, and he is in the Chamber as well. He spoke about the Gerringong changeover that occurred on 6 July 2023. More recently, I was present in the House last night when the member for Hornsby again spoke about the Berowra Lions Club and how it undertook a major rebuild, repair and restoration of a historic building in the area. All members have wonderful Lions clubs within their electorates. We need to get behind them and support them. We need to support them for our community. Let us hope that the Government gets behind the Community Building Partnership to support Lions clubs in doing what they do.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:45):** I speak in favour of the motion. I thank the member for Blacktown for allowing members of this House to highlight the fantastic achievements of Lions clubs not only in Blacktown but across New South Wales. The Lions' motto is, "Where there is a need, there is always a Lion." There is also a Lioness. It is certainly on display in the electorate of Shellharbour. All three of the wonderful clubs across the Shellharbour electorate provide valuable services throughout the local community and raise much-needed funds for those in need. Some recent achievements from Lions clubs in the Shellharbour electorate include a \$500 donation from Dapto Lions Club to the Illawarra branch of the RSPCA; \$500 tertiary scholarships from Shellharbour Lions Club for students at Lake Illawarra High School and Warilla High School; and a donation of eight iPads from Oak Flats Lions Club to the foreshore centre at Warilla High School. Those are just a few of the achievements of the amazing Lions clubs in the Shellharbour electorate.

Lions clubs continue to raise money to keep those amazing donations rolling. Next time that any member is in the Illawarra—except for the member for Kiama—I recommend a trip to 59A Central Avenue in Oak Flats, where they will find the Oak Flats Lions Club bookshop. It is a worthwhile trip. There are bargains aplenty. One can pick up a book or a puzzle for just \$3 or a magazine for 50¢ at the Oak Flats Lions Club bookshop. That is a good deal. After spending up a storm at the bookshop, one may want to venture to the Shellharbour Bunnings, where they may be lucky enough to arrive on a day where the Oak Flats Lions Club is hosting a fundraising barbecue. The Oak Flats Lions Club is known to make the best sausage sandwiches in the Illawarra. The fundraising efforts of the Oak Flats Lions Club are truly amazing. From 2018 until recently, president Steven Sherwood, secretary Gary Flint and treasurer Robyn Mills have led an amazing group of volunteers, raising \$126,500 for charitable causes, including disadvantaged youth programs, natural disaster relief, cancer research, hospital equipment, specialist nurse training and a variety of local community causes. That is a pretty good track record.

The board recently changed leadership, with president Don Briggs and secretary Ken Magnus now taking the lead at the Oak Flats Lions Club. I wish Don and Ken all the best in their new roles. I thank all Oak Flats Lions

Club members for their amazing work, including Bede Cummins, Deborah Dalmer, Anne Howley, George Mills, Jim Mullany, Lynne Nolan, Christine Reed, Larry Rees, George Richards, Peter Robinson and, last but not least, Mick Moon. Lions clubs not only support those in need but also add to the social wellbeing of the community by allowing people to give back to their communities. Lions is a win-win for all involved, and I encourage those who can to volunteer, make a purchase from their bookstore or sausage sizzle or make a donation. I thank all Lions clubs not just in the Shellharbour electorate but across the Illawarra and New South Wales.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:49):** I acknowledge the member for Blacktown for moving this motion, which acknowledges the outstanding work our Lions clubs do across New South Wales. The motto of "Where there's a need, there's a Lion or a Lioness" is so apt. I have a fearsome Lioness on the Central Coast. I am sure the member for Swansea is well aware of Margaret Pearce and her incredible work as a Lioness for the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford Centennial, which is a wonderful organisation. I had the pleasure of meeting club members in 2015, when I was first elected, about the Elsie's Retreat project and the delivery of dedicated palliative care services to the Central Coast. At that time community palliative services on the Central Coast were outstanding, but there was a need for our growing population to have dedicated in-patient palliative care services.

Through the club I was proud to partner and work with the team from Elsie's Retreat. For a dedicated palliative care unit at Gosford Hospital almost 15,000 signatures were obtained on petitions—that was before we had ePetitions—and former health Minister Brad Hazzard, who was under Margaret's spell from the minute they met, realised that it was the right thing to do. I thank the former Minister for committing millions of dollars to the local health district to deliver a palliative care unit for Gosford Hospital, colloquially known as Elsie's Retreat. I highlight that the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford raised in excess of \$400,000 to support the unit—a truly incredible effort. I thank Lions Clubs International for matching that amount dollar for dollar. Gosford Hospital now has an incredible palliative care unit, fitted out like a home, where families are supported. It is beautiful.

The next project for Margaret, who is never one to slow down, was an Elsie's Retreat for Wyong Hospital. I had the pleasure of introducing the former regional health Minister, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, to the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford. The club members put their case to her for a dedicated palliative care unit at Wyong Hospital and funding of \$13.6 million was secured from the former Liberal-Nationals Government for the project, which has been great. The constituents of the member for Swansea and my constituents will benefit from this. It is about Lions clubs working together to help our communities. Where there is a need, there is a Lion or a fearsome Lioness.

But the Elsie's Retreat project does not stop there. The Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford is now looking to secure funding to provide scholarships in palliative care for clinicians and nurses so that the project will always have a life. In addition to providing hand-knitted blankets for families to keep when their loved ones have passed, as part of the Elsie's Retreat project, there has been continual engagement and growth in the project. That will deliver forever for our community. Margaret and the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford can be very proud. This legacy will be there long after we have all gone. The club works with so many other community groups. I was proud to attend the first Elsie's Retreat walk of remembrance at Mingara to highlight palliative care. The Elsie's Retreat project, thanks to the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford Centennial, has done an amazing job. Also, I pay tribute to the late member for Myall Lakes. As the former chairperson of the Parliamentary Lions Club, he did an outstanding job of representing Lions in this place. That will never be forgotten.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (14:53):** I contribute to debate and support the fabulous motion of the member for Blacktown. The first Lions Club was formed in Australia at Lismore in 1947. Since that time Lions Australia has grown to be Australia's largest service club organisation, with a strong history in community service and commitment to improving the lives of others. Indeed, in my local area we have a number of very active Lions clubs. When we think of Lions clubs, we automatically think of the chocolate wheel at the local shops or the must-have Christmas cakes or puddings. It just would not be Christmas without a Lions tree. However, their volunteer work is so much more. It literally changes lives.

Today I speak first about my local Lions club, the Lions Club of Emu Plains. In September last year, the Lions celebrated their seventy-fifth anniversary in Australia. We celebrated that milestone with the Emu Plains, Cambridge Park, Penrith, Richmond, Mount Druitt and Sydney Nepal Himalaya Lions clubs by holding a community barbecue in Penrith. The Lions Club of Emu Plains is involved with many community fundraising activities for local charities—for example, the provision of wheelchairs for children, Nepean Cancer Care Centre, the Westfield Penrith chocolate wheel, Bunnings barbecues, Christmas tree sales, Ronald McDonald House, WestCare and the Salvation Army appeals. Last Christmas they distributed toys for kids in Nepean Hospital. The club also participated in food trolley drops for the Salvation Army—and collected an outstanding 17 trolleys of food.

I am proud to have a long involvement with the club, largely through the Lions Youth of the Year program. I applaud the work it does with our 15- to 19-year-old students nearing the end of their school studies by

acknowledging all-round skills in areas such as academic achievement, sport, cultural involvement, community service and public speaking. That program also encourages and fosters leadership skills in our local young people. On Thursday 20 April it was my pleasure to attend the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Emu Plains Lions Club. I have previously spoken in this place about that event. The celebration was not centred on the club itself; it was all about giving. Indeed, the Lions Club of Emu Plains distributed \$18,000 to many local charities on the night.

The Lions Club of Emu Plains has a dedicated team: president Cheryl Devine, who is only the second woman to fill the club's top role in its 35-year history; vice-president Alan Cooper; treasurer Jim Devine; membership manager Steven Wallace; and secretary Sue Hunt, who has completed 21 years of service and has just been acknowledged by Penrith City Council with a Making a Difference community service award for her work with Lions, disability charity Sailability and Ronald McDonald House. A number of other members have given substantial service: John Choma, a charter and life member with 49 years of service; Bob Baines, 33 years of service; Andy Heaton, 26 years of service; and Ian West, 23 years of service. One of our newer Lions is Emily Smith, an inspirational young female volunteer and an advocate for youth mental health support.

I shout out to the Lions Club of Cambridge Park, where community and compassion come together. One of its current projects is Australian Lions Hearing Dogs, which raises funds to supply a set of furry ears to those people suffering from hearing loss. Under the Lions Eye Health Program, partnering with the Centre for Eye Health, a team of screeners visit early learning centres or community groups to carry out vision screening. The Lions Club's Letters to Santa project is about visiting early learning centres in the area and giving children the opportunity to write letters to Santa Claus. I am sure that every member in this place has a positive story about the worthwhile work undertaken by their local Lions clubs. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:57):** I start by thanking the very hardworking member for Blacktown for introducing this motion. All members want to celebrate the contributions made by their Lions clubs. It is hard to believe that in 1917 a business leader by the name of Melvin Jones asked himself one simple question: What could happen if people used their talents and their abilities to the betterment of their community? Who would have thought we would have seen Lions grow to the largest service organisation anywhere in the world—46,000 clubs and more than 1.4 million members in 200 countries around the world? Five of those clubs happen to be in my electorate of Kiama: the Lions clubs of Kiama, Gerringong, Shoalhaven Heads, Bomaderry-Nowra and Kangaroo Valley.

It does not matter whether it is the incredible hard work by people such as Brian Arbury of the Gerringong Lions, who helped establish the Gerringong Men's Shed, where men are involved in Return and Earn, collecting literally hundreds of thousands of containers, which returns a benefit to the community and the environment; or the work of people such as Robyn Flack at Shoalhaven Heads, who has dedicated herself to improving amenities in the Shoalhaven Heads community; or the youth and community service work that Lions do in so many of our organisations, through works such as the Lions Youth of the Year. All of those services leave indelible and incredible marks on our community.

Members have referred to the contributions that Lions make to individuals, and I must share a personal story in this place. Lions have certainly left an indelible impact on me. One of the key focuses of Lions for several years has been Save Sight. As members would be aware, I have a visual impairment. I am classified as legally blind. Growing up I needed a piece of equipment to enlarge my textbooks to help with my studies, which my parents simply could not afford. Back in the '80s, that piece of equipment was worth \$5,000. It was through an approach to my local Lions club that my mum was able to secure not just the funding but also the equipment that allowed me to do my schoolwork, as well as all the other things I have done in life. I have no doubt that without that contribution, none of the things I went on to achieve would have been possible. I am a product of what Lions can achieve, and there are thousands of similar stories around the world. Because of their generosity of spirit, their kindness, their care, their incredible hard work and their transformative commitment to helping others—encapsulated in the Lions motto "We serve"—people have been able to realise their abilities.

I acknowledge other Lions in my community, like Peter Jeffrey, who I know loves doing work with his Lions club in Gerringong, including everything from mowing the lawns around the Gerringong community to some of the other projects I mentioned earlier. I acknowledge long-serving Lions in my community like Lorraine Mairinger, who has been a champion of women's involvement in charitable organisations and giving back to the community. There are so many people who have done so much with Lions. Another is Bruce Murphy, who has recently again taken on the presidency of the now combined Bomaderry-Nowra Lions Club. One of the big challenges for Lions, like any service organisation, is maintenance and encouragement of membership. All of us love and support our Lions clubs, and as members of Parliament we can promote the great achievements of Lions and encourage more people to join.

I join with the member for Terrigal in acknowledging the incredible contribution of a great man, the late Stephen Bromhead. He was so passionate about Lions. Members that served with him remember everything from

the level nine barbecues to his organisation of major events in the Strangers' dining room that, over the years, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity. I am sure all of us can come together in support and celebration of our community groups, but particularly in support of an organisation that started with a humble vision and has done so much for so many not just in New South Wales but right around the world.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:01):** By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Blacktown highlighting the remarkable, invaluable work carried out by Lions clubs in providing essential services to our local communities. Lions clubs have long been beacons of hope and pillars of support, consistently demonstrating their unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. Founded in 1945 in Lismore—and I acknowledge the member for Lismore is here—Lions Clubs Australia celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary in September 2022. Since its founding, Lions Clubs Australia has grown to be Australia's largest service club organisation. Lions clubs in Australia and Papua New Guinea are involved in establishing and managing a range of national projects and fundraisers. Last year alone, they raised over \$28 million through community fundraising for medical research, health care, disability care for both adults and children, emergency response organisations, and other community assistance schemes.

At the heart of its mission lies a simple yet profound motto, "We serve". This is not just a catchphrase; it represents the compassion, dedication and selflessness that defines those who choose to be a part of a Lions club. It is important that we recognise some of the accomplishments of Lions clubs and acknowledge the dedication of those who are part of a Lions club. Lions club members donate two million hours of community support each year. They have funded the development of a vaccine for cervical cancer and even helped to fund the bionic ear. One of the most admirable aspects of Lions clubs is their adaptability. Clubs identify the unique needs of their local communities and respond with tailor-made solutions. From providing healthcare services to supporting education and disaster relief, Lions clubs participate in a wide spectrum of initiatives that address the pressing concerns faced by communities around the globe.

Blacktown City Lions Club is no exception. I acknowledge Rebel and Rachael Hanlon, who have been pillars of the Blacktown City Lions Club over many years. The members of the Blacktown City Lions Club have dedicated many hours to providing their community with valuable resources. Their efforts include the installation of access seating at Nurragingy Reserve; the purchase of hearing testers for Mount Druitt Hospital; the clearing and replanting of the Mount Druitt Hospital palliative care garden; the supply and donation of food pantries and Christmas hampers to organisations such as the Women and Girls Health Centre, in partnership with Blacktown City Council; and the establishment of a reading collection with a yearly donation of material. It is important to recognise that the impact of Lions club efforts goes beyond the physical structures a club has helped to erect. The community building projects facilitated by Lions clubs become focal points for connection, growth and shared experiences. They provide spaces for people to gather, learn, celebrate and support one another, nurturing a sense of belonging that is vital for the wellbeing of any community.

I take this opportunity to show my appreciation to all those who volunteer their time to Lions clubs. Volunteering is integral to our communities. Whether it be one person helping another or an organisation helping a community, volunteering plays a crucial role in building stronger connections by fostering unity, addressing local needs, developing skills and contributing to the overall wellbeing of community members. Volunteering empowers individuals to actively participate in creating positive change and contributes to the collective growth and resilience of the community. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (15:06):** By leave: I make a brief contribution regarding my own Lions club, and I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this important motion before the House. I thank the member for Castle Hill for the honourable mention that he made of me a little earlier, which incited me to rush down to make a brief contribution. He recalled that, in a contribution I had previously delivered in the House, I mentioned that I had been a member of my beloved Kellyville Lions Club for 15 years. It must have been a while ago that I made that contribution, because I have now been a member for well over 20 years and have received my 20-year badge. I thank one of the currently serving Kellyville Lions, Wayne Kedward, for encouraging me in the year 2000 to join them.

The members of Kellyville Lions are a special group of people, as are, no doubt, the members of all Lions clubs across New South Wales, across the country and across the world. They play an integral role in our communities and, through their volunteering, fill voids that sometimes governments cannot. In 2018 Kellyville Lions took it upon themselves to contribute to the Buy a Bale initiative on behalf of struggling farmers in the bush during that horrific drought—a drought many Nationals members will attest to. They also decided to take busloads of their members to spend time in rural towns, contributing to the local economy and getting to know farming people. They then repaid those farmers with the opportunity to visit and stay with members in the city if they needed to do so. The economic support that the Lions provided for those families, and the support for the mental health struggles and anguish that so many of those farmers were going through at a horrific time during one of the

worst droughts we had ever seen in this country was just one of the roles the Kellyville Lions took on alongside everything they do in raising vital funds for needy organisations.

As a former Minister with responsibility for volunteering and disability services, I can say that Kellyville Lions have been responsible for raising funds for wheelchairs on behalf of people with disability, especially young children. They have made such a difference to the lives of those people. The Kellyville Lions Club regularly participates in a debating competition. It is a terrific way for schools to get involved by putting forward a student to participate in a debate. There is a question-and-answer period that runs through that. The competition is intensely fought out between the schools in our particular area. It is terrific to present the certificates to the winners once the debates are over. Nothing brings out more in young people than being put on the spot to talk about significant issues. They have raised topics from the Voice to Parliament to climate change and some other very important issues we face on a day-to-day basis. It is interesting to hear young people's views. That is just one of the roles that the Kellyville Lions Club plays, and I am sure there are many others that members have already raised. My support always goes out to great volunteers, and the Lions are just that.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:10):** By leave: I speak in support of the member for Blacktown's motion commending the Lions clubs and the Blacktown club in particular. As the member for Lismore, I am particularly proud to speak on the subject of Lions clubs because the city of Lismore is where Lions Australia began more than 75 years ago. Today there are more than 1,300 Lions clubs around Australia, with their remarkable record of community service and global action to support communities in need and improve the health and wellbeing of all. In the Lismore electorate there are seven Lions clubs: Lismore, Lismore City, Goonellabah-Wollongbar, Murwillumbah, Kyogle, Tenterfield and Bonalbo Upper Clarence.

Those clubs have faced some difficult years, from the bushfires to COVID and last year's devastating floods, but they have all kept going throughout. The range of services that those clubs provide reflects the diversity across my electorate. I have spoken in the past about the Tenterfield Lions' support for young people. The club had a voucher program to help families with the cost of winter school uniforms and warm clothes—something that is particularly important in the Tablelands area. The e-voucher system had a double benefit: supporting families but also supporting local businesses as the vouchers were spent in town.

The Murwillumbah Lions have long been a fixture at the local saleyards, running the kiosk sometimes up to three times a week. This was made more difficult after the kiosk was damaged in last year's floods, but they kept going. Like many Lions clubs, Murwillumbah has a focus on supporting opportunities for young people with the Lions International Youth Exchange program and donations to sporting clubs. Kyogle Lions Club has taken over the running of the Kyogle food pantry in recent years and has also played a huge role in flood support in Kyogle and across the northern region. The food pantry gave out \$10,000 in food vouchers, meals, cleaning supplies, petrol vouchers and portable gas stoves. It was supported in this by Ritchies IGA in Kyogle.

The Lions clubs have been supporting communities across Australia for just over 75 years. That support shines through in regular times, but especially so in times of disaster. Last year, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first Lions club meeting in Lismore, there was a gala dinner. The Lismore Lions hosted the event at Invercauld House. The mayor and I both attended, and we gave toasts and joined in the wonderful celebrations. The local Lions clubs are always there, day in and day out. They provided meals to flood-affected residents and volunteers all over the electorate. At the Browns Creek car park in Lismore, at the *Koori Mail* recovery hub, the effort continued for many months. Everyone was so pleased to be able to go there and get fed—to get their sausage sandwiches. There were others. They did a fantastic job. They actually fed everybody, whoever turned up, like tradies—I mean, absolutely everybody.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Politicians.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** Politicians! Yes, as the member for Tweed and the member for Clarence say.

**Mr Richie Williamson:** The odd Premier.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** The odd Premier or two, or Opposition leader—they fed everybody. There was also a combined effort to provide beds across the region with support from the Lions club in the Hunter Valley. Thank you to the Hunter Valley Lions. There were many others who were on deck to help. I take the opportunity to thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this motion to the House so I could commend all of the wonderful Lions clubs in the electorate of Lismore.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:14):** By leave: It is my great privilege to speak to this motion, moved by the fantastic member for Blacktown, about the Lions clubs and in particular the Blacktown City Lions Club. As the President of the NSW Parliamentary Lions Club, I note the members making contributions and I encourage each of them to join the NSW Parliamentary Lions Club. My association with the Lions goes back to the time I was a teenager. My mother was elected as President of the Riverstone and District Lions Club. However,

my association with the Blacktown City Lions Club began a bit over a year ago. Over that time, that club has contributed an extraordinary amount to the Riverstone community.

It all began with a phone call to social justice warrior Rebel Hanlon in the aftermath of the floods that devastated Riverstone. In April 2022 scores of homes and businesses were inundated and the community was in shock after experiencing the third major flood in two years. The normally robust residents were broken and needed support. The North West Business Chamber came together with North West Community Services and the Blacktown City Council to help our community get back on its feet by setting up a flood recovery shop in the Riverstone Village Shopping Centre. The flood shop was filled with household items generously donated by the wider community, everything from clothing and household items to furniture and food. But we needed cash donations too. When it comes to fundraising, there are few organisations better than the Lions.

I called Rebel and asked him about putting on a barbecue to help raise funds for those who were affected. Without hesitation, he agreed. He stopped what he was doing and went to get the sausages. The next morning, bright and early, the barbecue was fired up and everyone in the community was offered a free sausage sandwich. If they wanted to make a donation, they could, but there was no payment necessary. That morning we raised over \$3,000. The Lions fed families affected by the floods and gave them a place to gather, share stories and debrief. That was just the beginning. After that barbecue, Rebel, along with his partner and club president, Rachael, offered to set up a monthly food drive with all proceeds to go to the North West Community Services food pantry.

For context, despite the desperate and growing need for emergency support in my area, North West Community Services does not receive any funding to provide it. As a result, once a month the Blacktown City Lions Club turns up to Greenway Woolworths and asks shoppers to throw one extra item of non-perishable goods into the trolley, if they can afford it. To date, over 80 trolleys have been filled, representing over \$30,000 in donated grocery items. As a direct result of the efforts of the Blacktown City Lions Club, the lives of hundreds of families in my electorate have been made better. Just by standing in a local shopping centre and collecting for a local cause, the Lions help foster and maintain a sense of community in my continually growing electorate.

Of course my electorate is blessed to have more than the Blacktown City Lions Club. We have the Kings Langley Lions Club, the Blacktown Ponds Lions Club, the Schofields Tallawong Lions Club and the Riverstone and District Lions Club. Residents of the Riverstone electorate know they can trust the Lions. Riverstone is not the only trolley collection point for the Blacktown City Lions. They are regulars at Eastern Creek Quarter, collecting across communities in need in Blacktown. More broadly, the Blacktown City Lions Club has been serving the community for over 60 years. It is constantly involved in fundraising activities, food drives and community events like the Doonside Festival. The community spirit is not contained to fundraising alone. The club recently organised a men's health forum where guest speakers spoke on a range of topics related to mental and physical health in the community. Every week the club is involved in an activity of some kind. The dynamic duo of Rebel and Rachael Hanlon lead a group of engaged volunteers who should all be commended for the work they do.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:19):** By leave: I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this motion. It gives me great pleasure to speak on it. Before I acknowledge the work of the Lions clubs in my electorate, I make personal mention of the former member for Myall Lakes, Stephen Bromhead. Sadly, he passed away earlier this year. He was such a champion of Lions clubs, and his valedictory speech was one of the most courageous and inspiring events that I have witnessed in this Chamber. He embodied the spirit of Lions and so I think of him today.

There are three Lions clubs in the Wagga Wagga electorate. The Tumut Lions Club has been operating for more than 50 years. Recently, I was privileged to attend its annual changeover lunch and installation held at Club Tumut. The club has contributed to the community in a special way for all of those 50 years. I congratulate the new president, Bruce Brien, and the new members of the board, Anne Brien, Noel Armour, May Doon, Susan Franckiewicz, Albert Manning, Carol Manning, Susan Ready, Clayton Searl and Gilda Torino, who were present on the day. I congratulate Noel Armour on being awarded the Progressive Melvin Jones Fellowship, and I acknowledge Emma Peacock, who received the Lions Citizen of the Year award, and Anne Brien, who received the Lions Club Member of the Year award. I congratulate them all and thank them for what they do for the community.

I also attended the South Wagga Lions Club's fifty-third annual changeover dinner and installation. It is not because I keep getting invited to changeover dinners that I am speaking in favour of Lions clubs! They are everywhere when there is a charity event in our community. It is fantastic. They are manning the barbeques at all hours of the day and night, and always with a smile and a sense of service. I very much appreciated being invited to attend the South Wagga Lions Club changeover dinner. I congratulate the new president, Bob Smith, and thank the outgoing president, Michelle Henderson. I also acknowledge Di Smith, a long-serving executive of the club; Noeline Burns-Gee, who received the Neville Tucker Award; Michael Grellalis, who received the J.D. Richardson

Award; and Chris Leonard, who was awarded the Progressive Melvin Jones Fellowship. The club does a fantastic job of strengthening the community and assisting with local fundraising. It is always a privilege for me to meet up with its members. They have a wonderful sense of community purpose.

There is also the Lockhart Lions Club, led by president Bill Hampson, vice-president Max Day, secretary Lyn Hampson and treasurer Shirley Morgan. The club has been going for more than 20 years. It runs the recycling centre in Lockhart, which is a very successful enterprise that not only helps the environment but also provides much-needed funds for local events. I give a special shout-out to Shirley Morgan, who edits *The Verandah Post*. Of course, Lockhart is known as "the verandah town" and *The Verandah Post* is an important part of communication in that electorate. Lions clubs contribute to the fabric of our society in a very special way. I was privileged to join the NSW Parliamentary Lions this year. I acknowledge the work of the current president, the member for Riverstone, who spoke earlier. I also acknowledge the work that the member for Gosford has done over a number of years in supporting that organisation. Well done to the Lions. May they keep growing and roaring for the benefit of our community.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:22):** By leave: It is my great pleasure to contribute to this debate and to join members of this place in universal appreciation of Lions clubs. I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this motion to the House. It is a sign of the esteem in which Lions clubs are held and the incredible value of the work that they do in all of our communities that members from across the political spectrum, and the length and breadth of New South Wales, have come together to express their appreciation—albeit some in a more genuine manner that centres on the work of the clubs and their volunteers, rather than on scoring cheap partisan points.

I am proud that my community is served by both the Lions Club of Liverpool and the Wattle Grove Lions Club. My association with Wattle Grove Lions began in 2018 when I was approached by the then president, Christina McIntosh, to attend a trivia night to raise funds for the local Rural Fire Service. I was introduced to one of the few Lions clubs that is majority women. Contrary to some stereotypes, the club's board and its members were fresh, diverse and fun. Over the past few years, as a member of Wattle Grove Lions, I have participated in diverse projects—from a high tea and a casino night gala dinner to raise funds to develop a new women's shelter in south-west Sydney, to delivering food, clothing and other necessary items to the Liverpool Men's Centre, to a family fun run to raise awareness and funds for diabetes research.

Last year, as secretary of the Wattle Grove Lions Club, I was delighted to be part of the 201N2 District Lions 65th Convention, which we jointly hosted with the Ingleburn Lions Club. The convention was driven by the extraordinary efforts of Wattle Grove Lions Carol and Wayne Franshaw, Denise and Gary Feeney, and many others. The convention enabled us to showcase the many hidden gems of the Liverpool area to guests and Lions members from all over the district. Given the economic impact of COVID over the past few years, on south-west Sydney in particular, the importance of this exposure for our local businesses and retailers cannot be overstated.

Although many would know Lions clubs for their skill in cooking sausages for a cause—and I would love some stats on that—there is a huge amount of work we must also acknowledge. Lions Australia encourages organ donation, they have a proud history in medical research, they support the hearing dogs program and they encourage recycling and sustainability. All of this would not be possible without the time and effort of many volunteers, many of whom are forces to be reckoned with in their communities. They advocate and organise, coordinate, craft, persuade and do whatever else they can to ensure that needs within our communities are met. It must be said that Lions Australia prides itself on ensuring that 100 per cent of any funds raised go towards the projects it supports. All administrative costs are borne by members themselves.

A project close to my heart is the Thank Our Paramedics project, coordinated by the Wattle Grove Lions. During COVID it was found that many paramedics and frontline healthcare workers were suffering from a lack of self-care. The Lions banded together and worked with local businesses and other supporters to develop self-care packs for local paramedics at the Liverpool ambulance superstation and for frontline healthcare workers at the Macquarie Fields vaccination hub. The recipients of these self-care packs found them incredibly helpful in the circumstances and were touched by the support. I congratulate the incoming president, Debra Mowbray, and secretary, Carol Franshaw, of Wattle Grove Lions Club on their achievements. I look forward to the work that they will do within our community over the coming year. I thank Lions clubs members and volunteers from across the State, the country and internationally for what they do.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:27):** By leave: The common thing about the communities we represent is that they each have an abundance of amazing volunteers, and none more so than Lions volunteers. I too thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this very important motion to the House. He is a member of the NSW Parliamentary Lions. We all get in there together, and I am very pleased about that. I put the call out today for all members who have spoken on this motion to join the Parliamentary Friends of Lions and to encourage their neighbours in the halls of levels



10 and 12, and throughout Parliament House, to lend their support as well. We need you. We are hosting a barbeque soon—and we will raise some money too.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** The NSW Parliamentary Lions Club. We are not a "friends of"; we are the Parliamentary Lions Club.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We are a proper Lions Club, the NSW Parliamentary Lions. I thank the member for Riverstone. He is quite right. Wherever there is a community event, the Lions are there. I have been to a few this year. On National Tree Day, I joined in with the Budgewoi Beach Dunecare group to plant 900 trees. Who was there to cook us breakfast? It was the North Lakes Lions Club. When our community held its big Australia Day event in Mannering Park, who was there to cook the barbecue breakfast for the thousands who turned out? Again, it was the local Lions club. And who was there as part of the community celebration at Chain Valley Bay? It was the Lions club. Wherever there is community, there is a Lions club. The Lions values align with my Labor values, and that is why I cannot support them enough.

I give a particular shout-out to the Gwandalan Lioness Club, which I have a lot to do with. Its members are at the Gwandalan Community Hall every Saturday morning making sure that there is recycled and second-hand stuff for people from across the community. All the money raised goes to very good causes, but the club holds two particular events that I would like to highlight. One is the annual arts and craft expo, which will be held within the next few weeks. I have had the great fortune of opening it since I have been the member for Swansea. The expo raises funds for the Lions Childhood Cancer Research Foundation, and every cent goes to deserving organisations. In addition, the club raises an enormous amount of money for the local school. The school could not be more thankful. As a result, the kids at Gwandalan and Summerland Point have a close relationship with Lions club volunteers. Again, isn't that the foundation of the communities we represent? We are so fortunate.

Another event is Elsie's Retreat. The member for Terrigal has mentioned Elsie's Retreat previously in relation to Central Coast palliative care units. Lions clubs across the Central Coast participated in that retreat. My colleagues representing the electorates of The Entrance, Gosford and Wyong have all played key roles in supporting our Lions clubs to ensure they have the right frameworks to get that very important service up and running. Again, the Lions backed it in. The clubs spent so much time raising the funds, and we now have a valuable asset for our communities, which comes with such love. The Lions Club of Belmont and District has partnered with the Gateway Church in the Swansea electorate to establish and run a mobile shower and laundry service. The list goes on—I do not have time to name every initiative. But I conclude by saying that the Lions in New South Wales are fantastic, as they are right across the world.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:31):** In reply: It was great to hear 13 members—something like 14 per cent of the Parliament—support the motion. Even though there were a couple of quips and debating points, we were singing *Frère Jacques* most of the time. I thank members representing the electorates of Castle Hill, Shellharbour, Terrigal, Penrith, Kiama, Mount Druitt, Kellyville, Lismore, Riverstone, Wagga Wagga, Liverpool and Swansea for their contributions. All members highlighted the community change and support that Lions clubs deliver. The member for Castle Hill talked about the sleep-out. How often would we get an MP to sleep out on a cold winter's night if it were not for the Lions clubs? The member for Shellharbour talked about fundraising to buy iPads, sausage sizzles at Bunnings stores and the something like \$500,000 that Lions clubs raised for diabetes and cancer research, and specialised nurse training.

The member for Terrigal talked about the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford Centennial, its palliative care program and the scholarships it has given to palliative care nurses. The member for Penrith talked about the Lions Club of Emu Plains, which has raised money for wheelchairs for children and supported Ronald McDonald House. There is a common theme: health and support. The member for Kiama spoke about the five clubs down his way that helped to establish the men's shed. He also talked about the clubs' programs and told a personal story of how the Lions clubs helped to provide the equipment that he needed to do his studies and get into Parliament. If not for the Lions clubs, he may not be here.

The member for Mount Druitt, the member for Riverstone and I share the Lions Club of Blacktown City, amongst many others. When we talk, Rebel and Rachael Hanlon come up in conversation quite often because we cannot say no to them. We all talked about the hearing testing and the many other things they do. The member for Kellyville spoke about being a Lions member for 20 years. He should be congratulated on his commitment—before he became a parliamentarian, he was already helping out. The member for Lismore bragged about Lismore having the very first Lions club in Australia. Not only that, the Lismore electorate has seven Lions clubs. Obviously, the area has endured bushfires, floods and COVID, and I acknowledge all the volunteers who helped out.

