



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday 13 September 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 13 September 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.]*

## *Bills*

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

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (10:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The intent of the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023 is to provide improved governance for Insurance and Care NSW, also known as icare. The Minns Labor Government made a commitment to the people of New South Wales that we would reform icare. The Government has already acted to strengthen the icare board. The Government legislated to ensure that there are two directors nominated by employer and union representative organisations. The bill aims to complement that reform. The bill establishes clear objectives for icare and the icare board. Those objectives will provide guidance for the board members when they are exercising their functions as directors. The new objectives will help the board members focus on what needs to be achieved when they are setting icare's business strategy and plans and overseeing its performance. The objectives will provide a point of reference that every decision of the icare board must have regard to.

Icare should be, at the heart, a service provider organisation. It was established to consolidate service provision for the State's multiple insurance and care schemes—to be a centre of excellence for those schemes and provide an improved focus on return to work and quality-of-life outcomes. The bill will help icare focus on its original goals. The State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the SICG Act, sets out broad functions for icare as a service provider. Those functions describe the activities that icare is legally authorised to perform to fulfil its role. However, the Act currently provides no statement of objectives or overarching principles to guide the icare board and executive on what needs to be achieved when exercising those functions. The proposed objectives will address a gap or imbalance in the current Act, which sets out principal objectives for the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] but does not do the same for icare.

The icare board is responsible for overseeing a very complex organisation that has objectives and functions spread out over multiple different insurance and care schemes, and pieces of legislation. Providing workers compensation is a key role for icare, but it is nonetheless only one of icare's many roles. Icare acts for the workers compensation Nominal Insurer, established under the Workers Compensation Act 1987. The Nominal Insurer provides workers compensation for private sector employers who do not hold a self-insurer licence or are not covered by various industry insurance schemes. More than 330,000 employers are insured by the Nominal Insurer, providing cover for over three million employees. In line with the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the Nominal Insurer is responsible for managing the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund, held on behalf of employers and workers. The Nominal Insurer held around \$20.4 billion in assets as of 30 June 2023.

Workers compensation for dust diseases is regulated separately to other workers compensation. Icare has responsibility for administering this compensation on behalf of the Workers Compensation (Dust Diseases) Authority. Icare also provides workers compensation self-insurance for New South Wales government agencies

and their employees through the Treasury Managed Fund. In the financial year 2022-23, icare received more than 68,000 new claims for workers compensation on behalf of the Nominal Insurer. The Treasury Managed Fund received over 21,000 new workers compensation claims and paid over \$1.1 billion in benefits to sick and injured workers.

Workers compensation insurance is, however, only one of the multiple services that icare provides. Icare also provides care and support for people who are seriously injured in motor vehicle accidents or sporting injuries. Over 1,800 people living with long-term injuries from road accidents are supported by the Lifetime Care and Support Authority, administered by icare. People who are building their home are also protected by icare. Home owners have access to home building compensation insurance for incomplete work and unsatisfied statutory warranties in the event that their builder dies, disappears or is insolvent, or has their licence suspended for failure to comply with a money order made by a court or tribunal in favour of the home owner.

Icare provides self-insurance for the New South Wales Government through the NSW Self Insurance Corporation. New South Wales government agencies and government-related business are covered for a broad range of insurable risks. This includes claims for medical negligence, property and vehicle damage, natural disasters and other general liabilities. Icare also arranges insurance for New South Wales government construction projects, providing comprehensive cover for the agencies that commission projects and the contractors who undertake the construction.

Managing these multiple functions is a complex task. The bill sets out objectives, which are stated at high level, to help the icare board and executives navigate overlapping statutory functions and provide a clear direction. I also make it clear and stress the point that all of the objectives in the bill are intended to be of equal significance, with no objective taking precedence over another. Further, the proposed objectives do not negate or otherwise detract from the objectives of the different schemes that icare is responsible for or the statutory functions that icare has under the legislation establishing those schemes. Icare will continue to be responsible for achieving the statutory objectives of the workers compensation system, set out in the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998. Icare will also continue to be responsible for achieving outcomes for all the other insurance and care schemes that it administers on behalf of our community.

The first objective confirms that icare must maintain the affordability of insurance and the efficiency and viability of all those schemes it administers. These schemes must be financially viable for the long term. Premiums, levies and other contributions to these schemes, as well as investment income, must be sufficient to meet its liabilities over time. Employers, workers, motorists and home owners must be confident that the extensive funds that icare holds on behalf of the community are managed efficiently and will continue to be sufficient to protect the community. The cost of these insurance and care schemes to the community must be affordable. The levies and contributions that fund these schemes must be based on the efficient delivery of services while also ensuring that statutory benefits are available and accessible. The treatment and care services provided must be high quality and help restore people financially and socially.

The second objective focuses, in particular, on the treatment and care services funded by icare through its personal injury insurance and care schemes. This objective emphasises that icare should focus on funding access to treatment and care that helps injured persons get back to work and to other activities in the community. It stresses the importance of ensuring that injured people have the best opportunity to participate in their community. The workers compensation system has clear objectives, which are set out in section 3 of the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998. The Act makes it clear that the workers compensation system should provide prompt treatment for injured workers; that workers should be getting effective and timely management for their injuries; rehabilitation should be available when it is needed; and the goal should be getting people back to work as soon as possible. That is key. That is critical. That is the Government's goal; that is icare's goal now. It is all of our goals, both employers and unions. It is about getting people back to work.

Section 1.3 of the Motor Accidents Injuries Act 2017 sets out objects for that Act. These include encouraging early and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation to maximise recovery from injuries. The proposed objective for icare reinforces the system-wide objectives for workers compensation and the statutory objects for motor accident compensation, along with icare's other personal injury insurance and care schemes. Establishing the proposed objectives for icare in legislation makes it clear that icare should be focused on achieving those system-wide objectives through its business operations. At the same time, it does not detract from or dilute icare's statutory responsibilities for those other schemes, such as the Home Building Compensation Fund, which it also supports.

The third objective in the bill for icare is to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability in the conduct of its operations. That objective reflects what is expected of a public financial corporation providing mandatory insurance across our community. Icare has unique functions and governance arrangements, which means it is appropriate to reinforce that expectation. Icare manages insurance and care schemes with billions of

dollars in assets that are held in trust for our community. As of 30 June 2023, that included around \$20.4 billion for the Nominal Insurer and around \$9.2 billion for the Lifetime Care and Support authority fund.

Those schemes provide vital protections for the community, supporting people with injuries through challenging life events and providing a backstop to protect people who are building or renovating their homes. The community needs assurance that icare is conducting its operations as efficiently as possible to avoid putting upward pressure on premiums, levies and other contributions, and that the assets that icare holds in trust for the community will continue to deliver protection in the long term. The third objective confirms that icare needs to be accountable for how it undertakes functions, achieves its objectives and meets community expectations.

I now turn to the other provisions in the bill. Section 7 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 provides that the responsible Minister can give written directions to the icare board if the Minister is satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest. The power is a necessary safeguard that ensures that I—or any future Minister—can intervene if necessary. The power can be exercised only in the public interest. The Act also requires the responsible Minister to consult the board before issuing a direction. That is sensible and appropriate. However, the Act currently provides that the Minister must seek advice from the board on whether, in its opinion, complying with the direction would not be in the best interests of icare. Instead, the bill provides that the icare board will be asked to advise on how a ministerial direction would impact on the board's ability to achieve its principal objectives—the objectives that the bill establishes.

The change is in line with His Honour Mr McDougall's finding that it is essential that I, as Minister—or any future Minister—have advice that can help refine the direction if that is necessary in the particular circumstances before a direction is made. The bill also inserts new section 12A, which establishes a power for the Treasurer to require that icare provide specified information when so directed. The bill provides that that authority can be delegated to the Secretary of NSW Treasury. The new provision is intended as a transparency measure and makes clear that the Treasurer and, by implication, the Treasury have a clear interest in icare and its operations. It provides a clear signal and gives legislative expression to the concept that the Treasurer and Treasury have an enduring role in the financial governance and oversight of icare. As such, the Treasurer and Treasury bring both an economic and fiscal lens to icare and its operations.

Workers compensation is a direct cost to business and has some relationship to the level of business activity across the State and, therefore, upon economic growth. Similar considerations apply with respect to home building compensation insurance and its impact on housing activity. As the Government's social insurer, icare holds significant assets in trust for the wider community through its different scheme funds. And for government, through the Treasury Managed Fund, the Treasurer has a clear role under the NSW Self Insurance Corporation Act 2004 and Insurance for NSW to oversee the management of those funds, which, along with its liabilities, also form part of the State accounts. As such, the bill makes explicit the authority available to the Treasurer to require that icare provide information about its operations and that this same authority may be delegated to the Treasury secretary when deemed necessary.

The bill is another step in the reform journey. It responds, in part, to a recommendation of the Hon. Robert McDougall that icare's roles and responsibilities, along with those of SIRA and SafeWork NSW, be clarified. Clearly, a number of Mr McDougall's recommendations relating to SIRA's role and responsibilities remain unresolved. They are under active consideration by the Government. Further, an independent review of SafeWork NSW is currently underway, also being led by Mr McDougall. I anticipate that further legislation may be required as a result to progress further reforms.

I have many people and activists to thank but, before I do that, I assure the House that the Minns Labor Government is working very hard. We have inherited this mess. Change will not happen overnight, but we are working diligently and in a considered and methodical way. We are going through a very rigorous process. I take this area of my portfolio responsibility seriously, because in my 12 years in opposition I saw the destruction and dismantling of our workers compensation system and what the former Government did with respect to icare and what it allowed icare to do. We have worked diligently. I acknowledge the work of the Treasurer, who worked diligently in exposing what happened to icare over the many years under the former Government.

We are repairing and reinvesting. It will take a long time to regain trust and respect from business and injured workers. I am working very hard. Icare knows my expectations, the Government's expectations and the community's expectations. We were elected on a mandate. I want to see people return to work. There are three million workers under the Nominal Insurer. I want to see SafeWork and icare working together in a coordinated way to make sure that there is prevention; that, in cases where there are breaches with respect to safety at work, there are heavy penalties; and that, when people are injured at work, they are looked after immediately, and are triaged, case-managed and not treated terribly or spoken to terribly. That has to change. The agents are on notice.

I acknowledge that I have met a number of our icare caseworkers from the lifetime care scheme in Newcastle and Wollongong. I acknowledge those workers on the front line. I spent some time with them. I thank them and express my appreciation for their work in dealing with injured workers diligently. The bill is the next part of our reform process. As I said, it will take a long time to fix the former Government's mess. It never listened; it just hid and did not acknowledge that there were problems. I acknowledge the Injured Workers Campaign Network, Unions NSW and our business community, which has been calling for icare to have clear statutory objectives.

The new Minns Labor Government is delivering on its commitment to reform icare to make it better for injured workers. I reassure our business community that we are working hard. One of the first things that I did as Minister was intervene in a proposed 22 per cent premium increase, which members opposite left for us. It is still very tough for small business, but I reassure the business community, the mum-and-dad small business operators, that we are working hard. I have instructed icare to build better relationships with our small businesses, to outreach and build relationships with our chambers of commerce and to provide information and support for our small businesses. I reassure our injured workers that we are doing everything humanly possible to fix this system. It will not happen overnight, but we are working in partnership. I reassure them that today is the start of a new beginning, and the Minns Labor Government is delivering on that need. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

### **PAINTBALL AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Paintball Amendment Bill 2023. Paintball is enjoyed recreationally and competitively by thousands of people in New South Wales and, indeed, around the country, with nearly 2,900 paintball marker permits and 45 venue permits as of 31 August 2023. The Paintball Act 2018 sets out a modern permit system and regulatory framework for paintball markers and paintball activities. The Act removes red tape for paintball businesses and makes it easier for the people of New South Wales to play paintball in a safe and controlled environment. The bill proposes a number of amendments to the Act. Most of the amendments are based on the statutory review of the Act, which was completed in 2022.

The amendments will clarify the Act's operation and improve consumer and public safety, while balancing the needs of New South Wales paintball venue operators. Some of the key amendments include strengthening the requirements for when a paintball marker permit holder wants to use their own marker at a licensed venue, strengthening the requirements for transporting paintball markers, allowing for the use of paintball markers outside of authorised venues where it is appropriate and in the public interest, and introducing requirements on interstate paintball marker suppliers to level the playing field for New South Wales suppliers. For example, interstate suppliers will be required to sell paintball markers in New South Wales only through authorised New South Wales suppliers.

I now turn to the specific amendments in the bill, and first to the amendments in the bill that will enhance the safety provisions within the Act. The Government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of those participating in the sport of paintball, as well as the venues that house paintball activities. Through the amendments that will enhance safety, the Government is demonstrating that consumer and public safety is, and continues to be, its primary consideration. Central to the safety of the sport of paintball is the permit system established under the Act. Currently, permit holders are not required to show or display their permits. During consultation on the statutory review, stakeholders raised concerns about venue operators being unable to verify consumers' paintball marker permits where consumers wanted to use their own markers. Noting those concerns, the bill proposes new sections 41B and 36B.

New section 41B requires the holder of a paintball marker permit to show their permit before entering an authorised venue if they wish to use their own marker. New section 36B requires venues to not allow a person to use their own markers at the venue unless that person has shown their paintball marker permit to the venue operator or their employee. A maximum penalty of up to 200 penalty units, or about \$22,000, is proposed for a venue permit holder who does not sight the permit of a person who wishes to use their own paintball marker at the venue,

to ensure compliance with the Act and enhance consumer and public safety. New sections 41B and 36B will jointly serve to make sure that a person who wants to use their own paintball marker has the proper permit. They will also ensure that the owner of the paintball marker knows how to use markers safely and responsibly, since they must have completed the required NSW Paintball Marker Safety Training course to apply for a permit.

Concerns have also been raised that consumers were unable to check the credentials of paintball venues. This has potential risks to consumer safety, particularly when parents and guardians take their kids to play paintball. They want to be able to choose a safe venue for their kids. In response to this, the bill proposes to insert section 36A into the Act. Proposed section 36A will require venue operators to clearly display their paintball venue permit or permit number and registered business name at the paintball venue and on their website or social media platform. A maximum penalty of up to 20 penalty units, or \$2,200, is proposed for a venue permit holder who fails to display their permit at their venue or on their website or social media platform. This new requirement will improve consumer safety and awareness. Consumers will be able to easily verify a paintball venue's credentials before participating in activities at the venue.

Part 4 of the Act outlines the conditions of every permit, including the requirements for storage and transportation of paintball markers. The current requirements for transporting a paintball marker are much weaker when compared with the requirements for storing a paintball marker. The Act currently provides that paintball markers must be transported in an inoperable state, such as by having the gas canister removed, and must be in a secure bag or container that conceals the paintball marker and does not indicate that it contains a paintball marker. Given the risks involved in transporting paintball markers, the bill proposes to amend section 34 of the Act to require a paintball marker to be transported in a bag or container that is locked, is not able to be readily accessed by an unauthorised person, conceals the paintball marker, and does not indicate that the bag or container contains a paintball marker. These more stringent requirements will ensure that the transport of paintball markers is done as safely as possible with minimum risk to the public.

The bill also seeks to clarify the number of paintball markers a paintball marker permit holder can purchase and possess. The statutory review of the Act found that there is ambiguity about whether paintball marker permit holders and international paintball competitor permit holders could purchase multiple paintball markers under the one permit. The Act currently allows for the purchase and possession of a paintball marker. The original intent of the Act when it was introduced in 2018 was for operators and individuals to only need one permit, regardless of the number of markers they own. This approach reduces the administrative burden, fees and charges for individuals wanting to participate in the recreational sport, as they will only need to apply and pay for one permit. To clarify this provision, the bill proposes to amend section 12 of the Act to specifically allow the holder of a paintball marker permit to purchase and possess one or more paintball markers under a single permit.

Similarly, the bill proposes to amend section 13 of the Act to allow the holder of an international paintball competitor permit to have more than one paintball marker under a single permit. These amendments will clarify the operation of the Act and cut down administrative burden for paintball marker permit holders. However, the obligation under part 7 of the Act to register each paintball marker remains. This means that the serial number of each paintball marker must still be notified and recorded on the register of paintball markers to ensure that it can be tracked. The register is an important public safety measure. Further, the bill will introduce greater flexibility into the Act. It will introduce new amendments to provide flexibility by allowing for the use of paintball markers in activities other than the sport of paintball.

The Act currently prohibits the use and possession of paintball markers outside authorised paintball venues. Significant penalties apply for breaches, including two years' imprisonment, penalties of up to \$55,000, or both. Limiting the use of paintball markers to authorised paintball venues was designed to ensure the safe use of paintball markers. It ensured that people who were participating in the sport of paintball were appropriately equipped and supervised. However, these provisions have inadvertently prohibited certain activities that are for the public good. The statutory review received seven submissions from the special effects industry, advocating for the use of paintball markers for TV and film, each advising that paintball markers are safer to use than other alternatives such as pyrotechnics.

Prior to the introduction of the Act, individuals in the film and television industry were able to use paintball markers for special effects. I also understand that researchers at the University of New South Wales have been conducting research on safety equipment in paintball games and using paintball markers in a laboratory environment. This is clearly a genuine use of paintball markers that serves the public good and presents very little risk to public safety. It is apparent that the Act has limited the use of paintball markers in ways that were not intended.

Through this bill, the Government is demonstrating its commitment to providing commonsense and flexible laws that continue to uphold public safety. To enable the Act to allow for the use of paintball markers outside an authorised venue, the bill proposes to amend section 5 to give the secretary the power to authorise the

use of paintball markers at a place other than an authorised paintball game venue. This amendment will mean that paintball markers can be approved for use in appropriate circumstances—that is, for the public good and in low-risk settings.

To ensure that there are limits and appropriate safeguards on the secretary's authorisation power, the bill inserts new section 5 (3) into the Act to allow for the Paintball Regulation to prescribe certain matters in relation to applications for the secretary's authorisation. The regulation may prescribe the following matters in relation to applications for authorisations: the process for making an application; the approved application forms; application fees, including the reduction, postponement, waiver or refund of fees; the considerations the secretary must take into account when deciding whether or not to approve an application; and the process for applications to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an administrative review of an application. These amendments will ensure that the Act is flexible, while still safeguarding consumers and ensuring the public good.

The bill will continue to ensure a level playing field between New South Wales and interstate paintball marker suppliers while strengthening the Act to ensure consumer and public safety. Part 2 of the Act outlines key offences, one of which is the unauthorised supply of paintball markers. It is an offence to supply a paintball marker unless the supplier is either an "authorised supplier" or a paintball marker permit holder supplying a paintball marker to an "authorised supplier". To sell paintball markers to consumers in New South Wales, an authorised supplier is required to hold a paintball venue permit, firearms dealer licence or weapons dealer permit. Part 7 of the Act requires an authorised supplier to notify the department if it supplies or is supplied with a paintball marker to enable that information to be recorded on the register of paintball markers. This ensures that all paintball markers sold in New South Wales can be tracked to assist with compliance, investigation and enforcement activity. However, the current Act contains gaps in these critical provisions, which the bill will close.

The Act does not currently apply to suppliers in jurisdictions outside of New South Wales. This has created a regulatory gap whereby New South Wales consumers can purchase paintball markers from interstate suppliers that are not vetted or approved, and those suppliers are not required to notify the department when they sell a paintball marker to a consumer in New South Wales. This poses a significant safety and regulatory risk. To close this regulatory gap, the bill proposes two amendments: an amendment to section 9 of the Act, which will recognise interstate paintball marker suppliers that hold equivalent licences or permits in their own State or Territory under the New South Wales regulatory regime and allow those suppliers to supply paintball markers to New South Wales consumers via an authorised New South Wales supplier; and the insertion of a new provision, section 82, which will allow for the Act to have extraterritorial application to support the recognition of equivalent interstate authorisations.

It is worth highlighting the significance of the requirement for interstate suppliers to supply only via an authorised supplier in New South Wales. This measure will enhance consumer and public safety, as only suppliers who have already been assessed in their own jurisdiction as fit to sell firearms can sell paintball markers into New South Wales. Authorised New South Wales suppliers will be required to notify the department of any supply, receipt or disposal transactions regarding paintball markers from interstate suppliers. Relevant details of these transactions will be recorded on the paintball register, ensuring the integrity of the tracking system for paintball markers, which is a key public and consumer safety measure. These proposed amendments stem from feedback from industry stakeholders during the consultation process. Industry representatives reported that other Australian States and Territories' firearms laws require paintball markers to be supplied interstate between licensed dealers.

The bill will ensure that interstate suppliers are subject to the same requirements as New South Wales based authorised suppliers that supply to other States and Territories. The bill will level the playing field and make it fairer for New South Wales suppliers when competing with interstate suppliers. While I understand that extending the notification requirements to interstate transactions may impose a small administrative burden on authorised New South Wales suppliers, that is thoroughly outweighed by the importance of ensuring that all paintball markers sold into New South Wales are appropriately registered, recorded and tracked. As I have said before, consumer and public safety is this Government's highest priority.

The bill will also insert two clarifying provisions in relation to imitation firearms and the use of paintball markers. Following the commencement of the Act in 2019, paintball markers were no longer classified as firearms under the Firearms Act 1996. This change was made on the basis that paintball markers, by design, are sporting devices that are non-penetrative, non-lethal weapons used in lower risk activities. However, in some cases, the appearance of paintball markers can substantially duplicate a firearm. In this instance, the paintball marker may also be classified as an "imitation firearm" under the Firearms Act 1996.

An imitation firearm permit is required to possess or use an imitation firearm, including a paintball marker, which falls within the definition of an "imitation firearm" under the Firearms Act 1996. In those cases, paintball owners require both an imitation firearm permit and a paintball marker permit. An imitation firearm permit can only be issued if the Commissioner of Police is satisfied that an applicant has a legitimate reason for possessing

or using an imitation firearm. This is the law as it currently stands. To ensure that this is clear, the bill inserts a legislative note at the end of the definition of a paintball marker that states that a paintball marker may also be an imitation firearm and, if that is the case, a person will be required to hold a paintball marker permit under the Act and an imitation firearm permit under the Firearms Act.