The member for Riverstone is the current Parliamentary Lions Club president. He rounds us all up and makes sure that, whether a member or an associate member, we are there at the sausage sizzles. The member for

Wagga Wagga spoke about how Lions clubs contribute to the fabric of society and remarked that everywhere you go there is always a smile and a helping hand. The member for Liverpool talked about an all-women Lions club and the fundraising it does for diversity, diabetes, and food and organ donations. The member for Swansea encouraged us all to participate and talked about tree-planting programs, supporting Australia Day, the arts and craft expo, and raising money for another health initiative—a childhood cancer research charity. Governments cannot do everything; so Lions clubs fill the gap. Thank you to everyone who participates.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:35):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that, before leaving office in 2023, the former Government was to invest \$116.6 billion in infrastructure over the next four years.
- (2) Calls on the Government to continue record investment in infrastructure, despite not having a Minister for infrastructure.

It is a privilege to speak to this motion, of which I gave notice in the New South Wales Parliament on 24 May 2023. The night before I gave notice of the motion, I delivered my inaugural speech. Of course, I paid tribute to my parents—in particular, my father. For 40 years, he worked as a civil engineer for the New South Wales Government, notably on the M2 and M7. When he received his NSW Service Medallion, Dad's work colleagues described him as highly regarded for his energy and a man of undoubted integrity and capacity to manage considerable workloads. Clearly, I am very proud of Dad and proud to acknowledge his contribution in Parliament.

Like my father, I have a passion for roads and transport. I also—like most members in this House, no doubt—hope to be remembered as somebody who helped build infrastructure in New South Wales. Infrastructure is of the utmost importance to all of our communities. All members will certainly agree with that. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government delivered record investment in infrastructure. It is a proud record. In 2022-23 infrastructure investment reported in the final half-yearly review saw New South Wales with the largest State capital program in the nation. I am very proud to update the House on an interesting graph of infrastructure spending over the past 12 years.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: I know that the member is new to this place, but props cannot be used in the House. I ask you to direct the member for Davidson not to use props during debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I uphold the point order. Props must not be used in the House.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** In 2010-11—its last year in office—the former New South Wales Labor Government planned to invest \$62.2 billion in infrastructure over the next four years. When the Liberal-Nationals Government left office in 2022-23, that figure was \$116.6 billion. This is, of course, huge growth—and in an area where the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have a proud record of achievement. If we look at all the numbers, there is an extremely large jump in 2018-19. *Budget Paper No. 2* for 2018-19 states:

The Budget commits \$87.2 billion over the four years to 2021-22. This program will drive economic growth, create jobs, and provide high-quality services to the residents of New South Wales. The Government's successful asset recycling strategy has enabled these record levels of capital spending, while maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating.

We certainly made sure we put asset recycling funds into further infrastructure—a record investment in infrastructure. It is time that the Minns Labor Government is fair dinkum with the people of New South Wales and tells the truth about Labor's support for asset recycling. We must remember it was Labor that, from 1995 to 2011, privatised FreightCorp, electricity generators and retailers, and the lotteries. Do members know what else Labor privatised? It privatised Parklea prison in 2009. Who was the chief of staff to the Minister responsible for privatising Parklea prison? It was none other than the Premier, Chris Minns. But I digress.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** It being 3.40 p.m., debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

*Committees***JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROTECTING LOCAL WATER UTILITIES FROM PRIVATISATION****Establishment and Membership**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Thursday 3 August 2023 relating to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the joint select committee be the Hon. Mark Banasiak, Ms Cate Faehrmann, the Hon. Wes Fang, the Hon. Stephen Lawrence and the Hon. Emily Suvaal.
- (3) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, this House requests that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly set the time and place of the first meeting.

I set down consideration of the message for a later time.

*Community Recognition Statements***BIRDSNEST CLOTHING**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (15:42):** Today I acknowledge the great achievement of birdsnest clothing in Cooma, which has been named the Online Retailer of the Year in this year's Online Retail Industry Awards. Birdsnest is a well-established business in Cooma that was founded by Jane Cay. It has grown over many years in our community and now employs approximately 150 Cooma-based employees, which is a really significant number of employees for our community. Birdsnest is one of the biggest employers in town. It has consistently stayed at the top of the game when it comes to online retailing. I am told by those who buy its clothes that it is a very attractive place for people who buy clothing for women—which probably explains why I am not generally one of their customers. I absolutely congratulate birdsnest on winning this award.

**TRIBUTE TO JOYCE BURROWS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:43):** It is with deep sadness that I speak on the passing of Mrs Joyce Burrows. Better known to many of us on the Central Coast as Joy, she dedicated her life to the Liberal Party for so many years. It is with great sadness we on the Central Coast learnt of the passing of Joy this week. She was a stalwart of the Central Coast Liberals, helping to provide time and effort at Federal, State and local government levels while also serving as president of the Robertson Federal Electoral Conference from 1997 to 2009. Joy also was an incredibly active branch member, serving as president of the Empire Bay Liberal Branch—one of my own branches—when it was awarded Branch of the Year by the New South Wales Liberal Party. Joy's service did not stop there. She also represented me on the Local Traffic Committee. There was not a pothole, sign or road that Joy did not know about. I thank her for her incredibly dedicated service to our wider community and express my profound condolences to Joy's son, Kim, and her family on her passing. Vale, Joyce Burrows.

**MOLLYMOOK SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:45):** Today I speak about the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club. Mollymook Beach is a world-famous stretch of the coastline that attracts tourists and locals alike. The volunteers of the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club work tirelessly to ensure that everyone enjoying Mollymook Beach remains safe and enjoys their time on this beautiful stretch of the South Coast. Today I take the opportunity to recognise Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club members who have achieved an unbelievable tenure of service and dedication to saving lives at Mollymook: Kevin Whitford, 30 Year National Patrol Service Award; Michael Hendrie, 10 Year National Patrol Service Award; Keith Claxton, 25 Year Long Service Award; George Kolek, 50 Year Long Service Award; and Noel Turnbull, an amazing 60 Year Long Service Award. I thank them all for their selfless dedication.

**COFFS HARBOUR PINK LADIES**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:46):** The Coffs Harbour Pink Ladies is renowned for its ongoing fundraising and support work at Coffs Harbour Health Campus. The Coffs Harbour branch of the United Hospital Auxiliaries, or the UHA as they are known formally, had its annual general meeting recently with Helen Mears, OAM, continuing in the leadership role she has now enjoyed for more than 30 years. Helen was reinstated unopposed as president, and she thanked all the volunteers and committee members for their dedication. June Curry continues as vice-president, along with Linda Friend as treasurer and Heather Hardwick as secretary. Val Ide and Lorraine Partland are also on the committee. Despite the volunteer workforce challenges during the year, the committee raised almost \$275,000 for equipment for the Coffs Harbour Health Campus—an absolutely

extraordinary effort. The 43-strong volunteer army works to keep the Pink Ladies cafe and gift shop open, which is its main source of fundraising. I thank the Coffs Harbour Pink Ladies for being the heart and soul of our local hospital. I know the members would warmly welcome more volunteers to join them and help the cause.

#### **PUSHPA VITAN MANORATH FOOD DRIVE**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:47):** I extend my congratulations to the Vaishnav Parivar of Australia and the Vallabh Youth Organisation for a remarkable food drive at the Pushpa Vitan Manorath event in my electorate. Their target of gathering 100 kilograms was surpassed because of their tireless efforts, transcending all expectations. The community collected more than 500 kilograms of food, which they donated to Foodbank, Australia's largest hunger relief organisation. Foodbank acknowledged the remarkable achievement, telling them that this was a massive donation from any organisation and that it spoke volumes of their commitment to helping others. The Vaishnav Parivar of Australia is an inspiring example of selfless service. Its initiatives to support those in need show genuine concern for the wellbeing of others. It is a beacon of philanthropy, embodying the virtues of empathy and empowerment. The Vallabh Youth Organisation is equally praiseworthy, embodying the motto "We serve happiness." Through its various initiatives, such as providing support to underprivileged communities, educational programs and crisis aid, it showcases the spirit of giving back. My heartfelt appreciation goes out to both organisations for their incredible contributions, and for reminding us that positive change can happen when communities come together for a compassionate cause.

#### **KELLYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL 150TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (15:48):** I take this opportunity to recognise the recent celebration of the 150th anniversary of Kellyville Public School. It is a historical building in the local area and a wonderful educational precinct. I congratulate everyone who was involved with the 150th year celebrations, led from the top by the very capable principal, Jenny Walker. Her wonderful teaching staff and all the staff at the school made it a phenomenal day. A number of dignitaries and I attended for the occasion, including many of the local principals, who came together to celebrate this wonderful milestone. They are to be commended. It is a significant recognition of the wonderful educational facility that Kellyville Public School is and, apart from the provision of education to our students, it is very much a historical building.

#### **MANDAEAN COMMUNITY**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:49):** On Saturday 3 June 2023 the long-serving management committee members and founders of both the Mandaean Australian Community Cultural Club and the Manda House in Australia were recognised and rewarded for their hard work and support for the Mandaean community in Australia and all over the world. The event was hosted by Dr Amad Mtashar, AM, and I had the pleasure of attending the ceremony and thanking those organisations and their members for their tireless work. The Mandaean community has faced persecution in their homelands of Iran and Iraq for decades, with many making Liverpool and the south-west their new home. It is estimated that the Liverpool local government area is home to the largest Mandaean diaspora in the world and, like many communities before and after, its members have settled in their new homeland and sacrificed their time in service of their emerging community. I congratulate the following awardees: Asia, Jamal, Qabil, Ajeel, Basheer, Karim, Dahafir, Tarik, Sinan, Nasri, Abdual Muanem, Raed, Amajed and Ghazwan.

#### **JERSEY DAY**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (15:50):** Jersey Day will be held on 1 September 2023. Nathan Gremmo was a loved member of my community who at the age of 13 lost his life when he was critically injured in a tragic accident in April 2015. Nathan was passionate about sports, and he was a kind and generous person who will always be remembered. Nathan had watched a documentary about organ donation and he had a conversation with his parents. He became an organ donor. Nathan's organs saved the lives of six people, including five young adults and one baby. Jersey Day was inspired by Nathan's selfless, generous and kind decision to become an organ donor. Presently about 1,800 Australians are waiting for organ donation. Jersey Day is about raising awareness of organ and tissue donation. It is about encouraging our community to be like Nathan—to not only give a commitment to organ donation but also have a conversation with family and friends. On Jersey Day I encourage community members to wear their favourite jersey—or to wear a Jersey Day jersey—and to have a conversation. More information can be found at [www.jerseyday.com.au](http://www.jerseyday.com.au) or on Facebook or Instagram.

#### **HART JUNIOR STATE NETBALL TITLES**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:51):** It is not every day that one warms up for a competition with *Nutbush City Limits*. I recognise the New South Wales Hart Junior Netball Titles, which took place last month. From humble beginnings as the State Age Championships, the junior State titles has grown into one of the largest female sporting events in the Southern Hemisphere. After years of disruption from COVID and

weather events, the long-anticipated tournament followed a rained-out contest last year. This year the competition was hosted jointly by the Camden and District Netball Association and our own Liverpool City Netball Association, with the State's elite junior players converging on Liverpool's netball courts over three days. It was great to be there at the opening ceremony and to learn that our Liverpool under-12 team left the competition as State champions, in addition to hard-fought contests in other categories. I recognise the efforts of the dedicated umpires, volunteers and staff who made the event possible, as well as Netball NSW and the Liverpool City Netball Association. I look forward to celebrating the further achievements of our emerging netball talents.

#### **EASTWOOD TAI CHI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:52):** I congratulate Eastwood Tai Chi, which recently celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. It was founded by Master Cheung, who is also the face of the Eastwood Library mural. The group is a vibrant, engaged and welcoming community, practising and sharing the art of tai chi every morning. I thank the members for inviting me to join their celebrations in recent weeks and acknowledge their leadership team, which has fostered such a wonderful culture over many years. I acknowledge chairperson Master Zhang Jin Kai; vice chairperson and secretary Desmond Chung; vice presidents Sally Lin, Paul Cheah and Thomas Tan; treasurer Gordon Ma; and assistant secretary Ann Yang. None of it would be possible without the tireless dedication of the daily practice leads, namely Desmond, Ann, Zana, Cora, Andy, Connie, Chow Siu Cheung, Pauline Touthat and Stanley Lung. Whether one is an advanced practitioner or a novice, the team members are always ready to lend a hand. Their achievements are also soon to be enshrined permanently in Eastwood, with Ryde councillor Justin Li moving to install a small plaque in recognition of their service. I look forward to seeing them at the unveiling and wish them a happy anniversary.

#### **WEAR IT PURPLE DAY**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:54):** Wear it Purple Day is 25 August, when we show our support and care for young LGBTQIA+ people. It has arguably never been more important, with LGBTQIA+ young people aged 16 to 27 being five times more likely to attempt suicide than their contemporaries and transgender people aged 14 to 25 being 15 times more likely. Those statistics are unacceptable and are directly linked to the bigotry and lack of acceptance that those young people often face at home, among their peers and at their place of work or study. Sadly, our society still has a long way to go towards acceptance, and the New South Wales Government has a significant role to play to achieve that. I acknowledge the work of OUTwest, Northcott Disability Services, CCA, Arts and Cultural Exchange, WestWords and others in supporting queer youth. Often it is simply a community worker, scout leader, teacher, sports coach or dance teacher who works in quiet ways to say, "I see you. I value you. You belong."

#### **LILY NICOTRA**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:55):** I am delighted to acknowledge Lily Nicotra, who attends Killarney Heights High School in Wakehurst. I had the huge pleasure of recently sponsoring Lily in The Y's Youth Parliament program, which sat here in the Chamber last month. Lily speaks with great passion and commitment about her chosen interests of mental health and dyslexia-affected senior students—who knew that was a thing? But not content to leave it there, Lily has also arranged for me to visit Killarney Heights High School next month and meet with her fellow students who wish to raise their own concerns and engage with me as their representative in Australia's oldest Parliament. Lily has an amazing story to tell about her struggles with dyslexia and being a high-achieving student, as well as the difficulties in public schools versus private schools. I look forward to helping her progress that issue and sort it out once and for all, and I highly commend Lily. I will not be at all surprised if one day she is the member for Wakehurst.

#### **FAIRVALE HIGH SCHOOL HSC ART STUDENTS**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:56):** I was honoured to celebrate the talents of the year 12 students from Fairvale High School who recently hosted their HSC visual arts body of work exhibition. Each portfolio was a unique reflection of students' personal vision and experiences. The works of art have been created with passion, dedication and skill. We all know that art is a powerful tool for personal growth and development. It opens the door to imagination and self-expression, influencing our collective perceptions of the world. The Fairvale visual arts team truly went above and beyond to mentor those brilliant students. I thank art teacher Mona Wolsely, head teacher Teresa Toledo and deputy principal Dianne Piet. I congratulate all participating students on displaying their creativity. Fairfield is proud of them.

#### **WILLIS AND BOWRING SOLICITORS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:57):** I congratulate Willis and Bowring solicitors on winning the Outstanding Professional Services category at the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Located next door to my office in Miranda, Willis and Bowring solicitors have been providing clients with quality legal services

since 1960. Throughout that time Willis and Bowring has developed a reputation as a market leader in the provision of specialist legal services, offering a range of legal services and expertise to individuals, small businesses, property developers, financial institutions and corporations. I acknowledge the team at Willis and Bowring solicitors, including Pamela Wood, Ben Harris, Lou Polito, Greg Miller, Dean Stell, Jessica Calleja, Elena Buzevska, Tess Eecen, Deanne Kindis, Aimee Collantes, Elaine Tang and Jared Simonis, for this achievement. Local businesses like Willis and Bowring solicitors are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Willis and Bowring solicitors on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **EAST HILLS BULLETTES NETBALL CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (15:58):** In light of the great success of our female sporting heroes like the Diamonds, I recognise another successful women's sporting group—the East Hills Bullettes Netball Club. The club was founded in 1999 and celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. The name "Bullettes" was chosen to represent the feminine counterpart to the East Hills Rugby League Football Club, the Bulldogs, which initially threw its support behind the creation of a sister netball club. The club has a total of 26 teams, including 21 competitive teams, of which 19 made the semifinals this year. This Saturday 10 teams will compete in the grand finals. President Tara Banbury has worked tirelessly over many years—along with the committee, dedicated coaches and managers—to ensure the club is not only successful but also inclusive and supportive of its players. The club also hosts a range of social fundraising activities that the whole family can enjoy. I congratulate the East Hills Bullettes Netball Club and wish all 10 teams the very best of luck this weekend.

#### **NATIONAL TREE DAY**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (15:59):** National Tree Day proved to be a remarkable event at Picton Sportsground. Organised by the dedicated environmental team of Wollondilly Shire Council, the community initiative drew a crowd eager to make a difference. We collectively planted over 400 trees, with my team planting over 70, a testament to the community spirit present in Wollondilly. Volunteering at such events is more than just an environmental duty; it is 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 am looking forward to more community events like it, where we can come together to make a positive impact. Kudos to everyone involved. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed.

#### **COOK SCHOOL**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:00):** Working at Cook School is certainly challenging, but there is no doubt it is extremely rewarding. Based in Loftus, Cook School caters for students with complex support needs, including mental health conditions, emotional disturbances and behavioural difficulties. The trauma-informed education model provides a template for other schools to not only emulate but also aspire to. Recently the school was awarded the title of Education Perfect Australian School of the Year at the Australian Education Awards. The award was announced not long after the school was awarded the Special Education School of the Year at the same ceremony. The awards were a recognition of all the hard work and dedication of principal David Hobson and his staff. Last year the school opened the Acacia Secondary Campus in Loftus for students in years 7 to 12. Now more than 20 students attend Acacia Secondary Campus. I again congratulate Mr Hobson and his staff on two very well deserved awards. I know that the lives of many young people have been changed significantly for the better. On behalf of the entire Heathcote electorate, I thank them.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:01):** I recognise the unions and union members who rallied, campaigned and went on strike to scrap the public sector wages cap. Specifically I recognise the tireless work of public school teachers and their immense contribution to the community. Our office is in regular contact with local teachers, and I recently met with representatives from the Inner City Teachers Association to hear their calls to NSW Labor to honour its deal. We need to significantly improve the pay and conditions of public school teachers in this State. I also acknowledge the New South Wales paramedics who overwhelmingly rejected the Government's wage offer of 4 per cent that is in real terms a pay cut. On behalf of The Greens and the Newtown electorate, I back teachers, paramedics and public sector workers and acknowledge their demands for a pay rise that actually keeps up with the cost of living and inflation.

#### **SLOVENIAN STATEHOOD DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:02):** On Sunday 18 June 2023 I had the great pleasure of celebrating Slovenian Statehood Day at Triglav Mounties. It was an honour to attend the event with the Slovenian community

to celebrate this special day, and attendees came from all over Sydney. In 1990 Slovenia took the important step towards independence when about 90 per cent of the population voted for it. On 25 June 1991 Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia, and Australia was one of the first countries to recognise its independence. The electorate of Cabramatta embraces its cultural diversity, with people coming from all over the world to build a home in our community. I acknowledge and thank Mr Peter Kroke, the president of the Triglav Mounties advisory committee; His Excellency Mr Marko Ham, Ambassador of Slovenia; Triglav Mounties advisory committee members; the executive members of Mounties Group; New South Wales Slovenian community representatives; and everyone in the organising committee.

#### NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:03):** Last week was National Science Week. Running from 12 August to 20 August, National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and tech across the nation, including in the electorate of Oatley. As shadow Minister for Jobs, Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, I want to see more young people getting involved in STEM. We have so much talent in New South Wales and we need to harness it to make us a global leader in fields like science, medical research, technology and space. National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology. Thousands of individuals, from students to scientists, get involved, taking part in science events across the nation. Science week is designed for everyone. It is definitely not restricted to schools and universities, with events, activities, talks and shows for every age group. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Australian scientists to the world of knowledge. It also aims to encourage an interest in science pursuits among the general public and to encourage younger people to become fascinated by the world we live in.

#### AKEIN ALAHAKOON

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:04):** Today I congratulate Mr Akein Alahakoon, a young year 7 student from St Peter's Anglican College in Broulee, who has made waves in the world of education by achieving a high distinction in the prestigious Big Science Competition. His achievement not only showcases the growing development of regional and rural education but also demonstrates how the Bega district is now standing shoulder to shoulder with more urban regions. The Big Science Competition is renowned as one of the largest international science competitions. It involves challenging students from year 7 to year 10 by assessing their science knowledge, critical-thinking abilities and problem-solving skills. The fact that Akein secured a high distinction reflects not only his personal achievements but also the effectiveness of the education system in his rural area. Akein's success is a testament to his dedication and the quality of education he has been receiving. I congratulate Akein. He is a credit to his family, his school and the electorate.

#### AMBER STAPLETON AND GRACE BUTTON

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:05):** I acknowledge and celebrate two remarkable year 9 students from Caroline Chisholm College: Amber Stapleton and Grace Button. Their selection to represent our State in the New South Wales under-15s touch football team is a testament to their talent, dedication and relentless hard work. They have not only showcased their skills on the field but also brought pride to the community by competing in the School Sport Australia Touch Football Championships in Darwin on 14 August 2023. Their achievements serve as a beacon of inspiration for fellow students and sports enthusiasts in our region. The girls exemplify the values of dedication, teamwork and sportswomanship. I congratulate Amber and Grace on their incredible achievement, and I commend them for their stellar performances and wish them continued success in their future. Well done.

#### EARLWOOD WANDERERS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:06):** I congratulate the Earlwood Wanderers over-35 women's division 1 team, which won the grand final against Balmain last Sunday. The majority of the team members were mothers competing for their club and their families—some new to football, some experienced and many joining a team for the first time. They made time in their busy schedules to train hard once a week on top of looking after their families, working and taking their kids to their sports games. On the day of the grand final, they fought nerves and inner fears to perform at their ultimate best, knowing defeat was a possibility. However, they won in front of their roaring friends and families, victorious and pushing through, no matter what obstacle they faced. Their children screamed in delight, knowing that their mummies were winners and could do anything; their husbands and partners supported them all the way through. They celebrated the win for their club and, ultimately, their families as well as their teammates and coaches after an amazing season, which coincided with watching the FIFA Women's World Cup together. I congratulate captain Anna Que and the team's coaches, Peter Katsoulas and James Doran.

### ROTARY YOUTH VOCATIONAL AWARDS

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (16:07):** I acknowledge the 2023 local annual Rotary Youth Vocational Awards, which took place last week at Model Farms High School. The Rotary Youth Vocational Awards recognise the achievements of young people attending schools in the local area, particularly Model Farms High School, Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School and Catherine McAuley Westmead. It was great to recognise students for their success across subjects such as business services, primary industries, retail services and construction. I also recognise local Rotary clubs for their ongoing support of the magnificent awards, including the Parramatta, Parramatta City and Parramatta Daybreak Rotary clubs. The event is always a shining example of the educational opportunities across the Winston Hills electorate. I look forward to the vocational education and training facilities opening soon at Seven Hills High School, which were funded and delivered by the former Coalition Government. Once again, I congratulate the students and wish them every success for the remainder of the year.

### ANSTO NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK HACKATHON

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:08):** It is no secret that some of the best and brightest young minds in the State call the electorate of Heathcote home. That was again evident during the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO] annual Hackathon challenge. ANSTO is the nation's sovereign nuclear organisation that investigates the application of nuclear science, technology and medicine. In 2020 ANSTO introduced its Hackathon design challenge, a fast-paced challenge that requires students to put their problem-solving minds to the test. This year students were challenged to use SPOT, an ANSTO robotic dog, for a specific purpose, and Heathcote High School was anointed the champion. Its students' design was based around lightening the load on school cleaners by picking up and sorting rubbish on particular routes throughout the school. The award was rewarded for an innovative concept that certainly impressed the judges at ANSTO. This year 22 schools took part in the Hackathon. I again congratulate all the students at Heathcote High School on their Hackathon design challenge winning creation.

### NIGEL JUDD, OAM

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:09):** I make special mention of Mr Nigel Judd, OAM, current serving councillor of Temora Shire Council who was recently recognised during Local Government Week as the longest serving councillor in New South Wales. Councillor Judd began his career in local government when he was elected to the then Narraburra Shire Council in September 1977, where he served for three years. On 1 January 1981 Councillor Judd was elected to the newly amalgamated Temora Shire Council, where he has dedicated the past 46 years to his role and the community. Attending over 500 council meetings where motions and decisions have been made, Councillor Judd has played an important role in shaping Temora Council, "The Friendly Shire", into what it is today. Councillor Judd is very respected in the community, with involvement in several committees. He is always looking at ways to improve things. I thank Councillor Judd for his commitment and dedication, and for his valuable contributions to the communities of Arianah Park, Temora and surrounds.

### TRIBUTE TO MARIE ADELE JENSON

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:10):** With great sadness, I advise the House of the passing of Marie Adele Jenson at the age of 93. Marie was born in Tamworth in 1930. Prior to her marrying Edward in 1955, she worked in a handbag factory. They had two children, Ross and Rosemary. Marie became a widow after 42 years of marriage. Marie was a quiet, unassuming type but was a persistent volunteer in the community. For many years, she helped clean Doonside Catholic Church and ironed the priests' robes. Marie was a member of the Doonside Senior Citizens Club and provided valuable service in fundraising, running market stalls, helping to serve meals and undertaking other activities creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Marie was awarded the 2008 Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year for her community service. Apart from her community work, since 2005 Marie was a member of the Labor Doonside branch. Over the past 18 years she loved attending meetings and helping on the election campaigns. Vale, Marie Jenson.

### HENRY BURGESS

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:11):** My electorate of Drummoyne is home to one of the best performing arts high schools in Australia, The McDonald College in North Strathfield. The school has produced many esteemed international dancers. I take this opportunity to recognise one of those talented students: year 10 student Henry Burgess, who won the Sydney Eisteddfod Ballet Scholarship this year. He will leave Sydney at the beginning of September to take up a prestigious position at the Royal Ballet School in London. Henry is one of many success stories from the college. He follows in the footsteps of Lachlan Monaghan, now a principal dancer with Royal Birmingham Ballet, and Harrison Lee, now a first artist with The Royal Ballet. I thank the principal of the college, Ms Maxine Kohler, for all that she does to support her students and our community.



I sincerely congratulate Henry on this amazing and remarkable achievement. I am sure that his tireless hours in rehearsal and his dedication and sacrifice have paid off. I say well done to him. I am sure his family, friends and school community are very proud of him and wish him all the best.

### MEDOWIE MESSAGE

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (16:12):** I give some well-deserved recognition to a group of talented young students from Medowie Public School. Recently I attended this beautiful school to see the release of the *Medowie Message*—a hip hop masterpiece created by a group of students with the help of Shane and his inspiring crew from UP&UP. UP&UP's Healing with Hip Hop program involves a group of young people collaborating to write and record a hip hop song and video. The program uses the writing and recording process to explore ideas around resilience, self-worth and wellbeing. Young people are encouraged to express themselves with confidence and talk about their lives, challenges they have overcome and their hopes for the future. I will not subject the Chamber to my attempt at rapping, but I will leave members with some of the special lines that these kids created:

Take it from me, don't judge a book by its cover.  
Everyone has a story, no-one is like another.  
So don't underestimate your sister or your brother—  
can we all come together, relate and embrace one another.

I say well done to Medowie Public School!

### COLOURS OF FREEDOM ART EXHIBITION

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:13):** Today I bring to the attention of the House the *Colours of Freedom* art exhibition, dedicated to celebrating Ukrainian Independence Day, which is today. This vibrant exhibition at Balmain Town Hall brought together Ukrainian artists in Australia to capture in blue and yellow the spirit of Ukraine's independence and resilience. Artists Elena Levkovskaya, Olena Vigovska, Natalya Kravchenko, Nataliia Vyaz and Tetiana Koldunencko captured the power of beauty and positivity to foster cultural exchange between Ukrainian and Australian communities. I thank the "True Blue and a little bit of Yellow" Artists Collective, the Balmain Association and the Ukrainian Council of NSW for helping to create this special celebration of Ukraine's spirit.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (16:14):** I acknowledge the many small family-owned businesses and manufacturers that operate in the Winston Hills electorate. In my time as the member for Winston Hills, I have had the opportunity to visit a variety of small manufacturers, service companies, shops, stores and cafes throughout our community. Our local small businesses highlight the ingenuity and diversity of talents in our local area. The Winston Hills electorate is home to a number of cafes and restaurants that attract individuals from across Western Sydney as they enjoy the many food and beverage choices that the community has to offer.

I recently visited Els cafe in Winston Hills for a fantastic morning coffee that was made by one of the local baristas. The team at Els have been putting together delicious breakfast and lunch menus for a number of years and they feature fantastic things, such as the homemade schnitzel, the beautifully cooked steak and a choice of over 15 pizzas. The cafe was founded and is owned by the El Bayeh family, who have lived and worked in Western Sydney their whole lives. The family loves the community of Winston Hills and are always looking forward to providing anything they can to help support local community groups.

The locally owned Chook-a-licious serves up delicious Greek-inspired roast chicken, chips, burgers, wraps and more. The takeaway spot was established in 2011 and has fed the community ever since. The Chook-a-licious team believe that food unites our community. Their restaurant has earned a reputation that extends far beyond the borders of the Winston Hills electorate. Chook-a-licious has recently struggled with the increasing cost-of-living crisis, but the team is determined to survive. Their sentiment is shared by a number of the small businesses also located around the Winston Hills electorate.

Beyond restaurants and cafes, the local community has a number of well-known grocers who provide high-quality fruit and vegetables, cuts of meat and other household goods. Some of these grocers include the locally owned and operated Pendle Hill Meat Market, the Northmead Growers Market and Bec's Fruit and Veg. These businesses provide excellent customer service, with a focus on fresh product. In fact, I am already looking forward to purchasing the Christmas hams when they come on special at Pendle Hill Meat Market later this year.

Bec's Fruit and Veg is a great example of a local business. Bec is a local person with a passion for high-quality fruit and vegetables and excellent service. Bec started her business in 2020 during lockdown when

families across our community wanted high-quality produce delivered to their doorsteps. Bec visits the markets at 3.00 a.m. to source the best fruit and vegetables, then assembles and packages them with her team. Aside from providing this service to our local area, Bec also supports many of the local run foodbanks that helps many of the refugee families and other individuals in need in our community.

Suburbs like Pendle Hill and Seven Hills also host industrial parks that are home to manufacturers, like the industrial hose manufacturer Convoluted Technologies. I have visited Convoluted Technologies on a number of occasions, and it is always fantastic to see the work it does right in the heart of our local community. I acknowledge the director, Siem Velstra, for his hard work and dedication. Recently I also visited a business called Auto Artisan, a company that custom produces and installs automotive modifications. The team recently supplied and installed a custom truck detail for the Steve Waugh Foundation. I was humbled to be invited to meet the team and receive a tour of their facilities.

The former Liberal Government had a strong track record of supporting locally owned and operated small businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted small businesses, which is why the former Government introduced the small and micro-business grant program, which saw businesses either receive one-off grants or fortnightly payments to support their operations. In addition to these grant programs, the former Government introduced the Business Profile platform in 2020 that allowed small business owners to streamline all grant applications, paperwork, details and government-related work all on one platform. It was measures such as these that supported small businesses to continue their operations in the toughest of times.

I am extremely proud to represent the community of Winston Hills, which continues to impress me with its range and diversity of industrial innovation, high-quality produce and fantastic service. I commend all of the small business owners in the Winston Hills electorate who get out of bed every day, go to work and give it their best to provide for their families and make our community a better place to live.

#### **PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:19):** Our bus network serves as the arteries of metropolitan Sydney, transporting the population 365 days a year and providing a connection to other critical transport services. In the Parramatta electorate, bus services often provide essential public transport where there are no other transport options. Over the past 12 years, the privatisation of entire bus regions, coupled with the culling of bus routes and services across New South Wales, has resulted in one of the greatest public transport failures of the former Liberal-Nationals Government. Bus route cuts across region 7, including the M52 Parramatta to Circular Quay route, have had wideranging impacts on my community. Commuters are forced to change buses, increasing travel times and reducing safety for schoolchildren.

The M52 provided reliable and direct travel, but it was replaced by the far inferior 500X service without community consultation. The Liberals shut down routes and created contracts that made cancelling a service a better financial option than running a service late. There have been thousands of service cancellations each month because of this. Every day, people wait for buses that do not turn up. The 545 bus route experiences cancellations because there simply are not enough drivers to work the shifts, which is a direct result of the former Government delivering a two-tiered wages system and a privatisation program that led to an exodus of drivers from the bus industry. There is now a massive bus driver shortage.

Bus drivers work tirelessly every day to keep the State moving; however, they did not receive a level of support from the previous Government that reflected this. Every week, hundreds of drivers queue at the Charles Street bus layover. There are no permanent toilets on site and no driver facilities. Drivers are forced to use two portaloos that are seldom cleaned. The amenities are inadequate, drivers are overworked and bus services are scheduled so close together that the drivers do not have time for a comfort stop. It is completely unacceptable in twenty-first century New South Wales.

The situation is exacerbated by the sorry state the former Government left the train services in. There are backlogs of maintenance that now require reliance on a large number of train-replacement buses, thus pushing the Charles Street layover even further beyond its capacity. Drivers have imparted to me some shocking stories about this site. Bus drivers are resorting to using bushes and empty milk bottles to relieve themselves. There are women who work on this route who do not have a drink of water for 10 hours because of inadequate facilities and for fear that they will not be able to find a toilet. That is what the treatment of essential workers looks like under the Liberals.

The former Government's rampant privatisation and callous cuts created the conditions and disincentives that have resulted in these catastrophic staff shortages. If people had been prioritised over privatisation, paid equally and ensured a provision of adequate amenities, then recruitment to the industry may not be so challenging and people may consider bus driving a more attractive employment option. Additionally, the industry remains

male dominated. The 2020 quinquennial report on the bus industry found that a mere 9 per cent of the driving force comprised women. Any solution to staffing shortages must also address this imbalance. I was proud to stand with the Transport Workers' Union at the launch of its Road to Respect campaign in Parramatta to shed light on the issue. I look forward to seeing what our Government, the union and Transport for NSW can achieve together.

There is significant work to be done. Critical to this work is the Bus Industry Taskforce, which is charged with making recommendations to improve the reliability, quality and effectiveness of bus services across New South Wales. I have every confidence that Minister Haylen and the Minns Labor Government, working with service providers, the community and via the Bus Industry Taskforce, will eventually be able to implement solutions that will return bus services to the standards that citizens across Parramatta and New South Wales expect and deserve.

### **SYDNEY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:24):** The central business district is Sydney's heart and soul. It is the engine room of the State's economy. It supports business big and small, the services sector, retail, creative industries, cultural and religious institutions, education, hospitality, food and beverage, nightlife, tourism and residents. Its built environment includes commercial and residential towers, heritage buildings and precincts, pedestrian malls, boulevards and transport hubs, bounded by parklands and the iconic harbour. It is a melting pot of different people, cultures and ages coming together for different purposes, activating the streets in the exciting way that big cities can be.

Central business districts across the globe suffered significantly from the COVID-19 pandemic, and Sydney's CBD was no exception. Office workers emptied towers to work from home, shops and institutions were either closed or had few customers, and the streets were vacant. It was a sad predicament for a region so important to the city and the State. But new data has emerged showing that the central business district is bouncing back, particularly driven by visitor economies.

The Tourism and Transport Forum Australia engaged DSpark to analyse CBD activity across the country between November 2022 and April 2023, and the results show that Sydney's central business district is now in recovery. The number of office workers returning continues to grow. While their return is still below pre-pandemic levels, with working from home some days now incorporated in the work week under what could be a new norm, we should remember that only 4 per cent of workers were in their offices at the start of last year. Visitors are coming back in droves on weekends and at night, revitalising the city and powering its recovery. Weekend visits are closer to pre-pandemic levels and late-night visits have surged, with the number of people in Sydney's central business district late at night exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

New South Wales residents are spending most of their tourism dollars in Sydney and reinvesting back into the State. Domestic tourism in New South Wales is 17 per cent above pre-pandemic levels. People are attending cultural events and visiting cultural institutions. The new Sydney Modern wing of the Art Gallery of New South Wales is attracting new visits, and the removal of fees at the Australian Museum has attracted families from across Sydney to visit the city. This year's Vivid festival attracted a new record crowd of 3.3 million people. The festival ran over 23 nights and included the largest drone light show in the Southern Hemisphere.

The State has also seen an increase in international visitors by 15 per cent. Those visits provide new patronage to restaurants, cafes, bars, hotels and shops and keep the city alive. We must continue to invest in arts and culture in the city through cultural events, exhibitions and festivals to ensure this trend keeps growing. So that families can continue to visit and learn from its world-class offering, entry fees to the Australian Museum must not be reinstated. I support the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, which is currently hosting an amazing exhibition curated by Leo Schofield called *1001 Remarkable Objects*.

Importantly, the CBD's recovery relies on a public transport network that can get people in, out of and through the city quickly, reliably and safely without impacts on amenity. Public transport use in central Sydney has grown to 84 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Light rail has transformed George Street and provides visitors, workers and residents with a fast way to move between Circular Quay, Central station and everywhere in between, including to visit shops, services and hospitality venues. The construction of the metro will make it easier for a new cohort of people to visit the city, but we need to keep improving the city's transport links with a focus on public and active transport.

Motor vehicles take up too much space and make cities feel hostile, whereas walking, cycling and using public transport activates the streets. Linking separated cycleways into and through the city, and resolving challenges engaging bus drivers, must be priorities. I acknowledge the work of the transport Minister to make our transport system more connected. Economically dynamic global cities have a strong and vibrant central business

district. CBDs foster collaboration, innovation and resourcefulness, and enable businesses to support staff through training, brainstorming and team building.

Young people, students and people working in creative industries, technology and innovation will continue to be attracted to city centres, where they are close to others for networking and are provided with the buzz of city life. It is vital that we work to ensure that Sydney's CBD continues to be a powerhouse to the State's economy and future. I look forward to working with all levels of government to attract more workers and visitors to the Sydney CBD and help it grow in vibrancy and dynamism.

### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE TEAM SPORTS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:29):** Today I congratulate the rugby league teams within the Riverstone electorate on a fantastic footy season. Football holds a special place in the hearts of my constituents. As I previously noted in this place, Riverstone was home to the first rugby league game in Australia. It was played 129 years ago, on 25 May 1894. But before praising our local teams for a memorable season, I will talk about the importance of football and, more generally, of team sports. Participating in team sports offers numerous benefits that play a crucial role in the development of young people. Beyond physical exercise, team sports cultivate essential life skills and promote holistic growth. They foster the development of communication and shared responsibilities, and teach players how to work harmoniously toward a common goal. Those skills are transferable to various aspects of life, such as academia, careers and personal relationships.

Team sports offer opportunities for both success and failure. Winning teaches the value of hard work and determination, while losing provides valuable lessons in resilience and the ability to bounce back after setbacks. Those experiences contribute to the development of emotional intelligence and coping mechanisms, which are essential for navigating life's challenges. Team sports play a pivotal role in the holistic development of young people. They nurture social skills, teach essential life lessons and contribute to physical health.

Team sports extend their significance beyond individual growth by fostering a sense of community. They bring people together—transcending age, background and beliefs—and create a shared passion and purpose. Local teams knit neighbourhoods, schools and towns with tight bonds. That promotes inclusivity and unity. When spectators gather to support their teams, a strong community spirit emerges which boosts civic pride and a sense of belonging. This communal aspect encourages collaboration, empathy and mutual respect. It nurtures a positive social environment for young people to develop a deep connection to their communities while learning invaluable life skills on and off the field.

Riverstone is home to three junior rugby league clubs that play as part of the Penrith and District Junior Rugby League competition—namely, the Riverstone Razorbacks, a team steeped in history; the Quakers Hill Destroyers, the newest inclusion to the comp; and the Schofields Crusaders. I am pleased to announce to the House that the footy teams of the Riverstone electorate have seen great success this year. Firstly, I make special mention of the Schofields Crusaders, a newly formed club that has just completed its inaugural season. Over the past couple of years our area has become one of the fastest growing regions in the State, and new clubs like this are vital to ensuring the extraordinary population growth develops into a united community. I am proud to be a patron of the Crusaders; I am even prouder of the club's first premiership-winning team, the under-9s. I also make special mention of the club's under-12s team for reaching the grand final in its first year. I congratulate the Quakers Hill Junior Rugby League Club, affectionately known as the Destroyers, on its immense success this season—specifically, the under 13-1s, under 10-1s, under 9-1s, under 9-2s and the under-12s, all of whom were grand finalists.

A special mention also goes to the Quakers Hill under-11 division 1 team that clinched the premiership, displaying dominance over St Marys and winning 30-12. Last but not least, our oldest and most prestigious club, the Riverstone Razorbacks, saw its under-10s team win the premiership, while its under-19s and open men's teams both made it to the grand final. I once more extend my congratulations to the rugby league teams in Riverstone. I recognise the dedicated volunteers who invest countless hours in managing and coaching those clubs and emphasise the significance of our children's participation in team sports. Team sports play a crucial role in our communities; they bring people together and keep our kids healthy.

### **COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:33):** The recent rise of the Matildas has shown us that sport and the champions it produces have the ability to bring us together. The FIFA Women's World Cup and the athletes it showcased were powerful examples of what perseverance, grit and sheer determination can bring when working hard and dreaming big. Undoubtedly, sporting achievements can transcend boundaries and create shared experiences at all levels. But it is at the grassroots, the foundation of sport, where success has profound impacts

in our local communities. The Coffs Coast is renowned for producing outstanding sporting achievements and tonight I will shine the spotlight on some recent successes of which we can all be proud.

One of these great local stories revolves around Coffs Harbour's best baseballers, who won a State country title. Coffs Harbour Baseball Association's senior representative team won the division B senior title at the New South Wales Country Championships. The team went through the competition undefeated, culminating in its 9-7 grand final victory over the Central Coast. Coffs Harbour Baseball Association's current season is progressing to its finals series. The competition has four clubs: the Bellingen Brewers, Coffs Harbour All Stars, Sawtell/Toormina Dodgers and Woolgoolga Bluesox. In a similar vein, the Coffs Harbour Suns under-12 girls' basketball team is celebrating its own State title, with the division 1 side securing the Spalding Waratah Junior Leagues State cup. The Suns won all four of their games on their way to winning the State cup, beating the Tumut Timberwolves 45-40 in the grand final. Is Tumut in the electorate of the member for Monaro?

**Mr Steve Whan:** No.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** No, just outside. Suns player London Lacey was named the most valuable player of the under-12 girls' tournament. The coaches have praised the performances of the team, who greatly improved during the season. Meanwhile, on the fairways and greens at Coffs Harbour Golf Club, 12-year-old Milla Adamson has been crafting her game with wonderful results. Milla won the recent Jack Newton Junior Golf under-12 tour event at Wyong, with a gross score of 90. She burned up the course with seven pars and a birdie. That win was off the back of taking out the Port Macquarie Junior Seaside Classic. Travelling to such prestigious events is something Milla and her family have become accustomed to. In July last year Milla's initial handicap was 44.5. At Christmas she set herself the goal of getting it down to 20 by August. The Mary Help of Christians School student recently achieved her aim—her handicap is now 18.3. That is a huge improvement. Single figures are now in her sights. Milla is pursuing her dream of becoming a professional golfer.

Golf was also the name of the game two weeks ago at Bonville Golf Resort, where we celebrated a major coup for the Coffs Coast—the return of the prestigious Australian Woman's Classic-Bonville for a further three years. I was joined for the announcement by Coastal & Golf Resorts Group General Manager Brad Daymond and City of Coffs Harbour General Manager Natalia Cowley. The world's best female golfers and their fans will call our city home in 2024, 2025 and 2026. The Australian Women's Classic Bonville will boast \$500,000 in prize money and showcase the first-class Bonville course and the spectacular Coffs Coast to a global television audience. This much-loved women's sporting event will help drive tourism and economic growth across the Coffs Coast and our wider region. Golf lovers of all ages will converge on Coffs Harbour to see their favourite players in action, while at the same time staying at our local accommodation houses and visiting our restaurants, pubs, clubs, cafes, shops and local tourist attractions.

Recently our attention was focused on centre court and, more specifically, on the exploits of Coffs Harbour tennis ace Joshua Burns. His domination at the New South Wales Closed Country Championships Juniors event has had people talking. Run over five days, this year at Forster, the tournament is considered the most prestigious in country New South Wales. Joshua, aged nine, a year 4 student at Bishop Druitt College, won the 10-year singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles. That is impressive for a relative newcomer to the sport who picked up a racquet only two years ago. Joshua has now been named in the New South Wales Super 10s side, which is a pathway to the national development squad. He also won the singles at the Sawtell Seaside Open and is coached by Coffs Harbour's Tony Polack. I congratulate all of the sports stars who are shining so brightly along the Coffs Coast.

### **DISABLED WINTERSPORT AUSTRALIA**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (16:38):** Two weeks ago I had the great honour of spending a day with Disabled Wintersport Australia [DWA] in Jindabyne, and then at Thredbo and Perisher. I was invited by one of Disabled Wintersport Australia's board members, former Victorian MP Danielle Green, who has been a great friend of the ski industry and the disabled skiing scene from her time in Parliament but also as a keen skier herself. Disabled Wintersport Australia does amazing work in opening up the joys of the mountains and the snow sports for people with a range of disabilities. It was inspiring to meet some of the people involved and to see the range of work that Disabled Wintersport Australia is doing, but also to get a better understanding of the need in the mountains for some of the facilities that can help to make them more accessible to families and participants.

I heard some inspiring stories while I was there about people who, with the help of DWA, have been able to come back to or discover the freedom of skiing, and who are able to enjoy holidays in the mountains and activity with their family and friends again. Many of those who started with DWA have gone on to participate in elite Paralympic sports as well. As I said, DWA board member Danielle Green was my host for the day, and I was also accompanied by Richard Scheurer, who works for DWA. Shannon Dallas was one of the first people we met at Jindabyne; he showed me the workshop and the storage area for the alpine skiing gear, including the sit skis and

other pieces of equipment that are made available. Shannon himself started his disabled skiing career with DWA following a broken back. He went on to compete in Paralympics, world championships and a range of elite sporting events before coming back to assist people who are learning to ski and skiing with DWA. His involvement with DWA since his accident has taken him to elite levels of sport and back to helping other people to discover the joys of alpine skiing.

At Perisher we skied for a while with a man who introduced himself as Shane, who I later discovered was Professor Shane Clifton. He was skiing on a sit ski and outpaced me down the slopes on every run. He was enjoying skiing with two of his brothers and three generations of his family—a situation which, without DWA's assistance, would have been inaccessible to him. He was clearly enjoying the freedom of being on the slopes again. I met two young skiers, Joe Fry and Jimmy Jan, who had been skiing at a Snow Australia Para Futures event, where potential elite athletes ski with existing elite athletes who have been to the Paralympics and other elite events. They were clearly buzzing from that event as they were finishing their day on the slopes and getting back on the ski tube.

This is important because DWA and its operations across the alpine resorts in Victoria and New South Wales are opening up the possibility of participation in this fantastic sport to many people who have had serious injuries, and who would otherwise not get the opportunity to discover the freedom of being out on the slopes. To do that, DWA needs facilities, including storage areas and areas for people to go back to at the resorts. Alpine resort areas also need to have more disabled and accessible accommodation so that families travelling with the participants can actually enjoy their holidays in the snow. That is one of the great limitations DWA is facing at the moment. I know a lot of work is being done in that area, including upgrading the facilities that are available in places like Jindabyne.

Finally, I acknowledge Ron Finneren, who was the founder of DWA. I met Ron a number of times when I was last the member for Monaro, and he happened to be there on the evening I came back from my day out with DWA. Ron has made the incredible contribution of founding the organisation, which has now grown to operate at all alpine resorts in Australia—even Finsko's lodge at Jindabyne is named after him! It was a great pleasure to spend time with DWA, and I congratulate the team on their work.

#### **BEGA ELECTORATE ART AND CULTURE**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:43):** I speak on the wonderfully active arts community in the Bega electorate and the importance of arts, culture and creative industries in rural and regional areas. Often when we think of the arts, we think of bustling cities, with their grand theatres, galleries and live music venues. However, the arts are not confined to urban centres. Rural and regional areas, with their unique landscapes and stories, have a deep-seated connection with culture and creativity. Today I highlight the importance of arts, culture and the creative industries for these areas and explore how governments can play a pivotal role in supporting them. Arts and culture are the heartbeat of any community. They capture the stories of the past, they reflect the present and they shape the future. In rural areas particularly, we have the strength of 65,000 years of Indigenous identity and culture, of which art is an integral part. Art acts as a powerful conduit for local narratives, ensuring that the voices of these communities resonate far and wide.

The Bega electorate has innumerable artists involved in all kinds of art media, from painting, photography and ceramics to textiles and sculpture. There are many private galleries in the electorate, and artists supply or exhibit at several larger community galleries. These include the Bay Pavilions at Batemans Bay and the Basil Sellers Exhibition Centre in Moruya. I have been pleased to have been involved in the progress of the Narooma Arts and Community Centre, and to have helped the Narooma School of Arts committee achieve increased funding under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund. I keenly await the completion of the South East Centre for Contemporary Art in Bega. The electorate has the wonderful Sculpture for Clyde event in Batemans Bay, which I had the honour to open this year, as well as Sculpture Bermagui—indeed, both sculpture by the sea and sculpture by the bay! Moruya holds its annual River of Art, which involves the whole community and includes *Luminous*, a mini Vivid-style installation on the Moruya River. Just last week, the Far South Coast Film Festival was held in Merimbula and was again a great success. Our local performing arts and theatre scene is active at the historic Twyford Hall in Merimbula, with its soon to be completed Theatre Twyford; the Bay Players in Batemans Bay; the Moruya Red Door Theatre; and the FLING Physical Theatre in Bega.

The Bega electorate music scene is strong and diverse, from our small local country halls to the famous Four Winds Festival at Barragga Bay, the Cobargo Folk Festival, the Wanderer Festival at Pambula Beach and the Giyyong celebration of Aboriginal arts, culture and resilience. The arts preserve the identity and essence of these places and our people. Moreover, the creative industries are economic drivers. When we support local artisans, musicians and creators, we are investing in the regional community. Festivals, exhibitions and workshops draw visitors, leading to increased tourism and business for local establishments. The arts can transform a quiet town into a hub of creativity and innovation, where talents are nurtured and dreams are realised. Yet, despite the

immense potential, rural arts and culture face unique challenges. Limited infrastructure, fewer opportunities for funding and the lure of urban areas can make it difficult for artists to sustain their craft. This is where the role of government becomes crucial. Local, State and national governments can play a vital role by investing in infrastructure. By creating spaces such as cultural centres, theatres and studios, governments can provide artists with the necessary facilities to hone and showcase their talents.

Through funding and grants, financial assistance can ensure that creators can continue their work without the burden of economic constraints. Specialised grants can support everything from traditional crafts to innovative digital projects. By introducing arts education in schools and organising workshops, governments can ensure that the next generation recognises the value of its cultural heritage and has the skills to contribute. Governments can launch campaigns that spotlight regional artists, making sure their work reaches a wider audience. These initiatives will grow local, national and international audiences for cultural experiences, which will benefit the community and the broader economy. Collaborative partnerships with urban cultural institutions create opportunities for rural artists to exhibit and perform in larger venues, bridging the urban-rural divide. The arts, culture and creative industries are not just add-ons to community life; they are its lifeblood. Rural and regional areas have a wealth of stories, talents and traditions waiting to be celebrated. With the right support from governments, these places can shine even brighter, ensuring that their cultural legacy is not just preserved but thrives for generations to come.

### MACQUARIE HOSPITAL REZONING PROPOSAL

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (16:48):** I take this opportunity to educate the House on a few of the key principles of the planning system—a bit of planning 101. Planning is about foresight. It is about ensuring the necessary infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, roads, open space and utilities—the list goes on—is there to support our communities. Providing these essential utilities is critical to protecting and maintaining quality of life for all of our residents. Members might be wondering why I feel the need to reiterate this; it is usually self-explanatory. It is because the current Labor Government needs someone to teach it the basics. Labor members have been out of government so long they clearly need a refresher course, and I am happy to be their teacher.

On 10 August it was revealed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that Macquarie Hospital in North Ryde was one of the 12 sites being considered for rezoning and privatisation by the Labor Government. What the article further revealed was astonishing. We are not talking about a couple of townhouses or some affordable housing for essential workers. The Labor Government is planning on allowing the development of up to 7,650 homes on that site—a proposal that would be laughable if it was not so concerning that the Government seems to be taking it seriously. Before the election, the Labor Party promised extreme density for the northern suburbs of Sydney. So far, it looks like that will be the only election promise it intends to keep.

I preface this all by saying that I am not against good development in the Lane Cove electorate; in fact, I have supported it. The State has a housing crisis on its hands. One component of solving the crisis will be to increase the housing stock. However, we must remember why we need to solve this housing crisis. Many of us in this place have young and growing families that we have chosen to raise in our respective electorates for myriad reasons. For me, Lane Cove was the obvious choice due to its stunning open space, proximity to quality education and health care, the strong sense of community, and the list goes on. Eventually, I want my children to be able to raise their own families in Lane Cove. That is a sentiment shared by many constituents who, like me, share concerns about whether our children will realistically be able to afford to do so. But in the same breath we must ensure that we protect the aspects of our community that have made it such a fantastic place to raise our families.

The proposal put forward by the Labor Government is a project that will irreversibly alter the fabric of the Lane Cove electorate, particularly in the Ryde area. The proposal will introduce tens of thousands of new residents to a community that has no capacity to handle such an influx. The health, education, transport and utility infrastructure as it stands would crumble under the pressure that would cause. Further, the Government has shown it has no regard for the infrastructure needs of the area. It has refused to commit to the proposed site of the new high school in Lachlan's Line and refused to investigate the possibility of widening local roads, particularly Victoria Road—infrastructure that would be the bare minimum to support such development. I am not alone in my concerns. A petition that I started with the member for Ryde has received over 3,000 signatures in under a week from Lane Cove and Ryde constituents. The Government needs to wake up and smell the roses. The community is dead against this proposal. I urge all Ministers involved to reconsider such a poor planning proposal.

### STEVEN BRADBURY

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:51):** I speak about a Camden born and raised hero, Steven Bradbury. I will be speaking to his recent commendation. However, I feel the need to clarify for those who know Steven's story thus far that his bravery is anything but a surprise. Steven Bradbury was born in Camden on 14 October 1973. From the age of three, he skated his heart out, with his dad by his side. In fact, members will be interested to note that Steven's dad was himself a national speed skating champion. For those who are not aware

of how Steven got to that fateful day in Salt Lake City, he overcame adversity beyond imagination. In 1994, at the World Cup, Steven suffered a terrible injury to his leg where he was essentially impaled by another skater's blade. He lost over four litres of blood in 60 seconds. Yet, despite that near-death experience, Steven's stitches were removed after only a couple of weeks, and he raced at the World Championship four months later and placed twelfth in the world.

In 2000, six years after his accident, Steven had another hurdle to overcome. One day during training he crashed out, fracturing his C4, C5 and C6 vertebrae. To put it in simple terms, he broke his neck—quite badly, in fact. They had to screw a halo brace into his head, potentially ending his career for good. He could have bled out on the ice or ended up in a wheelchair. Still, despite those adversities, he overcame all odds and went for gold at the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics. Since that day he has been an Australian hero and a proud son of the Camden community. "Doing a Bradbury" has made it into the Australian vernacular, and he has even been honoured in the form of a postage stamp—an honour, I note, that not even most Premiers and Prime Ministers will receive.

In March last year, Steven continued his long history of bravery and courage by saving four young girls from two-metre waves. The girls were reported to have been dragged out by a sudden rip and were headed towards the impact zone, where the largest waves have the biggest breaks. When Steven and his son, Flynn, noticed this, Steven rushed straight into action and paddled out towards them, risking his own life to save others. Flynn flagged down other lifeguards in the area, who joined Steven and brought the remaining girls to shore. Reports state that one girl needed oxygen and another girl said that if Steven had not launched his massive effort, she would have died.

For that amazing feat of bravery, Steven was awarded a Commendation for Brave Conduct from His Excellency the Governor-General "for his actions during the rescue of four teenagers from rough seas in Caloundra, Queensland, on 5 March 2022". No-one could ever doubt that Steven's bravery is beyond reproach, but that commendation confirms what we all knew: Steven is one of a kind. On behalf of the Camden community, I thank Steven for his bravery and for all that he does to champion Camden values.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I acknowledge visitors in the gallery. They are my guests: my grandmother, Maria, and my sister, Olivia. I welcome them.

#### AGQUIP

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:57):** I also welcome the guests of the Temporary Speaker. It is lovely to see them. AgQuip 2023 in Gunnedah has wrapped up after a record three days, with hundreds of exhibitors and the latest in technology across many industries. AgQuip is the most anticipated agribusiness event of the year and has been the national leader in field days for the past 50 years. Located on a permanent purpose-built site eight kilometres west of Gunnedah, AgQuip attracts over 100,000 visitors over the three-day period. This year—on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week—has been no different. The event showcases over 3,000 products and services aimed at farming professionals and provides an excellent opportunity for businesses to promote their brands, generate sales and connect with their customers. Schools right across the region, far and wide, target AgQuip each year as their day out. Schools can be seen enjoying everything that AgQuip has to offer—that is the grounding for many of our future farmers, as they touch, feel, see and talk to many in the farming sector.

This year marked the fiftieth anniversary of AgQuip, which started in 1973. Max Ellis saw an opportunity to grow the farming sector and also an opportunity to promote and market it. AgQuip was then handed over to Jim Hynes, and then to Barry Harley and Rural Press Events for further progress. Since then, Kate Nugent from ACM Rural Events has taken over and pushed the event to higher levels yet again, with over 100,000 people over three days. AgQuip is a wonderful opportunity for farmers, friends and everyone alike to come together. Many would not have seen each other for over a year because they have been busy working. Businesses that have been busy doing what they have been doing get the chance to catch up with their clients as well. It is all about the mental health of our farming community. Quite often farmers work alone, so the field days provide a very good opportunity for them to come together and share their knowledge about what they are each doing on their own places and to catch up with the latest technology.

As we have for many years, this year The Nationals had a stand at AgQuip. Each year we cook a barbecue between 12.00 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. where we offer magnificent steaks supplied by our good friends at Teys Australia. Every dollar raised by selling those steaks goes to Gunnedah Family Support. We know how important that organisation's services are for the most vulnerable in our community. I congratulate AgQuip. I also congratulate ACM Rural Events and Kate Nugent for once again pulling off a magnificent three days. It is difficult, it is a huge event, and the planning will start tomorrow for 2024.



Of course, AgQuip continues to thrive off the back of strong sponsorship. This year it was sponsored by Aon, which plays a vital role in Australian agriculture, showcasing and demonstrating a vast range of new products and services, highlighting new technology and innovation, and providing information to professionals on the land. It is well known in the agricultural industry, and we thank it for its sponsorship of AgQuip 2023. The hotels, the motels, the pubs, the clubs, the camping grounds, the caravan parks—everybody benefits. It is a real economic injection, and there is a tangible buzz and vibe in the air of not only Gunnedah but also Tamworth and its surrounds. AgQuip does so much more than just bring the farming community together; it lifts spirits as we work our way through 2023. We look forward to the fifty-first AgQuip, in Gunnedah, next year.

### CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE POLICING

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:59):** Today I speak on the topic of policing and safety in Cabramatta. I proudly represent an electorate that is one of the most diverse cultural areas in New South Wales. Cabramatta is a lively and vibrant place, where many migrants and refugees have decided to reside. Thousands of visitors come from across Sydney every weekend to experience some of the best food and cultural activities that Sydney has to offer. Please do feel welcome to visit Cabramatta to walk around the shops, attend the cultural activities and enjoy some of the best food. The cultural diversity we celebrate today can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s, when Cabramatta played a pivotal role in providing essential shelter to many migrants and refugees, particularly those from South-East Asia following the end of the Vietnam War.

However, the vibrant Cabramatta we are all familiar with today was once tainted with crime and drugs. In the 1990s drug use was prevalent in Cabramatta, and there was a perception that Cabramatta was closely linked with drug-related crime. Stories of children playing in the park only to stumble upon syringes on the ground, or of bodies of overdose victims lying in the street, are all too familiar to those who lived in Cabramatta. During the 1990s I saw many syringes on the streets of Cabramatta and drug-related activities around the train stations. The lowest point and the saddest time, which caught the attention of the State and the country, was when the former member for Cabramatta, John Newman, was assassinated.

It is unfortunate that it required such a significant event for decisive action to be taken to address the drug issues and the crime problems in Cabramatta. However, the subsequent increase in resources and funding to Cabramatta improved law and order. NSW Police Force operations such as Operation Puccini, Operation Hammer, Strike Force Scotsville and Strike Force Portville, together with the CCTV initiative of the Fairfield City Council at the time, focused on solving the drug trafficking issues in and around Cabramatta and investigated serious criminal offences. This contributed towards clearing the streets of drug-related problems. The New South Wales Legislative Council inquiry into Cabramatta policing, established in June 2000, made sure that the New South Wales Government had a comprehensive and long-term plan for the area.

In 2003, about 20 years ago, the new Cabramatta Police Station on Cabramatta Road was completed and officially opened. All subsequent crime and justice statistics, research and articles have reported reduced and stable crime rates in Cabramatta. We are also hearing more positive stories coming from Cabramatta. Increased funding and assistance to the Cabramatta Local Area Command [LAC] and the Fairfield Local Area Command were instrumental in improving security and enhancing quality of life for my constituents. It is important that this continues to be supported.

I had the pleasure of attending the Community and Police Expo earlier this year, an annual event hosted by the Fairfield City Police Area Command [PAC]. The expo showcased various units within the NSW Police Force, including the police air wing, mounted police, dog squad, highway patrol and much more. This event is a fantastic opportunity for community members to learn more about the NSW Police Force and is just one example of the proactive community engagement initiatives undertaken by the command to develop deeper connections with the community. However, over the past decade we have seen the amalgamation of the Cabramatta and Fairfield local area commands into the Fairfield PAC. This reorganisation has seen most constables relocated to the Fairfield Police Station, and this has raised various concerns.

For any community, a sense of security and peace of mind is largely reliant on the presence of police officers patrolling the streets. It is important that this concern is addressed and that, despite the amalgamation, police patrols are kept up in my community. During the recent attestation of class 359 in early August 2023, I understand that 159 new probationary constables were sworn in to start their policing career, of which five were introduced to the Fairfield PAC. I extend my best wishes to them as they embark on their career with the NSW Police Force. It is very important that there is equitable and fair distribution of resources to ensure that the Cabramatta Police Station part of the Fairfield PAC remains equipped with the necessary tools, personnel and support to continue police efforts to keep my community safe.

The effective functioning of the Fairfield PAC through adequate support plays a significant role not only in the safety of our streets but also in the quality of life for individuals in the community. By prioritising sufficient

funding and resources, we can commit towards fostering a safe and secure environment for all. I look forward to continuing working with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and the Minns Labor Government to ensure that my community, the Cabramatta Police Station LAC and the Fairfield PAC receive adequate funding and support to continue the great work they do in keeping my community safe.

### AUKUS PACT

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:04):** Last week in Brisbane hundreds of anti-war activists, trade unionists and peace advocates took to the streets outside the Labor conference in opposition to the AUKUS deal. We are in the middle of the worst housing crisis in generations, the cost of living is out of control and essential workers are still striking to lift the wages cap. But instead of investing in solutions to any of those problems, the Albanese Federal Labor Government is choosing to spend billions of public dollars on nuclear submarines. Labor will not spend \$2.5 billion a year on building public and social housing to house the tens of thousands of approved applicants on waiting lists, nor will it increase income support by more than a pathetic \$4 a day, but Labor will spend \$32 million each day for the next 30 years for the incredibly dubious privilege of hosting nuclear submarines in Australian waters.

There is no doubt that tensions in the Pacific region are on the rise, but it is beyond belief that, rather than using our privileged and powerful position within the region to de-escalate tensions and call for peace and stability, the Federal Labor Government is instead choosing to sabre-rattle against China and participate in a dangerous arms race against our largest trading partner. As typhoons and floods batter our South-East Asian neighbours, our Pacific Island neighbours struggle to stay above water. What we need is international cooperation and coordination on addressing the climate crisis, not a dangerous military pact tying us to the United States and United Kingdom for the next two decades. And while AUKUS does just that—tie us to the US and UK with a long fuse that may, indeed, one day detonate—make no mistake, this was the Albanese Federal Labor Government's choice.

There are those who say that the AUKUS deal was merely something inherited from the former Coalition Government, that Australia is merely complying with American and British ambitions of war and that this deal highlights that Australia does not have an independent foreign policy. I say that these people are wrong. The Albanese Federal Labor Government could have chosen to renege on the AUKUS deal on assuming office, but it did not. Instead, it has been driven by its own military ambitions and own foreign policy goals to seal the deal on AUKUS and, in doing so, ignored the explicit concerns of other countries in our region. I note that the Prime Minister of Malaysia has called AUKUS "a catalyst towards the nuclear arms race in the Indo-Pacific region", and Indonesia's foreign Minister has approached the deal with apprehension, stressing the need for Australia to continue meeting all of its nuclear non-proliferation obligations. They know, and The Greens know, that submarines in the water around our countries do not make us safer. In fact, they do the opposite. They propel us toward an arms race and instability.