Noting that paintball markers may be used in ways not authorised by the Act, the bill also inserts a legislative note at the end of section 5 to confirm the effect of section 4 (7A) of the Crimes Act 1900. The note clarifies that if a paintball marker is used to commit an offence, the paintball marker will be treated as a firearm for the purposes of the Crimes Act. Making a clearer link between the Act and the Crimes Act both confirms the current legal obligations on people that use paintball markers and provides assurance to the public that there are sufficient controls in place to address the misuse of paintball markers. The proposed clarifying provisions reinforce that the Act is a regulatory tool for a low-risk recreational sport, but highlights that the design and use of paintball markers may invoke the provisions of the Firearms Act and the Crimes Act under certain circumstances.

The bill before the House proposes amendments to the Paintball Act 2018 that have been the subject of extensive targeted and public consultation. The amendments reflect current community attitudes and expectations on the regulation of paintball markers and paintball venues and activities. I thank the stakeholders consulted in the drafting of the bill, including the NSW Police Force, the Department of Communities and Justice, the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office, paintball businesses, members of the paintball industry and the wider public. The bill upholds consumer safety and prioritises public good, and clarifies the legislation in important ways. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the attention of members to the presence of the photographer in the public gallery. As I informed the House yesterday, the House in session photograph that will now be taken is a longstanding tradition of the House and memorialises the composition of the Parliament after the official opening. The photograph captures parliamentary staff who are routinely involved in sittings of the House. I ask members to check their attire and their hair. I ask that somebody pay special attention to the member for Wagga Wagga!

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the presence of the former Minister and inaugural member for Port Stephens, Bob Martin. It was very nice to speak to him earlier in the day. Regardless of the reason for his attendance, it is much appreciated. I extend a warm welcome to my guests in the gallery.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Name him.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I have more than one. I welcome Mr Kifi Hale, CEO of the Heartland Foundation, Gervais Appave, Serge Felix, Roseanne Embry and Jack Hornsby. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Vacluse, Evie Crinis and Stellina Roumanous, winners of the Environment Day competition speech. They are accompanied by their parents, Peta Fitzgerald, Bianca Gallifuoco and Norm Roumanous. I also welcome Councillor Jamie Chaffey, Mayor of Gunnedah Shire and chair of the Country Mayors Association, guest of the member for Tamworth.

I acknowledge year 5 and 6 students, teachers and parents from Toormina Public School, guests of the member for Coffs Harbour. For the record, I note I was born in Coffs Harbour and am waiting for a bronze statue there in my honour. The former member for Coffs Harbour was difficult to deal with on that issue; I hope for more assistance from the current member. I also acknowledge law studies students from MIT Sydney campus, guests of the member for Sydney. I welcome Karissa Siourounis, guest of the member for Bankstown.

#### *Bills*

### **CRIMES AMENDMENT (CORRUPT BENEFITS FOR TRUSTEES) BILL 2023**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.



*Announcements***MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT SESSION**

**The SPEAKER:** Today at 1.00 p.m. in the theatrette the New South Wales Information Commissioner, Ms Elizabeth Tydd, and the Acting New South Wales Privacy Commissioner, Ms Sonia Minutillo, will present at the Members' Development Session on the role and functions of the New South Wales Information and Privacy Commission. I encourage members and staff to attend. A light lunch will be provided.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery Ms Minako Tateno, Vice-Consul of Japan, guest of the member for Strathfield. I also recognise the former member for Mount Druitt and Father of the House, as I knew him, Richard Amery. I am sure he could give me some advice. I look forward to catching up with him.

*Question Time***CHILDCARE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FUND**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:10):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister guarantee that the \$775 million in the 2022-23 Coalition budget—which had the support of the then Labor Opposition—for the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund will still be paid?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:10):** I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition. It is a great opportunity for me to inform the House and the people of New South Wales that this Government is all about providing education and fixing the mess left to us by those opposite—from the early years, all the way to after school and to TAFE. That means we will continue to support the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund, to which the Leader of the Opposition refers. We supported it when we were in opposition—in fact, I recall that we strengthened it through amendments. Today we have made a series of great announcements about what we will do with the money in next Tuesday's budget. Again, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that the money in next Tuesday's budget, for the first time ever, will go towards fee relief for three-year-olds in preschool programs, in long day care centres. We do that—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Someone said "two-year-olds". Two-year-olds do not access preschool. We are talking about preschool.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister will come to order. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. The Minister will not invite interjections.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They are very, very confused when it comes to anything to do with the education of our most precious resource: our children. In next Tuesday's budget the money will be used for—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. We know that the Government made an announcement today about \$100 million. What we want to know is whether there is a guarantee that the \$775 million in last year's budget will still be put into it?

**The SPEAKER:** For the information of members, I will not order the clock to be stopped too often today because we lose too much time. The Minister is being directly relevant.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Mr Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Shock, horror! I am happy to take an extension of time to talk about what the Minns Labor Government is doing to educate our children. It starts with investment in universal preschool. It starts with what we are doing with the fund that we supported—that is in next Tuesday's budget. We are proud to support the delivery of fee relief to help with the cost of living to encourage more three-year-olds to access the life-changing opportunity of early childhood education and care for the transition to kindergarten—that play-based learning is so important for little minds—as well as helping women and men, mums and dads back to work. That is what the fund was designed for. We supported it, and we will continue to support it in next Tuesday's budget. In answer to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, this government is about supporting the education of a child from that point all the way to post school. That is why we have just landed an historic agreement to pay the teachers of New South Wales what they are worth, that last night those on the other side opposed.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was whether the Minister will guarantee the \$775 million in the 2023 Coalition budget.

**The SPEAKER:** My previous ruling stands. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The Opposition is either completely deluded or does not understand its own question. It is trying to perpetuate this furphy that we are cutting something that we are not. This morning we made announcements about the fund. The Opposition is very confused. We are about supporting the education of a child from the get-go to the end. [*Time expired.*]

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:15):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is tackling the teacher shortage in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:15):** This is an important question. The way we are tackling this is by bringing forward an increase in the salaries of the tens of thousands of public school teachers in New South Wales. First year teachers in New South Wales will go from the second lowest paid in Australia to the best paid. Experienced teachers in New South Wales will go from the third worst paid in Australia to the best paid. This will attract the best and brightest to our teaching profession and will genuinely invest in the next generation of young Australians. If we want a nimble, diverse, growing economy, this investment is essential for the next generation of young Australians. The work that the Deputy Premier has done will, for the first time in 10 years, turn around the rapid movement of retained teachers away from the teaching profession. To put this in perspective, for example, one in five teachers quits the profession in the first five years of their service—three years at university, one year of practical, two years in the classroom, then they quit.

The onboard costs to replace those teachers are astronomical. There has been a 30 per cent decline in the number of university students who study teaching or education at university. Those numbers are unsustainable if we are to grow the education workforce of the future. If we are to think about the Australian economy as more than what we dig out of the ground to sell to the rest of the world, but as an advanced economy that relies on our ingenuity, our manufacturing capability and the inventiveness of the next generation of young Australians, that can only happen with an investment in public education. That has been comprehensively opposed by those opposite with the return to the wages cap in New South Wales, and most spectacularly by the self-described best environment Minister in Australia's history, Matt Kean. If you self-describe something, it is a little bit like buying one of those aprons that says, "World's Best Chef". It does not make it true because you have called yourself that. Last night he said, "One thing I will give the Deputy Premier credit for: She tells a great fairytale."

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to make reflections on members of the House, he should do so by way of substantive motion. That is what the standing orders are for.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Manager of Opposition Business. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms Julia Finn:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** He said, "One thing I will give the Deputy Premier credit for: She tells a great fairytale." Tell that to the tens of thousands of parents who are dealing with the situation where their children's classes are being cancelled or merged on a daily basis. Those opposite are completely hypocritical when they go into public schools whenever they can and pretend to celebrate public education and the teaching profession, without disclosing to those teachers that they think they are paid too much money. If those opposite had any integrity, they would roll in to Manly public school, Mortdale Public School and Lane Cove Public School and tell the entire teaching profession and the students and parents that they personally oppose this historic increase in salary. If they had any integrity at all, they would do that. There has been one intervention from a member in the upper House, and her name is the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. She said, "No-one begrudges teachers a pay rise, but when you get a pay rise you normally need to do a bit more." That was her intervention. I can reveal to the House that the Hon. Bronnie Taylor—

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Premier—

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This is, again—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Holsworthy rises on a point of order.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 75. No member can be referred to by name. The Premier has done it twice.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** She is in the upper House. What am I supposed to say? Wrong Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate the sentiment of the point of order. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** She said, "No-one begrudges a pay rise, but you normally need to do a bit more." I need to reveal to the House that this same member is attempting to grab a 13 per cent increase in her salary and a 7 per cent increase in her expenses.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** What is she going to give as a trade-off? What is her trade-off? What productivity is she going to give?

**The SPEAKER:** Premier—

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Are they going to keep intervening?

**The SPEAKER:** I will direct the Clerk to stop the clock if the Premier resumes his seat.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** This is ridiculous. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to have a proper crack, he should do it by way of substantive motion.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This is material to the question I was asked. At the end of the day, the member from the upper House was saying, "You don't get a pay rise unless you give a bit." What is she going to give? She wants a 20 per cent increase in her pay. Maybe it is a commitment not to undermine her leader for 12 months? What is that worth? What is that worth to the member for Dubbo—20 per cent? We would offer that up as part of negotiations. At the end of the day, we have a comprehensive plan to rebuild essential services in New South Wales.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Opposition has opposed it for the past 10 years, but there is only one way when it comes to public education in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Has the Premier completed his answer? I must control members on both sides of the Chamber, and nobody is innocent. The Premier has concluded his answer.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. The previous Coalition Government budgeted \$282 million over four years for the early childhood education workforce. Today the Government announced that only \$22 million would be spent over five years to recruit and retain early education workers. What has happened to the balance of \$260 million, or did the Government cut it?

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

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:23):** I am not sure whether the member for Miranda is aware—I hope the rest of the House is—that the budget is on Tuesday. What we have announced today is part of what we are spending that money on. Just because we have not announced line by line what we are doing—

**Mr Paul Scully:** That is what the budget is for.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is actually what is going to be in the budget. If anyone seriously thinks this is a government that is about cutting funding to education, they are confusing us with those opposite. They are the ones who do not believe teachers deserve a pay rise. They are the ones who decimated our education system. They are the ones who oversaw teachers leaving in droves and education outcomes falling through the floor. To their credit, they said they were going to spend a lot of money in early childhood education and care, but there actually was no concrete way they were going to deliver that.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 74. The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome. She is deliberately inciting argument in this place and being deliberately evasive with respect to answering the question.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I will be quarrelsome every day of the week in defence of our kids and education. That is fine.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will not undermine my ruling.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Maybe those opposite should have put up more of a fight for our kids when they were in government; that would have been a good start. The funding that we supported when we were in opposition that is in next Tuesday's budget—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms PRUE CAR:** This surely cannot be another point of order about relevance. I am talking about what the member for Miranda asked me.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no dispute. The Minister will continue.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I am talking about what the member for Miranda asked me. I am talking about the investment in the early years that we are making next Tuesday. We have announced some of that today, and that is on top of our commitment to primary school and secondary school teachers. As for this confused argument from those opposite that somehow that means people will not be going into preschool education or early childhood education, we are not about pitting one workforce against another.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I hope that the member for Miranda is not seeking to take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker, I am entitled to request that you consider Standing Order 129 and that you ask the Deputy Premier to return to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The clock has been stopped. I have ruled that the Minister is being relevant. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** That is fine, Mr Speaker. We are entitled to ask the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, and you just have. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The member for Miranda is entitled to ask a question; I am sorry that I am giving her the answer. I am giving her an answer and she does not like it. If she does not understand what the Opposition is getting her to ask, that is not my problem. I am sorry. We are not cutting it. We are investing in our kids' education—a system across all levels that Opposition members drove into the ground.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:27):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how this Government is rebuilding the New South Wales education system and supporting children throughout the entirety of their schooling?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:27):** I am very happy to answer that question from the member for Camden. As a former teacher, she understands just how important the education of our kids really is. It is really good that Government members understand what the priorities of government are. I congratulate all of my Government colleagues who stood up last night to firmly support the teachers of New South Wales against a last-ditch attempt by those opposite to consistently deny the teachers of New South Wales the respect they deserve. As a government, we are about supporting all of our children in education from the early years right through to TAFE, from valuing and supporting our hardworking teachers to giving children the very best possible start in life through preschool.

That is what next Tuesday's budget will be all about: investing in our essential services, which the Opposition tried to strip bare. Today we announced that we will invest \$64 million—that is just part of the money, by the way—to boost access to high-quality early childhood education and care. For the first time, this Government is providing \$500 in fee relief so more three-year-olds can access preschool in long day care

programs. I know it is hard for those opposite to understand what that is: It is preschool programs in long day care centres.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Most parents know what I am talking about, even if members opposite do not understand it. Of course, that will be on top of existing Federal Government support.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Let me say this very slowly for members opposite: The funding is coming from the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund, which will be in next Tuesday's budget.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It was a fund we supported. In fact, we strengthened it with amendments during our time in opposition. It took the Liberals and The Nationals 12 years to say they were going to do something about early learning and care.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** They were gonna.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is true; they were gonna. They are the gonna parties. I have to address the claim made by the member for Tamworth last night in the public interest debate. We are not cutting the fund. Let me say that clearly: We are not cutting the fund. I am sorry to take away his tactic for today, but we are not cutting the fund. Unlike those opposite, we will ensure that the fund directly supports those who need it most: the children, the families and the early childhood education workforce. Rather than putting money in the bank account—and I acknowledge that that is what the previous Government did—we are going to deliver programs to support the sector and provide extra fee relief for families. We are committed to helping make preschool more affordable and accessible for more families in our State. [*Extension of time*]

We can do this, and we can do this at the same time as we properly and fairly pay our teachers. Last night the member for Tamworth essentially argued that the way to deal with this was to cut all teachers' pay. The bizarre argument was that we have to keep the wages of all educators low. That is the Liberal and The Nationals way.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth will cease interjecting.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73 again. If the Minister wants to take issue with a member, she can do so through the proper means.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister can do that, but citing Standing Order 73 is an over-application of the standing orders in this case. I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I do take issue with the member, and with his disdain for teachers. He should note that while he has been a member of Parliament, teacher vacancies in his electorate have increased by 900 per cent—so that is really great work, mate. The Premier made reference to the former Treasurer saying that teacher vacancies and shortages were a fairytale. He is going to be wearing that for a long time, I am sorry. The only fairytale thing about this is the Pinocchios opposite who are spending more time fantasising and not enough time in our schools. Maybe they should have spoken to teachers.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Minister is not addressing her comments through the Chair, and she keeps using offensive expressions against the Opposition.

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** As the education Minister and someone who should be setting an example of good behaviour, she is falling very short.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahrenonga will resume his seat. I call the member for Wahrenonga to order for the first time. That is not the way to take a point of order. There is no point of order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** If my only crime is being passionate on behalf of all the children of New South Wales, then I am happy to be accused of that every day. When it comes to language, maybe Opposition members should take responsibility for the language they use against teachers. [*Time expired.*]

#### DEE WHY AMBULANCE STATION

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (11:33):** Mr Speaker, you are looking dapper today. Was there a school photo?

**The SPEAKER:** There was a school photo, and all the children turned up.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN:** That is good to see. My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In March this year the previous Government committed to building a new ambulance station in Dee Why and other areas across the State. When will this new station be delivered? Will the Narrabeen station be retained? Will staff for the new station be added to the planned ambulance roster levels so the people of the northern beaches and across the State receive a genuine increase in frontline healthcare capacity?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:33):** That is a good question. The member for Wakehurst is a terrific advocate, whom I have met with already. He has written to me about youth mental health beds on the northern beaches, the national dementia plan and other important services in his community. I thank him for his advocacy on behalf of the community that he represents.

Frontline emergency care for residents on the northern beaches will receive a major boost with a new ambulance station set to be built near Dee Why. The new station will feature internal parking for ambulance vehicles, vehicle wash facilities, multipurpose spaces to support staff education and logistics, and storage and office administration areas as well as staff amenities. I was recently with the member for Coffs Harbour to look at a new ambulance station built in his electorate with up-to-date facilities that reflect the importance of making sure that our paramedics have a professional workspace that meets their needs.

The exact location for the new ambulance station at Dee Why will be determined once further planning is completed, which includes working with stakeholders to identify a suitable site. All sites being considered undergo a thorough evaluation through Health Infrastructure and the ambulance service to ensure that they meet the needs of the community and emergency staff. We need to take into consideration the traffic movements in particular areas, including the egress et cetera. We also need to consider how a station would work with the rest of the precinct given it is to be used for emergency response. Construction times will also be confirmed once the land search and site acquisition process is finalised.

I again acknowledge the member's ongoing commitment to seeing better health outcomes for his community. Members on this side of the House feel very strongly about that. Every three months, data from the Bureau of Health Information comes out. It has shown significant changes in ambulance responses, movements and demand for ambulances, the likes of which we have not seen for a long time. The rate for Dee Why has increased by about 6 per cent in 12 months. That may not sound like a lot, but it is a substantial increase in the number of people needing ambulances. Many of those are not for category 4 or category 5 incidents, which are minor issues. They are often P1 or P2 category cases and very high-level responses are needed. People should not fall into the trap of thinking that a whole lot of people are just calling for an ambulance but do not need one. That is often not the case. *[Extension of time]*

Notwithstanding this, performance of local ambulance services remains strong, with a 2.2 per cent increase in the call to ambulance arrival time for P1 patients within 15 minutes. It means more ambulances are getting there faster. It is only a small improvement; we have to be realistic. I am not going to say that is the end of it. It is a small improvement, and we need to do more. Some 92.1 per cent of P1 cases were responded to within 30 minutes, which was pleasing when I saw the dataset. That is important, because those are critical life-and-death situations.

The current Narrabeen Ambulance Station building is aged. It was constructed in the early sixties and does not meet current standards for an ambulance station. I am happy to meet with the member in the future to work through what we are going to do with that asset. The new ambulance station at Dee Why will ensure the community has improved access to emergency care when and where they need it most. The new ambulance station will boost local health services and bring more jobs to the local area. It will also provide a better working environment for paramedics, who are doing their utmost to serve our community. I sincerely thank the member for his question and his ongoing advocacy. He has made it clear that healthcare services in the north are important to him. He has written to me on a number of issues, and I look forward to continuing to engage with him on improving services in his local community.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (11:38):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Families and Communities. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's \$200 million package to save the child protection system?

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (11:39):** I thank the member for Heathcote for her question. I note that she has been a fierce advocate for vulnerable children and young people in her community for many years. I have seen it firsthand. In March this year our Government inherited a child protection system in desperate need of repair. It is

a broken child protection system that is too often failing children, families, caseworkers and communities. Members opposite not only left behind a broken system but also a budget black hole that was growing so fast it put the whole child protection system at risk of collapse. The system is hundreds of millions of dollars in deficit, funnelling vulnerable children into hotels and motels with 24/7 shiftworkers instead of being placed with loving foster carers.

Right now across the State more than 120 children are in those kinds of emergency placements. One-year-old children are holed up in motel rooms for months on end with rotating shiftworkers because the child protection system designed by those opposite has no other options. Imagine being a caseworker forced to make an impossible decision, knowing that a child is not safe at their own home and the State has no other home for them. That is why the Minns Labor Government is taking action to rescue the State's child protection system. We are providing a \$200 million rescue package to prevent the collapse of the out-of-home care system to ensure that thousands of vulnerable kids across New South Wales are kept safe.

It is likely that those opposite will be surprised to hear this because, when they were in government, they could not have cared less, but 15,000 children in New South Wales are in out-of-home care and each one deserves to be safe and protected, especially after everything they have been through. Yet the budget we inherited was due to run out in April, more than two months before the end of the financial year. We are taking a very different approach because status quo is not an option. Next Tuesday's budget will deliver a \$200 million lifeline so that we can undertake the significant structural reform that will lead to better outcomes for children in this State. It all starts with foster carers, the impressive people who open up their hearts and homes to kids in need of care. I could not believe it when I learned that the former Government decided to stop recruiting emergency foster carers, which left the Department of Communities and Justice without the capacity to look after children in their time of need. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the House for its indulgence. Instead, like so many other areas, the former Government entirely outsourced the provision of child protection services to the non-government sector. We have all seen the result. The number of children in emergency placements like hotels and motels has skyrocketed since 2019 as a direct result of their policies. Those emergency arrangements are obscenely expensive and, most importantly, result in awful outcomes for the young people involved. Children need relationships that they can rely on. They need safe places and safe faces, not 24/7 shiftworkers. A recent review found that two siblings were holed up in a motel room without enough food or clothing, despite non-government providers being paid more than \$1 million for their care. It cannot continue. Every stakeholder that I have spoken with—from caseworkers and carers, to parents, service providers and young people—knows that it has to change.

We will work collaboratively with them along the way. It will not be fixed overnight, but we are here for the long haul because the kids of this State deserve it. It starts with sensible budget management that rebuilds essential services without privatising public assets and imposing an unfair wages cap on essential workers. It will take a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-community approach as well. The \$200 million lifeline for child protection is just the beginning. We are repairing the budget so that we can rebuild public health, public education, public housing and public transport to prevent families from falling into the child protection system in the first place. That is what Labor governments do: They deliver budgets that give everyone a fair go.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (11:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Today she announced \$20 million in capital funds to support new not-for-profit services in high-growth and regional communities. Given that Gulargambone Preschool in regional New South Wales cost \$2.4 million to build, how many facilities will be created with the Government's investments?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:44):** I make it clear for those opposite and the people of New South Wales that our commitment is on top of the existing commitment of the former Government. I am sorry to keep raining on their parade, but this Government is committed to early education, primary and secondary education and even TAFE education, which I know those opposite particularly hate. Members opposite have a hide coming to the Chamber and accusing this Government of not investing in education. Not only are we investing more—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The question asked how many facilities will be created by the \$20 million capital fund.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is answering the question. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: A clause was inserted into Standing Order 131, at the instigation of the member for Wahroonga when he was the Leader of the House, to prevent points of order that are vexatious, interfering or obstructive. It has gone on too long.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. There is no point of order. The point of order taken by the member for Tamworth was not vexatious. I reflect on my time in this Chamber observing the behaviour of members on both sides of the House. I will be more strict on points of order regarding relevance. The Minister has been directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Opposition members come into the Chamber, as they are entitled to do in a democratic society, and ask questions of the Government, and the Government is answering them. It is not our fault that they do not like the answers.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Those opposite have a hide, especially after—

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** —consistently refusing to support teachers and kids throughout our systems.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Imagine going to the Opposition tactics meeting this morning and saying, "I know what we should ask about. We should ask about education. That is the strongest thing we've got going for us. We did such a good job with education."