I acknowledge that the movement in opposition to AUKUS is building. Our communities are getting angry, and they are getting organised. I recognise a few of the civil society organisations and trade unions that are coming together to build a coalition for peace: Wollongong Against War and Nukes; the Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition; the Electrical Trades Union; the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union; the National Tertiary Education Union; my own union, the Australian Services Union; as well as diaspora communities from countries within the Pacific that would absolutely be in the firing line if militarism were to escalate in our region. As my former Greens colleague Brisbane City Councillor Jonathan Sriranganathan says, "For change to happen we need two feet in Parliament and thousands of feet on the streets." Until these subs are built and sent into the sea, there is still a chance to fight for change and to see this deal and our public money diverted towards health, housing and public education instead. The Greens look forward to working with all those who are building a movement against AUKUS until this deal is finally sunk.

### TEACHER WAGES

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:08):** Our Government was elected with a mandate to improve the pay and conditions of teachers in New South Wales and to fix the many serious issues in our education system that were created or allowed to fester by the former Government. The idea that teaching is a 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. job is an insult and a myth. Many teachers arrive at work hours before the first bell and stay back for hours after the final bell of the day. Of late, during HSC and year 11 trials, teachers remain on school grounds late into the night and on weekends with their students, especially to assist with their major works. I have spoken to many teachers in recent months regarding the challenges they face. Under the former Government's 12-year reign, the needs of teachers were repeatedly neglected and dismissed. They left the New South Wales Minns Government with a teacher crisis—2,000 short.

We know that teacher shortages have a ripple effect. They lead to a drop in student engagement and wellbeing, to greater truancy and to behavioural problems. They also lead to a greater attrition rate in the teaching

profession. School counsellors are often shared across multiple schools, meaning the demand from students is often not able to be met. School counsellors are down 40 per cent—that is 7½ positions—in one team that covers from Miranda to Engadine. Some schools should be allocated a counsellor two or three days a week but are getting only one. In the Sutherland shire alone, there are four teams. The department is now advising counsellors to prioritise the students based on their vulnerability—that is, they are on the verge of committing suicide, self-harming or have very vulnerable, fractured lives. Can you imagine making those decisions? These are professionals who need to acquire two degrees—teaching and psychology—which can take up to eight years.

Friends and family who are teachers have had to leave events on weekends to go home and prepare work. This is not a one-off; it happens all the time. The former Government would not even sit down at the table with teachers to discuss a better pay deal. It would not even meet with them. As a result, teachers left the profession in droves, going to Queensland and Victoria, whilst school graduates chose to embark on other career paths. Our Government has done more for teachers in its first 100 days in government than the former Government did over the past 12 years. The Government is determined to ensure that our teachers are paid for their work and commitment and to make up for the past 12 years of neglect.

The New South Wales Government has already delivered on its commitment to reduce administration hours of teachers by five hours per week and to convert 10,000 temporary teaching positions into permanent ones. Currently, teacher salaries and conditions are being negotiated, albeit with challenges that are frustrating our wonderful teachers. We know that, apart from wages, there is more to be done to attract and retain new teachers. Let me be clear to all: There has never been a New South Wales education Minister who cares more about our State's teachers than Deputy Premier Prue Car. I have had countless conversations with the Deputy Premier about her admiration for our teachers, particularly those in the public sector.

A quality, public education can make an incredible difference to a young person's life. When the COVID-19 outbreak reached our shores, teachers stepped up once again. There were teachers and staff who still attended school premises during lockdowns, putting their own welfare and the health of their loved ones at risk in order to serve the needs of their students. Their efforts were not lost on me or on the Minns Government. Our little people who started school in kindergarten, year 1 and year 2 during COVID still need extra tuition in 2023. Our beautiful teachers and school learning support officers are caring for those children, with outstanding results.

I am here to tell all teachers throughout New South Wales, including those in the Heathcote electorate and all members of the Teachers Federation and Independent Education Union, that the Minns Government has their back. The Minister recently reiterated that raising the pay and conditions of our teachers, to give teachers in New South Wales nation-leading salaries, is an essential part of the Minns Labor Government's plans. I have always been a strong advocate for our teachers and their unions, and I will continue to stand by their side.

### MACQUARIE HOSPITAL REZONING PROPOSAL

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:13):** On 17 December this year Ryde residents and many more from around New South Wales will gather at the North Ryde Common for the second largest Christmas carol event in Sydney. For over 30 years, save for one year during COVID when they needed to move to another site, the Rotary clubs of North Ryde and Macquarie Park have hosted the extraordinary event at the common, bringing together thousands of local residents to celebrate and sing in the spirit of the Christmas season. Every local kid remembers the carols growing up. School holidays have started, there are spectacular fireworks and we all get up to some harmless mischief. Families love it too. The carols are a wholesome opportunity to come together, eat great food and support our local community groups and associations. This year I am sponsoring the Ryde Area Supported Accommodation for Intellectually Disabled tent. The group provides supported accommodation for people living with intellectual disabilities in Ryde.

Next door to the common is the Ryde mental health hospital. It is an understated facility that has helped support people with acute mental health and rehabilitation needs since 1956—for over 65 years. NSW Health speaks of the 195-bed facility as being fully integrated into the local community, with gently sloping, tree-filled land with views to the north, east and city skyline. Many patients are known to the residents and businesses of Coss Road, where they are empowered to reintegrate into society after what can be extremely challenging periods in their lives. The hospital also has a strong history with the University of Sydney school of medicine, helping train and nurture a future generation of healthcare practitioners, specifically those based in the Ryde area.

The community therefore felt extraordinarily blindsided to learn through reports in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of a secret plan to develop the site with high-rise housing. As a former Mayor of Ryde, I thought for sure there must have been some consultation with the council that would have confirmed this wild idea was not a serious consideration but perhaps just a thought bubble that would go no further. After all, council has been the custodian of the North Ryde Common site for several decades, maintaining the site and creating activity through

sport and recreation for many local user groups. It would be revealed almost immediately that this was not the case. But council had not been informed, and nor had the community.

The Government is rightly pursuing an agenda of delivering housing supply, yet it fails to plan strategically for our city's future. Even by the Government's own standards, North Ryde Common falls foul as a sensible site for high-density housing. The Government claims to target sites around metro stations, which is very logical, yet North Ryde Common is at least half an hour's walk from the nearest metro at North Ryde, a station with no parking. It is lightly serviced by the odd bus route, and local roads struggle with the existing through and residential traffic. I can think of few places worse for high-density living than the North Ryde Common and Macquarie mental health hospital site. I suspect that is why our community petition attracted well over 2,000 signatures in just the first couple of days, and why, as I doorknocked in the community, residents literally ripped the petition from my hands, desperate to register their objection to the Minns Labor Government's short-sighted bid for easy development.

This is not about opposing housing. Ryde has exceeded housing targets by well over 50 per cent for successive years and will likely continue to do so. The community is not unreasonable and has been patient as it waits for this new Government to deliver as it promised. Yet it has been left disappointed by broken promises, and this proposal, never announced before the election, would irrevocably grind our community to a halt. Delivery of new housing without requisite infrastructure is a recipe for disaster and is a product of poor planning. Just today in question time the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces mocked the community opposition, essentially committing the Minns Labor Government to developing North Ryde Common and the Macquarie mental health hospital site. That is despite overwhelming opposition, including from local Labor branch members and representatives.

I thank the local community for its continued support on this issue and acknowledge some of the unsung heroes, including the member for Lane Cove; Ryde councillor Sophie Lara-Watson, who moved a bipartisan and unanimous motion in council objecting to the proposal; and residents like Dee, Trish and Therese, who helped Sophie and me doorknock the community last week. People power can and should win, and I urge the Premier, his Ministers and this Labor Government to join with us to save North Ryde Common and the Macquarie mental health hospital.

#### **TOUKLEY HAWKS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:17):**

We're the blue and gold of Toukley  
We're the mighty Toukley Hawks, Hawks, Hawks  
All up and down the Coast  
We're the team they fear the most  
Yes, they all know they've played Toukley Hawks, Hawks, Hawks  
In victory or defeat  
We'll give the fan a treat  
Yes, they all know they've played Toukley Hawks, Hawks, Hawks

This was how it was on Sunday at the Central Coast Rugby League grand final. The mighty Toukley Hawks made it two years in a row, with an 8-6 victory over the Erina Eagles. There is a saying in rugby league that defence wins premierships, and the mighty Toukley Hawks demonstrated that adage with a backs-to-the-wall victory to claim back-to-back titles. Toukley resisted set after set of Erina attacks with last-ditch tackles and pure defensive strength. I watched on with heart in mouth, marvelling at the resilience of the Hawks players who definitely turned up to defend their first ever premiership, which they won last season.

The Hawks were formed back in, I think, 1965. Last season was their first ever rugby league grand final victory, and this year they not only returned to the winner's circle for their second premiership in a row but also were the minor premiers. Massive kudos is due to the Toukley Hawks. For a long time the poor old Hawks were the minnows of Central Coast rugby league, but now they are absolutely top of the pile. It is a great family club. It was amazing to see once again, as that final whistle blew for the 8-6 victory, that blue and yellow army flood onto Woy Woy Oval to pay homage to their heroes. Everyone celebrated this amazing victory—the young, the old, the old boys and the Hawkettes.

I have to say that the area resembled Little Toukley. As I stood in the grandstand watching the game, there was a sea of blue and yellow behind the goalposts. We had the amazing efforts from our left-winger, Aaron Heaven, who bagged a double, scoring two tries in the corner. Erina tried really hard. They put up a fantastic effort. Oliver Clements, Cam Davies and Finn Douch all appeared odds-on to score on separate occasions before being pulled up centimetres short of the line. The Man of the Match, Jakob Giles, not only had an excellent no-look

off-load to set up Aaron Heaven's second try but was right up there in the tackle count. Of course, one of the local heroes and now one of the local legends is captain-coach Jake Fitzgerald, who once again led his side in a momentous victory.

I know that after the game the community had the town blue and gold with support for the Hawks. The jerseys were everywhere. The players' names and numbers were on show throughout the community, but it is a really great feeling for the Toukley area and the Toukley Hawks who, as I said, have done it tough over a number of seasons. I was really pleased to be asked by Central Coast Rugby League to present the winner's trophy, but I was a little bit worried because I was dressed up in my Hawks gear. I had on the pullover and the shirt. With a scoreline of 8-6, with Erina trying to score right to the very end, I thought I might be embarrassed if I had to give the trophy to the other side while dressed in all my Hawks gear. But I was saved because the Hawks hung on, which is a real credit to them.

That could also be said of the Eagles, who the Hawks played against last season: Last year the winning margin was very close, as it was this year. The game was a huge defensive effort. It was exciting. There was passion. There were hard tackles and last-ditch defence. It was a really exciting game. I congratulate both teams, particularly the mighty Toukley Hawks, who are now back-to-back Central Coast Premiership winners. I know they will be celebrating all the way past Christmas and will be ready for next season to make it three in a row.

### RIVERWOOD HOUSING ESTATE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:22):** Today I stand with my community and highlight their concerns with the renewal of the Riverwood Housing Estate. I have been monitoring this proposal for many years now. Since it was first announced, significant changes have been made that meant it was no longer appropriate for our community. To make it absolutely clear, I am not against sensible development that benefits the community. However, I am against rampant overdevelopment without any consultation or consideration to appropriately upgrade the essential infrastructure for the community.

In 2016 when this project was first announced by the then Minister for Social Housing, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, it comprised just under 1,600 new social and affordable homes mixed with private housing. The recent completion of the neighbouring Washington Park demonstrated that there was strong potential to create a vibrant mixed-use precinct. Not only was the plan to boost social housing and affordable housing on the site, but planning would include investigations around community amenity, services and infrastructure that would be needed for the local population.

Since that time, the Land and Housing Corporation drastically increased the number to almost 4,000 new homes as part of the project. That would mean that we would now be looking at around a 400 per cent increase to the suburb's current population and building heights of more than 12 storeys. Although the Land and Housing Corporation decided to drastically increase the number of homes, there was no plan to invest additional money to see greater infrastructure improvements. Whilst local streets would be realigned and upgraded, they would still converge into Belmore Road, which had no funding allocated for upgrades.

Belmore Road already experiences significant congestion in the peak periods, as do neighbouring streets including Hannans Road, which also had no mention of receiving an upgrade. Parking is already a challenge on roads like Belmore Road. The planned development in its most recent form would significantly exacerbate this issue by adding even more cars onto our already crowded local streets. No confirmation was made about upgrades to Riverwood Public School, Narwee Public School or, for that matter, Hannans Road Public School. Instead, the plan was to monitor the situation, which is not a reassuring statement to make whilst it was clear the plan was to build 4,000 homes in direct proximity to the local schools.

It was also clear that the Land and Housing Corporation had no plans to fix the local transport infrastructure. Instead it just wanted to tick a box to fulfil a bureaucratic target. That is unfair not only to current residents but also future residents who would be moving into those properties. Both current and future residents of Riverwood deserve to have local amenities, services and infrastructure that meet the community's needs and expectations. This project needs to go back to what it started as, which was more than just a simple rezoning. We need to look at widening Belmore Road and widening the bridge over the Riverwood station. Our community wants the Government to focus on building places and communities that current and future generations can enjoy, with local amenities, services and infrastructure that meet people's needs and expectations.

As part of this project the community wants a sensible number of properties built, comprising new social and affordable homes mixed with private housing. The community wants to know that upgrades to schools in our local area will be guaranteed to ensure it can meet the demand of a growing community. Belmore Road needs significant upgrades between the M5 and the train line with the addition of traffic lights or roundabouts at more

intersections to assist with safe traffic flow to surrounding local streets. Our local parks, community and sports centres need to receive funding for upgrades to deal with an increase in use by our community.

Without infrastructure upgrades occurring at the same time with the housing developments, this project simply cannot go ahead. I call on the planning and housing Ministers to look at the history of this project and the concerns that have continuously been raised by the community. The previous Government understood this. We sent Land and Housing Corporation plans back to the drawing board. Current Government Ministers should ensure that the department is seriously redesigning the project to be in the interests of the community and future generations. As I have said before, I will not stop fighting until the community gets the right outcome.

### *Committees*

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

### **Reference**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:27):** By leave: I move:

That the resolution of the House of 23 August 2023 providing the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics with terms of reference relating to the Broderick report be amended by:

- (1) Omitting paragraph (1) and inserting instead: "The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on the four recommendations that directly refer to the committee in the Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2022 report entitled *Leading for Change: Independent Review of Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct in NSW Parliamentary Workplaces 2022*."
- (2) Omitting paragraph (3).

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:28):** The Opposition supports the amendment moved by the Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

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

### **Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment.

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of an earlier hour*

No. 1 **GOVT No. 1 [c2023-074B]**

Page 17, Schedule 9. Insert after line 19—

#### **[11A] Section 61A**

Insert after section 61—

#### **61A Exceptions for general practitioners during relevant period**

- (1) During the relevant period, the Chief Commissioner must not conduct an audit of—
  - (a) a general practitioner's compliance with the *Payroll Tax Act 2007*, or
  - (b) compliance with the *Payroll Tax Act 2007* by an entity with whom a general practitioner has a practice arrangement, to the extent amounts paid or payable by the entity relate to the general practitioner.
- (2) Also, if a tax default by a general practitioner occurs before or during the relevant period—
  - (a) in calculating, under Part 5, the interest payable by the general practitioner, no interest is payable in relation to a day that is within the relevant period, and
  - (b) the general practitioner is not liable under Part 5 to pay—
    - (i) for a tax default that occurs during the relevant period—penalty tax in relation to the tax default, or

- (ii) for a tax default that occurred before the relevant period—any penalty tax in relation to the tax default that was not paid before the relevant period.
- (3) Subsection (2) does not entitle a person to a refund of interest or penalty tax paid before the relevant period.
- (4) This section applies despite section 61 or another provision of a taxation law.
- (5) In this section—
  - general practitioner** means a medical practitioner who, under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law*, holds registration as a general practitioner.
  - practice arrangement** has the same meaning as in the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*.
  - relevant period** means the period—
    - (a) starting on the day on which the *Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023* commences, and
    - (b) ending on the day that is 12 months after the day that Act commences.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (17:30):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I thank all members in this House and in the other place who contributed to debate on the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. There are seven broad categories of reform in this complex and detailed but important bill. The bill amends State taxation legislation, government sector finance legislation, fines legislation, police legislation, unclaimed money legislation, valuation of land legislation and shared equity scheme legislation. In my second reading speech in this place, I spoke in great detail about those reforms and their importance to the effective operation of the State's revenue laws. I therefore focus on the amendment to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 that was proposed by the Government and agreed to in the other place.

The amendment will help address concerns raised by general practitioners about payroll tax. Following court judgements in Victoria and New South Wales confirming that payments to general practitioners at medical practices may be liable for payroll tax and the release of a revenue ruling by the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue, GPs have repeated concerns about payroll tax liabilities and the potential impact such liabilities could have on general practices and therefore on patient access to essential health services. The Government has heard those concerns.

The amendment to the bill concerning the Payroll Tax Act will, first, pause for 12 months payroll tax audits for general practitioners and their practices and, second, pause for 12 months tax penalties and interest accrued on outstanding payroll tax debts incurred before and at the commencement of the 12-month period. That amendment is a measured approach that provides a 12-month window to allow for ongoing consultation with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian Medical Association.

We also would like some time to assess the effects of the bulk-billing changes being introduced federally by the Albanese Government. The former Federal Liberal Government's failure to index bulk-billing rebates for Medicare against the consumer price index for a decade imposed cost stresses on GPs and patients alike. Government members are working hard to rebuild and restore essential services, including medical services, that were ignored by the previous Government. That will take time, but we are committed to doing it carefully and thoughtfully to achieve the best result we can. More broadly, the bill strengthens the integrity of our taxation and fines systems. As members are aware, 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 New South Wales needs. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:33):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Legislative Council amendment to the Revenue, Fines and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and acknowledge the words of the Attorney General. The proposed payroll tax creates a potential liability for corporate practices and general practices with multiple general practitioners. I believe it is a genuine threat in rural and regional areas, and something needs to be done about it. We are not talking about the huge corporate practices but practices where there are multiple doctors, nurses and allied health practitioners in a model that has been encouraged by the Federal Government to produce continuity of care and better outcomes for patients. It is disgraceful that that threat now hangs over general practices that provide such an important service, particularly in regional and rural areas.

The Opposition moved an amendment to the bill in the upper House that would have exempted general practices from the payroll tax. I welcome that move by Opposition members, but it is disappointing that it has come when they are in opposition. The issue has been around for five years now, and there was an opportunity to

do it when they were in government. The current Government wants time to consider the situation. I respect that and acknowledge the very good consultation that I have had with Ministers Houssos and Park on the issue as I have been trying to work through a way forward with them. The Government has chosen to provide an amnesty that will give 12 months to work it through, and I acknowledge and support that.

The issue has been bubbling away for the best part of five years, and recent turns of events have created enormous uncertainty and concern at a time when we are trying to rebuild rural and regional health. To have that payroll tax imposed would really cut against both the initiatives of the Federal Government in relation to bulk billing and the genuine attempts by this Government to rebuild regional and rural practices. Going forward, it is important that we reach a position where there is no retrospectivity and the ruling that has been made is clarified so that issues around the correct payment of doctors and work outside of the practices allow for necessary exemptions. I believe both the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian Medical Association will work constructively with the Government. I have spoken with Minister Houssos about it, and she has indicated to me that she is committed to genuinely working with both groups to get a solution in the next 12 months. I will certainly be doing my best to assist the Government in that respect.

We need certainty and fairness, and we need to keep in mind the importance of general practice for rural and regional communities. Of course we need to be careful about how we interpret the laws, and we need to be sure that we are doing the right thing by the tax system. I respect that, and I respect the Government's need to pause the process. I respect what I believe is its genuine good faith in working through a solution to it. But no retrospectivity, a future start date and clarification around the current exemptions will provide that certainty. I call on the Government to do that. In the meantime a pause is a good place to reach at this point, and I certainly will support the amendment.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (17:37):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his important intervention in this debate. Like the member for Bega, he brings a rare experience and expertise to the House. It is not often that we have accomplished medical practitioners amongst our ranks. But like the contributions of the former member for Macquarie Fields, who also brought a unique and valued expertise, the intervention of the member for Wagga Wagga in these considerations has assisted us towards a very sensible outcome. Let us face it—all of us rely on GPs and on a well-functioning medical system. This is a good and sensible outcome, and I thank the two doctors among us for their help.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **HEFFRON ELECTORATE TRAFFIC NOISE**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:38):** I acknowledge an issue of increasing frustration to my residents, particularly those in Alexandria, Beaconsfield, Zetland and Waterloo. For some time I have received complaints about noisy vehicles, speeding vehicles and illegally modified vehicles tearing down densely populated streets at all hours of the day and night. In particular, I have heard increasing complaints of speeding, reckless driving and undue noise through suburbs containing car dealerships—particularly high-end car dealerships. Test drivers—apparently intoxicated by the badges and hood ornaments on prominent makes like Ferrari, Lamborghini, Mercedes, BMW and Audi—stick to the fairly obvious routes where they can open up the car a little. The problem is that the city is not a racetrack; our community is not host to a grand prix.

My residents are just sitting in their homes, trying to enjoy a bit of peace and calm after a long day. They do not deserve the stress and disruption they are burdened with because a handful of drivers are excited about making tyres squeal while playing with a shiny gear stick. Our community has also had to deal with increasing numbers of vehicles modified with illegal exhaust systems and other enhancements that deliberately increase noise levels, contribute to noise pollution and create an environment of discomfort for residents. The impact of the disruptions is significant, affecting overall quality of life, sleep patterns and even mental wellbeing. Addressing the problem requires a combined effort from authorities, law enforcement agencies and the community.

Throughout my time as the member for Heffron, I have made countless representations to councils to implement traffic calming measures. I have advised residents to report modified vehicles to the Environment Protection Authority and I have worked with the Redfern Local Area Command—now the South Sydney Police Area Command—to ensure that the hooning hotspots are included in the highway patrol's taskings. Yet post-pandemic my residents are telling me that the issues are intensifying once more. It is of immense concern to



me as the local member. Nothing is more important on our roads than the safety of all road users, including pedestrians. And nothing is more important to residents than the ability to enjoy their homes and local amenities.

Hooning is not a problem unique to Heffron; it happens everywhere, affecting the tranquillity of our streets and endangering our lives. We all share the responsibility of finding a solution to the issue and ensuring that our communities remain safe and welcoming places for everyone. The only way the issue can be successfully addressed is through a combination of stricter enforcement of noise regulations, educational campaigns and community awareness initiatives that can help raise consciousness about the negative effects of loud vehicles. By fostering a culture of responsible vehicle ownership, we can promote quieter and more harmonious communities for everyone to enjoy.

That is why I was pleased to see one of my local councils taking a proactive approach to tackling the issue. Bayside Council—very much at the instigation of the member for Rockdale—together with the New South Wales police have taken a significant step towards combating hooning and antisocial behaviour by signing a memorandum of understanding, which marks a strong alliance in the fight against crime. Their agreement grants the police access to a network of over 70 CCTV cameras strategically positioned across Brighton-Le-Sands and surrounding areas, where I know that hooning is a problem.

Importantly, the partnership is not just about real-time surveillance; it extends the ability of the New South Wales police to review historical footage for investigative purposes. The information collected adheres to all the applicable guidelines and regulations, including the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act and the Surveillance Devices Act, ensuring the privacy and rights of residents while effectively addressing the issue at hand. What is more, the partnership between local government and the State law enforcement agencies, with financial support from the Federal Government through Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program grants, may well prove to be a template for the crackdown on noisy vehicles and reckless driving for more communities like Zetland and Waterloo in the future, because none of us want the sounds of screeching tyres and revving engines echoing across our neighbourhoods, leaving behind a trail of frustration and fear. I know my residents will be eager to see how the trial plays out.

#### **FOREST WAY ROAD SAFETY**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:43):** Today I speak on an urgent matter of road and pedestrian safety. The road in question is none other than Forest Way, which carries and connects us all on the northern beaches. Unfortunately, the road has also been a source of growing community concern, particularly a section commencing at Wearden Road in the north to Bowman Avenue in the south in the suburb of Belrose. Forest Way is six lanes wide. It is a very busy thoroughfare for vehicles, buses and trucks, which are often hurtling along it above the 70 kilometre per hour speed limit. I wholeheartedly agree with concerned residents who have written and spoken to me about the issue.

That section of Forest Way is a disaster waiting to happen, so why wait? In the past five years alone, there have been eight recorded vehicle accidents—eight accidents that resulted in pain and injury. They include a shocking incident just last Sunday when a van overturned and landed on the pedestrian footpath. They do not include the many unreported near misses that members of the community have told me about and which I will briefly talk to later. Thankfully no serious injuries or fatalities occurred on Sunday. However, I ask members to take a moment to think about different circumstances. What if it did not happen on a Sunday? What if it was during a busy school pick-up and drop-off? What if it was just any weekday, busy with schoolkids and parents around, completely unprotected? By asking these what-ifs we can see the urgent need to implement preventative measures to avoid catastrophe.

I have met with concerned residents and visited that section of Forest Way. I was shocked to see school students get off the bus and then cross six lanes of fast-moving traffic. Seven schools use the bus stop along that section of the road. The median strip is a typical narrow concrete one. Seeing how dangerous it actually is makes you wince. Kids with bulky backpacks are stuck on a very narrow median strip as buses, trucks and cars whiz past at full throttle. And there have not just been near misses. I met with a constituent whose child had been struck by a car on that section of Forest Way. Another child was also recently hit by a vehicle. It makes your stomach churn to learn about another incident in which a very young child fell off their bike onto the footpath and the road. The child was pulled out of the way by their parent milliseconds before a bus went past. Just milliseconds—that was the difference between a near miss and an unimaginable tragedy.

The incident was raised with me and the member for Davidson by a very concerned constituent. It was unreported, other than to us MPs. We have to ask ourselves: How many near misses go unreported? They are reminders that the situation is far more dire than statistics alone can ever reveal. We cannot afford to wait any longer. The stark reality is that, unless we take decisive action to upgrade pedestrian safety along that section of Forest Way, it is merely a matter of time before tragedy strikes. I have written to the roads Minister with a request

to meet, to implore him and the New South Wales Government to recognise the impending catastrophes. I am requesting that the Government take necessary steps to ensure the safety of our constituents. I do this in collaboration with local residents, Northern Beaches Council and the good member for Davidson, whose electorate also borders parts of Forest Way. I thank the member for Davidson for his attention and shared concern in the matter. I also thank the Minister in advance for the care and attention that I am sure he will give to the issue. I look forward to discussing it further at length with him.

The situation calls for a collaborative, bipartisan approach. We have a shared goal: a safer Forest Way for all. It is not a mere matter of convenience; it is a matter of life and death. My simple yet vital ask is that we upgrade pedestrian safety along the section of Forest Way between Wearden Road and Bowman Avenue in Belrose by installing pedestrian safety railings along both sides of Forest Way; implementing a 40 kilometre per hour school zone; reviewing the traffic lights at the Glen Street and Forest Way intersection; and, most importantly, constructing a pedestrian overpass. The need for an overpass is supported by the Northern Beaches Council and local residents. A community petition has close to 600 signatures already and is growing. I thank everyone in the community who is sharing their voice on this pressing issue. I conclude by reiterating the urgency. We know enough. We have the foresight on the tragedies that will occur, and are likely to occur sooner rather than later, if we stand by or waste more time. The Government must act now.

### TRIBUTE TO ALAN OVERTON

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:47):** Today I pay tribute to my very good friend Alan Overton who passed away on 28 July and who we farewelled in an enormous funeral on 10 August. As you, Madam Temporary Speaker, and the member for Winston Hills have mentioned in this place, Alan Overton was known as "Mr Parramatta". But to me he was also a very good and close friend for about 20 years. Alan and I served together on the Parramatta Park Trust. I had been appointed as a community representative and Alan was appointed through his role with both the Parramatta Leagues Club and the Parramatta Stadium.

Through those many years, we achieved World Heritage listing for Parramatta Park. Despite anticipating an adversarial relationship between Tom Uren and Alan Overton, everyone worked collaboratively to put the interests of the park at the heart of their work and made sure that the conflicts between the stadium and the park were absolutely minimised. Ovo was a great friend of mine, although he always shook his head every time I reminded him that I am a Bulldogs supporter. Alan was instrumental in the James Hardie sponsorship of the Parramatta Eels during their one and only very short period of success during the 1980s when they were the dominant team.

Alan was born in Granville in 1937. He was born in Queen Street at home and was delivered by Nurse Fisk who, as it turned out, happened to be the same nurse who delivered his wife, Merle, who also grew up in Granville. His family was very poor. He grew up in humble surroundings and he liked to joke that he had a GPS education—from Granville Public School. He went to what is now known as Granville Public School and then on to Granville Technical College, which is now known as Granville Boys High School. His parents were so poor that they could not afford shoes. He was sent home on his first day of high school because he was not wearing shoes. He borrowed a pair from his dad's friend and returned to school wearing shoes that were three sizes too big.

He joined the 1st Granville Scouts when he was only eight years old and stayed involved with the Scouts for 71 years. His legacy at Scouts is absolutely incredible. He established Scouts at Mays Hill and a number of other groups. Most interestingly, and more importantly, he put wheelchair access into the hall of the 3rd Granville Scouts and established the first local centre for disabled Scouts. He was a president of the Cumberland Area Scouts—now known as the Greater Western Sydney Region Scouts—for 30 years and vice-president of the New South Wales branch council for 17 years. He was involved in the establishment of Ronald McDonald House and he was involved in moving Ronald McDonald House to Westmead when the Children's Hospital relocated there during the 1990s.

Alan seemed to have lived a dozen lives in one life. I could not go through all of his achievements and all that he has done for the community. He served on 29 community boards and committees throughout his life. I will list them because the diversity of things he did is interesting. He was somebody who never seemed to not have the time to talk or hear someone's concerns, and he always found a way to help people. That is despite being probably the busiest person I have ever met, though I never got that impression when I was talking to him.

Alan held the following roles: chairman of Parramatta Eels; chairman of Parramatta Leagues Club; chairman of the Parramatta Power soccer club; chairman of the Parramatta Stadium Trust; chairman of Parramatta Two Blues Rugby Club; chairman of the Parramatta Community Development Support Expenditure Clubs Committee; president of the Scout Association Cumberland Area; president of the 7th Parramatta Handicap Scouts; president of the 1st Mays Hill Scouts; deputy chairman of the Parramatta Red Cross Calling Committee—the list

goes on. I am about to run out of time, but the list includes the swimming club, the cricket club, the PCYC and many other organisations.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** A wonderful life well lived.

### **ERARING POWER STATION**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:52):** Over the past few months there has been a lot of speculation regarding the future of Australia's largest coal-fired power station, Eraring, which is located in my electorate. Eraring currently employs approximately 430 workers and has a combined capacity of 2,880 megawatts. Constructed with an anticipated 50-year operational life, Eraring was expected to operate until 2032, but last year Origin Energy announced plans to close the station in August 2025. For the record, I am a strong supporter of the transition to renewable energy. There is scientific consensus that climate change is a major threat to our future, and the future of our planet. I do not think there would be many in this House who do not recognise the need to transition from coal to clean energy as soon as possible.

Whilst the transition to renewable energy is imperative for environmental reasons, there are also strong economic drivers behind the corporate decisions to transition away from coal-fired energy. Increasing levels of low-cost renewable energy is making coal-fired power stations economically unsustainable. I acknowledge the work of both the current and former New South Wales governments in recognising the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions and transition to clean energy. But it is clear this transition is not happening fast enough. I do not doubt that those working with EnergyCo and related bodies are doing everything in their power to put in place the infrastructure needed to support the transition to renewable energy, but the fact of the matter is we are not in a position to fully transition at the present time, and we are unlikely to be there by August 2025.

Whilst I have not had the chance to see the Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up, media reports suggest that it recommends that Eraring's operations be extended beyond the current proposed 2025 closure date to ensure energy reliability for New South Wales. I have said on record many times that we need to be pragmatic about the immediate future of Eraring. We currently do not have the transmission infrastructure in place to offset the current 2,880-megawatt capacity of Eraring and, until we can have confidence in the reliability of our renewable energy power system, the Government must do what it can to ensure that the New South Wales energy system is able to be supported by Eraring's energy supply.

Unfortunately, it may be the case that the State may have to bear some cost to ensure that Eraring remains operational for some time into the future. I advocated strongly against the privatisation of our power industry in the past. No doubt if these industries remained in government hands the transition process would have been far simpler. But we are where we are, and the importance of energy supply reliability to the people of New South Wales and their confidence in the transition to a renewable energy system, in my view, makes some costs necessary and unavoidable.

In addition to energy supply concerns, I also have concerns about the effect of the Eraring closure on the employees of Eraring and to other industries within Lake Macquarie and the local economy generally. There are many industries in my electorate—for example, the Mandalong and Myuna Bay collieries—that will be significantly impacted by Eraring's closure. For many years now I and others have been calling for the development of a transition policy framework to support workers, manage environmental issues and to diversify economies in mining regions. I acknowledge the tireless advocacy and excellent work of groups such as the Hunter Jobs Alliance and Hunter Renewal to ensure a strong post-coal economy and that environmental protections are there for the Hunter region. But despite the advocacy of these local groups and many of us here, I believe we are still woefully underprepared for the rapid shift away from coal-fired energy. The transition away from coal is happening as we speak.

I acknowledge the commitment shown by the Federal Government by setting up the national Net Zero Authority, but I am concerned about the pace at which this work is happening. At a State level we also need to start futureproofing our local communities, workers and local economies for this transition. Importantly, we need to have a clear plan and framework for the management of environmental legacy issues, including ash dam remediation. I appreciate the steps that the New South Wales Government is taking to establish regional authorities, including a Hunter transition authority, and the commitment of the Minister for Natural Resources to broad community consultation around these bodies. It is imperative that these authorities are established as soon as possible and, importantly, they must have sufficient resources to effectively support workers and industries in our regions and to ensure environmental legacy issues are properly managed.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:57):** I observed in the lead-up to *The Daily Telegraph* Bush Summit that there was a bit of media coverage on the renewables rollout, particularly in rural and regional

New South Wales. An article on Monday 7 August titled "Torn apart by green energy rollout" contained a quote from a farming couple who said, "We feel as though we have no say. It is just like the movie *The Castle*." It is not a new issue; in fact, it has been around for quite a few years. I will cover three issues in my contribution tonight. The first is that there is a debate, but members in this place agreed to the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020 that went through with the support of the whole Parliament. That was about a lot of things, including the rollout of renewables. Secondly, it is not about green energy itself but about the design and the machinery of government needed for the rollout. It is about the machinery of government, or the absence of it, when this issue ramped up a few years ago. The debate is alive and well in my electorate, and it started to heat up in 2020. McKees Hill is a small rural locality close to Lismore. It borders the Lismore electorate, but most of the area that I will talk about is in the Clarence electorate.

I was contacted by local farmers who were concerned when they heard that a large battery was going to be installed on a farming property in their area and they did not have any information about it. I said to them that I support the rollout of renewables, as we all do, but I was concerned that there was no machinery of government. By that, I mean that they found out about it when a local neighbour told them. When I inquired with the Department of Planning about how it is being rolled out, how people are being notified, what the planning mechanism is et cetera, it was not there. It was, "Let it rip and let it roll out." It is imperative, given that it was a New South Wales policy objective to transform the rollout of renewable energy—it was then, and it is with the current Government. The rollout of renewables is about health, as I characterise it.

Locals were surprised that there was no evident role for government. I was told that people could have a say around the time of or after the environmental impact statement. I said that they needed to at least know about it well before then. I organised with the then Department of Planning to get briefed about it with the then member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis, and we raised the concerns of locals and what we called an absence of machinery of government. Locals could not go anywhere to find out information. Obviously, the companies contacted me and the former member for Clarence, and we made sure that they were in contact with the locals. Some of the concerns raised by locals were about the fire potential of batteries, the glare from solar and the noise from wind. There were two other developments in the Tenterfield part of my electorate that I visited. I wrote to then Minister Matt Kean on behalf of my local farming communities. My letter stated:

I write to ask you to consider the missing link in the NSW renewable energy rollout. The missing link is the machinery of government designed to implement the renewable energy plan, based on the policy and legislative instruments resoundingly endorsed and then improved in the NSW Parliament.

It was improved in the New South Wales Parliament by amendments that came from the Opposition at the time and others in this place. My letter continued:

I shall outline what I see first hand regarding my request to fill the missing link. There is no government body that acts as a first point of contact to consult with the community and provide advice ...

We know that when there are developments at a local level, councils are actively involved and have some responsibility and carriage. That way, local communities can be informed. I then wrote to the then Agriculture Commissioner and raised the issue with him. I know that Regional Cities NSW did as well, and there was also a press release from NSW Farmers Association. It is not about the renewable energy itself, which we all want and need; it is about the absence of machinery of government.

#### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:03):** I start my remarks by acknowledging the youth member for Davidson, James Paterson, and thank him for coming to the New South Wales Parliament. It is great to have him here. Tonight I discuss public transport in the Davidson electorate. Public transport is a critical piece of infrastructure that connects us all between home, work and leisure. Public transport in the Davidson electorate includes, firstly, trains running on the North Shore line, with Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon railway stations, as well as nearby stations in Chatswood, Pymble and Turramurra; secondly, buses that connect residents to railway stations, as well connections directly to the city, notably in Belrose, Davidson, Frenchs Forest, St Ives, East Killara, East Lindfield and Roseville Chase; thirdly, rideshare; fourthly, active transport—and today I proudly joined the parliamentary friendship group; and, finally, Sydney Metro. Well, sort of. Sydney Metro North West passes under the Davidson electorate.

I appreciate constituents and residents contacting me about how to improve our local public transport. The first matter relates to school buses. I note the work of the P&C at St Ives High School, which passionately advocates for a credible and efficient bus service between St Ives High School and Gordon station, as well as services to the wider school catchment area all the way to the Hornsby local government area. It has developed a proposal to improve the student transport planning process. I have written to the Minister for Transport to ensure the bus contract with ComfortDelGro corporation achieves the highest standard of service, and I await the

Minister's reply. I note that I have received a response to representations relating to the bus between Lindfield station and Lindfield Learning Village. Sadly, the response outsources responsibility to the Bus Industry Taskforce rather than the Government getting on with fixing the buses. I thank David from Roseville for his advocacy.

The second matter relates to suggestions for buses. I thank Davidson constituents for suggesting the following: firstly, Kylie and Chris from Belrose suggested a bus extension from Belrose to Milsons Point, as the bus currently terminates in North Sydney; secondly, Barkev from Roseville Chase wants to make sure that buses are not overcrowded on the Terrey Hills to Sydney CBD 270 and 270X services; and, thirdly, Minette from Gordon suggested a dedicated bus service to west Gordon. I thank Councillor Simon Lennon for sharing that suggestion with me, and I have written to the Minister for Transport for advice on each of those matters.

The third matter relates to suggestions about trains. Firstly, Julia from St Ives wants to ensure that the gaps between platforms and trains are not too wide, which is an important safety measure; secondly, Mick from Roseville wants after-hours toilet access at Roseville station—and I thank Councillor Alec Taylor for bringing that to my attention—and, thirdly, Tim from Gordon has suggestions about noise from trains at Gordon. My office is looking into each of those issues. Finally, I touch on three issues of hope and renewal. Firstly, the Pymble Station Upgrade was completed and opened on 31 May 2023. It is a game changer for people who have a disability, for working parents who have prams and for those who need support to be able to use the public transport system. It was commissioned by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and includes three new lifts and toilets, as well as upgrades to footpaths, handrails, additional CCTV and lighting.

Secondly, work is currently underway on an upgrade to Killara railway station. Commissioned by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, it includes three new lifts, toilets, a canopy, deflection walls, upgrades to footpaths and stairs, formalised accessible parking, a kiss-and-ride zone, power supply upgrades, as well as improvements to lighting, ticketing facilities, CCTV and station communications. In a bipartisan way, I have asked the Minister for Transport to join me and the former member for Davidson, Jonathan O'Dea—who was crucial in advocating for these projects—and the community to do an official opening at a later date. It is important that we bring the community together to celebrate. As the member for Davidson, I am proud that with the completion of Pymble and Killara railway stations, all of the railway stations within the Davidson electorate, or that service the residents of Davidson, have disability access. We should be proud of that.

Finally, I talk about active transport. I thank Joey, a year 6 student from Lindfield who wrote to me with a suggestion to have a bike track next to the rail line along the rail corridor in the Davidson electorate. He noted, "There is 813 kilometres of track on the Sydney rail network, of which 444 kilometres is above ground, with the steepest gradient at 3.3 per cent." He continued by saying, "Less people will be stuck in traffic and there will be less pollution." That is amazing work by Joey, and I thank him for exercising leadership on the issue. I look forward to working through this issue with him.

### ACCOMMODATION AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:08):** In July I was honoured to join Accommodation Australia to speak at the 2023 Accommodation Awards for Excellence at the Fullerton Hotel in Sydney. The night was a great celebration of a new beginning—the amalgamation of Tourism Accommodation Australia and the Accommodation Association of Australia. Just like any important amalgamation, there was a vote—carried overwhelmingly—and the tick of approval from the Fair Work Commission. I knew there was a way I could work industrial relations in.

I acknowledge some of the people who made the night possible, including Richard Doyle and Patrick Lonergan, who are the co-chairs of Accommodation Australia; Australian Hotels Association NSW CEO John Whelan; AHA NSW president Scott Leach; national and Victoria AHA president David Canny; the new CEO of Accommodation Australia, Michael Johnson; Stacey McBride; the wonderful Jason Bartlett from AHA NSW; and the chair of the tourism and transport task force, and great friend of the tourism industry, Bruce Baird, AM. We all know Bruce, who has played a significant role in the tourism and hospitality industries, supporting the important workforce. Bruce was involved in the Olympics bid, which began the transformation of our great city into a global destination. It has been a difficult few years for the hospitality and accommodation industries, so it was wonderful to celebrate their great achievements for a night. The awards play an important role in highlighting their commitment to delivering the best experiences to the millions of international and domestic visitors New South Wales welcomes each day.

Domestic tourists are welcome in my local community of Canterbury, and have been coming to Lakemba, in particular, for many years now. I am proud of our work to ensure that we increase the number of domestic tourists not only from different cities but also from different suburbs. A weekend away need not mean travelling 200 kilometres. It is important to travel to our regional communities, but we should also consider suburban tourism. It is important for local jobs and boosts local investment. As people in this place know, I was a humble

airport hospitality worker. I am proud of the people I worked with many years ago. On behalf of my community, I thank the many workers who are employed in the industry, who work shifts. I acknowledge the important role they play.

I congratulate the winners on the night: Yi Ding from Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains, Sandeep Saini from View Sydney, Harmeet Charan from InterContinental Sydney, Oliver John Ruf from Park Hyatt Sydney, Guillem Padrós Puig from Crown Towers Sydney, Catrina Toward from Rydges Sydney Central, Chloe Mitchell from The Star Sydney, Pascale Rocher from Crystalbrook Byron, Narae Park from Hilton Sydney, Vanessa Thompson from Crystalbrook Byron, Olivia Blackley from Four Seasons Hotel Sydney, Jayson Coker from Crown Towers Sydney, Nathan Brown from Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour, Vijay Shah from Rydges World Square, Dyan Suaco from The Langham Sydney, Rob Weeden from The Fullerton Hotel Sydney, and Norman Arundel from EVT Hotels and Resorts. I congratulate the winners and the finalists. It is fantastic to see so many of them from across New South Wales putting in a massive effort and commitment to their jobs. It is great to see the important pathways that have been established and continue to be developed in the hospitality industry.

### AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES AND ANTISEMITISM

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:12):** Today I discuss an incredibly important component that has made our multicultural and multifaith society a success story: tolerance. Our nation has thrived due to the harmonious coexistence of people from all walks of life, cultures and faiths. My electorate of Holsworthy embodies this harmony—a melting pot between Liverpool and the Sutherland shire, diversity has been and always will be our biggest strength. So it was a major disappointment to see recent media reports in *The Daily Telegraph* drawing the public's attention to incidents of antisemitic behaviour taking place within Australian universities, despite the almost universal recognition of diversity being our strength. We must recognise that these actions not only threaten the wellbeing of Jewish students but also undermine the very fabric of our society. In some cases, Jewish students have hidden the expressions of their faith and missed in-person classes at university to avoid being targeted and harassed.

It was found that an overwhelming majority of Jewish university students across Australia had experienced antisemitism on campus. Nationally, 64 per cent of Jewish university students had experienced antisemitism on campus, and this number peaked at 77 per cent at the University of Sydney. Such acts of hatred, against any faith, have no place in our educational institutions, workplaces or any corner of our society. It is essential to remind ourselves of the historical examples of Muslims, Jews and Christians coming together to support, protect and uplift one another. Throughout history, we have witnessed countless instances where these three Abrahamic faiths have stood side by side, in times of both adversity and triumph. We must reflect upon the long tradition of cooperation and harmony that exists between our communities. As a woman of faith elected to this place, I hold a deep sense of responsibility to uphold the values of justice, equality and unity for all, regardless of faith or culture. An attack on any religion is an attack on all religions. We must stand united against any form of discrimination, hatred or injustice.

I stand here today committed to advocating for justice and equality for people of all faiths. Our strength lies in our unity, and it is our shared duty to foster an environment where every individual can practise their faith freely, without fear or prejudice. These reported incidents of antisemitism should serve as a reminder that the principles of compassion, respect, understanding and tolerance are universal and should guide our actions. As more people now have the opportunity to attend university, along with the rapid expansion of campuses across south-western Sydney, I am concerned that discrimination against and vilification of another's faith will be brought to the multicultural melting pot that is south-western Sydney.

Our diverse community stands beside those students who have been discriminated against for their faith or culture. We are ready to speak out against bigotry and discrimination. We in this place need to work hand in hand to ensure that the halls of education—primary, secondary and tertiary levels—remain spaces of learning, growth, mutual respect and tolerance. Let us be inspired in this place by the religious and historical bonds that tie us together and commit to building a future where every faith is celebrated and protected. We are a community that thrives when we stand up against racism, hatred and injustice.

### FAIRFIELD UNEMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:16):** I speak about one of Western Sydney's greatest economic challenges: unemployment. According to the NSW Parliamentary Research Service, in March 2023 Fairfield ranked number one in the State for unemployment, at 9.7 per cent. That is almost triple the State's average, which was 3.3 per cent. In fact, nine out of the top 10 electorates for unemployment in New South Wales were in Western Sydney. With soaring inflation and interest rates, the poverty line is increasing, reinforcing the hurt felt by families in my part of the world. As a result, a localised unemployment strategy in Fairfield is needed desperately.

My personal take on this strategy is to synchronise efforts to upskill Fairfield's population to enter the labour market, find meaningful employment and succeed. In doing so, five principles are relevant here. The first is to identify segments of the population to focus efforts on to become students and later to become competitive participants in the labour market. This includes refugees and migrants, recently graduated high school students, women and the long-term unemployed. The second is to equip those people with essential skills such as English literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, general employability skills and industry-specific employability skills. The third is to support those people as they embark on their studies, inclusive of support measures pertaining to housing, child care, income, health care, mental health, mentorship and accessibility in both disability and geographic terms.

The fourth principle is to link graduates, once their training is completed, with employment connection services facilitating the transition from study to work. The fifth is to provide ongoing support services for the now-working population to remain engaged and grow in their new jobs. The backdrop to all these principles is the need to build and maintain the necessary institutional ecosystem. This starts by mapping what training providers exist within the confines of Fairfield. If we need new ones, my job is to advocate with government and non-government stakeholders to come up with solutions. After all, localised training for local populations is necessary to maximise enrolment and completion outcomes. Following that, we need to coordinate training delivery services between different providers to ensure the right training is delivered to the right people as efficiently as possible.

Training will not be possible without specific measures to drive student recruitment. In that regard, feeder organisations need strong links with training providers to ensure robust pathways into study. When I talk about feeder organisations I mean high schools, government organisations, disability advocacy groups, refugee and migrant groups, youth groups, mental health groups, women's groups, community housing providers, religious institutions, volunteering groups, multipurpose community service groups and many more. At the end of the pipeline, we need to ensure employment connection services are readily able to provide the essential link between graduates transitioning from training providers to employers.

Overall, this unemployment strategy is based on building formal lines of passage for the people of Fairfield to learn and work while being supported every step of the way. If we do this, we reduce unemployment in Fairfield, we improve lives, we boost Western Sydney's economic profile and we make New South Wales better. Yes, a significant frontload investment is required, though I contend that the return on investment will bring about greater economic and social dividends. Furthermore, this strategy is capable of replication across other electorates in Western Sydney, generating better outcomes for New South Wales.

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:21):** A robust and well-funded public education system is both a fundamental right and a strategic investment that underpins the very fabric of our society. When we prioritise proper funding and resourcing for public schools and the teachers that work in them, we create an inclusive environment that helps level the playing field, giving everyone in our community the opportunity to learn, grow and give back to society. I know from speaking to teachers in the Balmain electorate that this vision could not be further from the day-to-day reality they are experiencing. As a parent of three primary school aged children, I see the impact this is having on the ground. The chronic teacher shortage is reaching a crisis point, and all the evidence tells us that the shortage is directly linked to unsustainable workloads and uncompetitive salaries for teachers.

Before the election, Labor made clear commitments to improve pay and conditions to help stem the mass exodus of public school teachers from the profession. The Greens are standing with teachers across the State to make sure those commitments are honoured. To give the Parliament an idea of the conditions that teachers are currently facing, I draw members' attention to comments from overworked teachers in the electorate of Balmain. Teachers from Orange Grove Public School have reported to my office that they are "working every weekend" and "marking books during lunchtimes" because no other time is available. Some report that they "don't eat until 4.00 p.m." and "sometimes there is no time to go to the toilet during working hours". They report regularly working extended hours, with days starting at 6.30 a.m. and going on until late in the evening. The "all-consuming responsibility" means they are "unable to switch off and replenish their own wellbeing".

For teachers in schools such as Glebe Public School, where many students have complex needs or trauma backgrounds, the conditions can be even more challenging. We have heard from local principals who are paying for additional supports for students out of their own pockets. They are spending precious hours applying for grants and reaching out to private businesses for support to meet the technology needs of their students. They are juggling school management while stepping in to teach classes and fill gaps in rosters. They are going above and beyond every single day to care for their students and the broader school community. These teachers need the Government to take care of them too.

In the face of these unsustainable workloads, teachers are also contending with grossly inadequate pay. Local teachers have shared with me that their wage has not increased in real terms in years, and that keeping food on the table and a roof over their heads is "challenging". This is fundamentally unsustainable. If we want to attract and keep quality teachers in our public education system, then it is time we pay teachers what they are worth. Teachers Federation members at the Balmain campus for Sydney Secondary College wrote a letter calling on the Premier to honour the deal. A section from their statement reads:

We consider this an act of betrayal. After years of neglect towards public education by previous governments, both Chris Minns and Prue Car gave the teaching profession and the communities that we serve hope. NSW Teachers Federation members from Sydney Secondary College, Balmain Campus went and campaigned to get rid of the previous government, based upon the promise that was made to the NSW Teachers Federation, by then opposition leader, Chris Minns, that he would reopen the award for a renegotiation and that his government would scrap the public sector wages cap. Instead, Mr Minns and Mr Mookhey decided to impose the wages cap upon the teaching profession for 3 years. We urge the NSW Government to honour the deal to save what credibility they have among teachers and the communities that we serve.

In addition to what is outlined in that statement, the Inner City Teachers Association passed a resolution to honour the deal. Teachers from Rozelle Public School and Annandale Public School, as well as St James Catholic Primary School in Glebe, have also contacted me raising their concerns about low pay and poor conditions, calling for urgent action to improve pay and address unsustainable workloads.

The NSW Teachers Federation is leading the charge in demanding fairer pay and conditions for teachers. As of the seventeenth of this month, more than 12,000 Teachers Federation members had contacted their local MPs to call on the Government to honour the deal. Failing to address unsustainable workloads and uncompetitive salaries will only serve to exacerbate the chronic teacher shortage in our State, which is having a devastating impact on students. Today I call on the Labor Government to hear the pleas from teachers in Balmain and across the State. The harrowing stories I hear every week indicate just how dire this situation has become. I stand with our teachers in urging the Premier to stand by the deal for better pay and conditions for New South Wales teachers. Teachers deserve to be paid what they are worth. I will end with a direct quote from a teacher at Annandale Public School who said, "Teachers need this. Children need this. Australia needs this."

### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY COMPETITION

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:26):** World Environment Day was held on Monday 5 June 2023. In my electorate of Vaucluse I held a competition for school students to tell us what is one way we can beat plastic pollution, and what are some other ways we can protect the environment? There are some wonderful, creative students out there with terrific writing, fabulous ideas and a lot of humour. It was really tough to pick the winners; there were a lot of entrants. The prize was to have their speech delivered here in Australia's oldest Parliament. We had to pick three winners, and the first was Ella Resnik, who is in year 4 at Bellevue Public School. She wrote:

Imagine you are a tiny little fish happily swimming in the clear blue ocean. You swim down to what you think is food but no it is in fact plastic. Plastic is not food and is lethal to our ocean creatures. Unfortunately we aren't imagining this, this is the reality. But we can change this horrid future.

It is estimated that in the year 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea. Everyone needs to reduce their plastic footprint starting today. Say goodbye to plastic straws, plastic cutlery and single use plastics. Instead of sandwich bags for your lunch use a paper bag or better yet a lunchbox. When going shopping use a reusable bag and not a plastic one. You don't need a separate plastic bag for every fruit or veggie, just leave them loose. This is one way to beat plastic pollution.

Some other ways to protect our environment include planting a tree, picking up rubbish, educating others by spreading the word about the dangers threatening our future and conserving water and using it wisely—no need to take so long in the shower.

Everyone can make a difference. Just by reusing and recycling we can build a beautiful future where that fish swimming in our oceans is no longer at risk. We need to stop plastic pollution now. We need to stop plastic pollution today. A happy fish is a happy future.

I thank Ella for her contribution. The second winner was Stellina Roumanous, who is in year 3 at Bondi Public School. She wrote:

Would you like your house to be covered in rubbish? Well I would not! But pretty much every one of our creatures have their home covered in garbage. So if you want to help the planet on World Environment Day or any other day, LISTEN UP!

I'm sure you've all heard of reuse, reduce, recycle. That is one way we can definitely beat plastic pollution. Reduce means to minimise the amount of waste we create. Human beings have created a lot of garbage over the last few decades. We need to put a stop to this because all of the garbage and pollution we're making can affect our lives later on. Reuse refers to using items more than once. For example, you can reuse wrapping paper, plastic bags, bottles and lumber. You can also give outgrown clothes or toys to friends or family. Recycle means putting a product to a new use instead of throwing it away.

Here are 10 examples of what you can do to help the environment:

1. Wean yourself off disposable plastics
2. Stop buying bottled water
3. Boycott microbeads



4. Cook more instead of takeout
5. Purchase items secondhand
6. Recycle
7. Support a bag tax or ban
8. Buy in bulk
9. Bring your own clothes bag to the dry cleaner
10. Put pressure on manufacturers to do better

I hope you now see how important it is to take pride in our city and protect the animals and nature. WE ALL NEED TO STOP PLASTIC POLLUTION!

The third winner was Evie from Holy Cross Primary School. She wrote:

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY!!!!

Many people don't look after this world and also we don't have a planet B. So if I were you I'd start to treat it better and not treat it like a giant trash can.

Now I've heard that the ice has been melting in the Antarctic and many animals are losing their homes and those animals are the polar bear and snow leopards and tuns more and it's getting hotter and they are all dying because of the heat. And because of that, bits of Paris and London are going to be folded in a few years because of the rising sea levels.

Now do you know that cutting down trees is bad for two reasons: it's taking innocent animals' homes and it's bad for us because without trees we have no oxygen and that does not end very well for the entire world. So we should stop cutting down trees and start finding a new way to get paper. Many things trees helped make our lives better and start a new happier life with no trees being cut down.

Ok let's talk about the amount of plastic we have in the land and sea. If we don't clean our Earth. If we don't clean this mess the beautiful sea and animals in it and on land will all get very sick.

In conclusion, a clean world is a very important thing to have for all of us and our world to live without the world we have hardly even a rock.

I thank Evie, Stellina and Ella. I also thank all the young people in the electorate who wrote to us. I know that our future is in very good hands.

### **CAMMERAY GOLF CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:31):** I highlight a real threat to the future of the Cammeray Golf Club, a precious, much-loved and historic local institution in the Willoughby electorate, of which I am proud to be the patron. The Cammeray Golf Club, a public course, is the third oldest golf club in New South Wales, having faithfully served generations of our community since 1906. It has long been ingrained in the life of Cammeray, and its continued place in the community should be assured. Shamefully, however, it now faces an uncertain future at the mercy of a local council. It has become clear that North Sydney Council, as presently constituted, would love nothing more than to see the course closed and the land repurposed for unknown alternative purposes.

It is clear there is now an underhanded campaign underway to undermine the club and achieve the council's goal. What is more, it is being done without any consultation and without the consent of the community. North Sydney Council should immediately back the future of the Cammeray Golf Club, end the uncertainty for both the club and the community, and cease its attempt to force out North Sydney's only golf course. The council is the current Crown land manager over most of the Cammeray parklands that comprise the golf course. Parts of Cammeray Park, notably the parts that house the golf club's clubhouse and car park, are currently managed directly by Crown Lands. The council recently passed a resolution requesting that the State Government appoint it to be the Crown land manager over the entirety of Cammeray Park, transferring to it control over those parts of the park currently directly managed by Crown Lands.

With the club's lease over the golf course expiring in May 2026, the council needs to give the community and the club certainty on the future. Remarkably, the council's report even recommends that "Crown land be vested in the council's ownership". The council must clearly explain why it is seeking to interfere in the clubhouse lease renewal process and should outline its plans for the future of Cammeray Park. The council's accompanying officer's report, endorsed by councillors, lays bare the real intentions of the mayor and the council in stating it will pursue the "broader potential for future public uses" of the golf course land.

It is clear that North Sydney Council is no friend of the continued existence of the golf course at Cammeray and that it seeks to destroy this historic local facility. Worse still is the lack of consultation—it has been non-existent. These moves are being made without any consultation with the golf club or the community itself. Where is the groundswell of support or calls from the community for the destruction of the course? It is simply

not there. North Sydney Council is not acting in good faith, and it is time the council stops this land grab and demonstrates some respect and transparency in the process.

Recreational opportunities are essential to the health and wellbeing of any community. This is, as I said, the North Sydney local government area's only golf course. The club has just had a significant multimillion dollar investment funded by the previous Coalition Government. A new state-of-the-art nine-hole course has recently opened, and the club has an exciting vision for the future and hundreds of excited club members. The new greens are freshly laid and already council is putting this great new community asset under threat. It has been a difficult, disruptive period for the club, with major roads projects underway, but the former Government supported the club through that difficult time, and it is now well past time that the council does likewise.

The council's actions set a frightening precedent. From tennis to croquet to football, and more, local grassroots community clubs right across the North Sydney local government area will be looking on, concerned whether they might be next. Indeed, any community organisation with land might now have a question mark as to whether the council will also seek to take their land as well. There is no question that access to local, green, open, public spaces is a challenge in an area such as North Sydney, and I have consistently advocated to boost such spaces. I will always work with the council on real solutions to boost open space, including my proposal for a green canopy over the Warringah Freeway and building other innovative solutions such as the Holtermann Street or Hume Street parks.

Also, let us not ignore that a significant part of the golf course's former configuration—indeed, at least 1.8 hectares of land, and likely more—will be returned to the community as open, publicly accessible green space for the entire community to enjoy. It is a good outcome for all in our community. The future of the golf course is assured with a new state-of-the-art course at the same time as the public receives new space once the Warringah Freeway upgrade is complete. I again call on Transport for NSW to accelerate the return of the space at Cammeray Park currently occupied by a temporary construction site, and to conduct community consultation on its future as soon as possible.

There is now a real chance to create an enduring and special place for the Cammeray community. I am continuing to advocate for a green roof over the freeway, which would unlock even more community space. I ask the council to join with me in the pursuit of that project. These are the solutions to boost public space in our community. What we do not need are local council representatives considering land grabs that will destroy historic local clubs and institutions in our community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 18:36 until  
Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**DAVE SIMMONS AND MATTHEW PARSONS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise the amazing and heart-warming efforts of Dave Simmons and Matthew Parson. The duo participated once again in the Variety B to Bash, an annual event held to fundraise for Variety – the Children's Charity. The event saw 66 cars travel 6,000 kilometres from Bathurst to the Batavia Coast across two weeks. Matthew and Dave drove, dressed as the iconic Batman and Robin, delivering supplies to regional school along the way. The children they visit particularly love their car because of the wings and Batman logos along the car and the number plate that reads "BATMOB". Dave and Matthew have been participating in the event for ten and five years, respectively, and together have raised an impressive \$350,000 in their time for the children's charity. Last year, Dave and Matthew earned the Spirit of the Valley title. This award is granted to the team that fellow Bashers believe are the most representative of Variety's mission statement, empowering children who are sick, disadvantaged or living with a disability, to live, laugh, and learn. Thank you to Dave and Matthew for the amazing work you have done and for the smiles you bring.

**WARREN DAVEY, RECIPIENT OF THE BADEN POWELL SCOUT AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate and recognise Warren Davey from the 2nd Baulkham Hills 'Outdoor' Rover Unit. On 19 August 2023 Warren was presented with the Baden Powell Scout Award. The Baden Powell Scout Award is the highest available to Youth in Australia. The award is named after Lieutenant General Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell who was the founder and first Chief Scout of the world-wide Scout Movement, and founder, with his sister Agnes, of the world-wide Girl Guide/Girl Scout Movement. Warren participated in 38 activities, assisted in 12 activities, and led other activities. Warren's outdoor activities included, bushcraft, survival skills, pioneering, hiking, camping, rock climbing, abseiling, canoeing, paddling, and cycling.

Warren has completed the requirements for appointment as a Venturer Scout Leader. He has received a certificate of adult appointment as a Venture Scout Leader, and he now leads Venturers at Cambridge Park. In May this year he led four young men on a four-day canoeing adventure on the Hawkesbury River. Warren's dedication is truly remarkable. I congratulate Warren on his efforts and on his achievement to receive the Baden Powell Scout Award.

### **SAMUEL GILBERT PUBLIC SCHOOL GREAT FETE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Samuel Gilbert Great Fete was held on 20 August 2023. The Fete lived up to its reputation as one of the greatest, if not the greatest school fetes in New South Wales. There was something for everyone at the Great Fete. There was live entertainment, Silent Auctions, Food Trucks, Face Painting, Market Stalls, Carnival Rides and much, much more. The Glenhaven RFS, the Hills SES, CareFlight and other volunteer organisations were in attendance. There was certainly fun for everyone at the Great Fete. The estimated number of persons who attended exceeded eight thousand. The Committee will use the profits from the Great Fete to assist with works at the school. Thank you to the Principal Sponsor, Di Jones Real Estate, to the Major Sponsors Robert Cliff Master Jewellers, Shine Bright Dental, Sophie Lea Photography, and CBK Select Tuition and to all other sponsors. Congratulations must of course go to the Samuel Gilbert P & C Fete Committee for the work to organise the fete. Congratulations to the President of the Samuel Gilbert P & C, Tim Richmond, Vice Presidents Elizabeth Tye and Fiona Young and to the entire committee. Well Done!!

### **FLAG BEARERS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate the six Forster Tuncurry junior footballers and the six Old Bar Barbarian junior footballers who were selected as flag bearers for the FIFA Women's World Cup quarter finals on Saturday the 12th of August at the England vs. Colombia match. Lilly Thomas, Tahlia Rose Hinsby, Ellie McDonald, Huntah Lynch, Danni Lynch, Milla Lynch from Forster Tuncurry and Mia Davis, MacKenzie James, Ella Maitland, Olivia Keen, Arabella Randle, Mya Weiley from Old Bar were the lucky girls who were selected through a competition conducted by Northern NSW Football. The girls arrived at the stadium five hours before kick-off and got a rundown of what was required. They were all provided with a uniform that they got to keep and two tickets to the game. Forster Tuncurry were flag bearers of the Colombian Flag and Old Bar were flag bearers of the English flag. Congratulations girls, what an opportunity of a lifetime – I was so excited when I found out there were going to be local Myall Lakes girls on the field!

### **FORSTER TUNCURRY GOLF CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Sue Bellamy, Club president of Forster Tuncurry Golf Club's Tuncurry course. The club's golfing museum was named one of the 15 best golf museums in the world. The museum, along with its sister site in Strathfield, was recognised by acclaimed United States-based Links Magazine. Two centres in Scotland, one from Canada and the Australian contingent were the only museums named outside of the US. This highly acknowledged museum was carefully curated on a budget, it was a local collaborative effort with contributions from Hugh Jolly, Les Brown, Amanda Hurley, Shelley Kurtz and club members who worked long hours to ensure the museum's success. Much of the memorabilia on display was donated from club members, golfing enthusiasts and the Australian Golf Heritage Museum and Society after it moved to smaller premises. The museum covers the development of golf both locally, an area which stretches from Sapphire Beach (near Coffs Harbour) to Bulahdelah, and nationally. Congratulations Sue on this well-deserved recognition. Your museum is very professional, and the fact that it was curated by members of the local community make it even more special.