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is one of the reasons why they were booted out of government.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:47):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government has fulfilled its election promise to scrap the wages cap?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:47):** I thank the hardworking member for Gosford and amazing parliamentary secretary for her deep interest in and concern for the essential workers in this State. It is a great question. The Minns Government was elected with a clear mandate to bring an end to the former Government's deliberate suppression of the wages of the State's essential workers. It was a deliberate strategy to keep wages low, and there is evidence of that. Former senator Mathias Cormann stated that it was a deliberate strategy of the design feature of their architecture in relation to their economic policy to keep wages low.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Read it. It's from 2019. Come to my office and I will give you a copy. They are the same workers who carried us through the COVID pandemic and responded to natural disasters that threatened lives and property.

**Mr Matt Kean:** It's a different Parliament. You know he wasn't in the State Parliament, don't you?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** It is in your DNA, member for Hornsby. Twelve years is a long time to hold down the wages of essential workers across the State's 430,000-strong public sector workforce. It led to a demoralised workforce and a recruitment and retention crisis, which we are fixing. I am proud to stand here today as a member of the Minns Government and say that we have kept faith with the workers in this State, who said, "Enough"—enough of wage suppression; enough of the wages cap. I am proud to stand here and say that the wages cap is over. Our offer of a 4.5 per cent increase for 2023-24 has busted the wages cap once and for all, and it is the biggest pay increase the New South Wales public sector has received in over a decade.

When the people of New South Wales elected us to government, we did something that those opposite would never bring themselves to do. We sat down with our workforce respectfully and recognised them. We negotiated, and we are negotiating. Guess what? It is amazing to sit down and to negotiate. On 20 July we reached agreement with the Public Service Association. Members know that I love award reform. This is the first step—

*[Government members interjected.]*

I am an IR nerd! Their awards have now been varied to provide a 4 per cent pay rise for over 80,000 public sector workers, including our wonderful child protection workers, park rangers, Fire and Rescue, and our public



servants from across a range of occupations. We heard over the weekend of the acceptance of our offer by the Teachers Federation to deal and tackle—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** I am afraid that time has expired.

*[Interruption]*

Members will come to order. The Minister's time has expired. I can only go by the time on the clock. I appreciate that the Minister maintained eye contact with me for quite some time during her answer. It was a very good contribution. Thank you.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** I am glad that someone is paying attention.

**The SPEAKER:** I am always paying attention to you, Minister.

#### **NSW REGIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (11:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Women. Given that in previous years the NSW Women of the Year Awards have included a Regional Woman of the Year award, why has the Labor Government scrapped this award on her watch as the Minister for Women?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Campbelltown will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:52):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for her question. The Women of the Year Awards are an incredibly important way of recognising the work of women in this State. On this side of the House, we are truly committed to recognising women—and representing women, in fact, because more than 50 per cent of the Ministers in our Cabinet are women. We have taken a good look at the way that we want to recognise the work of women in this State, and on International Women's Day next year we will make some wonderful announcements recognising the work of women in this State. I will give some examples of our commitment on this side of the House to representing women and making sure that women have true economic representation.

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

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The gender pay gap—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Vacluse rises on a point of order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relating to relevance. The question was specifically about regional women. What will the Minister be doing for regional women, and will she be cutting their award?

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I note that the Minister still has some time remaining for her answer. I ask that the Minister be directly relevant to the question.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As those on the other side well know, next week is the New South Wales budget and we will certainly be making some announcements in that area.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Are you scrapping the award?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wahroonga to order for the second time. I note that a number of members are on three calls to order. I am happy to put more members on calls to order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Minister has hardly begun her answer. We will move on. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The record of those opposite in this place is absolutely atrocious. We just need to look at the gender pay gap in this State, which increased on their watch and increased in the public service when they were the employers.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order—

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

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Mr Speaker, the Minister is flouting your earlier ruling. You directed her to be more directly relevant to the question and she is not doing that. Regional women of New South Wales need to understand whether the Minister is cutting regional New South Wales out.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Myall Lakes has sought an extension of time, and I will grant an additional two minutes for the Minister to complete her answer. I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The gender pay gap in this State, which includes regional women because regional women have jobs—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Well, they hope to have jobs. The gender pay gap in this State increased under those opposite, and in the public service, which was a regional employer, it increased—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time. Members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer the question. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Under those opposite, the gender pay gap between men and women in this State increased to 4.5 per cent in the past couple of years. That is their commitment to recognition of women in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Minister. Opposition members will come to order.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH SERVICES

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister inform the House how the Government is taking action to improve Western Sydney hospitals?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:58):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his advocacy on behalf of the south-west. He will be delighted to know—and I am sure the House will also be delighted to know—that some of our fastest growing communities, in north-west and south-west Sydney, are in for a record investment in health care. The member for Fairfield will know that we are committing a record \$550 million to completely upgrade his hospital. It is the first upgrade it has had since the late eighties or early nineties and is an incredible investment that comes off the back of long-term advocacy from members in and around that area. I thank them for that. When the member for Fairfield first saw me in this place as Minister, he wanted to ask about Fairfield, and he has been a great champion ever since.

We have also made significant investments in other hospitals across Western Sydney. Members should understand just how important that is. Bureau of Health Information data released just recently showed that, over the last quarter, close to 60,000 emergency department presentations occurred in Western Sydney. That is an unbelievable amount of pressure on our existing hospitals—many that have not had significant investment for many decades. But the Government has made significant investment in not only Fairfield Hospital but also Canterbury Hospital—which the member for Canterbury and her colleagues representing electorates around that area have been championing for some time. It is the first time that it has received that level of investment since the late eighties.

I turn to Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. It is the first time that that hospital has had a commitment of the scale that we will be rolling out since the two hospitals were merged in—I think it was 1997. It is a significant investment of \$1.3 billion to drive improvements in the Bankstown area. We are also doing more at Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals. The member for Blacktown and the member for Mount Druitt have been very strong advocates for that. I was at the Better Foundation the other night. It is a fantastic organisation doing great work for those two important hospitals in the west. There is \$120 million for both of those hospitals to provide additional beds in the fastest growing parts of west and north-western Sydney. There is also Rouse Hill Hospital. How I could forget Rouse Hill Hospital? Look at the member for Riverstone.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** It was on his birthday.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Hollywood will be calling.

**Dr David Saliba:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The resplendent member for Fairfield has risen. I like his tie.

**Dr David Saliba:** I request an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** I am willing to grant an additional two minutes if the Minister will stop inciting Government members. An additional two minutes is granted.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Fancy that. On his birthday, the member for Riverstone did not get just a hospital but also an extra \$400 million for the hospital. That is not bad. I feel like Oprah: "You're getting a hospital!" We are going to continue to invest in the health services that those communities in Western Sydney need. The people of north-western Sydney have been waiting for the hospital at Rouse Hill. It has been an issue in three elections—you would not believe it—2015, 2019 and 2023. We are not yet up to a sod turn. Hopefully we will be a bit faster than that.

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

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** I'm excited.

**The SPEAKER:** I know you're excited.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We will continue to focus on improving infrastructure for health services in Western Sydney because members on this side of the House know that investment in the fastest growing corridor across the nation, if I am honest, is going to have to be quick and significant. We are going to have to get on with the job because new communities are being built up out of the ground, but people are not getting the infrastructure they need. I note that the Country Mayors Association's Mr Chaffey is in the gallery today. He has been advocating and lobbying very strongly for Gunnedah Hospital. I thank him for that work.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We are going to continue to make sure that communities across Western Sydney and regional, rural and remote New South Wales get the health services they need and deserve.

#### **SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ILLUMINATION**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:03):** My question is directed to the Premier. In May the Premier told the public that lighting up the Opera House for the King's coronation would cost "between \$80,000 and \$100,000".

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. The member for Goulburn will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will restate his question.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** My question is directed to the Premier. In May the Premier told the public that lighting up the Opera House for the King's coronation would cost "between \$80,000 and \$100,000" and "we've got to be mindful of where taxpayer money is spent". Freedom of information documents instead show a cost of between \$10,000 and \$50,000 and that the decision was "political" from the Premier. How can the public trust anything he says?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:04):** Never let anyone accuse members opposite of not tackling the big issues: the cost-of-living crisis, the budget being handed down next week, aged care, child care, essential services, energy, the housing crisis. No, they want to know about the Opera House sails for King Charles.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the Chamber will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** At the end of the day, the Government made a decision. Under the previous Government and my good friend former Premier Dominic Perrottet, it was lit up for 71 days in 2022. That is twice a week. It was like a billboard, not an iconic building.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** You will love this, Mr Speaker. This is great. In 2016 the Opera House was lit up for two days in green to commemorate the Australian Bureau of Statistics. That is very important. There was an intervention from the member for Wahroonga this morning on radio. I got up early and I listened to Alister Henskens on 2GB.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Not on his podcast.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, not on his podcast this time. He said that the Opera House, our most internationally recognisable built structure in the whole of Australia—

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order—

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

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** The Premier has referred to a member by name again. It is quite disrespectful. Standing Order 75 outlines that no member is to be referred to by name.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Well, members know who I am talking about. He was on radio this morning. He said:

The Opera House is our most internationally recognisable built structure in the whole of Australia, and now it will appear that we're shunning Britain, a major trading partner. And one in five people in New South Wales get their jobs directly or indirectly through international trade, so this has broad ramifications ...

The \$1 trillion two-way trade is about to sink as a result! I had no idea. One in five people are about to lose their jobs. They are throwing out Tim Tams in London right now. They are tipping Foster's down the drain. No more poms in Coogee!

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The Premier was not asked about other people's commentary. The Premier was asked why he said something to the public that was not true and how we can trust him in the future.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has been highly relevant. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The two-way trade with Australia is about to collapse as a result of that decision. I had no idea. It is an extraordinary claim. Peter Andre and Kylie Minogue are currently in the embassy in the United Kingdom awaiting deportation, according to Alister. The Spice Girls are banned. The Ashes are off. What a joke. What an absolute farce the member is. He should focus on the real issues that the people of New South Wales care about.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Premier continues to be disrespectful. He is lying to the public. He is a liar.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is not for the Manager of Opposition Business to scream "liar" across the Chamber. The word is disorderly and the member's conduct was unparliamentary. He should be required to withdraw his remark or he should be dealt with for his disorderly conduct.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order raised by the Leader of the House. The comment was unparliamentary. I ask the member for Wahroonga, and Manager of Opposition Business, to withdraw the comment he made to the Premier.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I withdraw the comment.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga has withdrawn his comment. We will continue with question time.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (12:09):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister provide the House with an update on recent decisions and announcements made by the National Cabinet?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:10):** I thank the member for Strathfield for his question. He is concentrating on houses, not the Opera House. Recently, the member launched an under-18 yes campaign. He is in touch with what younger people want in their communities. What are the things they want? Not only do they want people to vote yes in the referendum, which I will be doing, but they also want members of this place to vote yes and say yes when it comes to housing in their community. They want Government members to say yes, they want Opposition members to say yes and they want the crossbench to say yes to more housing to address the housing availability challenge that young people like those in the gallery will face in the future. At the meeting of the National Cabinet on 16 August, a new, more ambitious housing target was agreed: to build 1.2 million homes nationally, over five years, starting from the 1 July 2024.

For New South Wales this translates into about 375,000 homes over the period. That will be a big task, I am sure everyone will agree, but it is one that we need to work together to achieve. There is a lot of catching up to do in housing supply. That is why, in the first five months of the Minns Government, we have introduced bonuses to help with the delivery of more affordable and market homes. We have provided additional self-assessment powers for government agencies like the Land and Housing Corporation, Landcom and the

Aboriginal Housing Office to deliver more affordable homes. There are greater self-assessment powers for Landcom and there is a new planning pathway for it to deliver more affordable homes. We have identified surplus government land that can be used more effectively to deliver housing supply. We have also supported local government by providing financial support for young planners in order to get more young planners into the planning system, and that has already had proven results.

Landcom will deliver 135 new affordable homes at Lachlan's Line in Ryde, which is close to jobs and transport and which is where people want to live. Landcom is already busy working on two build-to-rent pilots on the South Coast and Northern Rivers to deliver more housing there. Of course, the National Cabinet also agreed to the National Planning Reform Blueprint, which includes planning, zoning, land release and other measures to approve and improve housing supply and affordability. That blueprint includes updating State, regional and local strategic plans to reflect housing supply targets; promotes medium- and high-density housing in well-located areas so that they are close to existing public transport; and streamlines planning approval pathways. The Minns Government is determined to confront the housing challenge. [*Extension of time*]

I am pleased that that is starting to show results. The number of development applications [DAs] from last month was up on the month before, the number of DAs that were approved was up, and the average number of days to determine an application was down. Members might be aware that on concurrences and referrals—this is where other government agencies assess developments—in 2021-22 some \$3.4 billion worth of investment in New South Wales was delayed and less than two-thirds of the assessments were done on time. But in June this year nearly every single one was done on time. We are delivering those results. But, of course, there is more to do. As I said earlier, it is important that all members of this place get onboard and confront the housing challenge that we inherited from the previous Government. We have a shared responsibility to deliver those National Housing Accord housing targets. It is in the interests of future generations to do so.

Recently I heard comments from the Leader of the Opposition, who on 31 May backed in more housing, building extra suburbs and increasing densities in appropriate locations near train stations. That is a good measure. It is a good idea to build well-located homes. But, of course, his rhetoric did not match his reality when he sought to heritage-list a block of 30 new apartments 250 metres away from Cronulla train station. He says one thing but does another. We cannot afford that sort of behaviour. We need everyone in this place to get onboard and get behind efforts to boost housing supply so that there are well-located, well-designed and well-built homes available to all young people looking to get into the market, and for older people who are looking to free up their larger homes. That is exactly what the Minns Government is striving to do, that is exactly what we will keep working on, and that is exactly why we expect members of this place to join us on that journey.

#### PICTON BYPASS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:15):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Roads. Will the Minister confirm the cost of the two-kilometre stretch of road that RMS has recommended as Corridor 9, which will join Remembrance Driveway and Picton Road, and is known as the Picton Bypass? If no exact costings have been done, will the Minister provide the estimate that RMS has come up with for the project, after millions have been spent on planning this recommended bypass for the past 35 years?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:15):** I thank member for Wollondilly for her question. I know, and I am sure members of the House know, that the Picton Bypass is a key project and priority for her and her community. We know that building a bypass like this is not cheap and will cost taxpayers some hundreds of millions of dollars. That is why this project, like other projects, is currently part of the Australian Government's infrastructure review. What has been made clear to us, though, on coming into government, is that members opposite left us with a massive infrastructure backlog across western and south-western Sydney. The fact is that the former Liberal Government let development rip in western and south-western Sydney, but with that growth it did not build or deliver the essential services and infrastructure that people need. Those communities are left asking "Where are the roads?" and "Where are the schools, hospitals and transport services to support that increase in population?"

We need the infrastructure that they were promised. I understand that that is what the member has been hearing from her community. But the fact is that those opposite left it unfunded. In fact, yesterday I spoke about the fact that our bus taskforce revealed that while those opposite promised that the savings from privatisation would be spent on bus growth, instead those savings were quietly banked away. They were not spent on the communities that needed those essential services. Those opposite might have taken the people of Wollondilly for granted, but our Government is not going to take this lightly. We are going to meet the commitments that we have made and also make sure that we are listening to those communities. We know the Picton community wants to see this bypass built. That is why I am very pleased to inform the member that planning will continue and funding for the Picton Bypass will be included in next week's budget, which will be delivered on Tuesday.

The proposed bypass will provide an alternative route for motorists, including heavy vehicles, linking Thirlmere to Tahmoor with the Hume Highway via Picton Road. The aim of this project is to reduce the number of vehicles travelling through Picton town centre, reduce travel times and improve reliability and safety for road users. It will also aim to improve resilience of the road network in emergency events like floods and fires. The member also asked what was previously undertaken in relation to the road. I am advised that in 2018 some \$3 million was provided to Transport for NSW to investigate options for a future bypass for Picton. [*Extension of time*]

In December 2020 four corridors were presented to the community through the *Picton Bypass - Strategic Corridor Options Report*, which identified Corridor 9 as the preferred corridor. A consultation report was released during August 2021, which responded to the 55 submissions received between December 2020 and February 2021. The report also identified that Transport for NSW will prepare a strategic business case as part of the Government's framework for making and prioritising infrastructure investment decisions. Wollondilly Shire Council was briefed on the Picton bypass and Picton Road upgrade early in April this year.

We will continue to listen to the community and keep them up to date as the project progresses. We know, as the member well knows, that Wollondilly shire is changing very quickly. As Sydney grows, what was once a rural, agricultural community is becoming denser and more suburban. It is good that more people want to move to Wollondilly. It is a great place to live, as the member will obviously attest to. That growth cannot happen on its own. Our Government will work to make sure that communities get the infrastructure and the essential services that they need. We will continue our work on the Picton bypass. We are funding essential infrastructure services for the west and south-west of Sydney.

### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (12:20):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism in her capacity representing the Minister for Agriculture. With an El Niño event expected this summer, what plans does the New South Wales Government have in place right now to give communities an opportunity to prepare for hot and dry conditions?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:20):** I thank the member for his question. Farmers across New South Wales are resilient. We have all seen it. Our farmers are tough, but they are also smart. They are prepared for whatever this country's climate throws at them. The Department of Primary Industries combined drought indicator shows that 9 per cent of the State is currently in the drought category. Currently, areas on the North Coast, in the Hunter and in the south-east of New South Wales are experiencing drying conditions following lower than average rainfall over the past six months. Unfortunately, the seasonal outlook for the entire State is very troubling. The high likelihood of an El Niño event and predictions of below average rainfall and higher temperatures all increase the risk that larger areas of New South Wales will fall into drought.

Farmers are already monitoring on-the-ground conditions and climate forecasts closely, while implementing actions like supplementary feeding and stock reduction in line with their individual drought strategies. Combined with timely decisions, these resources will be critical to managing the seasonal, financial and personal impacts of drought. I am pleased to inform the House that the New South Wales Government is currently supporting primary producers to prepare for future droughts through a range of programs, including the Farm Business Resilience Program and the Rural Financial Counselling Service. The NSW Rural Assistance Authority also administers the Farm Innovation Fund to support farmers. This fund provides long-term, low interest rate loan schemes for farmers to invest in permanent on-farm infrastructure to improve productivity, manage adverse seasonal conditions and ensure long-term sustainability.

We will shortly be rolling out the first approved pilots of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. The program, co-funded by the Federal Government, has supported local councils, in partnership with regional communities, farmers and industry, to create community-driven drought plans. I am pleased to say that round one of the program has concluded and nine councils and joint organisations have received a staggering \$450,000 and \$560,000 between them in funding to develop their own drought resilience plans, which will be critical. Those councils include Moree Plains, Oberon, Wentworth shire, Temora and Berrigan as well as the Far North West Joint Organisation. Round two of the program opened on 5 September, and I encourage all eligible councils to apply. The program is enabling locals to plan projects that consider the unique interplay of their own environments, farms and communities, and develop strategies to deal with future droughts.

*Documents***STATE-OWNED CORPORATIONS****Tabling**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of the Treasurer: I table the following reports:

- (1) Half yearly reports for the period ended December 2022 of—Hunter Water Corporation; Sydney Water; Landcom; Port Authority of NSW; and Transport Asset Holding Entity of NSW.
- (2) Half yearly reports for the period 2022-2023 of—Essential Energy; WaterNSW; and Forestry Corporation of NSW.

*Committees***MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE****Inquiry**

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that on 24 August 2023 the Modern Slavery Committee resolved to:

- (1) Commence its review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018; and
- (2) Inquire into, and report on, the Ethical Clothing Extended Responsibilities Scheme 2005 and its potential to mitigate the risks of modern slavery in the clothing manufacturing industry in New South Wales.

The full details are available on the committee's home page.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following paper petitions signed by 500 or more persons have been lodged for presentation:

**Yass Valley Water Supply**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to replace the aged Yass Valley town water supply and ensure the region's future water security, received from **Mrs Wendy Tuckerman**.

**South-West Rail Link Infrastructure**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly extend the South West Rail Link from Leppington station to Badgerys Creek airport and build a minimum of three new stations with a minimum of 2,000 car parking spaces at each station in time for the airport opening in 2026, received from **Mr Nathan Hagarty**.

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

**Bungendore High School**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to improve communication on progress of the development of a permanent Bungendore high school and ensure that the project commences in the 2023 calendar year, received from **Mr Steve Whan**.

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

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the resolution of the House of 3 August 2023, I announce receipt of the following nominations in writing by the Government and Opposition Whips to the Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation: Ms Liza Butler, Mr Justin Clancy, Ms Steph Cooke, Mrs Helen Dalton and Mr Steve Whan.

*Bills***EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 23 August 2023.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:27):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. The proposed legislation represents a crucial step in enhancing the safety and regulation of explosives within New South Wales. The primary objective of the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 is to improve the Explosives Act 2003, implementing the final recommendations made by the 2019 statutory review of the Act. Those recommendations are aimed at refining and strengthening the regulatory framework governing explosives in New South Wales. Additionally, the bill seeks to streamline the legislative process by transferring vital provisions from the Explosives Regulation 2013 into the Explosives Act itself. This strategic shift ensures that essential elements of regulatory procedures are firmly established within the legislative framework, while the finer details are retained within the regulations.

The amendments proposed in the bill encompass a wide range of areas within the explosives industry, including the authorisation and prohibition of explosives, the granting of security clearances, and exemption procedures. By implementing those provisions in the Act, we aim to create a more robust regulatory framework that enhances the safety of explosives handling and storage within New South Wales. Additionally, the bill empowers regulatory authorities to establish procedures for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives, further ensuring the safe handling and management of those materials. Furthermore, it grants authorisation to NSW Police Force officers to undertake specific inspector functions, enhancing the enforcement capabilities when needed.

The statutory review of the Explosives Act was mandated under section 38 of the Act. Following an extensive period of public consultation, the review determined that the Act's objectives remain valid and its terms appropriate for achieving those objectives. However, four specific amendments were identified as necessary for enhancing effectiveness. In June 2022 concerns were raised regarding certain provisions within the Explosives Regulation 2013. Parliamentary Counsel identified that some of those provisions lacked adequate empowerment and were better suited for inclusion within the Act. Although the Building and Other Fair Trading Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 aimed to address those regulatory concerns, it failed in uplifting the identified provisions. As such, the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 represents a necessary and critical step toward rectifying those regulatory gaps.

The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 contains several key provisions that are instrumental in achieving its objectives. The bill clarifies and expands the definition of "supply" within the Act to include situations where supply occurs without a monetary exchange. The bill enables the authority to destroy forfeited explosives after proper analysis, certification and retention of sample evidence for potential use in proceedings. This provision enhances the safe and secure disposal of explosives that are no longer deemed safe or necessary. The bill ensures that certain provisions from the Explosives Regulation 2013 are transferred into the Explosives Act, ensuring that critical elements of the regulatory regime are firmly established within the Act and appropriately structuring delegations within the legislation. This includes the authorisation, registration and prohibition of explosives as well as powers for the regulatory authority to grant security clearances, the classes of licences that may be granted, and procedures and powers related to exemption procedures.

The bill establishes powers for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives, addressing an important safety concern. It further addresses the authorisation of NSW Police Force officers to undertake specific inspector functions, strengthening enforcement capabilities. The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 represents a significant step forward in enhancing the safety and regulation of explosives within the State. It addresses the recommendations of the 2019 statutory review and implements critical provisions from the Explosives Regulation into the Explosives Act. Those changes will improve the regulatory framework, ensure safer handling and disposal of explosives, and empower our law enforcement agencies. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:33):** I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in the debate pertaining to the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. The Liberals and The Nationals will support these reforms that implement the recommendations from the statutory review of the Explosives Act conducted when the Coalition was in government. They are sensible reforms that keep the law responsive and relevant as we endeavour to maintain world-class work health and safety. First and foremost, members must acknowledge the inherent risks associated with handling explosives. This is an industry that demands precision, expertise and an unwavering commitment to safety. Accidents can have devastating consequences not only for workers but also for families and communities. It is our moral and civic duty to protect those who work tirelessly to serve our industries and our economy.

Explosives legislation is not a matter of partisan politics; it is a shared responsibility. Both major political parties must, and typically do, come together to craft laws that promote a culture of safety and accountability. This transcends party lines because the safety of our workers knows no political affiliation. It is a universal concern that unites us all. We are proud of the work done by the former Liberal-Nationals Government to strengthen commitments to improved work health and safety across New South Wales. The Coalition worked diligently to



ensure that every worker in this State went to work with the utmost confidence that their safety was a top priority. The commitment to ensuring the safety of workers and the community in the explosives industry is of paramount importance. The amendments in the bill are the result of an exhaustive review conducted under the former Coalition Government, including comprehensive consultation with industry, workers, consumers and legal experts.

This review is required under the Act to ensure its objectives remain valid and that the Act's provisions remain the most appropriate way to achieve its objectives. The review found that the Act's objectives remain valid and its terms remain appropriate for securing those objectives, subject to the four amendments found in the bill. The review made four recommendations, three of which are being implemented in the bill. All members know that the Sydney Harbour New Year's Eve fireworks are the best in the world and a tremendous source of pride.

**Mr Paul Scully:** And they're now free.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** Yes. Not everyone is happy about that, but that is another matter.

**Mr Paul Scully:** What, you're upset you can't do a fundraiser or something?

**Mr TIM JAMES:** No. If the Minister talks to the police about it, he will get some interesting feedback. I have done that; it does not sound like those opposite did it at all—but that is another story. Those fireworks are a great source of pride for our city, State and country. With our city on display for the world to see, it is legislation such as this that keeps our workers safe and those events running year after year. I was pleased to engage with multiple stakeholders in respect of the bill, including the NSW Police Force, the NSW Minerals Council, the Pyrotechnics Industry Association of Australia, the Australian Explosives Industry Safety Group, the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and others. I thank them all for their time, counsel and expertise.

I look forward to keeping in contact and working collaboratively with all sectors—and indeed the Government—to ensure that viewpoints and concerns are heard and dealt with. It is essential to understand that the responsibility for explosive safety is shared among all stakeholders, including employers, employees and regulators. We must continue to work collaboratively to uphold the highest safety standards in the handling, storage and transport of explosives. Particularly, I thank SafeWork NSW, the chief regulatory body for explosives, and the NSW Resources Regulator, which handles mine-site compliance.

Our inspectors across New South Wales do incredible work in hazardous and difficult conditions. I thank them for their diligence and hard work. I thank the former Ministers for Work Health and Safety who oversaw the review that led to those changes. I acknowledge and thank the current Minister for Work Health and Safety for her role in these important reforms. Together, we must continue to craft legislation that sets and maintains our gold standard for work health and safety. Together, we must foster a culture of safety that leaves no room for error. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:38):** I support the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. The main purpose of the bill is to amend the Explosives Act 2003 to implement the final recommendations of the 2019 statutory review of the Act. Under section 38 of the Act, a statutory review was required. Following public consultation, the review found that the Act's objectives remain valid and its terms remain appropriate subject to four amendments as set out in the bill. The bill makes amendments to the Act to transfer established provisions from the Explosives Regulation 2013 into the Act. The amendments transfer long-established and critical elements of the regulatory regime into the Act, including the authorisation and prohibition of explosives, granting of security clearances and exemption procedures. In doing so, those provisions will be entrenched within the regulatory framework and ensure that only appropriate, underlying detail is contained within the regulation.

Minor consequential amendments have been made to facilitate the transfer of provisions. Powers for the regulation to prescribe procedures for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives, and the authorisation of New South Wales police officers to undertake certain inspector functions are also included in the bill. The amendments to the bill will include the insertion and clarification of the definition of the word "supply" within the Act so that circumstances where supply occurs without money being exchanged are covered by the Act. The proposed changes will also enable the regulatory authority to destroy forfeited explosives after analysing, certifying and retaining sample evidence for use in proceedings.

With regard to the review recommendations, section 4A concerning the definition of "supply", and part 3A of the bill concerning the procedures for the destruction of forfeited explosives, the department conducted public consultation of part of the statutory review whereby stakeholders were asked to respond to a discussion paper that set out the framework of the Act and included questions to guide discussion. Part 3A has also been subject to further consultation with Parliamentary Counsel, the Department of Communities and Justice, and the co-regulator, Regional NSW. So why is this being changed? The current definition of "supply" in the regulation is vague and includes the word "sell". The definition of "sell", which the current definition of "supply" refers to,

is contained within section 3 of the Act. It is not good, modern legal drafting to have two definitions that refer to each other in the Act and another in the regulation.

The 2019 statutory review of the Act recommended that the definition of "supply" be inserted in the Act, and in doing so clarify that the definition covers circumstances where supply occurs without money being exchanged. Further, with the proposed amendments to transfer licence classes to the Act, the definition of "supply" is appropriate for inclusion, as new section 16AB now refers to the licence to supply. While the definition of "supply" will continue to apply to situations where explosives are passed on without money changing hands, the amendments clarify that a person also supplies an explosive by transferring ownership of an explosive, providing access to an explosive or otherwise giving an explosive to another person.

Clause 113 of the regulation outlines that the regulatory authority is able to exempt classes of persons or things from requirements under the legislation. This is a broad power that effectively delegates power to the regulatory authority to determine the elements of the Act and is a regulation that must be complied with. In order to ensure there is transparency of legal obligations, the powers delegated to the regulatory authority by clause 113 have not been transferred into the Act. Instead, they are intended to cease. Should any large-scale exemptions be required, they are able to be implemented by legislative amendment. This amendment is about adding structure, rigour and transparency to the exemption process. The amendments proposed in the bill achieve this by appropriately delegating authority and power.

Schedule 1 [29] inserts clause 14 that outlines the savings and transitional arrangements the bill intends to implement. To ensure that there are no adverse or reactionary consequences from the proposed amendments, all existing exemptions under the current framework will continue to remain in effect following the commencement of the bill. That will ensure that no individual or business is negatively impacted by any of the transferred and amended provisions relating to exemptions. Once those exemptions expire, they will be able to be applied for under the Act. That strikes an effective balance between ensuring appropriate safety mechanisms are in place and business is not encumbered with unexpected changes to its operations. The amendments to the bill are intended to best replicate the existing provisions within the regulation.

As a result, there are no intended consequences to the existing regulatory regime. While minor changes have been drafted to reflect modern practices and approaches, they will not compromise the regulator's ability to effectively undertake compliance and enforcement. The amendments are not intended to impact or alter industry's compliance with the current regulatory regime. The same key requirements, licensing and security clearances remain in place. In fact, the bill sets a stronger foundation for the regulatory regime by solidifying long-established elements within the Act and ensuring the regulation and regulatory authority are appropriately delegated to. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:45):** The amendments in the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 transfer long-established and critical elements of the regulatory regime into the Act, including the authorisation and prohibition of explosives, granting of security clearances, and exemption procedures. In doing so, those provisions will be entrenched within the regulatory framework and ensure that only appropriate underlying detail is contained within the regulation. Powers for the regulation to prescribe procedures for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives and the authorisation of New South Wales police officers to undertake certain inspector functions are also included in the bill.

It is important to consider the current system of disposal of explosives. Currently, disposal of explosives is a highly hazardous activity and is historically one of the more common causes of unplanned explosion, fatality and injury associated with use of explosives, even by experienced users. In particular, the disposal of fireworks is one of the most highly hazardous disposal tasks and has the potential to lead to unplanned explosions and fatalities, including in New South Wales. I note that in December 2022 nine people, including children, were injured when a Christmas carol event went awry, as a direct result of fireworks exploding in an unplanned way.

The disposal of unwanted or unusable explosives in New South Wales occurs in different ways, depending on the circumstances. Where it is possible to do so, the regulatory authority may direct the person in possession of the explosives to return the explosives to the manufacturer or initiate the explosives as they were designed. The licensing regime also provides for limited disposal activities by the holder of a blasting explosives user licence, or more advanced disposal methods by the holder of a licence to manufacture explosives. Explosives that are abandoned or unstable to the point of posing a hazard are treated as an emergency situation and the New South Wales police bomb squad is tasked to destroy or make safe those explosives. That is the express function of that unit.

The amendment to section 30A does not change the licensing or the approved methods for disposing of explosives. The intent of section 30A is to ensure that the regulations may prescribe ways in which unwanted and unused explosives can be appropriately disposed of. This will better support the existing provisions within

clause 97 of the regulation, as well as any future potential improvements to procedures related to the disposal of explosives, and also allows for the regulatory authority to determine the manner in which explosives can be surrendered to them. This is not currently a service that is offered by the regulatory authority and there is no imminent intent to establish such a service.

Furthermore, the bill addresses the storage of ammonium nitrate in New South Wales, which has a strong multi-agency regulatory regime for the storage of explosives and explosive precursors. Ammonium nitrate is an explosive precursor that is subject to licensing and other safety and security provisions of the Explosives Act 2003 and the Explosives Regulation 2013. The New South Wales Government is reviewing its policies on the storage of ammonium nitrate to ensure that they meet global best practice to manage the associated risks. We have seen in other jurisdictions across the world the extreme risk posed to people and property when ammonium nitrate is stored inappropriately.

Currently, an explosives licence is required to import, export, manufacture, store, supply, use or transport ammonium nitrate in New South Wales. To approve an explosives licence for ammonium nitrate, SafeWork NSW must be satisfied that a facility is capable of handling ammonium nitrate safely and securely. SafeWork NSW assesses compliance with the requirements of the Australian standard applicable to ammonium nitrate—that being AS 4326, the storage and handling of oxidising agents—as well as the security plan, emergency plan and the degree of separation to neighbouring sites prepared by the licence holder.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, quantities of ammonium nitrate that exceed 10,000 kilograms must be notified to SafeWork NSW. Quantities exceeding 2,500 tonnes of ammonium nitrate or 5,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate fertilisers require a major hazard facility licence. SafeWork NSW coordinates a whole-of-government approval process for major hazard facilities, which involves assessments of security, waste and environmental management, emergency plans, and onsite and offsite risks. SafeWork NSW conducts periodic inspections as part of its post-licence verification programs. The New South Wales Government is currently considering further measures to mitigate the impact of a potential incident at an ammonium nitrate storage facility.

Public consultation, which included a discussion paper exhibited from 6 October to 18 November 2022, proposed regulatory amendments to strengthen the safety of ammonium nitrate in storage facilities. The proposed measures would provide additional protections for workers and communities near ammonium nitrate storage facilities. The consultation gave members of the public and industry the opportunity to provide their valuable feedback on the proposed introduction and specification of separation distances for the different storage quantities of ammonium nitrate. Further analysis of the impacts and review of the proposal is currently underway and the analysis is to be completed before any decision is made on changes to the regulation of ammonium nitrate in New South Wales, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The bill is not harmonising New South Wales explosive laws because Safe Work Australia, the national policy body, has previously led work on the harmonisation of explosives on behalf of Commonwealth, State and Territory work health and safety Ministers. Safe Work Australia developed proposals for harmonisation in four key areas. The first is the definition of "explosives". The second is authorisation processes, which are the processes by which explosive regulators determine the classification of an explosive, whether it is fit for purpose and whether it is safe for that purpose. The third is notification processes, which are the processes through which explosives users provide information to regulators about particular activities, events or incidents. The fourth is licensing.

While New South Wales has been supportive of the national harmonisation of explosive laws subject to any reforms maintaining sufficient protections of the safety and security of people in New South Wales, much of the detail of the explosives regulation relevant to those four key areas is located in explosives regulation rather than in the Act. For that reason, the proposed amendments to the Act are not considered to affect the future prospects of national harmonisation of explosives regulation. Finally, the current regulation is valid and is lawfully made. However, the proposed amendments represent an opportunity to ensure that key, established elements of the regulatory regime are embedded within the Act. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to provide specific powers for necessary regulatory details, such as the disposal of explosives and police officer authorisations.

Together, the proposed amendments will better facilitate the remake of the regulation. The scheduled repeal of the Explosives Regulation 2013 has been postponed under the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989 until September 2024, which is sufficient time to allow for the bill's amendments to be confirmed. That will allow for a full and thorough consultation on the regulation. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:54):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 and offer our support for the legislation. We recognise that the bill implements the final recommendations of the 2019 statutory review of the Explosives Act 2003 and that the amendments transfer substantive sections of the regulation into legislation where they will be more appropriately housed. The

statutory review was required under section 38 of the Act, and it found that the Act's objectives remain valid and recommended only four amendments. In June 2022 issues with the regulation were identified by Parliamentary Counsel and recommended to be incorporated into the Act, where they could be more fully empowered, rather than in regulations.

While the bill is broadly administrative, it is happening in advance of the unexpected update to the regulations next year, which would allow the regulations to be more technical and streamlined, with a lot bulk taken out and brought into legislation. I appreciate that some members have raised concerns about the bill, and I have no doubt there will be ongoing discussions when it comes to looking at the substance and the discussions around those regulations into next year. I confirm The Greens' support for the bill and thank the Minister for her work.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (12:55):** The purpose of the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 is to amend the Explosives Act 2003 to implement the final recommendations of a 2019 statutory review. The bill also makes amendments to the Act to transfer some provisions from the Explosives Regulation to the Act. The amendments transfer long-established and critical elements of the regulatory regime. That includes authorisation and prohibition of explosives, the granting of security clearances and exemption procedures. Specifically, the bill inserts and clarifies the definition of "supply" within the Act to also include circumstances where supply occurs without money being exchanged. Furthermore, it enables the regulatory authority to destroy forfeited explosives after analysing, certifying and retaining sample evidence for use in proceedings. The bill establishes powers for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives, and the authorisation of New South Wales police officers to exercise functions and powers of an inspector in certain circumstances.

As I mentioned previously, the bill transfers certain provisions from the regulation into the Act, key elements of which include the authorisation, registration and prohibition of explosives; powers for the regulatory authority to grant security clearances; classes of licences that may be granted; and procedures and powers related to the granting of exceptions. Those with a keen eye may have noticed that the provisions from the regulations have not been transferred to the bill word for word. The reason for that is Parliamentary Counsel, which is responsible for drafting the exact provisions in the bill, felt there was a need to change the wording to effectively transfer the intent. This has been done in accordance with modern drafting standards and best practice and, as such, both language and structural changes have been made to bring the provisions up to modern standards.

Precursors and explosives have a legitimate use from time to time, particularly in regard to farming, agriculture, and prospecting or mining. Chemicals like ammonium nitrate are used regularly in farming and agriculture, but we have to regulate the use of the chemicals because, as we have seen overseas especially, there are tragic outcomes if they are used intentionally and unintentionally. I recall, in particular, the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 when 168 people were killed. The destruction from that explosion extended 16 blocks and 324 buildings were damaged in the process. There was an unintentional explosion in Beirut in August 2020, which left 218 people dead, 7,000 injured and, at last estimate, somewhere in the range of \$15 billion in damage. So it is important that we regulate those chemicals and make sure they are handled and licensed appropriately, particularly in farming and agriculture.

It is important to note that the two recommendations already implemented from the statutory review have no impact on farmers or regional industry. The amendments are not intended to impact or alter the industry's compliance with the current regulatory regime.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 1.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for orders of the day (committee reports). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

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

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:00):** As Chair: I address the House regarding the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 3/58*. The committee tabled this digest yesterday. It examined six bills and seven regulations, commenting on one regulation. The committee's scrutiny function is intended to inform members of both Houses about the potential impacts of legislation on personal rights and liberties and whether they enable the inappropriate use of government or legislative powers. I now draw to the attention of the House some of the key issues raised in the digest.

The Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 and the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 were introduced together in cognate. The cognate bills aim to update existing discrimination protection

for LGBTIQ+ people under the law. The equality amendment bill seeks to amend 20 pieces of legislation. The committee considered all amendments—for example, a new provision in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to permit children and young people to make decisions about their medical and dental treatment. The committee considered the application of laws to minors, specifically their consent to medical and dental treatments, and acknowledged the intention of the provisions to recognise the autonomy of a young person under the age of 18 years to make decisions concerning their own health care. However, the committee noted that the bill does not detail or set out what is required to constitute informed consent. The changes would remove the distinction in health care between young people over 16 years old and adults, along with allowing children under the age of 16 to consent to medical or dental treatment in certain circumstances. The committee has referred the matter to the Parliament for its consideration.

The Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 is modelled on Victorian legislation and seeks to create offences for practices that aim to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. One matter the committee considered is the extraterritorial application of this criminal offence. The provisions apply to conduct occurring wholly outside New South Wales if there is a real and substantial link with New South Wales. While clarifications are included in the bill, the committee noted that it may be unclear for individuals to understand what laws apply to them in New South Wales or elsewhere. For those reasons, the committee has referred this matter to the Parliament for its consideration.

I turn to a regulation that the committee reported on in the digest. The Surveillance Devices Amendment (ICAC) Regulation 2023 seeks to exempt the Independent Commission Against Corruption from strict and significant provisions of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007. The proposed insertion in that Act would permit the ICAC to use evidence obtained from a third party by the unlawful use of a surveillance device. The exemption will expire on 31 December 2025. The committee considered the effect of the amendment on privacy rights. The committee recognised that the amendment arises from a need related to an ongoing investigation of the ICAC. However, the provisions are not worded in a way that limits the application of exemption to any particular investigation.

Further, the committee noted the absence of safeguards accompanying the exemption. The exemption would permit the ICAC to use material that would otherwise be inadmissible and unlawful. The ICAC and its officers could be able to use information obtained by listening, optical surveillance, tracking and data surveillance devices without consent and even without a warrant in certain circumstances. The committee acknowledges that these provisions expire on 31 December 2025; however, the lack of any limit or allowance for a challenge or a review of its application, along with the lack of clarity around the date when the regulation takes effect, led the committee to refer those matters to the Parliament for its consideration. That concludes my remarks. I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and the secretariat for their substantial support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:05):** It was great to serve on the Legislation Review Committee again. I assure members that the committee is continuing to look at all forms of legislation being placed before the House. It also looks for areas where it criss-crosses with other legislation and where there may be infringements on areas of privacy and general human rights. In the *Legislation Review Digest No. 3/58* we looked at six bills before the House, in particular the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill 2023. A number of items have been referred to the Minister. I implore the Minister to look particularly at the right of freedom of religion, which will be a topic that the general public will want a detailed and thorough response on. A number of other bills were referred to the Minister for a response, which I expect the Minister to provide.

I move on to the regulations. The committee assessed the Surveillance Devices Amendment (ICAC) Regulation 2023. That regulation raised some concerns regarding the items referred to and has been referred to the Minister for response on the right to privacy, procedural fairness, and timing and retrospectivity. The regulation trespasses on the personal rights and liberties of the people of New South Wales and requires an in-depth examination. The regulation is intended to look at a particular investigation, but the committee found that the way it has been drafted means it is not limited to one investigation. It gives the commission broad powers and, in fact, using those powers across a number of different investigations is a broadbrush approach. It seems to be limited only by time and it is unclear whether that is when the investigation starts or as it proceeds, so there needs to be a close look at this time-limited approach.

The ICAC has been given quite strong powers. There is always a concern that these types of regulations could allow for powers that could become a precedent for different investigations in the future, infringing on the personal rights and liberties of the people of New South Wales. There is a concern that this could encourage illegal behaviour and illegal recordings going forward and almost promote public vigilantism—trying to catch people out. But not all of these actions are used for good; they can be used for bad as well. We must be careful when we

give broadbrush powers to police authorities and to the commission. This is important regulation proposed by the Government, and it needs an additional level of scrutiny. The ability for illegal evidence to be potentially washed clean by the commission and then issued through its reporting mechanisms to the public provides a way to use illegally gained information in a public court. That could impede on a person's right to privacy and a fair trial. It concerns me that this item has been issued as a regulation. The Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023 includes the resumption of an acre of land—

**Mr Paul Scully:** An excellent bill.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** I note the interjection from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. It is his bill. It is a great bill that is well worthy of the House. When a serious regulation of this nature comes before the House and its report ends with "refers the matter to Parliament for its consideration", it makes me wonder whether we are giving these changes, which seem broad instead of narrow and focused on what the commission is trying to achieve, enough consideration.

No member of this House is against getting to the truth and making sure that all corrupt behaviour is called out and prosecuted. But we must be careful and consider what we are trying to achieve before we give the commission broadbrush powers that go well beyond one investigation. The fact is that, instead of putting this regulation in a bill, it must be questioned. That said, the committee has done an enormous amount of work and the secretariat did a wonderful job in issuing the report. We commend the report to the House, and we encourage all members to give it a good read because there is some good stuff in there.