### **LITTLE ATHLETICS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to congratulate Taree Little Athletics who won three major awards at the 2023 Little Athletics NSW Awards. The club was successful in the Innovative Centre of the Year, Coach of the Year and Junior Volunteer of the Year. Taree was recognised for implementing innovations which helped see the club grow its registrations from 68 in the previous season to 162 athletes in 2023. Jenny Wyllie was named NSW Coach of the Year. She was recognised for creating learning opportunities for athletes at all ability levels, providing access to specialised event training and organising squads that focused on less popular, technical events like hurdles, javelin and jumping events. Laine Wyllie, 16, was named Junior Volunteer of the Year for her valuable contribution to the running of Taree Little Athletics. Laine was acknowledged for being involved at all levels of the sport, from helping run weekly competition nights, to coaching athletes, coordinating sponsorship and novelty afternoons, and mentoring younger athletes. Congratulations Taree Little Athletics, to win 3 of the 8 award categories is a huge achievement.

### **ADAM BLATCH**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Adam Blatch of Caringbah on being named a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes program. Adam is the CEO of Feel the Magic, a charity that helps families

after the loss of a parent, sibling or guardian. It provides evidence-based resources and offers free camps for 500 children a year. The camps are developed by clinical psychologists and are a starting point for children to talk about their grief. Adam is passionate about making a difference to the lives of others and the three words used to sum him up in his Local Heroes profile are 'dedicated, compassionate, honest'. As well as leading the Feel the Magic team, Adam volunteers in the community, including as an executive mentor and coach in the for-purpose sector. I wish Adam success in the Local Heroes program and commend him and his team on the difference they make in the community as they support families in difficult times.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2023**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Laserclinics Australia Caringbah on winning the Outstanding Beauty Service award in the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards earlier this month. It specialises in laser hair removal, skin treatment and cosmetic injectables, using medical-grade equipment and advanced technology, with services performed by doctors, registered nurses and trained therapists. Laserclinics Australia Caringbah is no stranger to these awards, previously winning in 2017 and a finalist in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019. I congratulate Dance Works Studio on winning the Outstanding Performing Arts award in the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards this month. Dance Works has specialised in adult dance classes since 2005, in particular tap, jazz, ballet/lyrical, JFH, showgirl/heels and Broadway classes, from beginners to advanced. It offers classes for people wanting to dance for exercise or for those interested in performing. Dance Works also won in 2020 and were finalists in 2021. I congratulate Blushh Hair Bar in Cronulla on winning the Outstanding Hairdresser award in the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Blushh is an expansive luxury hair salon dedicated to sustainability and priding itself for using eco-friendly products in their services of haircuts, colour and styling.

### **LILIANA HERNANDEZ**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Liliana Hernandez of Gold Care Home Services for being named Business Person of the Year at the 2023 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Located in Sutherland, Gold Care Home Services offers a range of aged care and disability support services. Its aged care services include personal care, domestic assistance, meal preparation. Its disability support services include assistance with daily living and access to community. It describes its vision as follows: "To assist the Aged Care and Disability community achieve a happy and healthy lifestyle with a person centred approach and true compassion. To create an environment where our team feels valued and continues to develop their skills and knowledge".

### **MONA VALE SLSC AGM**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club on another successful year, as marked by their AGM on 6 August 2023. I thank all volunteers and acknowledge their important efforts this past season with 1,012 preventions and 57 rescues. This season was particularly special for the club, as they celebrated their 100-year anniversary on 21 October 2022. Thank you to outgoing President, Paula Tocquer, and the rest of the committee, for your service facilitating the operation of the club. A special thank you to Alan Mason for compiling the club's 100-year history. Congratulations to Peter Lever, Ross James and Noel Moran on being awarded life membership and to Ralph Stonell on his election as President. Congratulations to award recipients: Macy Beuzeville, Bethany Lever, Brett Beuzeville, Kammi Beuzeville, Tash Cowper, Aleesha Gibby, Jaimee Henery, Brooke West, Jack Richardson, Simon de Montemas, Jarrod Cowper, John Dibbs, Sandra Avedisian, Brad Newton, Olivia Strothersm Candice Ryan, Jay Torta, DeArne McWhirter, Bill Watkins, Greg Watt, Sophie Stokes, Ralph Stonell, Joel Lever, Jorja Fry, Harvey Monnock, Albie Peasland, Ben Rankin, Fletcher Humphrey, Genevieve Lawrence, Max McIntosh, Flynn Ferris Tonge, Daniel Rothery, Matt Rich, Caitlin Rich, Zara Cunningham and the whole March Past team.

### **FUZZY GOODMAN**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I am pleased to acknowledge Adrian "Fuzzy" Goodman. Fuzzy is a brilliant and selfless individual, always working hard to serve others in the Pittwater community. Fuzzy was the President of the Cottage Point Community Association (CPCA) for several years, serving as an amazing advocate for the needs of Sydney's smallest and most unique suburb. Fuzzy is known to all in Cottage Point, for being a decent, community-minded man. One resident told me that when people think of Cottage Point, they think of Fuzzy. A few years ago, a member of the Cottage Point community died tragically of a heart attack. Their family had been unable to contact emergency services quickly due to the appalling phone reception in the area. As president of CPCA, Fuzzy campaigned tirelessly to the federal government to install a phone tower. Fuzzy knew that reliable phone and internet reception would help keep residents safe and Cottage Point's wonderful local businesses succeed. The community driven campaign was a success, and funding was provided for the tower in

2020. Despite some delays, the community continue to keep pressure on the federal government and the delivery of this critical infrastructure is imminent. Well done, Fuzzy!

#### **NEWPORT BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recognise the Newport Bowling Club that celebrated its 85th Birthday earlier this year. Newport Bowlo is known as one of the friendliest social venues and sporting clubs in Pittwater. The staff and members of the club are currently running a wonderful campaign to encourage more locals to try out lawn bowls. While many sports require high levels of physical exertion, a friendly game of lawn bowls is an easy way for people to enjoy the outdoors and develop their coordination, balance, and strength. The club is passionate about sharing the benefits of lawn bowls with people of all ages in the community. I commend the clubs' efforts to foster a welcoming and positive environment for all to gather and enjoy themselves. It is wonderful to see how the club has supported our local community, hosting ANZAC day services and fundraisers for charities, including the Avalon Youth Hub. I am pleased that acknowledgement of the Newport Bowling Club is now preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country.

#### **JAMES (JIM) PRENDAGAST**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I recently had the privilege of visiting James Prendegast, a remarkable individual celebrating his 100th birthday at his home in Eastwood. Jim, as he is more commonly known, embodies a century's worth of wisdom, experiences, and memories. His life has spanned eras of transformative change, witnessing the evolution of technology, culture, and society. Of particular note was our shared history in local government. Jim served for many years as a health inspector, enforcing good practice in Council's right across Sydney. He remarked that much has changed in his lifetime, but many things also remain the same. I can only surmise he was talking about the occasional scuffle that inevitably emerges when dealing with local Councils! Jim also served in the Royal Australian Air Force, and had cause to travel to some of the more obscure parts of the world during his service. Despite being on opposite sides of the war, he spoke of a camaraderie that emerged among soldiers on the battlefields - perhaps something we could try to emulate from time to time in this Parliament. It was an honour to celebrate 100 years with Jim, and meet his wonderful wife Joan. Many happy returns!

#### **BADEN HARGARTY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge Baden Hargarty, a shining light from Marist College Eastwood, who recently brought pride to Ryde as he took centre stage at the Babe Ruth World Baseball Series in Missouri. Representing the Aussie Drop Bears, he's become a symbol of our sporting prowess on the international stage. From the streets of Eastwood to the pitches of the US, we are witnessing the embodiment of Australian talent and dedication through Baden's journey. As we follow his progress, we are not just spectators, but part of a nation united in support of our own. The Babe Ruth World Series has become Baden's arena to showcase his skills, competing against global teams and helping put Australian baseball on the map. As we watch Baden's exploits, we're reminded of our shared love for the game and its athletes. We wish the Aussie Drop Bears every success for the future as they carry the hopes and dreams of every Australian who knows the thrill of baseball. From Down Under to across the sea, Baden Hargarty is a true-blue representation of our unwavering sportsmanship and camaraderie. No doubt we will hear more from him as his career develops.

#### **VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, North Ryde RSL Sub Branch recently hosted a poignant victory ceremony commemorating Japan's surrender in the Pacific, marking a significant milestone in history. This solemn event paid tribute to the brave souls who made the ultimate sacrifice, while also celebrating the end of World War Two. With deep respect, attendees gathered to remember and honour the fallen heroes who selflessly gave their lives in the pursuit of peace and freedom. The ceremony served as an important reminder of the sacrifices made and the enduring impact of those sacrifices on generations to come. The occasion provided an opportunity for the community to come together, recognizing the collective efforts that led to the cessation of hostilities and the dawn of a new era. As the North Ryde RSL Sub Branch orchestrated this meaningful event, they reinforced the importance of remembrance, unity, and hope. Their dedication in organising this ceremony showcased their commitment to preserving the memory of the past while embracing the promise of a brighter future. I thank NRRSL Sub-branch President, Peter Colthorpe, Secretary Gordon Macpherson, and Gladesville RSL Director, Peter Astridge for their organisation of this commemoration event. Lest We Forget.

#### **OPENFIELD ARTS FESTIVAL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises OpenField, a new contemporary arts festival successfully held for the first time in Berry over four days and nights in June. Local creatives who worked as volunteers enlisted over 20 artists from the region to present a program of

high-calibre contemporary art in a free festival format. OpenField involved 130 artists, performers and public program participants in total, used 11 Council venues, presented three panels, four workshops, a First Nations program, two gigs and a film night, recruited 75 volunteers, delivered free education programming to four school and preschool groups and attracted 4000 visitors to the town to enjoy the festival. I acknowledge the OpenField sponsors and local business owners, organisers, Lenka Kripac, Co-Chair and Artistic Director, Amelia Ramsden, Co-Chair and Festival Director, Committee Members, Anne Slater, Fleur Townley, James Gulliver Hancock, Zar Bingham, Gloria Tong, Andrea Christie-David, Julie Ward, and Curatorium Members, dance artist, director and educator Emma Saunders, and Nowra-based Gomeroi man Warwick Keen is a teacher and curator of Aboriginal Cultural Art and practising artist. We look forward to another successful festival in 2025.

#### **EM SCOLLARY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Em Scollary, from Shell Cove, who lives with a rare genetic disorder called Williams syndrome. Despite the challenges the condition brings, Em entered the City2Surf event for a fifth time this year. Em walked up to 10 km with her dad Brendan almost every day to prepare for the 14 kilometre trek from Sydney's Hyde Park to Bondi Beach which took place on Sunday 13 August 2023. Em had a coach that worked with her every Tuesday morning who helped her with balance and made sure that she was prepared for this years event. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Em Scollary and wish her well in her future endeavours.

#### **ANNIKA AND CIANNA LITTLE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate sisters Annika and Cianna Little, from Warilla High School, who were selected to dance with the Southern Stars High School Dance company to perform at Southern Stars at the WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong on 25 and 26 August 2023. Southern Stars is an annual arena spectacular held in Wollongong at the WIN Entertainment Centre for public schools. It is open to all public schools across NSW and is an exciting showcase of dance, drama and music performed to a live orchestra by students from Year 2 to Year 12. Since its inception in 2001, more than 50,000 public school students have been given the unforgettable opportunity to experience performing in the event. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Annika and Cianna and wish them well performing in Southern Stars this year.

#### **EMILY JONES AND ON THE CUSP**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to take this moment to give due recognition to Emily Jones, the founder of the remarkable organization, On The Cusp. Located in the Shellharbour electorate, On The Cusp is a volunteer-led organization with a noble mission: to empower young individuals between the ages of 18 and 35, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to address vital issues within their communities. Emily's dedication and hard work serve as an advocate for creating improved opportunities for the members of her community. It is truly inspiring to witness a passionate individual from the Shellharbour Electorate striving to make a positive impact and bring about meaningful change for the betterment of the community.

#### **EDGAR ADAMS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Tonight, I would like to thank Edgar Adams for his selfless contributions to our beautiful Central Coast. Every single year, Mr Adams produces an Investment Prospectus of the Central Coast and he has done it for almost three decades. What a commitment! The Investment Prospectus covers a vast range of information from the opportunities, key industries, where to invest, education and training, workforce and so much more. Most impressive of all, it is free to the public. This document is professionally designed. It gives people from outside of the region a glimpse of the Central Coast, and what they can achieve if they relocate or invest in our region. Besides that, it also provides our residents an understanding of the local economy and the current development plans, which would require countless hours of researching time from an individual. Mr Adams' initiative shows how much he wants our region to succeed, and I hope his exemplary action inspires our community members to work together and make the Central Coast one of the most attractive places to live. To Edgar, I genuinely admire your commitment to better our region, and I wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

#### **MINGEI MATERIALISED**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Mingei Materialised is an exhibition inspired by the Mingei which roughly translated from Japanese means "folk craft" or "ordinary people's craft". Organised by Alan Tremain, this exhibition showcased in June this year, including Japanese inspired quilts and research materials collection on Alan's many adventures in Japan whether they be educational or for study. Alan R Tremain's latest quilt known as "Quilt-ffiti" is the latest in his exhibition of "ordinary people's crafts". This exhibition is the living and breathing epitome of Mingei and the founder of Mingei, Yanahi Soetsu aka Yanagi Muneyoshi would be immensely proud.

I was there to officially open the exhibition on Saturday 3rd June and feast my eyes on the brilliant art pieces which inhabit the walls of the Gosford Regional Gallery. Alan also tutors quilting, embroidery, dress making and other textile work at Narara Community Centre utilising his 40 years of experience as a male quilt designer. Congratulations Alan on this great accomplishment and I wish you and Mingei Materialised all the very best success.

#### **BENDIGO BANK CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I am honoured to praise Bendigo Bank for 25 years of service in our community. Over 25 years, Bendigo Bank, including the wonderful Ettalong Branch, have operated with a profit-with-a-purpose model, returning significant profit to the community since 1998. This unique model allows each community to decide what is important to them, Bendigo Bank then provides a path that the community can walk down. The Ettalong Beach branch opened its door to our community in 2005 and has returned \$1.36M in sponsorships and grants to the community. Over this time, the support of the Ettalong branch has allowed important community projects to move forward, including support for youth programs through the Peninsula PCYC, a donation to help build the new Umina Beach Men's Shed and contributions towards the purchase of a Community Connect Van for Pacific Link Housing. I congratulate and thank Bendigo Bank for 25 years of supporting our community.

#### **TORONTO FIRE AND RESCUE NSW**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—The 2019 to 2020 bushfire season was one we will never forget. It was the worst bushfire season on record in New South Wales, unprecedented in its intensity and scale. Over nine catastrophic months fires raged across the state. 26 lives were lost, 2,448 homes were destroyed and 5.5 million hectares of land was burnt. I would like to acknowledge and thank the lifesaving efforts of the Toronto 464 Fire and Rescue Brigade during the Black Summer fires. In particular, I would like to recognise Captain David Parker, Deputy Captain Jason Baker along with firefighters Matt McBride, Cary Hughes, Charles Hardy, Shane Ross, Alex Hardy, Todd Cawley, Paul Puller and Joey Van Lier who all recently received the National Emergency Medal for their heroic deeds during this harrowing time. In an effort to save lives and protect homes and habitat the aforementioned firefighters left their families for up to a week at a time, being deployed to locations such as Wollombi, Branxton, Bulga, Putty, Port Macquarie, Taree, Old Bar, Wauchope and the Central Coast. I thank them for their service during this time and also for the amazing work they do everyday.

#### **ORANA NSW INC**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—There are so many wonderful organisations throughout the Heathcote electorate that undertake incredible work. One of those organisations is Orana NSW Inc. Orana's vision is simple yet powerful – to empower people to have a voice and foster inclusion. This aim is achieved through a number of services, programs, courses and groups. The community centre serves as a drop-in centre where anyone can come for free tea or coffee, or to take part in groups, classes and services. The early support program helps mothers of young children by offering much needed support, particularly during the earliest stages of the baby's life. The women's health centre is run by women, for women, and offers programs such as free family law advice, as well as support for victims of domestic and family violence. The safety and healing program is a trauma informed, strengths-based program that support victims of domestic and family violence. Orana also offers emergency financial relief, support for carers and adult learning classes. On behalf of the Heathcote electorate, thank you to every member of the Orana team for the incredibly vital work you undertake to support those most need in our community.

#### **ANN SELLE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to acknowledge and recognise the hard work and dedication of lifelong volunteer Ms Ann Selle. Ms Selle has been a charter member of the Zonta Club of Botany Bay for over 29 years and currently serves as the Club's President. The Zonta Club was formed in 1994 and strives to empower and support women in the community. As President of the Club, Ms Selle was the instigator of the Breast Cancer Cushion project which has spread across Australia and beyond to make sure those suffering from Breast cancer receive a free comfort cushion which aids in their recovery from surgery. Ann has also been involved with many assembly days for the Birthing Kit Foundation which provides kits for safe birthing in underdeveloped countries. Ms Selle is truly an inspiration to us all and I want to sincerely thank her for continuing to be an advocate for women in our local community.

#### **PAM DAVIDSON**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to acknowledge and recognise the hard work and dedication of lifelong volunteer Ms Pam Davidson. Ms Davidson has been a member of the Zonta Club of Botany Bay for over 17 years and currently serves as an Executive Director. The Zonta Club was formed in 1994 and strives

to empower and support women in the community. Along with her team of volunteers, Ms Davidson has organised and led numerous programs aimed at supporting the most vulnerable members in our community. This included assembling birthing kits for women in underdeveloped countries, supporting female refugees by preparing household packs and linen and assisting domestic violence victims settle into safe housing. The list of ways Pam helps and supports women in our community is endless. As a professional nurse, Pam has carried that selfless and caring role into the Club, putting her hand up to help in whatever way she can. Pam is truly an inspiration to us all and I want to sincerely thank her for continuing to be an advocate for women in our local community.

#### **REGOGNITION OF ARMIDALE BRANCH OF THE COUNTRY WOMENS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the Armidale Branch of the Country Women's Association [CWA] for their donation of 40 sleeping bags to St Vincent De Paul, to assist their many clients in need across regional areas. I congratulate each member of the Armidale Branch including President Llani Pevitt, Sharron Chappell, Eva Raue, Helen Browning, Ruth Blanch, Pam Hulme, Donna Harris and Eleanor Austin. Regional towns and communities cannot function without the enduring support and commitment that such volunteers give. I commend the Armidale community for supporting fundraising efforts, as well as Backpack who supplied the sleeping bags, and members of the CWA for their hard work and tireless efforts, which are appreciated by the whole community.

#### **RECOGNITION OF CHRISTINE CONNOR**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise Christine Connor for achieving the Dedication to Service Award at the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network, 2023 Primary Care Quality and Innovation Awards. The awards celebrates the outstanding contributions providers and individuals make to the Primary Care sector. I congratulate Christine for almost 40 years of service to health, as a Senior Primary Health Care Nurse, with Health-Wise Inverell. Christine has made a significant contribution to the community through her work, with many people relying on health checks, advice and education, especially those in remote areas that otherwise would not benefit from primary health care support. I commend Christine and the team at HealthWise, for your hard work and ongoing commitment to rural areas within our region and to the health industry. Your valuable work is appreciated by the whole community.

#### **ST LUKE'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE STAFF**

**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 the staff at St Luke's Catholic College in Marsden Park, who became finalists at the Australian Education Awards. St Luke's were finalists for the 'Grok Academy Innovation in Curriculum Design' award, for the amazing work they did in designing a course that would allow students to obtain both their Diploma and HSC simultaneously. In the current age, innovation and design is of immense importance to ensure we are creating efficient processes, especially when it comes to education. These teachers have done an amazing job in designing this course, and should be proud of themselves for their efforts, as am I. Keep up the great work St Luke's!

#### **JOBE DEGNAN, SANDY CAMERON AND ALEX CAMERON FROM PENRITH BMX CLUB**

**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 Jobe Degnan, Sandy Cameron and Alex Cameron from Penrith BMX Club, who recently competed in Glasgow, Scotland at the BMX World Championships. Our competitors were up against some of the best BMX riders in the world. Jobe finished 6th in 1/8 finals for 10 Boys and 6th in ¼ finals for 8-12 Cruiser Boys. Sandy finished 5th in the ¼ final for 40+ Women's Cruiser. I would also like to recognise Penrith Coach Alex Cameron, who supported Jobe and Sandy in Glasgow, and competed in the Cruiser Men's final. These are amazing results on the BMX world stage. You have our community proud, and I look forward to seeing what the future has in-store for you. Well done, Jobe, Sandy and Alex!

#### **MANLY LIONS 2023**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Speaker, in July the Manly Lions Club held their change over dinner to welcome their new president, Caroline Holdstock. The night was also a great opportunity to recognise and thank all the Lions club members for the fantastic work they do in our community. A special congratulations goes to David Cowell who was awarded the Melvin Jones Fellowship for his ongoing service to the community through Lions and the inclusive Ripper Nipper beach project at North Steyne Surf Club. Speaker, I thank all Lions Club member service is an inspiration to us all and part for the fabric that brings Manly together.



**DAVID WEBB**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I rise today to recognise local David Webb who recently won the "Mr. Fix -It" award for his fantastic work for Sailability. David has volunteered for Sailability 15 years, in that time, David has combined his love of sailing and engineering to complete a range of projects of Sailability including new cupboards for the storeroom, a registration table and a mobile rack for lifejackets. The Manly community is very lucky to have David. He is someone who is willing to use their decades of experience and expertise to help the community. I thank David and Manly Sailability for all the fantastic work they and look forward to seeing them on the water soon.

**ALYNA ARAGO**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to recognise Ms Alyna Arago, for her recent scholarship in Blacktown City Council's 2023 Tertiary Scholarship Awards. Ms Arago, who is a resident of my electorate, is studying a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of New South Wales, was recently awarded with a \$1,500 Scholarship to assist in her studies. The annual program hosted by Blacktown City Council, awards the outstanding academic performance of university students who have completed at least one year of study at a recognised institution. Education is vital to our community and I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Arago on this well-deserved achievement.

**OUTLOUD - RESPECT PROGRAM 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY SHOWCASE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Thursday 27 July, I had the pleasure of attending Outloud's 10th-anniversary RESPECT showcase in Bankstown Central and it was truly heart-warming. Outloud, established in 2013, is a youth arts organisation in my electorate. They provide dynamic, socially driven arts opportunities for young people. Their award-winning RESPECT program focuses on educating boys under 12 about domestic violence and gender equality and aims to prevent and reduce domestic violence in the future. It's incredible to see how this program transforms young boys into active agents of social change and positive role models in their schools. In fact, Murdoch University has recognised this program as a model project that leads to long-term change in its participants. It's been proven that 98 percent of the boys involved in RESPECT have increased awareness and understanding of domestic violence and healthy relationships. The showcase itself was a celebration of the hard work and talent of students from local schools who over a 12-week period, wrote, recorded, and performed their original songs. I congratulate RESPECT Artistic Director and CEO, Finn O'Branagain, and the Outloud team on the important work they do in our community.

**VIETNAM VETERAN'S DAY 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 18 August 2023, I was honoured to attend the Commemoration Service for the 50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War. It was the first time in Australian history that people were conscripted. More than 60,000 Australians made the supreme sacrifice in the South Vietnam war where 523 people lost their lives, approximately 3,000 were wounded and many continue to suffer from injuries endured by that war. I joined the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia at their service at Bankstown Sports Club. It was wonderful to see many friends, especially my old mate, Anne Garland OAM. Frank Cole, President of the Association, led the ceremony and prayer of peace and Terry Corcoran, President of Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch led The Ode followed by a wreath-laying ceremony. The special program was developed in conjunction with national stakeholder consultative groups, including Vietnam veterans and representatives of the wider veteran community. Throughout the year, Australians will be encouraged to honour and remember the service of approximately 60,000 Australian men and women who served in the Vietnam War as well as their families. Lest We Forget

**MR MICHAEL EGAN – ACEL NSW INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP AWARD**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr Michael Egan, principal of LaSalle Catholic College Bankstown, on receiving the Australian Council for Educational Leaders [ACEL] NSW Individual Leadership Award. ACEL NSW hosts an annual presentation of Fellowships and leadership awards for educational leaders. Through these awards, they honour leaders who have made significant contributions to education, demonstrated outstanding leadership, and have continued to contribute to the improvement of student learning outcomes and teacher professional practice in their workplace and beyond. Mr Egan has made significant contributions to the principal and system leadership in Catholic schools. He has supported professional learning throughout his principalship career spanning more than a decade, and most

recently through his current role as President of the NSW Association of Catholic School Principals. Mr Egan's career in Catholic education spans over 39 years and includes principalship in two schools, most recently at LaSalle Catholic College, where he led the transformation of the College into a year 7-12 Co-educational College and Trade School. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the dedication and hard work Mr Egan has put into NSW Catholic education.

### **BEACH2BEACH 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—This Sunday 27 August 2023, I will join the Northern Beaches community at Beach2Beach – a fun run starting at Dee Why Beach and ending at Newport Beach. Beach2Beach invites everyone from running enthusiasts to beginners to participate in 3km, 6km, and 13km races. The track itself is undoubtedly one of Sydney's most scenic and picturesque fun runs. As an avid runner, I will be competing in the 13km course. Now in its 29th year, Beach2Beach has raised over \$3.5 million dollars for various charities including Life Education Australia, Northern Beaches Interchange [NBI], Surf Life Saving Northern Beaches, Without A Ribbon, Bear Cottage, the Sanfilippo Children's Foundation, Women's Resilience, the Northern Beaches Community Cancer Charity, OneEighty, and Sunnyfield. I acknowledge Mr Mark Bayfield for starting this initiative nearly three decades ago. I also thank the Rotary Club of Warringah and the many sponsors for their remarkable efforts in overseeing and supporting this event. I look forward to participating this weekend and encourage others to come along and enjoy the Northern Beaches at its best.

### **2ND ST IVES SCOUTS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Monday 21 August 2023, I visited the 2nd St Ives Scouts at their Scout Hall to take a look at their new driveway. Nestled in the gum trees that are abundant across the Davidson electorate, the 2nd St Ives Scouts are ideally placed to explore and protect the stunning natural environment surrounding them. Due to the difficult terrain on which the St Ives Scouts Hall is located, driving cars and towing trailers full of outdoor equipment was proving to be no easy task. That's why the former Member for Davidson Hon. Jonathan O'Dea supported them via the Community Building Partnership program to construct a new easy-access driveway. It particularly pleasing to see the smiles and grins of the young girls and boys as they admired this much-needed infrastructure investment. I have often emphasised how the Scouts contribute positively to the Davidson community and the people of NSW. I acknowledge Paul Taylor, the Maintenance Manager of 2nd St Ives Scouts, and all the other volunteers for their continued efforts in providing these fantastic opportunities for young people in the community. I look forward to engaging with Scouts in the Davidson electorate for many years to come.

### **MARITIME SAFETY IN DAVIDSON AND NSW**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In August 2023 I attended the 54th Sydney International Boat Show at Darling Harbour, joining parliamentary colleagues in a bipartisan effort to support this annual event. The Davidson electorate is home to the waterways of Middle Harbour, Lane Cove River and Cowan Creek, with several residents enjoy the passion of taking their boat out on the water. Did you know? In NSW one in ten people have a boat licence!!! As a result, maritime safety should and always be a priority for the NSW Government. I was proud to visit and personally thank the people of Transport for NSW at their stalls that promoted safety. I acknowledge the President of the Boating Industry Association [BIA] Andrew Fielding for his work in overseeing this event. I congratulate 'GoBoat' led by Nick Tyrrell on receiving the BIA Sustainability Award; and Davidson local boat enthusiast Darren Vaux on his award of life membership to the BIA. My final message to everyone: wear your life jacket. Help us all in NSW to have zero fatalities and serious injuries on our waterways."

### **CATE AND BRYCE YATES - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I recognise Cate and Bryce Yates of Griffith. Cate and Bryce operate Flow Smart, which they first opened in 2005. Today, Flow Smart is considered a market leader in the design, supply and installation of spray irrigation systems in southern NSW and Victoria. Cate and Bryce, along with their staff, have worked tirelessly to push for international recognition of their work at Flow Smart. Their efforts were rewarded when Cate and Bryce recently accepted the top Zimmatic TM Dealership Award for the Asia-Pacific Region at Lindsay Corporation's dealership convention in Nebraska. This award brings global recognition, that has been shared with Flow Smart's regionally based team. It is also the first time that this award has been given to someone outside the US. Cate and Bryce's well-deserved award represents an exciting time for innovation in Australian agriculture. Together, with the advancements of partners such as Lindsay Corporation, Cate and Bryce look forward to integrating a suite of technology for their many clients. Cate and Bryce, I commend you for your hard work and dedication to Australian agricultural needs.

**MARTY WILMSHURST - DENILIQUN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the work of Mr Marty Wilmshurst of Deniliquin. Marty moved to Deniliquin 1973 for a short stay and hasn't left since. And over the last four decades, Marty's impact on the community is undeniable, dedicating his time to countless local organisations, including the Lions Club, Drama Club, Rotary Club and more. Marty's leadership skills have also shone through his various leadership roles, such as the Leader of Deniliquin Scouts, Director of the Deniliquin RSL, and Secretary/Treasurer of the Deniliquin Chamber of Commerce. His dedication to local housing is to be commended, through his work at the RSL and Homes Out West, Marty worked tirelessly to support Veterans and those most vulnerable in our community. I would again like to thank Marty for his dedication to the Deniliquin community and wish him the best of luck in the future.

**NINA CRAWFORD AND ARCHIE MATTERS - TOCUMWAL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the impressive achievements of Nina Crawford and Archie Matters, the winners of the 2023 Tocumwal Public School Spelling Bee, and participants in the 2023 Premiers Spelling Bee. Nina Crawford's remarkable journey through the competition saw her advance to the impressive Round 5, securing her place among the last 13 students standing. Her dedication to the art of spelling and her ability to hold her own against formidable opponents demonstrate her exceptional talent and promise. Archie Matters also exhibited his linguistic prowess by navigating through the early rounds of the competition, showcasing his determination and commitment to excellence. Their accomplishments are a testament to their hard work and the support of their teachers, mentors, and families who have nurtured their passion for words and language. With the promise they have shown, I eagerly anticipate their future participation in the Premier's Spelling Bee and other academic pursuits, confident that their bright minds will continue to shine and make our community proud.

**JOANNE BUCKLEY – PRESIDENT OF HARRINGTON LIONS CLUB**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to welcome the newly elected President of the Harrington Lions Club Joanne Buckley who will lead the organisation into the 2023-2024 Lions International year. Chartered in October 1976, Harrington Lions Club emulate their International motto of "We Serve" through the championing of projects and events that make a tangible, meaningful difference in their community. Joanne is the Club's first female President in a 47-year history and is hoping to build on a legacy of delivering for Harrington and its surrounds. During the coming year Joanne plans to establish a Leo Club for teenagers aged 12 to 18 years to raise awareness amongst our youth of the benefits of service. Joanne also plans to fundraise for Ronald McDonald House through a Charity Masquerade Ball and a kid's disco, incorporating a Christmas toy raffle as part of the event. Joanne is a successful businesswoman in the Harrington and Hannam Vale communities. She owns and operates Jabiru Teaching and Learning Centre Harrington, a before-and-after-school business in Hannam Vale and the Jabiru Swim School. I have no doubt that Harrington Lions will only grow from strength to strength with Joanne's leadership and experience. Congratulations!

**COASTLINE CREDIT UNION SUPPORTING THE KENDALL COMMUNITY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the Coastline Credit Union and the Kendall Community Centre on their collaboration to open a branch of the Coastline Credit Union at the Kendall Community Centre. The Branch commenced operating on Monday 3rd July 2023 with a Grand Opening on Thursday 6 July. The opening of the Coastline Credit Union Branch follows another bank's withdrawal from Kendall. Coastline Credit Union sees this Branch opening as a strategic expansion to offer convenient access to financial services for residents of Kendall and surrounding areas. The Credit Union's support for local communities was further demonstrated by the Coastline Community Foundation making a \$20,000 donation to the Kendall National Violin Competition Inc. Over the past two decades this annual competition has brought some of Australia's most accomplished young violinists to Kendall. The donation from Coastline will support the next phase of growth for the competition. The funds will help to purchase the Category A prize for the winner of the 23rd violin competition in 2025 - a violin created by Peter Erden, a distinguished violin maker based in Munich, Germany. Thank you to all involved in the establishment of the new Branch.

**OLIVER AND CHARLIE DARGAN - STATE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise in the House today to recognise Oliver and Charlie Dargan - students from Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie who represented our region in two State Hockey Championships during Term 2. Oliver and Charlie are two talented athletes who after impressing selectors at the recent State Hockey events have launched themselves onto the professional hockey circuit. Oliver Dargan performed exceptionally well at the recent NSW Combined High Schools – Secondary Hockey Boys Championship in Kurnell and was the only player from the Lower North Coast team to secure a position in the

North Coast side. His team dominated throughout the series reaching the semi-finals, only going down in a nail-biting penalty shootout to finish fourth overall. An incredible achievement! Charlie Dargan represented in the recent Under-15 Boys Field State Championship held in Wagga Wagga. Charlie showcased his natural talents on grass to achieve a selection in the NSW Under-16's State Squad. If all goes well, Charlie hopes to gain a place in the Under-16s National Carnival in 2024. Hard work and determination are the keys to success and I congratulate Oliver and Charlie on their achievements and wish them both well.

#### **JOSHUA SHIBA, NAHRAIN KHOSHABA AND FADI YAQO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish to congratulate three exemplary Year 7 students from St Narsai Assyrian Christian College Joshua Shiba, Nahrain Khoshaba and Fadi Yaqo. They have been recognised for their outstanding performance in NAPLAN, specifically in the fields of Literacy and Numeracy. This showcases not only their dedication but also their prowess. It is commendable to see such young minds striving for excellence and achieving great feats. Their accomplishments serve as an inspiration to their peers, educators and the broader community. I am confident that Joshua, Nahrain and Fadi will continue to shine and set remarkable benchmarks in the future. Well done to these students, their families and the dedicated staff at St Narsai Assyrian Christian College for nurturing such talent.

#### **ALENA YOUSSEF AND ONIEL KAMBER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I extend my congratulations to two exemplary Year 9 students from St Narsai Assyrian Christian College Alena Youssef and Oniel Kamber. They have been recognised for their outstanding performance in NAPLAN, specifically in the fields of Literacy and Numeracy. This showcases not only their dedication but also their prowess. It is commendable to see such young minds striving for excellence and achieving great feats. Their accomplishments serve as an inspiration to their peers, educators and the broader community. I am confident that Alena and Oniel will continue to shine and set remarkable benchmarks in the future. Well done to both students, their families and the dedicated staff at St Narsai Assyrian Christian College for nurturing such talent.

#### **CLARENCE RIVER FISHERMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to the Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative who celebrated its 78th Birthday this week. The Co-operative has earned its reputation as one of Australia's most consistent suppliers of high-quality seafood products throughout Australia and South-East Asia. Its three retail outlets at Maclean, Yamba and Iluka provide the local and tourism community with fresh seafood all year round, most notably its famous Yamba prawn. It plays an integral part in the local economy employing over 50 team members. It has 90 commercial fishers as shareholders and is led very professionally by Chief Executive Danielle Adams and current Board members - Chair Brad Dixon, Deputy Chair Matt Essex, Glenn Dawson, Max Leeson, Jeff Hunt and Peter Saunders. The Co-operative has withstood many challenges over the years – natural disasters, a restructure, competition with imported seafood, a pandemic and recently the two-year ban of the Clarence green school prawn due to the on-land detection of white spot. Yet through this it continues to battle on so this important regional food producing and employment generating industry can strive for excellence in representing both its members and the community in providing a sustainable and viable future for the local commercial fishing industry.

#### **THERESE HINDER**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—I wish to give thanks to a most incredible educator in my electorate of Epping, Therese Hinder. Therese's first teaching post was at Hoxton Park High School in 1974 and since then, a remarkable teaching career has taken her to a variety of schools and department offices. At the end of term 2 this year, Therese retired from her final job as Principal at Epping West Public School, a role which she assumed in 1995 and in which I have had the privilege to work alongside her as the Member for Epping. Throughout her 28 years at Epping West, students, parents, and fellow staff members have reported on Therese's most professional and encouraging manner, and the ways in which she has been a constant support to all. She oversaw Epping West through its largest growth period, and I pay tribute to her leadership and direction. Epping West has thrived, and her advocacy played a significant role in the major upgrades the school has received over the past four years. She will be greatly missed, but I wish her all the best in her retirement. Thank you, Therese, for your contribution to the school and the broader community.

#### **ASH IS SELECTED AGAIN AMID WORLD CUP FEVER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge a talented year 11 student Ash Carty, from Albury High School for her selection to represent NSW Country in the Under 18's national soccer tournament in Melbourne. This is a great opportunity for Ash, as she pursues her dream to one day represent Australia. Ash plays the right-winger position and has already demonstrated her skills in the under-16+ and under-14 levels,

representing NSW. Her hard work has earned her this well-deserved selection to compete at the national level. Ash's versatility extends to her ongoing interests in athletics, heptathlon, and triple jump. Ash knows the value of commitment, travelling to Canberra three times a week to train and play in the National Premier League competition. This latest news is a validation of that effort and the support she has received from others to pursue excellence in her sport. Ash - I wish you every success on the field, whilst also acknowledging those who support and guide you - your family, coaches, teachers, and Albury High School community.

#### **DR GERARD FOGARTY RETIRES FROM ALBURY WODONGA HEALTH**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the career of Dr Gerard Fogarty - an Ear, Nose and Throat [ENT] Surgeon who has decided to retire from Albury Wodonga Health after decades serving his community. Dr Fogarty has been providing specialist services to public and private patients located in the North East district and surrounding areas since 1989. It was a snow trip to Falls Creek that caught his interest in Albury and led to this valuable regional career. Dr Fogarty will leave a genuine mark here, having supported and treated many individuals. I thank Dr Fogarty for his long lasting commitment to patient care and for his compassionate approach to his patients. His legacy extends beyond the operating room, as he has been a mentor, a teacher, and a source of inspiration for those who have worked closely with him. Dr Fogarty, thank you for your many years of dedication to our medical community and your enduring commitment to patient well-being, and I wish you continued success as you embark on a new chapter.

#### **JED, 12, STARRING IN AGE GROUP**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Jed Fyffe from Jindera - a talented young man who has begun to turn heads in flat-track motor racing both nationally and internationally. At just 12 years of age, Jed's recent accomplishments include second place in the 9-11 age group 85cc modified class at the US nationals in Du Quoin, Illinois. Jed's performances show immense skill and determination. He began his racing career at the tender age of 5 and has gained valuable experience and confidence over the years. Racing runs in the family, as Jed's father Mat and grandfather Laurie have both achieved success in state and national races. Jed, I wish you continued success in your racing career.

#### **JET HOFFMAN**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Jet Hoffman for his performance at the 2023 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Scarboro and Trig Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. The Aussies is an annual event where members from the country's 314 surf clubs unite to participate in almost 500 beach and ocean events that mimic surf lifesaving activities. Members of Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes Surf Life Saving Clubs made the trek over to Western Australia for this nine-day event, with their competitors taking part in the Juniors, Masters and Opens competitions. Jet from the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club took out the bronze medal in the under 17 male surf board riding event. Congratulations Jet on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **LANI WALLER**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Lani Waller for his performance at the 2023 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at Scarboro and Trig Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. The Aussies is an annual event where members from the country's 314 surf clubs unite to participate in almost 500 beach and ocean events that mimic surf lifesaving activities. Members of Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes Surf Life Saving Clubs made the trek over to Western Australia for this nine-day event, with their competitors taking part in the Juniors, Masters and Opens competitions. Lani from the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club competed took out the gold medal in the under 17 Female Taplin team event and also claimed gold in the under 17 female board relay team event. Lani also won a silver medal in the under 17 female iron person. Congratulations Lani on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **LEEANNE LONGFORD**

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

Competition, taking out the silver medal in the 50-54 year Female board race. Congratulations Leeanne on a fantastic performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **JASON ANDERSON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Narrabri pistol shooter, Jason Anderson is a member of the big bore team and together with his team members won the gold medal, shooting against the best from countries around the world. In June, the team competed at Budapest for the world titles. Australia winning gold in every category bar one and received silver for that category. Jason is a member of the NSW team which will compete at the national championships. I congratulate Jason and his team on taking out the gold medal and wish him all the best in the national championships.

#### **WARRUMBUNGLE COMMUNITY CARE TEAM**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Warrumbungle Community Care has been awarded top place in this year's NSW local Government Excellence Awards for their innovative meal voucher program- "rise and shine it's time to dine meal vouchers". Winning the category Community Development- population under 150,000. The community development award recognises leadership in community services as evidence by way of corporate process improvements. The meal voucher program proves just this. Partnered with 40 food vendors in the local government area, they supply eligible clients with vouchers to access meals at a discounted rate, while also supporting local businesses. Since this program started during the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of vouchers and participating vendors have more than doubled. I congratulate Warrumbungle Community Care for winning this award and I applaud the team for coming up with an innovative idea that not only supports those in need but also the local businesses.

#### **ELODIE ANNA MINHINNICK**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate boxer Elodie Anna Minhinnick on representing her home town of Orange with distinction at the Golden Gloves tournament in Queensland earlier this month. Despite having to contest a higher weight division when her own 54kg class failed to draw an opponent, Elodie was able to match and then beat her opponents in the 57kg division to score two wins from two bouts at the Cairns tournament. Elodie beat not only her opponents, but a tough schedule with her first fight at 9pm, while the second was before noon the following day. That second bout was against an experienced Townsville fighter whom Elodie dispatched with a unanimous judges' decision to win the featherweight Golden Gloves belt. A fitting reward on her birthday weekend! A mother of one, Elodie had already made daughter Leona proud by securing the NSW bantamweight title earlier this year. She had also earned the right to represent NSW at last weekend's State of Origin card against Queensland. Elodie trains at Orange's successful Littlefield's Boxing team and looks to have a big future in the sport.

#### **ALESSANDRO VILELLA**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge a young man with a bright future, Parkes' own 'Sleek Geek', 11-year-old Alessandro Vilella. Alessandro has earned a highly-commended honour with his entry into the Australian Museum's Eureka Prize, Australia's premier science awards. The 'Sleek Geek's Eureka Prize is one of 18 categories in the competition and encourages primary and secondary students to discuss a scientific concept in an accessible and entertaining way. This year's theme of 'Green' produced hundreds of entries. A student at Parkes' Holy Family School, Alessandro was the youngest entrant, but his film 'The Dirty Secret: Green Farming', earned him a top-10 place in the primary school division. In his film, Alessandro explores regenerative farming and the role dirt can play in carbon absorption. Alessandro's work is worthy of recognition considering the family moved from a Sydney suburb to Parkes just two years ago and since then, he has developed a strong interest in agriculture. Alessandro's mum Simran helped him put together his entry, along with Parkes farmers Greg Magill and Joel Jelbart, who lent their farming expertise. I would like to congratulate Alessandro on his success and encourage him to continue along the scientific path.

#### **CODY BURCHER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to shine the spotlight on one of Orange's rising motorsport stars, Cody Burcher. At 20 years of age Cody is establishing himself as a driver to watch, racing in the Toyota Gazoo Racing Australia 86 Series where he drives for the Sieders Racing team. Heading into the final round at Sandown next month (September), Cody is in the top three on the championship ladder after scoring several race wins and podium finishes in the four previous rounds. Cody's 2023 success has come after serving a solid apprenticeship as a teenager, starting with national and state titles in go-karts. This success earned Cody his first start in cars at a test day for Formula 4. He then linked with the Synergy Motorsport enabling him to enhance his skills, this time in Formula Ford going on to finish third in the championship in 2021. In 2022 Cody raced in the Australian Trans Am Championship and has the support of a wonderful family and a number of Orange and

Central West businesses, for which he is grateful. I congratulate Cody and look forward to watching him flourish in motorsports.

### **DUNGOG DISTRICT COMMUNITY OF SCHOOLS EDUCATION WEEK AWARDS**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—CONGRATULATIONS to recipients of the Dungog District Community of Schools Awards presented at Dungog High School during the Education Week 2023 celebration marking 175 years of Public Education in NSW. Excellence in Teaching Awards were presented to Vacy Public School's Belinda Smith, Heidi Soars from Paterson Public, Vera Middlebrook of Dungog Public and Dungog High's Robyn Norris and Susan Judd. Laura Compton of Paterson Public was recognised for Excellence in a program or initiative for Phonemic and Phonological Awareness building staff capacity to achieve a consistent and effective whole school teaching approach to phonics. Non-Teacher Award recipients included Kara Clements and Sylvia O'Sullivan of Dungog High School, Paterson Public's Judy Styman, Reid Coleman of Dungog Public and Vacy Public's Kylie Russell. Excellence in student achievement awards recognised work by Flynn Gordon from Dungog Public School, Baxta Brown and Thomas Godfrey from Dungog High, Paterson Public's Eve Keena and Vacy Public's Taylah Johnson-Ham. Recipients of School Community Awards include Belinda Butler of Vacy Public, Paterson Public's Kate Shrimpton and Sally Burgmann, Tracey Lowrey for her contribution to Dungog Public and Dungog High School's John Walton and Phyl Danvers.

### **YASMIN JIMMIESON'S ROTARY AWARD**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I WANT to acknowledge Muswellbrook's Yasmin Jimmieson for being named the NSW State Emergency Service Winner at the 2023 Rotary Emergency Service Awards announced recently in Sydney. Yasmin is a full-time university student and member of the Muswellbrook and Armidale SES units. Her roles have included being SES acting deputy unit commander, administration officer, training coordinator and Community Capability Officer across both units. Yasmin volunteers her time responding to emergency situations, organising and instructing unit training, community engagement events, attending training courses and mentoring. She is also trained in assisting communities in their time of need as a General Land and Swift-Water Rescue trained operator, which has seen Yasmin deployed across the state to several communities affected by severe weather events. Additionally, Yasmin volunteers with numerous youth organisations including Little Dreamers, Young Carer Organisation, One Door Mental Health on Fire Youth Program, and Beautiful Minds Youth Enrichment Program as a Team Leader. As a registered young carer herself, Yasmin understands the struggles young people endure when it comes to caring for someone with a disability or mental health illness. I thank Yasmin for her contributions to the community through volunteering and especially the SES.

### **BRETT CAVANOUGH TRAINS HIS 1,000TH RACE WINNER**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Congratulations Scone racehorse trainer Brett Cavanough on posting your 1,000th race winner. Brett began racehorse training in southern NSW with his first runner taking to the track in August 1999. It would be a 17 month wait before Goquillo became his first race winner. Since relocating to Scone in 2017, Cavanough's career has continued to develop with more winners, placegetters and increased prizemoney. If waiting 17 months for your first winner seems like arduous, Brett endured the longest week before achieving his recent milestone. Cavanough Racing went to Scone races on Sunday 6 August on 997 wins then by Friday 11 August all eyes were on Muswellbrook for that 1,000th winner. The somewhat elusive victory ultimately claimed by apprentice jockey Jai Williams at Casino on the Saturday with six year old gelding, Burdekin. Brett Cavanough's 2022-23 racing season included being the leading trainer of winners at Scone and claiming third in the NSW Country Premiership. At 1,000 winners – one victory remains outstanding and that is for 'Cav' to train a Group One winner – Upper Hunter wishes him well with that goal and the future.

### **1ST NORTHBRIDGE SEA SCOUTS – CENTENARY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The 1st Northbridge Sea Scouts is celebrating their centenary this year. On Sunday 30 July, I had the pleasure of visiting this wonderful Scouting division that has provided 100 years of adventure, discovery, learning, fun and fellowship for generations of local children. Boys and girls aged from 8 to 17 can join 1st Northbridge Sea Scouts at any stage and participate in a rich and varied program. As a sea scout division, Northbridge Scouts enjoy water-based activities including canoeing, kayaking, and sailing on Middle Harbour during the spring and summer months from their boat shed at Clive Park. I was delighted to support this wonderful local scout group recently with repairs to the scout hall roof, kitchen, floor and many of its major facilities. The existing hall has been on site since 1926 with a great history and an even brighter future for these scouts. I would like to offer my heartiest thanks to Sid, Mel, Steve and everyone involved with Northbridge Sea Scouts. This division is a huge asset to Australian Scouting and I look forward to many more visits to 1st Northbridge Sea Scouts.

**NORTHERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - CHATSWOOD WORLD CUP LIVE SITE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The excellence of our Matildas has captivated a nation with their stellar performance in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. To cater for their rapidly growing throng of fans, the Northern Suburbs Football Association recently partnered with Willoughby City Council to provide a live site at the Chatswood Concourse for locals to cheer on the Matildas. The live site proved a success as hundreds of fans donned in green and gold headed to the Concourse to cheer on our national football champions. The matches were projected live on a giant screen and the atmosphere was exciting amongst the adoring fans. I would like to congratulate both Willoughby City Council and the Northern Suburbs Football Association for this great community initiative and thank all those involved for making the live site at Chatswood run smoothly for the recent matches. I join with all Australians in congratulating the Matildas on their amazing World Cup performance and honour them for their phenomenal impact on both football and women's sport in our country.

**NATIONAL TREE DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was pleased to be able to mark National Tree Day in my community on Sunday 30 July. Joining staff from Willoughby City Council and local volunteers at Warners Park in Northbridge, we helped plant 500 trees. Established in 1996 by Planet Ark, National Tree Day has grown into Australia's largest community tree planting and nature care event. The program is a call to action for all Australians to get their hands dirty, give back to their community, and nurture their local environment. Since the initiative was launched 27 years ago, 26 million trees have been planted, five million people have volunteered and 10 million hours of time have been donated in what has truly become a popular, grassroots movement. Like the Clean Up Australia Day campaign, the best environmental movements so often begin from the bottom up and I have every confidence that National Tree Day will have a positive and palpable impact on our natural environment for years to come.

**SRI LANKAN FOOD FAIR**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the Sri Lankan New South Wales Catholic Association for organising such a successful annual fundraising food fair. The association's dedication and commitment are commendable because of their remarkable efforts in supporting local and international charity initiatives. Their support of local charities as well as projects in Sri Lanka is inspiring and reflects their values of generosity, inclusivity, and selflessness. In the face of challenging circumstances, the Sri Lankan New South Wales Catholic Association has shown exceptional resilience and resourcefulness. They have extended a helping hand to individuals, families, and entire communities, providing essential resources and alleviating suffering during uncertain times. They exemplify the spirit of unity, bringing together Sri Lankan migrants and the wider community in a shared vision of support and empathy. The annual Sri Lankan Food Fair provides incredibly delicious food, especially the egg hoppers, and raises much-needed funds. It fosters a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared purpose. To Claude Perera, the President, and his entire team, Thank you for the wonderful work you do in enriching us all.

**EMILY GILTINAN**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I wish to take this time to congratulate my constituent Emily Giltinan, who has been recognised as an outstanding nurse and finalist in the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2023. Emily is one of 29 nurses and midwives from NSW Health services across the state to be named a finalist. Emily has been recognised for going above and beyond to give exceptional care to her patients and her enthusiasm which inspires and motivates others. Emily enjoys the fast pace of a busy surgical ward and loves seeing patients progress under her care. But she also remembers all too well her nerves as a student and embraces opportunities to support students and colleagues in training. Congratulations Emily on being named a finalist and for being recognised for your exceptional talent, skill, compassion and caring for your patients and their families. I also want to thank you for inspiring nursing students and graduates across the Central Coast.

**SIENNA PAL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I wish to take this time to congratulate Sienna Pal, a very talented 17-year-old BMX bike rider in my electorate who has achieved her goal of competing for Australia. An NSW Institute of Sport scholarship holder, Sienna is one of Australia's top female riders with past achievements including being an NSW Pro Women's series leader and under 19 Women's Oceania bronze medalist. Recently Sienna took on the world's best international riders when she competed for Australia in the 2023 BMX Racing World Championships which were held in Glasgow, Scotland. Sienna had a difficult progression through the quarter final with a crash but went on to take second place in a thrilling final earning a silver medal. Overcoming physical injury in the lead up to the championships, her home club Terrigal BMX and the local community has been very supportive in helping Sienna get to the championships, including holding a fundraiser in July.



### TOOTOOL REST STOP COMMITTEE

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It gives me a great deal of pleasure to acknowledge and congratulate the Tootool Rest Stop Committee. Tootool was once a busy village with a school, post office, general store and two churches. Following a reunion in 2000, there was interest in having a roadside rest stop. This impressive complex was established by volunteers and it continues to be proudly and passionately maintained entirely by volunteers. I commend committee members: Elsie Peschla, Bob Peschla, Margaret Cox, Judith Lewis, the late Graham Lewis, Roy Chaplin, Barry Chaplin, Betty Chaplin, Bruce Tutty, Shirley Tutty, Michael Flinn and Lindsay Horton for their commitment and dedication to this historically significant complex. These committee members have had a hand in everything at the site from buildings to artwork, to the tranquil garden grown entirely from scratch with cuttings, to the memorabilia on display for passing travellers and visitors to enjoy. I acknowledge the hours spent to mow, plant, weed and clean are contributed by many who no longer live there. Tootool Rest Stop is a testament to this incredible group of committee members, and I congratulate their dedication to this special little oasis by the side of the road.

### TOOTOOL COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I congratulate the members of the Tootool Rest Stop Committee who joined with The Rock RSL Sub Branch to commemorate the anniversary of a tragic air crash 80 years ago. The 1943 crash involved two Wirraway aircraft from the RAAF 5 Service Flying Training School at Uranquinty and took the lives of three Leading Aircraftmen, Frank Kenneth Smith, John Christopher Chandler and Raymond Thomas Cooper. The pilot, Sgt Leonard Hardy White, parachuted out; however he was killed in another accident only three months later. The commemoration took place on the 8th August 2023 at the Tootool Rest Stop which displayed memorabilia from the accident. Two young witnesses to the horrifying scene were Jack Vennel and the late Eddie Chaplin. They were only ten years old. Eddie has since passed but John was in attendance at the commemoration. It is an honour to recognise and thank the The Rock RSL Sub Branch - Michael Flinn, Ian Marston, Grant O'Neill, James Van Strijp, Norman Woods, Greg Verdon, Peter Smith and Coral Biggs with Chaplain Colin Rush; and members of the Tootool Rest Stop Committee for commemorating this tragedy and ensuring that these brave young men are not forgotten.

### ASPIRE – MACKENZIE THOMSON AND KATELYN LAWRENCE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Mackenzie Thomson from All Saints College and Katelyn Lawrence from St Joseph's Lochinvar on their roles in the recent ASPIRE performance of The Pirate Code. ASPIRE is the Maitland/Newcastle Catholic Schools Office creative and performing arts program. Each year ASPIRE creates an original production and students are required to formally audition for dance, design, drama, vocal, stage band and production ensembles roles. This year's production the Pirate Code followed a group of pirates on the hunt for lost treasure and on the way proved that women make the best pirates and included powerful music from the fan favourites like Queen, Adele and Pat Benetar. Mackenzie Thomson played the lead character of Captain Lucy and Katelyn Lawrence was a solo vocalist in Captain Lucy's crew. Following six months of rehearsals for the cast and crew of over 150 students, the production was performed to sold out crowds over four days at Newcastle's Civic Theatre. I congratulate Mackenzie, Katelyn and the whole ensemble on their hard work and commitment and also thank the hard working and dedicated teachers who run the ASPIRE program each year.

### CODY BEAVIS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Cody Beavis who recently represented the NSW U15 All Schools at the Australian Football Championships. The tournament was held in Ballarat and Cody put in an outstanding performance, picking up a Most Valuable Player and Players Player award and the coach's award for the tournament as a whole. Cody has been playing AFL since he was 9 and is in his third year with the Sydney Swans Academy as well as the Super 24 Squad for the last two years. Cody's sister, Aleah, is also a member of the Swans Academy in the AFLW, so talent obviously runs in the family. Cody is a student at All Saints College Maitland, and he does not limit his sporting success to AFL. Cody is also a member of the NSW Country Rugby League U15 team, and has also represented his school in football as a goalkeeper in the Bill Turner Cup. Maitland Saints Australian Football Club and the whole community are so proud of Cody's achievements. I want to wish Cody the best of luck as he continues to pursue his AFL dreams, I am excited to see what the future holds for him.

### VALE DONALD GEORGE BAGNELL

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I wish to acknowledge the sad passing of Donald George Bagnell recently at the age of 89. Don was a stalwart of the Australian Labor Party, staunch unionist and lifetime member of my own branch, the East Maitland branch. Don

generously volunteered for many years as the auditor of branch finances and every election day he would most often be found on the Tenambit polling booths supporting his beloved party. During the recent state election Don was no longer able to assist on the booths but was supporting me from the sidelines. Don and his beloved wife Doreen moved to Largs a few years ago and Don cared for Doreen until her sad passing earlier this year. Don was truly one of life's gentlemen. My sincere condolences go to Don's family. To Kim, Mark and Kylie and his adored grandchildren Lisa and Adam, Amy and Evan, Aaron and Hayley, Elena and James and great grandchildren Eli and Kaley. VALE Donald George Bagnell."

#### **LAMBTON JAFFAS WIN NPL PREMIERSHIP**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Lambton Jaffas men's football team has again won the NPL, defeating Newcastle Olympic 1-0 on Sunday 13 August at Arthur Edden Oval in New Lambton. This is their second premiership in three years. The match was a torrid and physical encounter, with three players being red-carded – two for the Jaffas, and one for Olympic. Leading scorer Kale Bradbery put the Jaffas ahead in the 26th minute. They had started the match with 4-3-2 formation to get the first goal and then reverted to a 4-4-1 combination to defend the remainder of the game. Despite the odds, Lambton held on to triumph. Coach David Tanchevsky praised the character of his team and said that they knew how to win the hard way. Captain Ben Kennedy lauded his side's grit. The match displayed a great team effort from both starters and bench players. Congratulations to the Jaffas on a well-deserved win in the face of adversity.

#### **TRENT WILLIAMS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Trent Williams, Clinical Nurse Consultant and Health Service Research Fellow at Hunter New England Health, received on August 3 the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand's 2023 Cardiovascular Nursing Clinical Innovation Award. This award is given to the nurse – from across both Australia and New Zealand – who has demonstrated innovation and leadership in their clinical role. Trent has also been announced as a finalist in the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards for Nurse of the Year, to be held on 16 November. Trent comes from a long line of nurses. He completed his undergraduate degree and PhD at the University of Newcastle in Nursing and Midwifery, holds a Graduate Certificate in Cardiology and now has 20 years of acute cardiology experience. Trent has co-authored 52 papers on health outcomes of cardiology patients and was recently awarded the Hunter New England Health Clinical Health Services Fellowship, where he will set up cardio-oncology clinical systems across the district. For his untiring work with cancer patients, clinical research and mentoring of nurses - congratulations Trent on a wonderful achievement. The next generation of our nurses is in good hands.

#### **WARATAH GIRLS CHOIR AND WARATAH ENSEMBLE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—3 years ago an invitation was issued to the Waratah Girls' Choir and Ensemble in Newcastle for these young women to perform in New York at Carnegie Hall and also at Disney's California Adventure Park. Due to the pandemic, it wasn't until April 2023, with choristers as young as 13 years, that they could fulfil this amazing opportunity. The Waratah Girls' Choir was founded in 1982 by Wynette Horne OAM and is now led by her daughter, Lindy Connett. The group has since travelled the world making music, taking on exciting new challenges – bringing young girls together to discover the joys of music, to develop strong character and leadership qualities and to build friendships to last a lifetime. On Easter Sunday 2023 the Waratah Girls' Choir, along with 7 other choirs, performed "The Cry of Jeremiah" by Dr Rosephanye Powell under the direction of Maestra D'Walla Simmons-Burke. Hannah Karbowiak (25), touring as Captain for the first time noted the "friendships, team spirit and an overwhelming excitement throughout the choir community". Vice-Captain Rachael Rodgers (27) noted a "unique and incredible experience". Well done and congratulations to these talented young women.

#### **GERRINGONG HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Gerringong and District Historical Society and the work of Robyn Florance OAM. The Gerringong and District Historical Society hosted the official opening of the first, in the series of 'Glimpses of the Past' at Gerringong Museum on Saturday 29th July 2023. The archive team have been cataloguing a large number of photos and gathering information related to sport, and decided to run a series of exhibits, the first one with a focus on hockey. At the exhibition launch, I was also delighted to launch 'Hooked on Hockey: Games They Played. Gerringong Women's Hockey 1947-1957' by local historian Robyn Florance OAM. This book chronicles the early vestiges of women's hockey and captures the stories, characters and important history surrounding women's hockey in Gerringong. It was wonderful to have representatives of the current Gerringong women's hockey team on hand for the launch of the exhibition and book. I would also like to acknowledge Mrs Joy Fullagar, who is also the hard-working and dedicated Secretary of the Gerringong and District Historical Society.

### **DARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise the Darlington Public School Student Leaders and their contribution to the school community. The 2023 Student Leadership Council includes Henry Beeston, Helena Korb, Soodjai Lyttleton, Finlay McCormack, Harper Smith and Sadie Leigh-Young - Year 6 students who have been leading their school community in 2023. These students were elected by their peers and the school community after a series of leadership workshops and presentations, and are students who have consistently demonstrated the ability to lead, inspire, and effectively represent their peers. Their responsibilities include leading weekly school assemblies and other special assemblies and events, running fundraisers, representing the school, and mentoring younger students. Recently, they spoke to prospective parents and promoted the school at the Kindy 2024 Information Evening. In this role the student leaders have developed valuable skills including communication, decision-making, teamwork, and problem-solving. They play a vital role in shaping the school by advocating for student interests, promoting positive change, and organising school activities. I acknowledge the Darlington Public School Student Leadership Council, and thank them for their contributions to the school and their community.

### **NAIDOC WEEK**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I acknowledge the NAIDOC fun day I attended in Miller on 5 July. NAIDOC week invites us to celebrate and recognise the proud history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the oldest continuing cultures on earth. This year's theme was "For our Elders". The fun consisted of garden games, food, live music, and an awards ceremony. I acknowledge Auntie Lexi, who was named Liverpool's elder of the year, for her immeasurable contribution to our community. I also acknowledge the Young Person of the year, 17-year-old Tiarna-Lee Thorne, as well as the Elders Coffee Club on winning the Community Group award. The Community Member award was presented to Emma Eldridge for her contribution to cultural and historical heritage. I'd like to thank Liverpool City Council and Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council for organising the event. I hope to continue celebrating our first nations people going forward.

### **LIVERPOOL RANGERS FC**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Liverpool is known for our capacity to generate some of the world's most renowned sporting talents and our residents are particularly overrepresented on the soccer fields. A key reason for this is the strength of our local sporting clubs, and I am proud to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Liverpool Rangers Football Club. Established in 1963, Liverpool Rangers FC holds the honour of being one of the oldest clubs in the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association. Boasting three full-sized fields, the club's facilities provide opportunities for keen soccer players across our area and enable the limitless ambitions of our future sporting heroes. Over the last 60 years, the Club has generated a record number of junior female teams and recently fielded three senior female teams for the first time, highlighting its commitment to gender equality. I give my congratulations to the players, coaches and supporters of Liverpool Rangers on their extraordinary milestone. I acknowledge the contribution of President Matt McMahon and the 2023 committee for their devotion to the sport in Liverpool.

### **LIVERPOOL OLYMPIC FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—There's nothing like grabbing a lamb souvlakia and watching some of south-west Sydney's best talent taking to the field. I've had the pleasure of doing this many times down at Hoxton Park Reserve, the home of Liverpool Olympic Football Club since 1990. The Club was formed in 1982, with a vision to unite the community "through the beautiful game", and initially played at Liverpool Boys High School and Philips Park, Lurnea. Combining the proud Greek heritage of the founders and their strong sense of community, the Club provides a safe haven for young people that creates friendships, nurtures talent and fosters good sportsmanship. This is enhanced by the army of supporters and volunteers who give up their valuable time to help coach, manage and support Liverpool Olympic's teams every week. I sincerely congratulate Liverpool Olympic FC on its 40th Anniversary and wish it success in the seasons ahead. I also acknowledge the dedicated work of the executive committee over many years in servicing our growing community.

### **RECOGNITION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—The Australian Chinese Community Association, specifically their centre in Lane Cove, is a testament to the community focused nature of Chinese Australians. ACCA provides a comprehensive range of community services to Chinese Australians. ACCA is involved with the circulation of community information from Government and other agencies, assistance with language and health problems, counselling, mediation, personal and family problems, gambling problems and settlement assistance for new

migrants. ACCA is an example of the human spirit at its finest, as it is a group of people whose only goal is to help others transition seamlessly to their new life in Lane Cove. I commend all the members of the ACCA for their incredible work that has changed the lives of so many and that will continue to help Chinese Australians for years to come.

### **RECOGNITION OF THE LANE COVE YOUTH CENTRE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Young people are the backbone of Australia, they are this country's future leaders and it is our responsibility to ensure we set them on the right path for success. The Lane Cove Youth Centre has forged a community in which young people from all across Lane Cove are able to unite together, learn together and create lifelong friendships. The Youth Centre hosts a plethora of events for our youth to engage with, while at the same time teaching them the skills they need to excel in life. Events range from sporting activities all the way to cooking tutorials. With the rise of disconnecting "social media" and the concerning rise of youth isolation, the Lane Cove Youth Centre is a beacon of hope for our young as it allows them to escape their devices and meet a range of new people in the real world. I commend all the staff who make the incredible Youth Centre and its ongoing activities possible.