**Report noted.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Condolences*

#### **THE HON. J. RICHARD FACE, FORMER MEMBER FOR CHARLESTOWN AND A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Chamber Gay Bryden, partner of the late Hon. J. Richard Face; Tamara Bryden, Gay's daughter; Melita Morrow and Annabelle Morrow, daughter and granddaughter; and close friends the Hon. Bob Martin, former member of this House, and Mrs Margaret Martin and the Hon. Richard Amery, also a former member. It was a pleasure to meet with you earlier today.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (14:31):** I move:

That this House extends deep sympathy to the family and friends of the Hon. J. Richard Face, a former Minister of the Crown, who passed on 1 August 2023.

I join the Speaker in acknowledging special guests, some of Richard's good friends and loved ones who are in the gallery today: Richard's partner, Gay Bryden; Gay's daughter, Tamara; Richard's daughter, Melita Morrow, and granddaughter, Annabelle; and Richard's very close friends, the Hon. Bob Martin and Margaret Martin, and the Hon. Richard Amery. Thank you all for coming today and welcome back to the Legislative Assembly—a place where Richard proudly served his community for three decades.

Richard's long, accomplished life has left an indelible mark on the Charlestown electorate, the broader Hunter region and the entire State of New South Wales. He represented the communities of the Charlestown electorate in this place from November 1972 until his retirement in March 2003 and, 17½ years into his tenure, he became the Father of the House, the longest-serving MP in this place—a title that he held until his retirement. From 1995 until 2003, he was a member of Bob Carr's Cabinet, serving as Minister for Gaming and Racing and inaugurating the office of Minister for the Hunter, then known as the Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development.

But of course, as his friends and family know better than I do, Richard's life did not begin and end with his service in the Legislative Assembly. He was a proud father to Melita, Warwick, Marika and Stephen. He was a doting grandfather to eight grandchildren. He was a great colleague to those he worked with, whether in this place or in any other area, and, as I can personally attest, he was a wonderful friend. He was a proud student of Merewether Public School and attended the Newcastle Junior Technical High School in Broadmeadow, which is now known as the Hunter School for the Performing Arts—very apt, as Richard's life went on.

After leaving school at 15, Richard undertook a four-year apprenticeship as a plumber before starting work at the gas company and then joining the NSW Police Force. He worked in a variety of roles as a member of the police, but the bulk of his time on the force was spent in the special traffic patrol—the predecessor to the modern

highway patrol. His police colleague and partner Bruce Tarrant said of Richard's time in the service, "Constable Richard Face was a diligent member of the NSW Police Force. He was able to catch armed criminals and dangerous malefactors without too much trouble. He was never vindictive and carried out his duties without fear or favour, malice or ill will."

One of Richard's great loves was music. He was a lifelong lover of pipe music, in particular. That is probably what he was most famous for, but, as his daughter Melita pointed out in her beautiful eulogy, his interest in music was deep and wideranging. As a young man, he performed a role in a school production of the Gilbert and Sullivan classic *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which, since Richard went to an all-boys school, required him to perform in drag. This led him to develop a love for singing—I am not sure that it was performing in drag—and, as a young man, he would earn some extra money as a wedding singer. His love of pipe music never wavered. He would march every Anzac Day in the Newcastle parade with the Newcastle RSL pipe band, kitted out in full Scottish regalia. In this capacity, he participated in countless ceremonies and parades across Australia and overseas.

It was Richard's time in the police that led him to political life. His work as a member of the police association committee led to his involvement with the local branch of the Labor Party. Richard's predecessor as the member for Charlestown, Jack Stewart, clearly saw potential in him and, at Jack's insistence, Richard was elected secretary of the local branch. When Jack passed away suddenly in 1972, Richard stood against a number of opponents for preselection and prevailed. He won the subsequent by-election, with a 5 per cent swing to Labor. Richard entered this place at a very different time in politics. As Melita has recalled, constituents would wait for meetings in the living room of the family's Kahibah home. As Gay mentioned to me at lunchtime, when Richard came down here when Parliament was sitting, regional MPs would sleep on site in Parliament.

At just 29 years old, Richard was thrust into the bearpit. Robert Askin was the Premier, and it was an electric time in Australian politics. Richard's by-election was seen by some as an indication of what would come during the 1972 Federal election—otherwise known as the It's Time election, when Gough Whitlam's Labor swept to power after decades of Liberal rule. Richard was a devotee of Neville Wran, having been one of the votes that got him over the line against Pat Hills in a closely fought leadership contest in 1973. Richard always spoke highly of the Wran Government and of Neville Wran himself. Richard was part of the "Wranslide" in 1978 and again in 1981 and would go on to win every election he stood for until 2003. He certainly weathered some tough swings at times, including scraping in at the 1988 election, which ended the Unsworth Government, with a 63-vote margin. I remember Richard telling us about conceding on election night and then winning with a 63-vote margin. As Richard would always be the first to remind you, that is politics.

Through it all, Richard never lost sight of his community. Over the course of his service to the people of his electorate and to our State, Richard built an extraordinary legacy. On the local level, he was a driving force behind many projects that we in the Charlestown electorate and the wider Hunter hold dear to our hearts: the Newcastle Inner City Bypass; Glenrock State Recreation Area; the redevelopment of McDonald Jones Stadium; and the development of the Fernleigh Track. It was Richard's experience as a police officer that drove him to push for and achieve the opening of the Police Citizens Youth Club at Windale. Lake Macquarie PCYC is such an important part of the local community to this day. Without Richard, it would not be there.

On a broader regional level, when the closure of BHP ushered in a period of great industrial change in the Hunter, Richard led the charge for a just and fair transition for BHP workers and the wider community. It is difficult to overstate just how important that period of transition was to the Hunter. For 84 years, Newcastle had been known as the Steel City. BHP had been the city's biggest employer, with 13,000 workers at its peak. When the steelworks closed in 1999, there were widespread fears that the unemployment rate in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and around the region would skyrocket and that the local community would never recover. There was widespread anxiety not just for BHP workers but also for those who relied on those workers for their businesses. It is in large part thanks to Richard that those worst fears were never realised. As Richard said in this place in 1999:

Whilst the demise of steel making as we have known it ... marked the end of an era in Newcastle, a city that has been identified with its steelworks for nearly the whole of the twentieth century ... it also serves as a signpost for changes in direction that are for the better in Newcastle in the long term ...

I am sure all the Hunter MPs are fully in agreement with that sentiment. In that same speech, Richard said the task facing Newcastle and the Hunter region was "to look to the future". Thanks to Richard's commitment to that forward-thinking, positive outlook; to his voice in Bob Carr's Cabinet; and to his tireless advocacy over the process of BHP's closure from the initial announcement to the closure itself and the aftermath, his vision was achieved. The closure of BHP was difficult, but it was not the catastrophe that so many had predicted and feared. There can be no doubt that that is largely because of the Hon. Richard Face.

Today Newcastle is a diverse, vibrant and economically strong place. The Hunter region as a whole is so much stronger as a result of what Richard fought for. Richard would be the first to acknowledge that the job is

never done, which is why I and my colleagues in this place continue to build upon his vision of the future. But it would not be possible at all without Richard's work. Richard's commitment to his constituents was recognised. As Gay remembers, they could not just pop quickly to the shops to get groceries; they would be stopped constantly every few metres by someone who would say to Richard, "Do you remember me? You helped me years ago." It does not surprise me at all to hear that, most of the time, Richard did in fact remember them. That is the mark of a committed, hardworking local MP. It is an example that every member in this place should aspire to.

For Richard Face, though, being the member for Charlestown was not just a job; as he said in his valedictory speech, it was a way of life. His work extended far beyond what was reported in the headlines and the big achievements that I have mentioned. He went into bat for the most vulnerable members of our community, particularly women and children in crisis. That is why he was stopped in local shopping centres. On the rare occasions when he was not working, Richard could be found at the Dixon Park Surf Life Saving Club or playing rugby union for Merewether Carlton. Even before his involvement in the police union and the Labor Party, Richard made a mark on the local community through his engagement with the surf club. He was elected as a surf club member to the Australia Day Council in his early 20s and later became the council's senior vice president, demonstrating his commitment to the community long before entering Parliament was even on his radar.

Richard did not retire from public life when his time in Parliament came to an end. He was President of the RSL pipe band. He was President of Rotary Club of Charlestown, which he had been a member of for many years. He was a longstanding patron of the Northern NSW Football federation, where he served as chairman and, for 30 years, he was an avid supporter of Charlestown netball. An example of his ongoing commitment to the Charlestown area was his advocacy in public and in the media during 2010 for improved parking in the Charlestown CBD—we are still fighting for that. In his retirement, he and Gay travelled widely. With Bob and Margaret Martin, they purchased an RV in America and, over the course of three years, travelled around the United States and Canada. For six to eight weeks a year, Richard, Gay and the Martins saw North America up close and experienced it like the locals.

Richard's love of pipe music and his love of travel came together when he and Gay were on a trip to the United Kingdom and got to see the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Richard's welcoming spirit—the same welcoming spirit that saw him bring constituents into his home in the 1970s—saw him and Gay entertain friends at their holiday home in Boomerang Beach. Their life of travelling and entertaining slowed down following Richard's diagnosis with Parkinson's disease. I came to know Richard through my involvement with the Labor Party, and he became an important mentor and source of support and advice as I pursued a political career. I am proud to represent the Charlestown electorate in this place, just as Richard did for so many years. I see firsthand every day the positive impacts of his legacy. I dare say that, for all of us in Newcastle and the Hunter, it is impossible not to see that legacy.

Richard was more than a political mentor for me. I am very lucky to count both him and Gay as friends. When I had my daughter, India, 24 years ago, Richard and Gay gifted us a beautiful baby blanket. I still have it now. It is a beautiful and treasured memento of that time and of our friendship. Rest easy, my friend, knowing that you have achieved so much for your community and that you were loved by so many and respected by so many more. Your time in this place was transformational. Your life beyond the walls of this Parliament was extraordinary. Your legacy will be long remembered. Your memory will be forever cherished. Thank you, the Hon. Richard Face, for your incredible service to your community and the State of New South Wales. Vale, the Hon. Richard Face.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (14:47):** On behalf of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Opposition, I make a contribution to the condolence motion for the Hon. Richard Face. Richard served as the member for Charlestown in this place between 1972 and 2003. Richard was local to the Newcastle region. He was born in Merewether and educated at Merewether Public School and Broadmeadow High School. That was followed by further study at Newcastle Technical College, where he specialised as a licensed plumber, gasfitter and drainer, and estimator experienced in the gas industry, and the NSW Police Force Academy.

Richard served in the Carr ministry from 1995 to 2003 as Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development. It was in the latter role that he made his greatest contribution to the Newcastle region. Richard is noted as being instrumental in the Hunter's transformation over three decades, including the transition of Newcastle from a steelmaking and mining town to the metropolitan regional city that it is today. Richard certainly played his part in ensuring Charlestown both took part in, and was rewarded for, that journey. Indeed, part of his legacy continues to the modern day. During Richard's 10 terms as the member for Charlestown, the first three stages of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass were constructed as a result of his sustained, strong advocacy. The third stage was the West Charlestown Bypass, which opened in 2003 and was certainly a fitting retirement gift. The fourth stage opened in 2014 and the fifth and final stage commenced construction last year.



Additionally, Richard was instrumental in the establishment of the Glenrock State recreation reserve. Today the Glenrock State Conservation Area is a 554-hectare, State-heritage-listed park nestled between the suburbs of Merewether and Dudley, five kilometres from Newcastle, and a popular destination for mountain bike riding, hang-gliding, paragliding, bushwalking, horseriding, trail running, orienteering, surfing and many other activities—well done, Richard. Richard served as patron and founder of the Lake Macquarie Police Citizens Youth Club, which opened in 1983, and he worked in the Windale community, empowering young people to survive and thrive in partnership with the police and the community. Richard was also heavily involved with the great institutions of coastal electorates, local surf life saving clubs—specifically the Redhead and Dixon Park surf life saving clubs.

Befitting his title of Father of the House upon his retirement in 2003, Richard is survived by his wonderful wife, Gay, four children and eight grandchildren. As Father of the House some 20 years later, it is indeed appropriate that I join all members of this House in recognising Richard's lifelong commitment, contribution and service to the people not only of Charlestown and Newcastle but also, more broadly, of New South Wales. On behalf of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Coalition, I extend our most sincere condolences and thoughts to his family at this time. Richard was one of those once-in-a-generation members of Parliament. As I was reflecting over his wonderful story and his wonderful contribution not only to New South Wales but also to Australia itself, it brought to mind my Latin training from many years ago. To sum up Richard's life, I will quote the great Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero, who credited the Roman poet Caecilius Statius with the following expression:

*Serit arbores, quae alteri saeculo prosint.*

"He who plants trees, which will be of use to another age." That sums up Richard's life. Vale, Richard.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (14:51):** I begin by acknowledging the family, friends and colleagues of Jack Richard. It is lovely to see you tonight. Richard was elected nine times, and that was following a by-election win in 1972, when he was 29, after his predecessor, Jack Stuart, died in office. That was a mere fortnight before Gough Whitlam won the Federal election, so we can really call that the It's Time era. Interestingly, as the member for Charlestown mentioned, Richard was a student at Merewether Public School and then Newcastle Technical College. They say that is where his love of music grew. There were also comments and jokes about the teachers organising a performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore* at that boys-only school and apparently, for Richard, at that time the question of dressing up as a girl was an interesting one. He did have a love of music, which I can remember and relate to.

Apparently he had a beautiful tenor voice. I did not hear him sing at all, but apparently listening to him sing *Jerusalem* was very special. I certainly remember Richard in the pipe bands. I know that if my predecessor, John Mills, who was the member for Wallsend for 18 years, were here right now he would speak very highly of Richard. Richard tried to bring Hunter members together not only on the Newcastle Inner City Bypass, of which we all share the benefit, but also on the Glendale athletics centre, for those of us in the Glendale area. Because of Richard's leadership, Hunter MPs pooled their resources to build that centre, which the member for Lake Macquarie knows very well. It is a wonderful asset to our local community and it was built in a really smart spot at a crossroads—because it truly is the crossroads.

Richard has many legacies, but for me the inner-city bypass and Glendale are two particular things I remember, as does my predecessor, John Mills. To sum up, Richard has many legacies within the Labor Party and as a life member of the Labor Party, and he has a legacy, of course, with the New South Wales Government, having been a member of Parliament for 30 years. I have great memories of Richard, and I really enjoyed the many conversations I had with him. I did not mention before that he loved speaking on the telephone. For those of us who remember, he loved having a conversation. Usually I made sure to find time so that I could sit down with Richard for at least half an hour.

He always gave good advice, and he did it out of care for other people. It was not about him. The first questions were always, "How are you? What's happening? How can I help you?", which was wonderful. It was great to have leadership like that. It was very sad to learn that Richard was not well during COVID and that he had entered a much quieter period of his life. I say to Richard's family and colleagues that we will treasure the lovely memories. Richard certainly has legacies here. I am sure the ghost of Richard is in the Chamber right now, listening to everything we are saying. Vale, Richard.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (14:55):** I offer my condolences to the family and friends of Richard Face. It is so lovely to have you in the gallery. Gay, it is particularly lovely to see you. I know how much you must be missing Richard—I really do. Of course, for me, the greatest thing about Richard was his love of the Labor Party. He loved this place and he loved being here as a member of the Labor Party, making a difference to people's lives right across this State but,

most importantly, to the people he represented in Charlestown. Let us not make any bones about it: He was terribly parochial about his area. That is why he was elected on nine occasions, and he would be proud to admit it as well. He was an absolute titan of the Hunter Labor movement. We are all here to honour his time in this place and the fact that he set the path and the standard for us to follow.

Richard joined the party in 1967—I was not even born! None of my colleagues were either. He was, of course, president and secretary of the Kahibah branch, secretary of the Charlestown State electorate council and delegate to the State conference. He loved the State conference and the banter on the floor. He was first elected as the member of Charlestown, which he served as for over 30 years, in 1972—I was born then—and he retired in 2003. He faced a large number of elections. Some were windfalls; some went down to the wire, including one that the member for Charlestown mentioned, which came down to 63 votes. I remember hearing the stories at his funeral. I cannot remember whether it was Melita or Warwick who told the story of that night, when he thought he had lost. He was pragmatic about it, but then found out that he had won by 63 votes. There must have been some party after that—there would not have been enough red wine in the cupboard. Another thing about Richard was his humility. His valedictory speech sums up that. He said:

As for my record of achievement in my electorate, it is for others and history to say whether it has been one of success or not.

That shows an enormous amount of humility because, as has been said by my colleagues—and we will hear from others as well—his legacy of infrastructure building has significantly changed the lives of people in the region, and they are still delivering today, as they did way back then thanks to his big vision. Richard departed this House with a significant record of achievement, and I say it again because it is so important. He spoke with great pride of his work in campaigning for the declaration of the Glenrock State Conservation Area. As the member for Lane Cove described, that is everything to everyone. It offers so much enjoyment to the broader community. I do not know whether Richard could have envisaged what it would become, but it is such a wonderful State recreation area and is used by people of all ages and abilities.

He also played a critical role in the region's transition away from steel. As the member for Charlestown described, Newcastle was the Steel City, but Richard had the vision to know we could be more than that. He knew we had to be more than that because, at the end of the day, people still needed a job, families still needed to put food on the table and kids still needed to be looked after. His values were the lens through which he saw things; he sought to have a vision and find the answers to deliver that vision. The establishment of the Hunter Beyond 2000 Committees was another example of his vision. During his tenure he also played an important role in fighting for the construction of the Charlestown bypass. I thank him every day when I drive on it. It is a great piece of infrastructure that is so important for the people of the Newcastle area, and it now makes up the full inner-city bypass. What a visionary the man was!

Richard was also a strong advocate for the redevelopment of the McDonald Jones Stadium. Thank goodness for that, because the Knights are likely to win the grand final this year. It is a big statement, I know, but I will be cheering them all the way—and I know Richard would have as well. Why should Newcastle and the Hunter region not have one of the best stadiums in the State? That was Richard's view on everything. If others have it, we will get it too. Then he set about doing it. We all have pretty big shoes to fill. The stadium is such a valued community asset. It plays host to international rugby league, rugby union and soccer games. As has been said, Richard was a great lover of sport. Earlier this year we had Elton John and Pink—I am not sure whether he was an Elton John or Pink fan, but, if he was, he would be pleased to know they were there.

Richard served not only as the member for Charlestown but also as the Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development in the Carr Government. The role of Minister assisting was important in empowering our region, as has been said by those who spoke before me. It made sense to have a voice at the Cabinet table, and from the moment he got that position Richard never took a step backwards. He advocated for the Hunter at every opportunity. The role was the precursor to the establishment of Minister for the Hunter, a position I am proud to hold today.

Prior to entering Parliament, Richard served in the community as a police officer. As police Minister, I have had many lovely words said to me about his contribution to the NSW Police Force. It is a profession that not many put up their hand for. Now that I have such a close view of police matters, I know why. Every day is a tough day. Police officers go out there and serve their community, never knowing what to expect. They never know what their day will hold. I am so inspired by and grateful for all the people in the NSW Police Force, including Richard. I know he loved the NSW Police Force and the camaraderie that came with it. He got that same camaraderie when he joined the Labor Party.

Richard was very involved in the PCYC as chairman, alongside being the patron and founder of the Lake Macquarie Police Citizens Youth Club. He was also a proud member of the surf lifesaving movement, as am I. I do not know about his choice of Redhead Surf Life Saving Club; I am a Caves girl. Dixon Park is definitely

out, but I know he loved Dixon Park. Richard was so loved. At his funeral, I caught up with members from Dixon Park Surf Life Saving Club who had been family friends with Richard through the club for decades. The father of those members was very good friends with Richard. It was lovely to hear them recount their stories. All the stories are the same: Richard entered a room and you knew he was in the room. He lit up the room; he was larger than life and so much fun.

It is important to share another thing, which the member for Charlestown mentioned. Richard was a mentor to all of us. I know every single one of us would have had the phone call with Richard saying, "Listen, I just wanted to tell you this, love" or "Now what's happening is ..." or "Now what you've got to do is ..." or "I'm telling you, that's exactly what you've got to do." He was a great mentor with lots of good advice, and, generally speaking, he was right. We will miss him not giving us those calls, and we will miss him sharing his love of Labor and his love of doing the right thing. He knew that we have the capacity as MPs to change people's lives in a positive way. That is what it was all about for him. My thoughts go to all of his family here today and to his broader family, who I know cannot be here because they are all around the country and the world. I acknowledge Richard's service in this place, in the community and in the labour movement, and thank his family very much for sharing him with us. That is a gift they gave. Vale, Richard Face.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Before I call the member for Wyong, I welcome another former member to the gallery, Tony Stewart.

**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) (15:05):** I make a short contribution in tribute to the Hon. Richard Face. I offer my deepest condolences to Richard's family, friends and colleagues. Some of my former colleagues are in the gallery, the Hon. Richard Amery and the Hon. Tony Stewart. I feel no pressure at all! They were great mentors to me as a young person coming into this place. Listening to the contribution of the member for Swansea, I was reminded that being a mentor was an important role that Richard Face played in this place. It was not just about his electorate; it was about developing his colleagues. I pay tribute to my two former colleagues in the gallery. We catch up for dinner every now and again and still toss ideas around. That is an ongoing legacy, even after you leave this place.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Are you a Feather Duster?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** I am an honorary Feather Duster, because I was in and then I was out, and now I am back again. I wanted to bring a different perspective. I am not sure, because I was at another event, whether it has been raised so far, but dear to my heart is how I met the Hon. Richard Face. I had the privilege for a number of years to be chieftain of the clans at Norah Head. At one of those events a fine, upstanding person—the Hon. Richard Face—was drum major for the Newcastle RSL pipes and drums. We had a great conversation. That was the first time we had spoken personally, because he had left this place by the time I arrived. He gave me some great tips on how to be a good chieftain. He loved his music, and he loved his Scottish heritage particularly. I was reflecting on a photo from back then, when he was resplendent in red and proud to lead the pipes and drums of Newcastle RSL. I followed in his footsteps there as the chieftain.

Richard was also the Minister for Gaming and Racing, which is the role I currently hold. He was the first, and held the role for a long time. Thirty years in this place is an amazing feat and something that most of us can only dream of. It is a tribute to him that his community gave him that trust for 30 years. Richard was highly respected in the gaming and racing industry. One of the things I understood through conversations with others is that he had great admiration for people who worked in the department. He understood that the public service—the people who work as part of government—are absolutely vital. He also understood that those industries, particularly in regional New South Wales, are so important to communities. He understood the importance of the racing industry, and understood how it spreads out not just through the Hunter but through the whole of New South Wales. I think that is a great credit to him.