### **BALLINA RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the hard work of the Ballina RSL Sub-Branch in coordinating this year's Vietnam Veterans Day and the 50th Anniversary of the Withdrawal of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War. Over the weekend, I attended the Commemoration Service at the Ballina RSL, and was moved and inspired by the insights shared. More than 60,000 Australian troops served in the conflict, and 523 lost their lives. It is hard to believe that we are 50 years on from the withdrawal of Australian Troops from the Vietnam War. I would like to acknowledge the work of Ballina RSL sub-Branch President Tony Tartaro and Ballina Ex-Army Association President Allan Britt for organising the event, and thank Father Richard Brown, Bugler Brendan Flanagan, Flag Orderlies Allan Haynes and Bill Thompson for their efforts. I would also like to acknowledge Guest Speaker Murray Broomhall, who served in the 161 Field Battery Royal New Zealand Artillery during the Vietnam War. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers at the Ballina RSL Club for their hard work coordinating the Withdrawal Commemoration.

### **SHOALHAVEN BUSINESS AWARDS 2023**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—On 18 February 2023, I was delighted to attend the Shoalhaven Business Awards at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre. I want to acknowledge some of the nominees in specific categories: Outstanding Business Leader: Amy Hall, Banksia Support Services; Tracy Mayo, CareSouth; Dave Flemons, Climax Air Conditioning; Nikki Morris, Empower Me Program Inc; Kim McArthur, South Coast Brides; Karen Mason, Stay With Us; Sian Ludlow, Stella Studioz. Outstanding Employee: Nadiene Versitano, APM Employment Services; Kim Aziz, Ardent Lawyers; Joanne King, Ardent Lawyers; Beth Heard, Bright Lives; Peter Johnson, CareSouth; Cameron Galletly, Medicine in Motion Health Group; Natalie Allan, MMJ Real Estate Nowra. Outstanding Young Business Leader: Mary-Jean Lewis, Ardent Lawyers; Jack Dinnie, Bumpy Road Catering; Morgan Holt-McKean, DanceWorks South Coast; Trent Hilaire, HILL to AIR; Michala Farrell, Insight Legal Solutions; Samuel Tacey, Stella Studioz; Jonina Menzies, Yes Hair Australia / LOHY. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate Bumpy Road Catering and Events and its founders Jack and Alyce for taking out the converted 'Business of the Year' Award. I also take this opportunity to thank the Master of Ceremonies Chance and Bec Hanlon who did an outstanding job of running the event on the evening.

### **YOUTH SOLUTIONS DENIM AND DIAMOND BALL**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I had the pleasure of attending the 2023 Annual Charity Event for Youth Solutions, the Denim and Diamonds Ball. The night was filled with glitz and glamour, and it was heartwarming to see the community come together to support such a vital cause. For 35 years, Youth Solutions has been making a significant impact by focusing on drug and alcohol prevention for young people in our region. Youth Solutions delivers a range of health education programs and campaigns to reduce and prevent drug and alcohol-related harm among young people aged 12 to 25 years. Their efforts to educate, empower, support, and connect young people are inching us closer to a community of healthy, safe, and connected youth. . It truly takes a village to keep our young people healthy and safe, and I want to extend my gratitude to all the people, businesses, and organisations who are part of the Youth Solutions family, supporting their crucial work. Let us continue to rally behind Youth Solutions and their mission to create a better future for our young generation. Together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our youth.

### **NEW SCOREBOARD AT VICTORIA PARK**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I am thrilled to share the news of the official opening of the new scoreboard at Victoria Park last month. It was an honour to be in the company of Mayor Matt Gould, Deputy

Mayor Matthew Deeth and Cr Michael Banasik for this momentous occasion. The scoreboard, named in tribute to Merv and Freda Davies, stands as a testament to their unwavering commitment to the club. The presence of the Davies family, including several active members of the Magpies, added a special touch to the event. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the juniors and seniors club, as well as the Picton Magpies Old Boys, for their fundraising efforts and dedication in bringing this project to fruition. Furthermore, I want to express my appreciation to the numerous local businesses who generously donated their time, materials, and services at cost, ensuring the success of this project. The new scoreboard at Victoria Park symbolises the spirit of community and shared commitment to our local sports clubs, enhancing the game-day experience for players, supporters, and spectators alike. Thank you to everyone involved. Your collective efforts have created a lasting legacy for the Picton Magpies and the entire community.

### **COWRA LIONS CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the Cowra Lions Club 2023 Citizen of the Year, Jenny Richmond. Jenny was acknowledged and recognised with this prestigious award for all her unwavering dedication and commitment to improving the lives of diabetes patients. Jenny is the Diabetes Nurse at Kendal Street Medical Centre in Cowra. The Lions Australia Diabetes Foundation strives to reduce diabetes and enhance the quality of life for those diagnosed with the condition. Each year the foundation hosts a walk called 'lap the map' to help raise funds and much needed awareness to this lifechanging condition. In a conversation between Cowra Lions Club and Jenny, both agreed 'lap the map' needed to be introduced to Cowra. As a result, they collaborated to organise this walk at the Prisoner of War camp area with educational activities and informational handouts available to participants. Currently the Cowra Lions Club and Jenny are working together with the Cowra Council to co-sponsor larger sharps containers to be installed around town. Jenny's passion for her work makes her a very worthy recipient of this award.

### **UNGARIE CWA 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to extend a huge congratulations to all the current and past members of the Ungarie Branch of the Country Women's Association [CWA] on their 100th Anniversary. I was fortunate to join the members of the Ungarie CWA on 26 July to celebrate this magnificent milestone. I heard all about the amazing social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of this association from over the past century. The Ungarie Branch of the Country Women's Association was first formed on 21 July 1923 and I was honoured to recognise and celebrate the 20 active members of the club being; President, Claire DeVaney, Vice President, Anne Wells, Secretary, Pam Brewer, Treasurer, Margaret Daniher, Roslyn Bennett, Pat Daly, Pam Feally, Lyn Golding, Eileen Keatley, Julie Keatley, Tove Larsen, Beth Lemon, Paula Manawatu, Brony Mason, Sam McCubbin, Pat McGrane, Lyn Nicholls, Lurensa Rowling, Jo Ward, Vanessa Williams, who are contributing to such an important community organisation. I congratulate the Ungarie Branch once again.

### **ELISABETH HALL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to congratulate Elisabeth Hall who was sponsored by the Lions Club of Young, District 201N4 in recognising her achievements. Elisabeth was nominated as a State finalist for Lions Youth of the Year Program 2022-2023 and placed second overall. Elisabeth is incredibly involved within her school community, and represents her school, Hennessy Catholic College as Gallagher House Captain. Additionally, Elisabeth has been involved with swimming, dance, art and music, cross country, netball and debating including several significant achievements at both the State level and for the Riverina. Outside of school, Elisabeth continues to be involved in an array of community groups such as Eisteddfod's, Musicals, Bands, Theatres, several sports, and other community-based events. For her monumental efforts, Elisabeth has received numerous awards, most notably the Premier's Respect Award 2022, Long Tan Youth Leadership and Teamwork Award 2021, Gallagher House Award 2022, Caltex Allrounder Award 2020, William Rheubenson Foundation Scholarship Holder 2018-2023 and Acceptance into University of Canberra Fast Forward 2022-2023 Award. Elisabeth is an outstanding young woman who I look forward to meeting. Elisabeth, well done, keep kicking goals and all the best for what I am sure will be a bright future.

### **STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS RIVERBANK PARK ADVENTURE PLAYSPACE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Yass Valley Council's planning and development teams' contribution to the Riverbank Park adventure playspace. It is with great excitement from the community that the park was officially opened on the 1st July 2023. This is a significant asset for the growing Yass community and is already providing many beneficial outcomes for locals and visitors. The playspace includes a skywalk, mouse walk, flying fox and other upgraded facilities, embracing the goals of the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, which aims to grow healthy and sustainable communities by providing access to nature and recreation, with the opportunity to enhance quality of life for residents. I take this time to acknowledge the significant work undertaken by the Yass Valley Council's planning and development team of Melinda Cooke,

Dominic O'Malley, Seamus McGurk, Greg Farthing, Clayton Dunley, Braith Ironside, Callum Ironside, Ben Burden, Tony Warren, Brett Reardon, and Adrian Paull and their dedication to make the project reality. The adventure playspace will undoubtedly prove to be a valuable commodity within the Yass community, and I thank each and every one of you for the contribution you have made to the community.

#### **CRAIG SMART**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—Today I recognise Mr Craig Smart. Mr Smart has recently celebrated his retirement from Lachlan Shire Council, leaving behind many colleagues and senior staff, who have referred to him as a true asset to their team, and a mentor to many. Mr Smart took on the role of senior engineering assistant with Crookwell Shire Council in 1989, seeing the amalgamation of Crookwell, Gunning, and parts of Mulwaree Shire Councils in 2004, which formed the Upper Lachlan Shire Council. During his thirty-four years of service with Council, Mr Smart undertook roles which focussed on design and development work, as well as asset management. Major works, of which he was involved, include the upgrade and construction of roads such as the Taralga, Gunning, Boorowa and Junction Point roads and the Tuena Bridge construction. Mr Smart recognises the benefits of advanced technology through the years, such as GPS, aiding in the works conducted. Mr Smart's service to Council and local government, and the major contribution to the development of infrastructure within the local community is to be commended. It is with great sincerity and recognition that I say thank you and wish you all the very best in your retirement.

#### **GOULBURN YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I recognise participants and staff of the Goulburn Youth Mentoring Program. The 96km Kokoda Track is a place of national significance to Australia - known for its gruelling physical and mental challenges that it places upon those brave enough to make the trek. In July, eight young persons from the Goulburn electorate headed off to Papua New Guinea to undertake the ten days walk, taking on the steep ascents, descents, river crossings, narrow tracks, and extreme weather conditions, not to mention the weight of their individual packs that they were required to carry. As part of the Goulburn Mulwaree' Council's Youth Services Program – individual twenty-week program, the trek was an experience to assist those participating to recognise that life challenges that they may encounter can be overcome utilising their own skills, abilities, and knowledge or by seeking the assistance from others when required. I acknowledge the leadership and commitment of the mentors Luke Wallace and Anna Wishart from Council's Youth Services Team and Senior Constable Barb Beard Youth Officer for the Hume Police District. I sincerely congratulate all youth participants who participated and completed this momentous trek, highlighting your strengths, abilities and celebrate new confidence.

#### **FAREWELL, DANIEL WALTON – NATIONAL SECRETARY AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Farewell and thank you to Daniel Walton for his service as National Secretary of The Australian Workers Union [AWU]. Mr Walton concluded his tenure with the AWU on the 13th July 2023. I thank Dan for his dedication to working families and the trade union movement and congratulate him on his progression as Group Executive, Strategy & Growth with Employers Mutual Limited. Mr Walton has had a long and distinguished career, serving with the AWU for 15 years. His advocacy and representation of the interests of working men and women has been instrumental in achieving fair pay, working conditions and safety-on-site. Mr Walton's leadership was vital in efforts to protect the steel industry, improve conditions for vulnerable workers like fruit pickers, and modernise processes within the AWU. Thank you, Dan, for helping give a voice to Australian workers and shaping the AWU to what it is today. I wish you the very best in your new role. I also welcome Paul Farrow as the AWU's 22nd National Secretary, succeeding Mr Walton. I look forward to collaborating with Mr Farrow to continue supporting workers in our Western Sydney community.

#### **CATHERINE MCAULEY, WESTMEAD – PARRAMATTA WOMEN'S SHELTER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Catherine McAuley Catholic College on their incredible and successful fundraising efforts which went towards supporting the Parramatta Women's Shelter. Catherine McAuley Catholic College is a Mercy school, that teaches young women to actively participate in a dynamic world as autonomous lifelong learners. Students, leaders, teachers, and the school community collaborated to offer creative fundraising events. This included a Mother's Day stall, bake sale, money trail and a lip sync battle to raise funds and bring awareness. Together, the school donated a total of \$9,004 to the Parramatta Women's Shelter. The Parramatta Women's Shelter assists women and children escaping domestic and family violence, gender-based discrimination and homelessness. Catherine McAuley's donation will support the Shelter to offer clients education, employment, legal assistance and fund essentials such as food to feed a family, access to crisis support and a safe night's sleep. Congratulations to Catherine McAuley Catholic College for their generous community support. I also thank the Parramatta Women's Shelter for their continued work offering safe

shelter and support to women and children seeking new beginnings. I applaud both the school and shelter for their compassionate example of how our community cares for each other.

#### **GREYSTANES FC BREAKFAST AND OPEN DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was wonderful to join the Greystanes Football Club on Saturday, 12th August 2023 at Bathurst Street Park for their annual breakfast and open day. Greystanes FC is a pillar of our local sporting community in Western Sydney. Since its establishment in 1970, thousands of families have joined the club, making it one of the largest football clubs that service our families in Greystanes, Pemulwuy, and surrounding suburbs. Currently, the Club has over 750 members, over 250 of which are females. As a volunteer run organisation, I commend Greystanes FC on their dedication to the constant growth of the Club and its long-term viability. The leadership team, players, and families are always striving to improve the sporting experience for its players, through initiatives such as philanthropic events and improvements to the playing field. The 2023 breakfast and open day was a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the Club with the Greystanes FC sporting community, as one of their Club Patrons. Thank you to Club President, David Apps, Secretary Eamonn Donohoe, Committee Members, volunteers, and families for your hardworking efforts to offer a fun and inclusive football hub for our Western Sydney community.

#### **JULIE DE NARDI – LOCAL ITALIAN LEGEND**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to honour Julie De Nardi – a much loved and respected member of the Lismore and district community. Immigrating with her family from Italy in 1952, Julie spent her life helping others in the Lismore community. During the floods of 2022, Julie coordinated a huge volunteer effort within the Italian community to support those affected by the flood. She opened her home to flood refugees, coordinated gifts, vouchers and donations from Italian communities across the State for Lismore residents. Julie is a passionate advocate for Lismore and her Italian heritage and is involved in many groups which assist our Lismore community – St Vincent's Hospital Consumer Advisory Group, Club Marconi Lismore Advisory Group, Lismore Friendship Festival and New Italy Museum. More recently, Julie coordinated 35 volunteers for the LisAmore! Festival, which celebrates our district's rich Italian cultural heritage and provides a fantastic multicultural free family fun day. Through their efforts in providing a pasta bar and salami BBQ at the festival, Julie was able to donate \$7,000 to the Lismore Friendship Festival coordinating committee to deliver future events to celebrating our diverse community. I commend Julie for her continuing passionate community spirit.

#### **ANNE DEVER – HUNTER REGION BOTANIC GARDENS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion)**—Speaker, Today I'd like to recognise someone that's quietly made a significant contribution to one of Port Stephens' local treasures, the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. Anne Dever has been the curator of the beautiful Rainforest and Gundabooka Gardens at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens, and has recently announced her retirement. Anne has volunteered at the Gardens for more than 13 years and in 2020 was awarded a Meritorious Service Award for long and outstanding service. I am also told that Anne holds another prestigious title – an 'OBE' - Over Bloomin' Eighty. Under Anne's leadership, and with the hard work of her team of fellow volunteers, the Rainforest and Gundabooka gardens have been transformed into two of the centre's most popular attractions. I recently enjoyed Anne's company as we walked through her rainforest garden to view the stunning sculpture exhibition, "Sculpture in the Gardens" – which is still on and well worth a visit. Thank you Anne, for all the time, energy and knowledge you've generously given to the gardens over many years, I know you'll be missed by the garden's many volunteers.

#### **WELLINGTON REDBACKS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate the Wellington Redbacks first-grade rugby team on their remarkable victory in the 2023 Oils Plus Rugby Premiership. Their triumph is not only a testament to their skill, determination, and teamwork, but also a source of immense pride for our community. Last Saturday the Wellington Redbacks returned with the 2023 Oils Plus Premiership Cup held high, following their astounding 'come from behind' victory against the Coonabarabran Kookas. The final score of 27 to 18 reflects the tenacity and unwavering spirit with which our Redbacks took the field. This victory was no ordinary one – it was a tightly contested grand final boilover, a win that defied the odds and showcased the true heart of our team. Throughout the season the Wellington Redbacks demonstrated their exceptional skills and dedication. They faced challenges head-on and pushed themselves beyond their limits. Under the leadership of Captain/Coach Kieran Brien, and the guidance of Neale Brien and Heamani Lavaka, the Redbacks displayed a level of energy and commitment that was simply unmatched. Congratulations once again to the Wellington Redbacks, and best of luck for next year!

**WELLINGTON AND DISTRICT LEADER 100TH EDITION**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise the Wellington & District Leader, which will be celebrating its 100th edition next week! Over the course of these 100 editions, the Wellington & District Leader has become more than just a newspaper; it has evolved into a reliable companion that has kept us connected with local news, events, and stories. The Wellington & District Leader has played a crucial role in bringing our community together, highlighting the achievements of our residents, and shedding light on the issues that matter most to us. In an era of rapidly changing media landscapes, the newspaper's consistent presence and commitment to journalistic integrity are commendable and greatly appreciated. I extend my gratitude to the talented team behind the paper – Mark Griggs and Sharon Wilson – who have both demonstrated a remarkable passion for capturing the essence of our community through the pages of the Wellington & District Leader. Your hard work and dedication have not gone unnoticed. Congratulations once again on this remarkable milestone. Here's to many more editions of the Wellington & District Leader!

**REGIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Brenda Moon & the team at Regional Australia Bank in Dubbo for their incredible contribution to local groups and organisations at their recent Community Partnerships Program presentation evening. With the bank's dedication to making money do more, customers with an everyday transaction account are asked to select their chosen organisation or cause they would like to support, and the bank handles the rest, calculating the client's average bank balance and contributing a percentage of that figure annually to that fund. This year, the fund delivered an incredible \$336,130 in support to a wide range of incredible groups and causes in the Dubbo region. By providing financial backing to these groups, you are not only helping them thrive, but also fostering a sense of unity and collaboration within the community. Your actions set an inspiring example for other businesses to follow, and it is so heartening to see Regional Australia Bank prioritise the support and development of the communities you are a part of. Congratulations once again and thank you for making a difference where it truly matters.

**VALE DON BRINKWORTH**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—It is with great sadness, I acknowledge the passing of Don Brinkworth, a long time member of Mosman Branch within the Liberal Party of Australia. Don joined the Mosman Branch on the 16th of January 1989 and became the President of the branch in the mid-nineties. For most of his time in the branch Don was a FEC/SEC delegate and a regular attendee and active participant in FEC/SEC meetings. As a dedicated Liberal Party member Don participated in all House of Representatives preselections, including being a member of the pre-selection committee for The Hon Tony Abbott's preselection for Warringah in 1994. As many of our party members are during elections, Don was always a hardworking booth captain at Mosman High School for many state and federal elections. I acknowledge all effort and contributions that Don contributed to our local Liberal Party and I extend my sincerest condolences to Don's family, friends and the members of Mosman Branch. My thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time.

**LINDA THEBRIDGE NSW SONOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Linda Thebridge's recent achievement of being awarded NSW Sonographer of the Year at the Australian Sonographer Association Awards. As the head of Vascular Ultrasound unit at the Royal North Shore Hospital, Linda is known for her incredible efforts of providing specialised care to her patients whilst pursuing her PhD at the University of Sydney and actively contributing to training sonography students. The Vascular Ultrasound Unit serves various specialised areas including acute spinal patients, severe burns, trauma, reconstructive surgery, vascular and cardiac vascular surgery. I commend the tremendous efforts of Linda and her workers for providing essential care to patients and their families. Linda is now pursuing translating research into clinical outcomes by actively investigating the efficacy of protocols she developed, aiming to optimise ultrasound usage for better patient outcomes. I thank Linda for her continuous dedication and devotion towards the Vascular Ultrasound unit at Royal North Shore Hospital. Congratulations once again and I wish you all the very best for your future endeavours.

**COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—It was wonderful to attend the Holman Barnes Group Community Spirit Awards recognising community groups working and supporting our community, and budding artists and students from the Inner West Primary and Secondary Schools. Australian sports commentator Ms Stephanie Brantz was MC for the event and did a wonderful job making the event enjoyable and fun for all. I would like to thank the staff and Board including Chairman, Mr Tony Andreacchio for the invitation to attend and for organising a great day. At the event, I met Abbotsford Public School student William McMartin who was awarded and named as a finalist in the 2023 Arts Competition. His artwork is being displayed in the foyer of West



Ashfields Leagues Club. William's artwork is beautiful and he is very talented artist. He told me that the inspiration for his work was the environment and the importance of looking after our world for future generations. I would like to sincerely congratulate William. It was lovely to meet you, your parents, and your twin brother. I am sure your family, friends and school community are all very proud of your achievement.

#### VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY SERVICE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recently attended a service in my community at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway to reflect and honour the sacrifice of defence personal in World War II. Each year on the 15 August we commemorate Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender. For Australians this marked the end of the Second World War and is known as VP Day. It was a moving service and was attended by many veterans, serving defence force personal, consular diplomatic members, community groups, RSL Sub-branches, schools, politicians and members of the public. I laid a wreath at the Memorial on behalf of our community in honour of our Australian Defence Forces. We will never forget the sacrifice many Australians made to defend our nation in war. It was wonderful to see special community involvement including the Choir from Strathfield North Public School, preschool students from Concord West Rhodes Preschool and students from local high schools to commemorate this day. Thank you to the Chair of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Ms Jennifer Collins OAM, the Board, and staff for their work in facilitating this important service and for their steadfast commitment to honouring veterans.

#### GIANNI MUSUMECI

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate Mr Gianni Musumeci who was recently elected the new President of the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has a proud history of connecting local businesses and people through its forum. As President, Gianni has the important role of guiding and supporting the Chamber and its members through the current issues experienced by businesses in Five Dock. The business strip along Great North Road is a thriving community hub of wonderful small and family-owned businesses but it is currently facing many challenges, as a result of Metro construction and the need to increase parking. I recently met with Gianni and his passion for the suburb and for its people is to be commended. I have already seen him visiting businesses along Great North Road to introduce himself and listen to small business owners and staff. I have faith that Gianni will serve this role exceptionally well. He will navigate the Chamber through some uncertain economic times and ensure that Five Dock continues to be a lively and ideal suburb to do business and attract visitors.

#### COAST SHELTER

**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 Coast Shelter for receiving Business of the Year and Outstanding Community Organisation at the 2023 Business Wyong Awards hosted at Wyong Race Club July 29. Coast Shelter provide support across the Central Coast in the community who are experiencing homelessness and domestic violence with a range of services including hot meals, emergency accommodation and transitional housing assistance, social work support, domestic violence support and counselling, mental health and drug and alcohol counselling, and life skills training and workshops. Recently CEO Michael Starr and staff were thrilled for the new facility in Wyong to open. It is another step forward in Coast Shelters mission to provide comprehensive support and resources to those in need and will serve as a much-needed hub on the Northern end of the Central Coast community. The Business Wyong awards are to celebrate the local businesses who positively impact and support the community. Well done to the team at Coast Shelter for being recognised in the community by making a difference within society.

#### NEUROKIND

**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)**—Co-founders Matthew Craig and Jaime Wroe from Neurokind at Wyong received the Outstanding Start Up of the Year award at the 2023 Business Wyong Awards, hosted at Wyong Race Club July 29. NeuroKind is a psychology service with a team who provides affirming individual, family, and group support to build capacity, knowledge, and self-awareness for neurodivergent individuals to thrive as their authentic selves. The NeuroKind team individually see each brain as valuable and worthy of love and respect. New programs have recently been launched for term 3 focusing on all about being unapologetically you and unmasking your authentic self, introducing the neuro develop, neuro body, neuro discover and neuro parent program along with existing programs already up and running. NeuroKind turn challenging obstacles into opportunities for growth and push the boundaries in understanding neurodiversity and fostering a more inclusive society. The Business Wyong awards are to celebrate the local businesses who positively impact and support the community. I congratulate NeuroKind for their outstanding affect towards the people in the community and continue to grow and make a difference.

**JAKOB GILES**

**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)**—An outstanding celebration has been put on show through out the Toukley community with the win of 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. Toukley player 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 with a great set up from team player Jakob Giles. 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. Congratulations to Toukley backrower Jakob Giles who received man of the match with an excellent no-look offload to set up Aaron Heaven's second try. Jakob's form is strong in defence and a potent weapon on attack, over the back half of the season he has shown excellent line running yielding. Recently Jakob has played over 50 senior games and received the Players Player award in 2022.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY SUDHA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of celebrating a very special birthday in my electorate. Sudha Natarajan is a very close friend of mine and she is also the Co-Chairperson of the Resourceful Australian Indian Network [RAIN] in Penshurst. So last week I knew I just had to visit her with flowers and a birthday card in hand to wish her a very happy birthday. Sudha has become a local icon within our Indian community as she founded what has become one of the biggest and most successful Indian organisations in my local community. RAIN provides an invaluable service to the community through their many outreach programs, particularly focusing on supporting our Indian seniors to continue to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. Whether it is assisting in applying for grants, cooking food or helping to run RAIN, Sudha has dedicated her life to helping others, ensuring that no one is left without support, care or love. Speaker, I want to again wish Sudha a very happy birthday and all the best.

**CRUST AND CREAM**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise a new small business Crust & Cream which is located in Riverwood. Crust & Cream is a new café which has recently opened up within the Riverwood Shopping Precinct along Belmore Road in my electorate, providing a much need boost to my community. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity of taking the Mayor of Georges River Council, Cr Nick Katris, Cr Lou Konjarski and Cr Veronica Ficarra to visit the owner Huss Sharaf to discuss his background in business and to recognise his hard work. Supporting small businesses like Crust & Cream is so important as they are the backbone of our local economy and I want to commend Huss on his dedication and hard work to revitalise our local area and create a fun and welcoming environment.

**SYDNEY PRAYER BREAKFAST**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Sydney Prayer Breakfast, held annually at the International Convention Centre for people of all denominations who work and live in the Sydney CBD. It was fantastic to meet with our Faith-based communities, enjoying a morning of prayer, good conversations and off-course, great food. The event is organised by the City Bible Forum, who do a fantastic job of coordinating each year. As Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I've had the pleasure of working closely with faith-based organisations throughout New South Wales. Their commitment to their local communities is clear through the work they do. I truly couldn't be prouder of what they have achieved over the years. Faith-based communities uphold the very same values that this great State was built upon. Mutual respect, fellowship and caring for each other are core to the success of New South Wales. I'd like to thank Chairman, Neville Cox for the work he continues to do for faith-based communities in New South Wales. I very much look forward to attending next year.

**KATERINA MCNALLY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Held every two years, the WorldSkills National Championships is Australia's largest vocational skills contest—and amongst the nine students from Newcastle and Maitland who went to the 2023 championships was Kotara South local Katerina McNally. Katerina and fellow TAFE NSW Nursing student Neave O'Reilly joined more than five hundred vocational students at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 17 to 19 August. The winners are in the running to be selected for the Australian Skillaroos team, who will compete against teams from more than 75 countries in France next year. As part of the competition, Katerina and Neave were tested on critical healthcare worker skills demonstrating

self-management, communication, problem solving, innovation, creativity, and empathy. Katerina said she was confident heading into the competition, thanks to months of mentorship by TAFE NSW teachers Lynelle Jenkinson and Anne MacLeod. Crediting their support for her skill and confidence, Katerina is a shining example of our TAFE system. Congratulations to Katerina, Neave and all their fellow competitors. This is what makes TAFE NSW so great!

#### **BOB SHERIDAN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It's not just anyone who can complete a 12,000 kilometre lap of Australia on a bike, but 68-year-old St Mary's College Gateshead teacher Bob Sheridan isn't anyone. On 11 April, he started out from Townsville headed to Broome and ended up cycling the length and breadth of the continent: through the Kimberley to Perth, across the Nullarbor and on to Mildura before heading up through the Riverina to end his trek at Nobbys Beach in Newcastle on 14 August. His odyssey has raised more than \$26,000 for the Black Dog Institute and included stops at schools where Bob delivered presentations on overcoming depression and building resilience. For Bob, this cause was personal: he was abused as a child and lives with post-traumatic stress disorder. He has said he hopes his journey inspires people to seek the help they need, and has been open about how he had difficulty seeking help due to shame and stigma. He said he was surprised by how many people opened up to him on his journey about their own experience with mental health, and credits this with helping him get through the difficult days. Good on you, Bob. What a truly inspiring journey.

#### **NEWCASTLE NORTHSTARS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—If the Newcastle Northstars planned to close out the Australian Ice Hockey League regular season on a high note, they achieved their goal. In front of a capacity crowd at the Hunter Ice Skating Stadium, the Warners Bay-based team managed a convincing 7-5 victory over the Canberra Brave in the final game of the regular season. I will admit this game had a personal dimension for me. It was in June last year I dropped the ceremonial puck at a Northstars versus Brave match, and I've been keeping my eye on the great competition between the two sides. Their campaign continued into the first round of the play-offs against the Perth Thunder on Saturday 19 August. After a blistering third-period offensive, Thunder ended up carrying the day 4-1. While their season has ended, it has been an absolutely stellar one for the Northstars—they played their final game in front of a packed house at Hunter Ice Skating Stadium, and I couldn't be more proud of them. Congratulations to the team, and here's to a great season in 2024!

#### **COMO-JANNALI JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the Como-Jannali Junior Rugby League Football Club (Como Crocs) who are the successful recipients of \$10,000 from the NSW Government's 2022/23 Local Sport Grant Program. Founded in 1947, the Como Crocs have developed a reputation as a community minded club that deliver programs for their members both on and off the field such as Mates 4 MENTAL Health. Through this funding, the Como Crocs hosted their annual Indigenous Round which I attended on 5 August 2023. The day included a Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony, professional dancers, a didgeridoo performance and commemorative football jerseys for the players. I take this opportunity to commend the hard-working volunteers behind the Como Crocs. I recognise executive committee members Hayden Garn, Chris Bowden, David Bruce, Samantha Heather, Justine Goldsbrough, Jay Putterill, Nathan Sykes, Jason Prenzel, David Follmi and Steve Green and Indigenous Liaisons Shareen Moran, Faith Perryman, Sean Bateman and Damien John. Grassroot sporting organisations like the Como Crocs are an important part of our local community and I commend them for celebrating indigenous heritage.

#### **JOHN COOK**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to John Cook on receiving Life Membership of the Bathurst City Croquet Club. Since 1989 John has made a significant contribution to the Club advancing both his skill base and a high level of service to the organisation. Undertaking roles as President, Secretary, Treasurer and Lawn Committee Coordinator John has been a driving force in developing the Club. John's undertakings have ensured that ongoing upgrades at the Croquet Club are implemented at both an operational and maintenance level to the highest possible standards. John has represented Bathurst at numerous Club, Interstate and National Tournaments and his success has placed him amongst the top level of players in NSW and Australia for Association Croquet. Additional qualifications were also gained by Mr Cook as a referee for Association Croquet which has led to duties at both State and National levels. John Cook has been a tireless worker for the Bathurst Croquet Club demonstrating a distinctive level of commitment and dedication and as such he is a most worthy recipient of acknowledgement and recognition as a Life Member.

**ANNETTE MCMANUS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Annette McManus on receiving Life Membership of the Bathurst City Croquet Club. Annette has been involved with the Croquet Club since 1996 and has made a significant contribution through many aspects of the operation of the organisation. Annette has organised the Annual Croquet Carnival since 2000, has been on the Club Executive since 2003 and undertaken the role of Treasurer for 20 years. As well as at the local level, Annette has represented Bathurst and Western Region in NSW Competitions, achieving success in many events in her division. Annette dedicates significant time in training and developing others, undertakes to promote and encourage community involvement and participates in fundraising activities. From cleaning the Clubhouse to designing the new kitchen Annette has embraced every opportunity to be a committed and dedicated member of the Bathurst Croquet Club for the benefit of all members. Despite failing eyesight and the progression of Parkinson's Disease Annette continues to play and participate at all levels of the Club and she is a wonderful role model and inspiration for this sporting code. Congratulations on the recognition given to Annette McManus as a Life Member and extraordinary Ambassador of the Bathurst City Croquet Club.

**PROFESSOR JOHN DEARIN AM**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Recognition of immeasurable levels of community contribution must be given to Professor John Dearin AM. After 47 years as a Doctor Professor Dearin is winding down his General Practice although he will continue with his university work and prison clinics. Commencing his medical career in 1975 he trained in internal medicine at Royal North Shore Hospital as well as working as a Director of rehabilitation and geriatrics at Mona Vale and Tamworth Hospitals before relocating to Lithgow. Notably Professor Dearin has also made a significant contribution to the University of Notre Dame Lithgow Campus since 2006 through as a Senior Lecturer and an Associate Professor role both of which he considered 'an enormous privilege'. The impact and service Professor Dearin has made to the community is outstanding and has endeared him to peoples from all walks of life. Congratulations Professor John Dearin you are an extraordinary Citizen who has enhanced and enriched the lives of so many – no greater service can one give.

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