In his valedictory speech he called the staff at the Department of Gaming and Racing "legendary". He valued the support of those people. I too am served by a small but effective department. It can be quite interesting these days because some in the community have various views about some of the industries that I regulate. But, like Richard, many of us share a passion for those industries because we understand the importance to our communities. As Yaz mentioned, his legacy is particularly important.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Yaz?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Sorry, I should say the member for Swansea.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** And Minister!

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** And Minister—and my neighbour. We are very close. I heard in her contribution the respect she had for Richard Face; I did not hear the words of other members but I know they would have spoken in the same way. He left an important legacy, particularly in being the precursor to Minister for the Hunter. One of the most important things in the history of the Hunter Valley was the transition from BHP, and he led that transition. He was part of those important conversations and must be respected and remembered for the work that he did in an amazingly difficult time for that community. I was at university in Newcastle at the time—it was called teachers' college back then—and saw firsthand the difficulties of that transition. Richard was a leader in that community and a big part of making sure that Newcastle became the vibrant community that it is today. That should never be forgotten or underestimated. His work on the ground in his electorate and his advocacy in this place made sure that those issues were front and centre and addressed in the way they should have been.

I am now the Minister for the Central Coast; the member for Swansea is the Minister for the Hunter, and other members have had responsibility for that portfolio in the past. We know the importance of regional New South Wales. The standard set by Richard is a high bar for us to reach. The Hunter is about to go through another transition, this time away from the fossil fuel energy industry to renewables. We can look back at the lessons left to us by Richard to understand that you leave no-one behind, workers are the most important people and the whole community must benefit. That is his great legacy.

Members have today heard of his many other achievements, projects and passions. I am sure that after he retired he would drive around not only his electorate but also the Hunter, see the range of buildings, parks and other things that he created and think, "I did that". As a politician, there is no more important legacy than to drive around your community and think you played a part in those things happening. Over 30 years there was probably not a lot that he did not have a hand in. When his family members look around that community they can be proud in so many different ways. Today I feel honoured to speak about Richard. I hope I have conveyed to his family his fantastic legacy. We salute him. May he rest in peace.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (15:13):** Today I too make a brief contribution to debate on this condolence motion in recognition of a true gentleman, the Hon. Richard Face. It will be brief because my colleagues have covered a great deal of Richard's contribution to this place, to the community, to the Hunter and to the State. I extend my condolences to his family and friends in the gallery today. The good member for Swansea mentioned something similar in her contribution, but when thinking about Richard's legacy I note that I was about to turn two when he was elected to this place.

**Mr Steve Whan:** Stop bragging.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** It just puts me in mind of the extent of his contribution and the time he spent in this place through that period. It was an extensive three decades, an enormous contribution. As has been mentioned by other members, prior to coming to Parliament he was a police officer. His service to community was so lengthy and important. To be the member for Charlestown representing his community for three decades from 1972 is an extraordinary service. To think he also contested—I have heard nine elections today, possibly 10 elections—

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** It was 10.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Contesting 10 elections is no small feat. Having contested just four of my own, I know that every single one of them takes a lot out of you. It takes a lot out of your family members and friends. I acknowledge the Hon. Bob Martin in the gallery. He knows how much it takes out of those former members when they support me in my elections. It is an enormous effort. Contesting 10 elections is extraordinary in itself. For that entire time Richard represented his constituents, his seat, the Hunter and the people of New South Wales with honour and distinction.

I met Richard as a relative newcomer to the Labor Party when having those first dangerous thoughts of running for the electorate of Port Stephens. I was introduced to him by his friend the Hon. Bob Martin. Richard was always generous with his time, his ideas, his knowledge and his deep connections across the Hunter that were always beneficial. The mentoring role he played for every one of the current Hunter MPs cannot be understated. I know that the Hon. Bob Martin has many stories about his and Richard's exploits in this place and elsewhere, joined in steadfast solidarity by his good friend the Hon. Richard Amery, who is also in the gallery today. Bob has shared a few of those stories with me but I will not go into any of them. For the record, however, Bob tells me that Richard's rendition of *Jerusalem* was indeed magnificent.

As mentioned by some of my colleagues, when reflecting on Richard's enormous contribution, the context is important. He was a leader in the Hunter at a time of significant transformation when the region's bedrock employer, BHP Steelworks, was closing. As a true Labor man to the core, Richard was squarely focused on the

workers, ensuring that there was assistance in place for the workforce as jobs were lost and people faced the most difficult times of their lives. Amongst many of the initiatives for which Richard was responsible, one was the retraining and relocation packages that he put in place. He realised that job creation elsewhere was key. He was always seeking other job creation opportunities in the Hunter, such as the Steel River Project at Mayfield. While he supported a community going through upheaval, he always had an eye to the future. He supported the development of the University of Newcastle, the Newcastle city bypass, the redevelopment of McDonald Jones Stadium, the establishment of the Glenrock sports recreation area and the expansion of the port—without even privatising it.

In April 1995 Richard became Minister for Gaming and Racing—and what is now known as Minister for the Hunter—in the Carr Government and served until his retirement in 2003. He was a true Labor Party man through and through, joining in 1967, holding various positions in the party and being a delegate to the New South Wales State conference since 1970. That is true loyalty and commitment. Whilst Richard's allegiance to the Labor Party was unbreakable, it was matched by his commitment to his community. We have heard so much today about his contributions across the electorate of Charlestown and the Hunter more broadly as chairman of the Federation of the Police Citizens Youth Clubs and member of the board for three years, patron and founder of the Lake Macquarie Police Citizens Youth Club, and co-organiser of the Newcastle Musical and Military Tattoo. He also had close ties with surf lifesaving associations and obviously a love of piping and pipe bands as well.

He made many different contributions across the community. I have to say that any reference I have ever heard made about Richard is that he was a man of honour and a true gentleman. He spent his entire life serving his community and, as someone who has not yet clicked up one decade in this role, I cannot imagine how challenging it was to do what he did for the amount of time he did it. Being in public office has an impact not only on the individual but also on family and friends. On behalf of the Parliament, the people of Port Stephens, the Hunter and me personally, I extend my gratitude, respect and condolences to Richard's family, friends and loved ones—particularly Gay, Richard's children, Warwick, Melita, Marika and Stephen, and his eight grandchildren, including Annabelle, who is here today.

As the member for Swansea mentioned, today's condolence motion and the contributions that have been and will be made reflect the esteem with which Richard was held by all of us here. He showed us leadership and a way to follow in his footsteps. We feel very honoured to follow in those footsteps. Richard was parochial and full of pride, because that comes with being an MP representing the Hunter. We are so grateful for that. I finish by saying that the Hunter is a much better place because of Richard Face, as is the State. Vale, Richard.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:21):** I too acknowledge Melita, Annabelle, Gay, Tamara, Margaret, Bob, Richard and Tony. Richard Face was a very well-loved man in my electorate of Newcastle. He devoted his life to serving the community, as we have heard, not only during his 30 years in Parliament but also as a policeman before that and through his involvement with community groups in his retirement. I was fortunate to know Richard personally. We first met some 25 years ago when he was in the position equivalent to the Minister for the Hunter. He was at the peak of his long career that earned him the affectionate title of grandfather of the House.

As one would expect, after 30 years in Parliament, Richard left a very rich legacy. He made many great contributions to the local area that my colleagues have touched on, from his leadership during the Hunter's transition from steelworks to his triumph in establishing the Glenrock State Conservation Area. His passion for helping people and improving our local community lived on right until the end. He was a member and supporter of just about every kind of community organisation and sporting group, from musical groups to the multiple police citizens youth clubs in the Hunter that he chaired. In recent years, like my colleagues, I enjoyed many regular conversations with Richard when he would offer advice, comment on the progress of the city and give us a few tips. He would never stop thinking about how he could help Newcastle grow. I am very grateful for the guidance and counsel that he provided to me throughout my career.

Richard was a Labor man through and through. He treated people with fairness and with kindness. He maintained close relationships with many of the people who worked for him and people who worked with him. He is very fondly remembered for his quick wit and sense of humour. He could always be relied upon to put a smile on your face and brighten the day with his quick repartee. I saw Richard many times in his past few years and it makes me very happy to say that his spirit and his warmth never dulled. We know he had his ups and downs, particularly towards the end. But when he was good, he was really good and he was great company. He was quick and always offered more and more of his wonderful personality.

He leaves behind his gorgeous family: his wife, Gay, four children and eight grandchildren. My thoughts are with you and have been with you throughout this difficult time. He also leaves behind a trail of friends. I note the presence of Bob, the former member for Port Stephens, and Margaret and, of course, his dear friend Richard Amery. I welcome them back to the New South Wales Parliament. It is always wonderful to have you

here. I was talking to Melita before and she mentioned they used to come here on school holidays. Richard would work, then spend some time with the family and then he would come back to work. He never stopped, that man—quite incredible. I take this opportunity to thank Richard personally on behalf of my constituents for everything he did for Newcastle, the Hunter and all of New South Wales. Vale, Richard Face.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (15:25):** It is an honour for me to support this motion of condolence. I am indebted to Richard Amery, Chair of the Former Members Association, for some speech notes to contribute to this motion. Those who know Richard will not be surprised to learn that they are small, typewritten pages, which I was delighted to receive.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Which one?

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** You better ask him later which model of typewriter it is. I was not in this place when Richard Face was here. I did not have the sort of contact with him that a lot of the Hunter members had. I heard stories about him, of course. I first came into this place in 2003, just after Richard retired. I had heard a lot about his contribution, particularly to the Carr Government. Judging from some of the contributions here today, I am quite amazed at his many achievements during his lengthy period in office. Earlier the member for Wallsend noted that Richard was first elected to this place two weeks before the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972. My father was elected as part of the Whitlam Government in the Federal electorate of Eden-Monaro—which tells me how long ago it was. In our family history that was certainly a momentous time in politics, and it would have been really exciting for anybody elected to represent the Labor Party in any parliamentary sphere.

Richard served the House during the terms of three Premiers—Bob Askin, Tom Lewis and Sir Eric Willis—before the Wran Government. A short time after the defeat of the Labor Government in 1988 he joined the shadow Cabinet of Bob Carr and was elected by the caucus to the Opposition frontbench. One of those things that has changed since his time here is that the caucus used to elect our frontbenchers—a change that I oppose. I would not say that to the Premier though! Richard's hard work in opposition was rewarded when he was sworn in as a Minister upon the election of the Carr Government in 1995, and he served as a Minister until leaving Parliament in 2003. I can tell from a number of his comments that he took his duties very seriously.

I got out the *Hansard* and had a look at Richard's valedictory speech in this place. I note in that speech he indicated a book was being run on the length of his valedictory address. He speculated on who might win, although it was obviously very much in his control as to who would be the winner. I note the reference to a portfolio that he held for quite a long time. Richard also mentioned in his valedictory speech that he was noted for his lengthy speeches, which concerned the Premier and others. During one of Richard's contributions the Premier passed him a note saying "Keep it going" and later another note saying, "No, that's a joke". I did not have the pleasure of serving with Richard Face but he clearly approached his job with a huge amount of commitment, and also the sort of humour that quite honestly one would need to stay in this business for 30 years. That is an incredible length of time to serve the people of an electorate, let alone in this place.

I noted the comment before about standing in 10 elections. Maybe I have something in common with him. I stood in seven—although I lost most of mine. He certainly has a lot on me with regard to that. It is a great honour for us all to remember someone who made such an incredible contribution. I have been impressed with some of the things Richard was involved in. I do not live in the Hunter but I regularly visit Newcastle, and I read about his role in the Honeysuckle redevelopment on the foreshore. Visitors to Newcastle who regularly visit the site probably would not know how long ago that was advocated for. Members have spoken about the Glenrock State Conservation Area and the Fernleigh Track, both of which I have used extensively as a cyclist when I visit that area. That he was responsible for the Fernleigh Track being preserved as a corridor so that it could be used is an amazing legacy. I would be very proud if I left Parliament even with just a legacy like that, let alone all the other things he was engaged in.

Richard was involved in promoting the Hunter wine industry, which has gone from strength to strength over the years, and promoting its exports. Australian wine exports are incredibly important, particularly the quality wines that come from the Hunter region. Richard Amery wants me to mention this next part. Richard Amery is the current President of the Parliamentary Bowls Club and he wants me to mention Richard Face's involvement with the Parliamentary Bowls Club. When he first came to this Parliament, the Parliamentary Bowls Club was well supported by many members from both sides of the Parliament. Richard would recount that during the 1970s he would be encouraged to join the club by such people as former Premier Jack Renshaw, Minister Kevin Stewart and members such as Brian Bannon. Richard Face did join and remained an active member of the club for the rest of his time in Parliament. A proud moment was in 1994 when, as president of the club, he led the team to its first carnival win in 29 years in South Perth. That is a little like bringing the America's Cup home, by the sound of it. That was the first of a number of wins throughout the years.

Richard was a well-respected member of this Parliament. I am told he was also an active member. The former policeman in the gallery has pointed out to me that that training came in handy when Richard Face tackled an interloper who jumped the barrier from the gallery into the Chamber. He restrained that person until the attendants could get to them—the training never left. Over the past few years, Richard suffered from Parkinson's. Several of my relatives have suffered from Parkinson's over the years: a grandfather, an uncle and a father-in-law. My sympathies are with the family for the frustration that I know he would have felt as he was going through that. That frustration as Parkinson's takes hold can be seen in the people who are suffering it. My thoughts are with the family and with him for the experience that he would have gone through. In his valedictory speech he said that the job of being a member was not just a job but his life. He gave his commitment to it. As we heard in the contributions from members today, he continued to do that for many years afterwards. That is a great tribute. I extend my sympathies to all of Richard Face's family for their loss.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:33):** I pay my respects to the Hon. Richard Face's family, some of whom are in the gallery today. I acknowledge his former colleagues. It is a beautiful thing to see them in the gallery. During this debate my Hunter colleagues have been in and out of the Chamber or have stayed in the Chamber because we look to the old members as the ones we want to emulate, with the strength of their bond in standing up for their region and their community. Richard Face was a giant in the Hunter. He will always be remembered for assisting the Premier with the Hunter and through its transition. Many people in this Chamber have good memories of him and hold him in very high regard.

He was so integral to shaping the Hunter during that really difficult transition. As articulated by Matthew Kelly in the *Newcastle Herald* on Richard's passing, he played such a key role in the region's transition away from steelmaking and the establishment of the Hunter Beyond 2000 Committees. That was no mean feat and an extraordinary legacy we would all like to emulate as we face our own transition in the twenty-first century. I will leave it to other members to reflect more on his story. They knew him better than I did. I met him a number of times. I give special thanks to the member for Charlestown for her beautiful overview and tribute.

I will share a bit of perspective from Maitland. Richard was a friend not just to the Hunter but to Maitland specifically. I spoke to former member for Maitland John Price earlier today. He is very sorry he could not be in the Chamber today; he has some medical appointments. His service to the House overlapped with some of Richard's time in Parliament. He sends his sympathies and condolences to Richard's family and friends. The way he described Richard was very thoughtful. He said he was a good member and a good Minister. If any of us leave this place with that endorsement from someone whom I hold in such high regard as Pricey, I think they are doing pretty well. It was not just about the Hunter. Maitland is the dormitory for all the Hunter region's industries. It has been that way for generations. Where the Hunter goes—whether it be steelmaking, coal or aluminium—we go because our people provide those workers; that is really important for us.

I also heard from former member for Maitland Peter Blackmore, OAM. He has very good recollections. Hearing from him today brought back memories. He has previously spoken to me with such fondness about Richard. Peter Blackmore was a big musician and I think he also joined a pipe band, but he did not mention Richard's affinity with that instrument because Peter likes to show his own colours—and I mean that in a nice way. He is a very generous person. He said to me that Richard loved wearing his busby, a big fluffy hat; he remembers that very fondly.

He also remembers Richard as a very strong supporter of apprenticeships for young people and doing a lot of work for people in the Hunter in that area. He too remembers the incident the member for Monaro recalled, when a young fellow jumped over the railing from the gallery onto the floor of the House and Richard very quickly apprehended the offender—although Peter said he assisted him in that moment too. I am sure other members of the Chamber did too. Perhaps some of the former members in the gallery today were there too. Mr Blackmore also noted that the Speaker deleted video of the incident so that it could not be replayed, which is an interesting perspective on how things have changed. They obviously did not want all the drama and the possibility of encouraging someone else to do similar.

The Government Whip is in the Chamber. He can close his ears for a minute. Peter remembers an occasion when he sought approval for a pair request from the other side to attend an event in Newcastle. It was very difficult to attend. He decided he would talk personally to Richard and then they both agreed that the event in Newcastle was very important. Between themselves, they organised a little pair. I have never done that and never would. None of us would. It is a different time. At the event Richard thanked Peter and acknowledged that, without his support, he would not have been able to attend. Peter very much appreciated that and remembered him for it. Peter also made special mention of Gay, who worked in Richard's office, and said she was always very lovely. That is very nice to hear as well. Those are the things that really showed how much respect members had on both sides of politics; I know it went both ways.

Richard spent so many hours on the train between the Hunter and Macquarie Street with people like Arthur Wade, Sam Jones, Ken Booth and other MPs such as Milton Morris. They were great mates. In fact, Richard was at Milton's funeral a couple of years ago. That is something we should all reflect on. It is easy to let the 24-hour news cycle, the gotchas and all those other moments get in the way of friendship and, more importantly, the collaboration that can develop. So it is wonderful to see people who honour their friendships right through to the very end and honour the walk together towards progress for their communities that we all share, particularly in difficult times such as transition. There can be no greater accolade for a member of Parliament than to have people on the opposite side wanting to work with them and to remember those efforts and their importance.

John Price noted that a lot of people in Maitland are grateful to Richard for his efforts as Minister in supporting the retention of greyhound racing in Maitland, which continues to this day. I know that can be a controversial topic, but a part of our community really values it. I am sorry that I could not be at Richard's funeral; I was on medical leave when he passed. I am so grateful for this opportunity to show how much he was valued as a local member across the aisle and across the broader Hunter rather than just in the area of operation of his own electorate. Whenever we look at the challenges ahead of us, we will look to people like Richard as a model to emulate for collaboration to benefit the community, because that is why we are all here. Thank you and vale, Richard.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:40):** I pay tribute to the late Richard Face. I pay respect to his family through his partner, Gay, and to the members who are in the gallery today. Richard was part of the Carr Government, as was I, albeit in the other place.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You were a young girl then.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I was a young girl then. I had the privilege to serve with Richard during his eight years as Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development, as it was then called. Richard was serious about his role as Minister, but he had a great sense of fun and of the ridiculous, which is essential to survive in this place. He always wore his love for the Hunter on his sleeve. It was always evident. He was a pivotal figure in the transformation of the Hunter in its transition to the strong, vibrant economic and cultural region that it is today. They were hard times; I remember them. It was a statewide issue and a national issue, and I remember Richard's role in it very well. Who says transition cannot happen? It did. And Richard was pivotal to it and immersed in it.

The racing and club industries are very active in the area where I live, in the Northern Rivers. With carriage of both those matters, Richard visited my area a few times as Minister when I was in the upper House. When he came to visit, he was so good on the stump, as they say. He got on with everybody. He could work across the aisle, as we heard from the previous speaker. He did so even when we were in the middle of Treasurer Egan's reform of the clubs—I remember that well. As a Minister, Richard was very active and good in how he dealt with it.

Richard was courteous and he listened well. He always had his door open and was always willing to help. He carried himself with a bit of a copper's stance, having been a former police officer. He was a presence, as was his colleague and mate the Hon. Richard Amery, whom I acknowledge in the gallery. When Richard left this place, he left it in good standing amongst his peers on all sides. He held his seat of Charleston for 30 years. He won 10 elections; that is a feat in itself. He left both this Parliament and his electorate a better place because of his contribution.

Many of us here have secured great and big wins—and Richard had his—but it is often the small local ones that give us the most satisfaction as members. In Richard's last speech in this place he said, "As for my record of achievement in my electorate, it is for others and history to say whether it has been one of success or not. However, of the things I have done or achieved in the electorate in 30 years, it is the declaration of the Glenrock State Recreation Area which has brought me the most satisfaction." Again, that speaks to how Richard's heart was in the Hunter and how very local he was. With those words, I pay tribute to my colleague the late Richard Face.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:45):** I pass on my condolences to Gay and her family and to the colleagues of the late Richard Face. I have only been in this place a relatively short time—about 16 years, give or take. As the member for Lismore said, my recollection of Richard relates to his club reforms. I was leading the club movement in the Tweed area and I was also general manager of the Tweed Heads Bowls Club. We had many meetings with Richard when he attended the area as Minister for Gaming and Racing. I had also previously worked at Revesby Workers with Mr Pat Rogan, whom I also have a great deal of respect for. I remember Richard visiting, reflecting on how Queensland had poker machines and talking about the reforms. I probably could not repeat what he said about the Treasurer at that particular point in time, but he was very supportive.



I am sure Richard had a little press secretary called Freddy, who was a short, bald-headed fellow. The Hon. Richard Amery might be able to remember. I spent many an evening with Richard and Freddy in my area. I found him a very warm and considered individual, but also a very respectful individual. Even when we were in Sydney holding up signs outside the Parliament saying "Axe the tax" and things of that nature, Richard was someone we totally respected. I am sure he had all the club movement behind him. After I got into politics, Richard visited me as a representative for the Northern Region Football Association. I served on the National Bowls Board for about 10 or 12 years. In fact, I think I am the only living life member of the national association at this time. Richard and I had a lot in common, with our interest in sporting groups and the interplay within them. We all know what politics is like in this place, but in State and national sporting groups there is probably more politics than here. But I found Richard extremely helpful.

The loss of anyone is a time of sadness. It is a time of reflection. But it is also a time of celebration that you managed to share some time with Richard. Even though his family and friends are sad, I can see there is warmth in their hearts that has been generated by Richard. I found him very warm and funny. I found him sometimes a bit abrupt, but I deeply respected him. There are not too many members on my side of the House who were here at the same time as Richard, but he has left an ongoing legacy. From listening to my colleagues from the Hunter and Newcastle, it is obvious he achieved a terrible lot there and left a great legacy. I am still struggling to picture the member for Monaro on a pushbike riding lengthy distances.

Be that as it may, I pass on my condolences and I am sure that I speak on behalf of the club industry, ClubsNSW, the Australian Hotels Association and Racing NSW. I think it would be a joy for Richard to see the success of the thoroughbred industry in the Hunter and of massive events in the racing industry like The Everest. I am sure the member for Cessnock would also point out the success and high quality of the wine industry in his area. On behalf of my electorate, I offer my condolences to Richard's family. It is a great loss indeed. Thank you.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:49):** I too make some brief reflections on the former member for Charlestown, the Hon. Richard Face. We have been regaled with the history of the great achievements that Richard made from this place and subsequent to his leaving the Legislative Assembly. None of us in this place could do our work without the support of our family and loved ones, including our close friends. I am sure that would have been the case for Richard. To Gay and Tamara, Melita and Annabelle, Bob and Margaret and Richard, it is a privilege for me to stand in this place and say a few words. I am going to co-opt the sentiments and words of my colleagues, particularly the member for Charlestown, who gave such a good overview of the political life—and much of his life outside Parliament—of Richard Face.

I reflect on somebody whom I did know in this place: former member David Campbell, who was police Minister at the time. He has a sort of gruffness about him. In some ways, there is a bit of a similarity there. I remember going to see David, and he said to me something that was very similar to something that Richard said to me once, "Member for Lake Macquarie, I'm happy to do what I can to help you, but I'd much rather be dealing with one of ours, okay?" David did not get over it very well, but I defeated a longstanding member of the Labor Party in the Hunter—which was not a common thing to do. I am sure that Richard probably had a similar sentiment. But he was also very generous in the way that he approached me.

Another member that has been reflected on in this place is Milton Morris. They were contemporaries, of course. When you were elected, Milton was always keen to send you a nice little note, either handwritten or typed. I seem to think it was typewritten; he may have got the member for Mount Druitt to help him tap it out on his typewriter. Richard did not do it that way with me. I think it was the member for Charlestown who said that Richard was a mentor and adviser—or certainly words to that effect. I am going to say that he was an adviser. Richard wanted to give me advice, there is no doubt about that. I am not sure that he expected me to follow it, but he certainly wanted to give it to me.

I got to know Richard most when I was Mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie, having been elected in 2004. That is where I first started to spend more time discussing regional matters with Richard, including his involvement with Northern Region Football. There was a lot going on in that area. I do not know whether they have sorted out their politics. I think they have. But, surprise, surprise, Richard would be involved not only in politics here but also in sport. Who is surprised?

Richard was absolutely fully engaged in the region. He was a titan of the Hunter. That is how I remember him before I really got involved in politics. He was just always there, and he was involved in some of those major capital works and other arguments to drive the Hunter forward. He was incredibly parochial, as I hope all members are for their area. I think we are very parochial in the Hunter, and Richard was the epitome of that. Why was I not surprised then that, as Mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie, he approached me about something—I mean, who gets into bowling? I do not know. It is a tragic kind of a life.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order!

**Mr GREG PIPER:** I have heard of a chap by the name of Richard Amery and bowling memorabilia around the Parliament. Richard Face was also involved. Richard went on to a life spent supporting bowling clubs and trying to make sure that those clubs remained sustainable in the area and could survive and stand on their own. Of course, many of them have been unable to do so. In all seriousness, it is a tragic loss for the community. One club that I worked with Richard really closely on—and with the former mayor of Lake Macquarie, John Kilpatrick—was the Charlestown Bowling Club. I will call it Kahibah, where I grew up. Anyway, Richard and I worked closely to deliver freehold ownership of the Charlestown Bowling Club. It would not have happened had it not been for Richard Face. I do not know how many members of the bowling club recognise that now, but they owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Richard left a great legacy. We are all on the same path and we will all leave at some stage, but I do not think many of us will be able to leave the mark that Richard Face has left, not just in this place but also in his community. To his family and friends, my condolences. Vale, Richard Face.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:56):** I make a short contribution to the motion. As somebody who grew up in Burwood Street, Kahibah—I know the Face family originally lived in Waratah Street—I pay my condolences to his family and acknowledge the tremendous service of Richard Face to the Kahibah community and to the electorate of Charlestown, as well as to the community of the Hunter Valley. People should not underestimate the tremendous emotional toll that the closure of BHP and the transition from an industrial town to the town that Newcastle is today took upon our community. It affected people in my family, and I saw it in the community around me. We had to adjust to the change from an expectation that we would leave school at year 10 and be offered an apprenticeship in one of the many businesses in town, to a community where apprenticeships disappeared and unemployment went through the roof. It was very hard.

It would have been a tremendous emotional burden on representatives like Richard and the other Labor members in that town to help the town through it, and they did. They did it successfully. That is a real tribute to Richard and also to the families who supported him during that period. It is important we put that on the record in this place. On a personal note, Richard's first wife, Barbara, taught me mathematics at Whitebridge High School. She was a wonderful teacher. The important role that representatives like Richard, the Labor Party and Labor representatives played in the transition Newcastle had to go through, when capital left town and the workers were left on their own to rebuild that city into the fine place it is today, must be properly recognised. I pay tremendous tribute to Richard and those Labor representatives. Vale, Richard Face.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Members and officers of the House stood as a mark of respect.*

*Bills*

## **CITY OF SYDNEY AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:59):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The City of Sydney Amendment Bill 2023 repeals the anti-democratic measures legislated by those opposite when they were in government that confer an unfair weighting on the votes cast by non-residential electors in City of Sydney elections over those cast by residential electors. Not only are those measures indefensible on any democratic principle but also they have placed an onerous and costly administrative burden on the City of Sydney to automatically enrol eligible electors and ensure the accuracy of the data used for enrolments. They have also put the NSW Electoral Commission in the difficult position of having to take enforcement action against the many enrolled non-residential electors who failed to vote at elections for the City of Sydney—in some cases, because they did not know that they were enrolled and required to vote.

In some other cases, it failed to send out postal voting ballot papers, fined people for not voting and then had to refund the fines. That included my wife. The bill corrects that historic wrong. It will apply to the City of Sydney the same voting rules for non-residential electors that apply at all other council elections. The bill also corrects another historical anomaly by abolishing the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee. The establishment of that committee was opposed by the City of Sydney and is not supported by it. The body has now

become inoperative. Dissolving the committee will remove an unnecessary barrier to transport decision-making in the Sydney CBD.

The City of Sydney's unique non-residential elector franchise applies only to that local government area. Under the Local Government Act 1993, any persons who live in a local government area or who are non-resident owners, rate-paying lessees or occupiers of rateable land in that area are eligible to vote as non-residential electors at the elections for local councils. However, the voting rules for non-residential electors that apply in the City of Sydney are very different from the rules that apply in other local government areas. Where in other local government areas non-residential electors are required to apply to be enrolled, in the City of Sydney they are automatically enrolled whether they want to be or not. The differences do not end there. Under the City of Sydney's non-residential elector franchise, where there are more than two natural persons who are non-residential owners, rate-paying lessees or occupiers of land, up to two of those persons are to be enrolled. In other local government areas, only one of those people is eligible to be enrolled.

Where a corporation is an owner, lessee or occupier of rateable land, two officers of the corporation—unless nominated by the corporation—are to be automatically enrolled. In other local government areas only one person nominated by the corporation may be enrolled. What does that mean in practice? Let us take the example of land in the City of Sydney that is owned by one corporation that leases to another who is a shopping centre operator who contributes to the payment of rates under the lease and licenses space in that shopping centre to store owners. In that example, up to two people may be enrolled to vote on behalf of the landowner, another two on behalf of the lessee and two for each of the store owners in the shopping centre. Potentially hundreds could be enrolled with respect to a single parcel of land.

Another unique attribute of the City of Sydney's non-residential elector franchise is that voting is compulsory for enrolled non-residential electors. In other local government areas enrolled non-residential electors are not required to vote. Not only are non-residential electors in the City of Sydney denied any choice in whether to be enrolled; if they fail to vote, they will be fined. Under the City of Sydney Act, the unenviable task of administering such an electoral shambles falls to the council's general manager. The Act places responsibility on the general manager for keeping and maintaining a non-residential roll electoral information register and for ensuring the information is accurate.

The information kept in the register is used to create the non-residential elector rolls for the elections for the City of Sydney. That means that, where there are two or more people who are eligible to be enrolled as non-residential electors, the general manager is obliged to determine which of those persons are to be enrolled based upon the alphabetical order of their names. It also means that the general manager of the City of Sydney is obliged under the legislation to ascertain the identity of eligible non-residential electors who live interstate or overseas so that they may be enrolled even though they do not have access to the data necessary for them to do so.

Unsurprisingly, the City of Sydney has raised concerns about the logistical and operational challenges of maintaining the register and ensuring that the information contained in it is accurate. The City of Sydney spent \$9.7 million to establish the register and it costs approximately \$1 million per annum to maintain it. In fact, you would comfortably be able to provide the opinion that the register is not even accurate. That money could be better invested in delivering services and infrastructure to the local community, including business owners. Despite the vast cost and administrative complexity of the City of Sydney's non-residential elector franchise, it has failed to deliver its policy objectives. While the current arrangements have seen an increase in the enrolment of non-residential electors in the City of Sydney, a significant number of non-residential electors enrolled under the expanded franchise are not exercising their rights to vote at elections for the City of Sydney.

At the 2021 City of Sydney election, 47,465 non-residential voters were enrolled to vote—assuming that figure is accurate. However, 18,501 of those were issued Apparent Failure To Vote notices by the Electoral Commission following that election. That represented 39 per cent of all non-residential electors for the area. By contrast, 21 per cent of the residential electors for the City of Sydney were issued Apparent Failure To Vote notices. There are two possible reasons for that. The first is that, because there is no provision for absent voting at local government elections, if non-residential electors for the City of Sydney failed to apply to vote by postal vote, there would have been no way for them to cast their vote even if they lived in another part of the State or elsewhere.

The second is that many enrolled non-residential electors for the City of Sydney may not have even known that they were enrolled to vote at the election for the City of Sydney and that they were obliged to vote. Undoubtedly, many of those electors would have been surprised to learn that, in addition to voting at the election for their local council in December 2021, they were also expected to vote at an election for another council in another part of the State. Whatever the reasons so many enrolled non-residential electors failed to vote, the Electoral Commission has had to go to the trouble and expense of enforcing the failure to vote provisions with

respect to the 18,501 non-residential electors who failed to vote at the election for the City of Sydney in December 2021.

Each of those electors has been put to the trouble of having to show cause to the commission about why they should not be fined for failing to vote. I have already indicated to the House that people like my wife were fined for failing to vote, and in her case that amount of money was refunded. The measures contained in the bill will remove the uniquely anti-democratic, administratively complex and costly rules for non-residential voting currently prescribed under the City of Sydney Act. They will do this by repealing the provisions that prescribe them and by making several consequential amendments. This will, in effect, see the City of Sydney become subject to the same rules governing voting by non-residential electors that apply in other local government areas in this State.

If passed, the bill will see the following outcomes: A natural person who is a non-resident owner, ratepaying lessee or occupier of rateable land in the City of Sydney will be entitled to apply to be enrolled as a non-residential elector for the City of Sydney; a corporation that is a non-resident owner, ratepaying lessee or occupier of rateable land in the City of Sydney will be entitled to nominate one person to be enrolled as a non-residential elector for the City of Sydney; where there are multiple non-residential owners, ratepaying lessees or occupiers of a parcel of land, only one of those persons may be nominated for enrolment; and where corporations or trustees own or are ratepaying lessees or occupiers of more than one parcel of land in the City of Sydney, or if joint or several non-resident owners, ratepaying lessees or occupiers own or are ratepaying lessees or occupiers of more than one parcel of land in the City of Sydney, they can only nominate one person to be enrolled as a non-residential elector for the City of Sydney in respect of one of those parcels.

A person may be enrolled only once to vote in elections for the City of Sydney in any capacity. If they are already eligible to be enrolled as a residential elector, they will not be eligible to be enrolled as a non-resident elector. Like all other councils in the State, the General Manager of the City of Sydney will be required to prepare a non-residential elector roll prior to each election that includes the names of the persons who have applied at any time for the inclusion of their name on the roll and who on the closing date 40 days before the election are, in the opinion of the general manager, qualified for inclusion on that roll. It will not be compulsory for enrolled non-residential electors to vote at elections for the City of Sydney. The bill will also address another historical anomaly in the City of Sydney Act by abolishing the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee, which was established in 2012 to provide a mechanism for coordination between the New South Wales Government and the City of Sydney in the Sydney CBD.

The City of Sydney was strongly opposed to the establishment of the committee and has requested its abolition on several occasions. The City of Sydney was concerned that the committee would delay decisions on important transport and traffic management issues in the City of Sydney. As a result, the City of Sydney has declined to support the committee and it has not been able to be convened and is currently inoperative. There are other governance arrangements in place for the City of Sydney on transport projects impacting upon the CBD, and that committee is no longer required. A number of members of the House who are currently in the Chamber—including the member for Sydney, the member for Newtown and me—serve on the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee, which, in effect, makes the same decisions that the Government sought to have made by the committee that I am proposing this House abolish.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** The member for Balmain is here as well.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The member for Balmain is also on that committee. It is important to emphasise that the bill is not about disenfranchising non-residential electors in the City of Sydney. Eligible non-residential electors will still be able to apply to be included on the non-residential roll and to exercise their right to vote at elections for the City of Sydney. Importantly, it will be their choice. Non-residential electors will not be enrolled against their will and be compelled to vote, as is currently the case. The bill will remove the current anti-democratic arrangements and put non-residential electors in the City of Sydney on the same footing as their counterparts in other local government areas. The Act seemed to operate proximate to the way it was posited in a question without notice that was asked of me by the member of Sydney several months ago. On becoming Minister for Local Government, it was always my intention to propose to this House the removal of this anti-democratic provision that applied uniquely to the City of Sydney.

As I told the House several months ago, it was stage two of the then Government's attempt to remove local councillor Clover Moore as Lord Mayor of Sydney and provide a vehicle for the Liberal Party to obtain control of Sydney Town Hall. In 2014, in debate on the City of Sydney Amendment (Elections) Bill 2014—parts of which I seek to repeal with this bill—I made some observations. I am sure the member for Kiama will remember it clearly because he was in the chair and he did his best to shut me down in the House. Nine years ago, the shadow Minister for Local Government and member for Canterbury bitterly opposed the bill. The Member for Sydney at the time also bitterly opposed the bill and its undemocratic nature. The bill was not only undemocratic in nature

but also dishonest in purpose. In 2014 I quoted to the House a tweet from Antony Green that he posted on 5 September 2014. He wrote:

Will somebody not rid me of this troublesome Lord Mayor?

I said to the House in part:

Why does the Government not have the honesty and integrity to stand up and say that the City of Sydney Amendment (Elections) Bill 2014 is about getting rid of Clover Moore?

In 2012, when we amended the Local Government Act, we expected Clover Moore to resign and not contest the City of Sydney council elections. I said:

But she did what the Tories never expected: She resigned her membership of this House. Why does the Government not say that that is what this bill is all about, and everything else is a ruse?

I said then, as I have said now, that the voting system created two business votes. It is designed specifically for that purpose and no other. I refer to the committee that the member for Kiama chaired, which made recommendations based upon the Melbourne model, and which the member for Ku-ring-gai did not know about when he made his contribution to debate on the bill. In fact, the chairman of the Victorian Electoral Matters Committee recommended to the Victorian Government that it repeal the provisions because they had not worked in Melbourne local government. Of trying to get rid of Clover Moore, I said:

No member of this House, no member of the other place and no Executive Government has been able to get rid of her for 34 years; she has outsmarted them all. She has outsmarted the Tories and she has outsmarted the Labor Party.

I have watched her for 34 years outsmarting Bill Hartup, the former Mayor of South Sydney; I saw her outsmart the former Lord Mayor of Sydney, Doug Sutherland; and I saw her outsmart and embarrass the Tories when she beat the up and coming Michael Yabsley to become the member for Bligh. I observed her as the member for Sydney. She outsmarted Eric Roozendaal when he was general secretary and thought the Labor Party could take control of the Council of the City of Sydney.

I went on to say of Eric Roozendaal:

When he joined South Sydney Council and the Council of the City of Sydney he created the environment for Clover Moore to be elected Lord Mayor of Sydney, thinking that somehow or other the Labor Party could sneak through the middle. Now the Tories are doing what every other government has tried for 80 years ...

That is clearly the motivation for this bill. This Government and all the governments before it have not liked this particular Lord Mayor of Sydney. But she has outsmarted them again.

Further, I observed:

I may not like her planning policies; I might support Councillor Linda Scott, a member of the City of Sydney council, who I thought might have been a better Lord Mayor. But in 2012 the people in the city council area, which includes a substantial part of my electorate, elected Clover Moore with an overwhelming majority. Governments of the day have never accepted that for 34 years she has gained the overwhelming support of her constituents. She must be doing something right.

Then I gave this warning to the government of the day—and the member for Kiama will remember it:

I give the Minister for Local Government this warning: He will end up like every other Minister for Local Government because in 2016 Clover Moore will still be Lord Mayor and all his naked political attempts to remove her, just like those of his predecessors, will have fallen flat.

I certainly did not have a crystal ball when I said that to the House in 2014. It really was a reprehensible, undemocratic decision designed to impact and affect the democratic institution of the City of Sydney. It has backfired on them because, 43 years later, Clover Moore is still there. If Clover Moore is still there 44 years later, it will be because the people of the City of Sydney have decided to return her to the lord mayoralty, or they will decide otherwise. Whatever the decision, it will be their decision in a fair election. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:22):** When I was interrupted previously, I was regaling the House with information on the use of ammonium nitrate as a fertiliser. I spoke with members during the pause, and they said they were waiting with bated breath to hear the resumption of this section of the speech. Members will wait no more. Currently, an explosives licence is required to import, export, manufacture, store, supply, use or transport ammonium nitrate in New South Wales. To approve an explosives licence for ammonium nitrate, SafeWork NSW must be satisfied that a facility is capable of handling ammonium nitrate safely and securely.

SafeWork assesses compliance with the requirements of the Australian standard applicable, which is AS 4326, if members want to look it up.

Essentially, the changes that are being considered have no impact on the use of ammonium nitrate for farming. Currently, farmers who transport or store explosives are required to have a licence, and the bill does not change that. The same goes for prospectors. If someone is perhaps out Bathurst way looking for gold, and they want to blow some things up to find bits of gold, the changes that are being put forward do not affect that. Existing licensing clearances and other compliance regimes that are in place will stay; the bill makes no change to that. There has been extensive consultation on the bill, which is always important when we propose changes to laws.

Key industry stakeholders were notified of the release of the discussion paper that was put out between 19 July and 16 August 2019. There were a number of submissions from the police, the pyrotechnics industry, the Minerals Council and a number of organisations that are involved in the manufacture and transportation of these materials. Key stakeholders were also invited to an industry forum. In short, their submissions and feedback were carefully considered by the review. Their input went into the recommendations, which have in turn gone into the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:25):** I speak in support of the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. I commend the New South Wales Government for bringing the bill forward and implementing the recommendations handed down from the statutory review. I also support the amendments intended to transfer and embed core elements of the regulatory framework into the Act.

The Explosives Act is a critical piece of legislation that regulates the usage of explosives and explosive precursors in New South Wales. Explosive precursors are chemicals and other materials that can be processed, manufactured or otherwise developed to make an explosive. Ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place is critical in protecting workers, the public and property from the very real hazards that may arise from any illegal or unsafe use of explosives. The Act has been effectively safeguarding communities in New South Wales since its inception on 1 September 2005. However, the bill represents an opportunity to modernise, update and further improve the Act to best reflect modern legislative drafting practices.

The bill continues the iterative legislative cycle by building on the established regulatory foundations and confirming that the Act remains fit for purpose. The bill makes an amendment to define "supply" in the Act to include the sale of an explosive and any transfer of ownership of or access to an explosive. This establishes greater consistency between the definitions of the Act and the regulation, and makes it emphatically clear that supply can occur without money changing hands.

The bill also allows the regulatory authority, when in possession of forfeited explosives, to destroy the bulk of those explosives while preserving the admissibility of samples and certificate evidence in any subsequent proceedings for offences. I commend the bill for introducing strict provisions designed to ensure the integrity of evidentiary certificates and to protect the rights of a defendant. That puts New South Wales regulators on the front foot to meet, adapt to and resolve the challenges they face undertaking compliance operations in a complex regulatory environment. The new provisions allow for this without compromising the regulator's ability to effectively prosecute those who break the law.

The bill makes amendments to establish regulation-making powers for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives, and to authorise New South Wales police officers to exercise specific functions and powers of an inspector. These regulation-making powers better support existing provisions and allow for them to continue to effectively operate. The bill also transfers key elements of the regulation into the Act, including the authorisation, registration, and prohibition of explosives; powers for the regulatory authority to grant security clearances; classes of licences that may be granted; and procedures and powers related to the granting of exemptions. The amendments transfer long-established, critical elements of the regulatory regime into the Act. Their transfer represents a commitment to the ongoing safe regulation of explosives in New South Wales and ensures that the provisions are firmly entrenched in law and subject to parliamentary oversight. Consequential amendments are also included to assist in the transfer and integration of those provisions.

The improvements contained in this bill will continue to ensure the protection of the community of New South Wales from the risks of unsafe use of explosives. Clearly the bill has been developed in such a manner that there are no unintended consequences to the existing regulatory regime. While the bill makes minor changes to reflect modern practices and approaches, those changes do not compromise the regulator's ability to effectively undertake compliance and enforcement, nor are the amendments intended to impact or alter industry's compliance with the current regulatory regime. The same requirements will continue to remain in place and in effect.

This bill continues the strong legacy of the regulation of explosives in New South Wales, solidifying long-established elements within the Act and ensuring the regulation and regulatory authority are appropriately

delegated to. The Government's focus on the safety of explosives is extended to include the review of the Explosives Regulation, which is required to take place before 1 September 2024. I acknowledge that further regulations are required before the bill can come into effect and that the remake of the regulation has been postponed to allow for the bill to be passed before that work is finalised. Doing so will allow for the undertaking of thorough consultation on the regulation, allowing industry and the public to review the changes in the context of the regulation and provide any necessary feedback to improve the regulatory framework. I commend this bill and thank the Minister.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:30):** Today I speak in favour of the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023. This is a vital piece of legislation aimed at enhancing the safety and security of the people of New South Wales. Safeguarding the community is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of this esteemed Assembly and something our Government takes seriously. The proposed amendments within this bill are a significant step towards fulfilling that duty. By their very nature, explosive materials have the potential to cause severe harm. They are made to cause destruction, and extreme care must be taken to ensure that destruction is not accidental. We must have a robust and effective regulatory framework in place to govern the use, storage and handling of such materials. The Explosives Act 2003 has served as the cornerstone of this framework. The proposed amendments seek to strengthen and modernise the Act, aligning it with our State's evolving needs and challenges.

Throughout various regions of New South Wales, numerous individuals and industries have legitimate and essential purposes for using and storing explosive materials. The risks associated with such materials and their legitimate commercial purposes necessitate a strong regulation enacted by law. Many residents in my electorate of Riverstone rely on commercially available chemicals that fall under the category of explosives. Ensuring the safe storage and use of these volatile chemicals is paramount. Any lapse can have devastating consequences. The volatility of the materials can make them a threat to not only the person in possession of them but also the wider community. Whilst our area is changing and growing rapidly, large areas of north-west Sydney remain semirural, and agricultural use of land is not uncommon. From stockpiling too many chemicals to simply forgetting about their existence, there is a real risk of a catastrophe if care is not taken with the storage of explosive materials.

The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 seeks to implement the final recommendations of the 2019 statutory review of the Explosives Act. At the same time, the bill transfers established provisions from the Explosives Regulation 2013 into the Act. That strategic move serves to entrench critical elements of the regulatory regime within the Act itself, ensuring that only the most pertinent and underlying details remain within the regulation. One of the key elements proposed by the bill is the clarification of the definition of "supply" within the Explosives Act. This amendment ensures the Act encompasses scenarios where supply occurs without monetary exchange. In an era where innovative business models and transactions have emerged, this update is both timely and necessary, preventing any potential gaps in enforcement. Moreover, the bill empowers the regulatory authority to destroy forfeited explosives after appropriate analysis, certification and the retention of sample evidence for use in legal proceedings. This provision strengthens accountability and ensures the safe disposal of explosives, reducing the risk of unsecured and hazardous materials.

The transfer of certain provisions from the Explosives Regulation to the Explosives Act is a pivotal aspect of the bill. By doing so, the legislation appropriately structures delegations within the law, ensuring that key elements of the regulatory framework are empowered under the Act. Those provisions include authorisations, registrations, prohibitions of related explosives, and powers for the regulatory authorities to grant security clearances and establish classes of licences that may be granted. Furthermore, the bill delineates procedures and powers related to granting exemptions, offering much-needed clarity and permanence to those critical aspects of explosives management. In addition to these significant changes, the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 introduces provisions for the disposal of unwanted and unusable explosives. It authorises New South Wales police officers to exercise certain inspection functions in specific circumstances. Those additions bolster the overall regulatory framework, enhancing oversight and enforcement capabilities.

After extensive public consultation, the 2019 statutory review of the Explosives Act 2003 concluded that the Act's objectives remain valid and its terms appropriate for securing those objectives, with only four recommended amendments. However, issues related to explosives regulation were identified in June 2022 by Parliamentary Counsel. Certain provisions were considered inadequately empowered, making their inclusion within the Act more suitable. While the Building and Other Fair Trading Legislation Amendment Act 2022 addresses some concerns regarding regulation-making powers, it does not encompass the identified provisions.

The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 represents a comprehensive and well-considered effort to modernise and fortify our regulatory framework surrounding explosive materials. It acknowledges the legitimate needs of industries and individuals while at the same time reinforcing our commitment to public safety. By transferring established provisions into the Explosives Act, the bill ensures that critical elements of the regulatory regime are anchored within the Act itself, providing a stable foundation for managing explosive materials. The inclusion of

disposal provisions and the authorisation of New South Wales police officers to exercise certain inspector functions are a further step towards ensuring safe and responsible handling of explosive materials. These provisions demonstrate a commitment to a safer and more secure New South Wales.

I conclude by saying that the Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 is a judicious and necessary response to the challenges posed by explosive materials. It strikes a delicate balance between facilitating legitimate activities that require such materials whilst safeguarding our community from the potential harm they can cause. The bill is essential to the upkeep of safety for our wider community. I commend Minister Cotsis for her commitment to the safety of the people of New South Wales.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:38):** In reply: As members have heard, the Minns Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the statutory review of the Explosives Act 2003. The Explosives Amendment Bill 2023 finalises recommendations from the 2019 statutory review of the Act as well as strengthening the regulatory regime through a number of administrative measures. The amendments encompass improved administrative detail and the entrenching of powers within the Act, as well as providing the regulatory authority greater flexibility to effectively and safely fulfil its role. The amendments contained in the bill are mainly administrative but will implement real positive change to the way the people of New South Wales interact with laws and government processes.

In bringing forward the bill, the Government has established a number of amendments that will see the objectives of the Act more efficiently met and furthered. These proposed reforms have been identified through consultation with important industry stakeholders, legal experts and the day-to-day functions of the various agencies involved. The bill forms part of the New South Wales Government's intention to improve legislation and assist regulators in doing what they do best, in this case with regard to the regulation of explosives in New South Wales.

Through the bill, the Government is ensuring that the definition of "supply" will be consistently applied across the legislative framework and will now include the sale or transfer of ownership or possession. As members have also heard, the bill will enable regulators to destroy explosives prior to prosecution proceedings being engaged by following strict requirements as to the actions that they are able to complete, and use certificate evidence and samples as evidence in proceedings under the Act. This will allow for the reduced strain on regulator storage limits and ensure the viability of those regulator sites where explosives are stored.

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

Further, the bill establishes power for the disposal and destruction of forfeited and unusable explosives, and clarify authorisations for New South Wales police officers under the Act. The bill reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring the safe and effective regulation and control of explosives and explosive precursors in New South Wales. The amendments within the bill represent a critical step in the improvement and continued refinement of the regulatory framework. These amendments are a testament to my expectation for the bill and my role as the Minister for Work Health and Safety. I intend to continue to deliver effective legislation and improve workplace health and safety for the people and businesses of New South Wales.

I make clear that beyond the amendments with respect to the definition of "supply", provisions allowing the use of certificate evidence and destruction of explosives, the bill is primarily intended as an uplift of the regulations to the Explosive Act 2003 from the existing regulations. I emphasise this point: I assure our stakeholders that these amendments will in no way affect existing requirements related to supply or suppliers of powders and primers used for firearms for sporting, recreational, rural and professional applications. I also emphasise for stakeholders and those who raised issues with me that licensing for the transportation of explosives will not adversely impact on supply to gun shops and the storage levels within those shops, nor will the bill lead to any changes concerning the existing storage or transportation requirements concerning ammonium nitrate.

I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I thank the member for Mount Druitt, who spoke about the need for the regulatory uplift from the regulations to the Act. I thank the member for Willoughby and shadow Minister, and I welcome the support of the Opposition. I also thank the member for South Coast, who spoke to the extensive stakeholder consultation that occurred in the creation of the bill; the member for Liverpool,



who spoke to the benefit of changes to the disposal of unwanted explosives that the bill provides; and the member for Leppington, who waited very patiently and who noted that the bill has no impact on ammonium nitrate storage or transport requirements. I thank the member for Newtown for supporting the bill; the member for Parramatta, who was patient as well and who spoke about the improved provisions relating to how police may exercise powers under the Act; and the member for Riverstone for his consideration about some of the issues, particularly around how the bill will safeguard the community.

I also acknowledge the many and varied stakeholders: Department of Communities and Justice; police; NSW Small Business Commission; Mining and Energy Union; Minerals Council of Australia; Pyrotechnics Industry Association of Australia; Australasian Explosives Industry Safety Group; Sporting Shooters Association of Australia; ORICA; Glencore; and, of course, a number of Independents. I consulted with the Opposition. I consulted with the shadow Minister. We had very good officials from the department, Ben and Warren, and my very hardworking ministerial staff did an excellent job. I thank them as well for exhaustively consulting with all of us, particularly those from this side of the House, the Opposition, Independents and crossbench members, to make sure that people understand the consequences of the bill and how important it is. The bill complements the existing legislative framework and strengthens its function, operation and oversight. These are necessary, albeit primarily administrative, changes that will lay the groundwork for any changes that arise as part of the scheduled remake of the regulation. There will be further consultation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK AUTHORITY AMENDMENT (HILL ROAD UPGRADE) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:47):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. The bill is vital to the delivery of the Carter Street urban renewal precinct. The Carter Street Precinct, located adjacent to the Sydney Olympic Park, will enable 6,200 new homes to be built and the delivery of a vibrant new commercial and retail centre. Importantly, the Carter Street Precinct will increase opportunities for much-needed housing supply close to public transport. It will deliver new infrastructure to support a growing population and provide an improved public open space for an existing and future community.

The Carter Street Precinct Master Plan adopted in 2020, following extensive consultation with the local community, provided for the rezoning of what was industrial land to deliver this new residential and mixed-use precinct. The Hill Road upgrade project is an essential component of the delivery of the Carter Street Precinct Master Plan vision. Over the coming years Hill Road will form an increasingly important road link in a growing and developing part of Sydney's Central River City. The Carter Street Precinct is an example of the high-quality planning outcomes that we need to deliver to meet the growing housing and employment needs of Western Sydney. Transport for NSW will be undertaking the Hill Road upgrade works between Parramatta Road and the John Ian Wing Parade intersection. The upgrade works are located in Lidcombe near Sydney Olympic Park and are within the Cumberland and City of Parramatta local government areas.

The primary purpose of the Hill Road upgrade is to facilitate the new precinct. In addition, the upgrade will deliver improved connectivity to the Sydney Olympic Park precinct, and the residential and commercial centres of Newington and Wentworth Park. Importantly, it will also deliver new and enhanced active transport links, including pedestrian and cycle paths. The specific objectives of the Hill Road upgrade are to support the development growth in the Carter Street Precinct; improve traffic efficiency and accessibility to the Carter Street Precinct and Sydney Olympic Park; enable future transport network flexibility, improve road safety and access for all road users; minimise traffic disruptions on the surrounding road network during construction; and improve active transport links and access to public transport. The Hill Road upgrade is funded under the Housing Acceleration Fund, which provides funding for critical infrastructure projects designed to accelerate the delivery of much-needed housing. A total of \$140 million will be provided under the fund for this project.

I report to the House that the Hill Road upgrade project has been the subject of a planning assessment process under part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Transport for NSW invited community feedback on the project dating back to 2017. That included community consultation on the review of environmental factors [REF] in late 2021. During our briefings on the bill, The Greens and Animal Justice Party MLCs in the other place raised concerns about vegetation removal on the site. Vegetation loss required as part of the project has been identified as having low vegetation value. Vegetation was assessed as highly disturbed areas with a mix of exotic and native trees that are not remnant. Landscaping will be provided as part of the project, which will tie in with the existing area and complement the existing Millennium Parklands species and meet Sydney Olympic Park Authority and council requirements.

The community engagement included over 17,000 community notifications through mailbox drops, 135 stakeholders being reached via email, 1,800 project webpage views and receipt of 25 formal submissions. The feedback received during the community consultations was considered in determining the final detailed design for the upgrade works. Of the total submissions received as part of the REF, only 4 per cent of people expressed an objection to the project. The Sydney Olympic Park Authority advises that it received no objections as part of the granting of the short-term licences process to Transport for NSW for access to the land for early works.

Following the completion of a tender process later this year, Transport for NSW anticipates construction will commence in early 2024 and take approximately 18 months to complete. On completion of the works, City of Parramatta Council and Cumberland City Council will take responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of the upgraded sections of Hill Road. That is consistent with their responsibilities as the existing roads authorities under the Roads Act 1993. Hill Road is currently a regional road, with City of Parramatta Council being the roads authority for the section of Hill Road north of the M4 and Cumberland City Council being the roads authority for the section south of the M4.

I now outline the purpose of the bill. The Hill Road upgrade will require the acquisition of a small parcel of land in the Millennium Parklands near the intersection of Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade. That parcel is approximately 1,070 square metres. To put that into perspective, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the average site area for a new house in Greater Sydney in 2021 was 423 square metres. Acquisition of the land will allow for the necessary upgrade of the Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade intersection, as well as provide for a shared pedestrian and cycle path and associated landscaping. The land needs to be acquired by Transport for NSW for it to finalise the road upgrade.

As I mentioned, on completion the land will be vested in City of Parramatta Council as the roads authority for the newly upgraded section of road. In the short term, Transport for NSW will have access to the subject land for preliminary works. That has been obtained under short-term licences that have been granted by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. I confirm that various options were considered for the alignment of the widening of John Ian Wing Parade at the intersection with Hill Road. All of the options considered would have required a small portion of the Millennium Parklands to be used. In the final analysis, I am advised that the chosen alignment is one which will facilitate construction while also limiting impacts on the community during the completion of the works.

Under section 31 of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority cannot sell, mortgage or otherwise dispose of land in the Millennium Parklands. Further, section 31 (2) provides that the Millennium Parklands, or any part of the Millennium Parklands, cannot be compulsorily acquired, except by an Act of Parliament, hence the primary reason for the bill. Those are important provisions designed to protect the Millennium Parklands for future public use.

The purpose of the bill is to enable a small parcel of land to be acquired by Transport for NSW and for that land to cease to be part of the Millennium Parklands once acquired. It is necessary to ensure any specific provisions applying to the Millennium Parklands under the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001 do not prevent the upgrade works from being undertaken and, once completed, that the upgraded road and associated infrastructure can be utilised for their intended purpose. The acquisition of the small parcel of land is justified in this case having regard to the crucial role the Hill Road upgrade will have in delivering the Carter Street Precinct. In addition, the improved pedestrian and cycle paths that will be provided will serve to increase the community's access to, and enjoyment of, the Millennium Parklands.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts a new provision in the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001. That is new section 37A, which will apply to land identified as the Hill Road upgrade land on the Hill Road upgrade map. New section 37A provides that the prohibition on land disposal or acquisition in section 31 of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001 does not apply to the Hill Road upgrade land, and furthermore that the Hill Road upgrade land ceases to be part of the Millennium Parklands if the land is sold, disposed of, or compulsorily acquired. New section 37A (4) provides that any plan of management for the

Millennium Parklands does not prevent works for the purposes of upgrading Hill Road and ancillary activities. Finally, the bill inserts the Hill Road upgrade map in schedule 5 to the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001.

The Hill Road upgrade is an essential part of the new precinct. It will ensure that the development of the precinct can proceed without delay. The Government considers it essential to have the necessary infrastructure in place to support the new housing development. Effectively integrating land use and infrastructure planning in this way is what good planning is about, realising the precinct is an example of the type of development we should be delivering to meet the growing housing, employment and transport needs of Western Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:57):** I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in debate on the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. The Opposition does not oppose the amending bill. I agree with the Minister that we need to get on with the project and that passing the bill is in the public interest. The bill will amend the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001 to enable a clearly defined piece of land in the Millennium Parklands to be acquired by Transport for NSW for the purpose of upgrading Hill Road in Newington, in accordance with section 31 (2). I note the bill could have been handled using miscellaneous legislation rather than a singular bill, but as the shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, I always welcome the opportunity to speak about the previous Government's strong delivery around transport and other infrastructure.

The Hill Road upgrade will constitute an essential part of the Carter Street Precinct. It will provide the infrastructure necessary to support additional housing, accommodating transport, connectivity and other needs in the area of Western Sydney. Schedule 5 to the bill includes a map of the upgrade, which covers just 1,070 square metres. The project was originally announced by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government in 2015 to facilitate development in the Carter Street Precinct of Sydney Olympic Park as part of round four of the Housing Acceleration Fund. The Carter Street Precinct master plan was adopted under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government in 2020 following extensive community consultation, and it provided for industrial land to be rezoned for the new residential and mixed-use precinct.

Works are expected to commence early next year and take 18 months to complete. The Hill Road upgrade will provide essential connectivity to the Carter Street urban activation precinct, which is set to deliver 6,200 new residential properties close to public transport, a new retail and commercial centre, more public open space, pedestrian and cycle paths, and improved connectivity to the Sydney Olympic Park precinct and the residential and commercial centres of Newington and Wentworth Point. The Hill Road upgrade will also improve traffic efficiency, road safety, road access, active transport options and network flexibility. The upgrade will require the acquisition of the land near the intersection of Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade. This was identified as the best option as it will facilitate construction while limiting the impacts on community during its completion.

The upgrade project underwent a rigorous planning assessment process under part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, including being open to public consultation since 2017 and a public exhibition of the review of environmental factors in 2021. Only 4 per cent of respondents objected to the project as a part of the review of environmental factors. That process included over 17,000 notifications via letterboxing, 135 stakeholders being reached by email, 1,800 webpage views and 25 formal submissions.

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

### Public Interest Debate

#### REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that since 2020 the regional seniors travel card has helped more than one million eligible seniors living in regional New South Wales with cost-of-living expenses by providing \$250 to spend on petrol, taxis or public transport to help get them to appointments or do the weekly grocery shop.
- (2) Notes that on 7 July 2023 the Minns Labor Government suspended applications for the card based on public claims by Government members that regional seniors were rorting the card.
- (3) Calls on the Minns Labor Government to fund round five of the regional seniors travel card in its 2023-24 budget as an urgent cost-of-living measure.

This debate is important at a time when inflation, interest rates, electricity prices and grocery costs are constricting every New South Wales household, including our seniors. In regional areas seniors are struggling under all of

those pressures. On top of that, they have to travel further than those in the city to carry out their day-to-day tasks and to visit their families. During our time in government, the Liberal Party and The Nationals put forward a robust solution that came in the form of a \$250 card for regional seniors to pay for petrol, taxis, trains, coaches and community transport. This card is not just a crucial cost-of-living measure at a time when people are feeling the pinch, it is also crucial to give our seniors more independence. The regional seniors travel card means more trips to see the grandkids. It means more trips to visit friends. It means being able to get to the shops or get to a medical appointment.

If members do not want to take it from me about how important the card is, how about they take it from the fact that there are almost 22,000 signatures on the online petition, and there are more coming in the paper version, to stop Labor from scrapping the card. In this State 22,000 people are already trying to tell Labor how important it is, and that number is growing every day. Among them are people like Loraine from Braidwood, who wrote to her council saying:

This card enables us to pay for fuel to travel to Canberra, Queanbeyan and Goulburn when necessary, or to pay for the Rixons bus for the trip. \$250 a year is a godsend when medical care is needed in a big centre. The pension doesn't cover this expense.

Loraine also sent numerous emails to the Minns Government and received not one answer. She said:

I want them to understand how important the travel card is for people in small country towns ... The NSW government gives continual discounts on travel costs to Sydney commuters, but as usual, they balk at helping country dwellers.

Then there is Janus Harwood, who wrote to my office. She said:

Perhaps Mr Minns would like to come and look at the way us pensioners live, through no fault of our own. I personally live on my own. I am 72 and have decided to cut meat and several other items from my shopping list as life is getting so hard.

My husband died from motor neuron 10 years ago, we had been married 45 years but never got to the places we wanted to go to in Australia. I was thinking perhaps I could use the Seniors Travel Card. That would be a great way to see our lovely country.

Anything that has been given to us (pensioners) has been so appreciated and then along comes Mr Minns.

And I can't believe what he did to us, taking something we could truly use and just cancel it.

Jennifer Armstrong wrote to me saying:

The present Government doesn't seem to have much concern for the aged pensioner, an example being taking away the Regional Travel Card for Seniors. I live in rural NSW and that card serves us well. Some pensioners use it to visit their specialists in Sydney or maybe to visit family once a year. Sometimes it's the little things that can make a big difference.

But, of course, Labor is not listening to Loraine or Janus or Jennifer or anyone. Labor is refusing to commit to continuing the card. Labor suspended the card on 7 July. Let me predict what I expect to hear from those opposite: The card was not funded. That is absolute bunkum. It had been fully funded for this year until the card was suspended on 7 July. We also had funding for a brand-new card, which Labor cut before it even suspended this one—the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card. Do members remember that one? We had that card because we wanted to do everything we could to keep people in the regions and support them. The regional seniors travel card had been funded each year in a Coalition budget for the past four years. It was fully funded for the entire year—this year—and if we were in government it would have been funded in the budget again for the next year, which we are asking the Government to do for round five.

Another thing I expect Government members will say is that the card can be used fraudulently. We have heard that from them a bit. It is ridiculous. The card is linked specifically by a code to fuel stations. Guess what the most expensive thing is at a fuel station? Fuel! I asked literally hundreds of seniors if they have used the card for anything else. Of course, the answer is no. But I will dare every Government member this afternoon to accuse one of their constituents or one of our constituents of rorting the system. I dare them to look down the barrel and say that. Or I dare them to go face to face, eye to eye with one of their constituents and tell them that they have been rorting. I do not reckon they will have the gumption to do that face to face. I know they will do it here this afternoon. But I will say it again: It will be another desperate lie because 1.3 million of these cards have gone out since 2020. It is incredible and has made a difference to people's lives.

Over 6,000 cards have gone to the electorate of the member for Cessnock this year. That is from January to 7 July, which is when the Government carved up the card. In Bega, there were over 5,000. The electorate of Monaro had 4,500. Shellharbour had over 8,000. In the electorate of Port Stephens there were 11,000, which is incredible. The member for Maitland—the Minister who seems determined to cut the card—has almost 8,500 constituents who have already had the card this year. We love the card. The people in Labor electorates, crossbench electorates and our electorates love the card. The Government should listen to constituents, listen to all people who live in regional New South Wales and commit today to keeping the card. We all know somebody in our community who relies on that card, whether it is a grandparent, a parent, a friend or a relative. We need to care for that person. We need Labor to commit today to keeping the card.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (17:07):** What a demonstration of hypocrisy and cynical commentary we have just seen from the Leader of The Nationals. We are not surprised because that typifies The Nationals' approach to regional New South Wales. It is about slogans but not action. We just heard the Leader of The Nationals admit that they funded the card year by year. He does not tell the truth to the people of New South Wales because what he did not say is that going into an election parties put forward estimates to the Parliamentary Budget Office so that people can get an honest impression of what a future government is going to spend.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** Members opposite did not put into the Parliamentary Budget Office any future funding of the travel card—not one cent. So either the Leader of The Nationals is lying to the people of New South Wales about the state of a future budget under a Coalition government, or he is lying to them about the travel card. I suspect that there is a bit of both in it because that is typical of The Nationals. The member opposite said, "Go out and find us someone who says they misuse the card." This person wrote a letter to the coast news. They stated:

When this card was introduced some years back, I rang the Member for Terrigal's office (when the Libs/Nats) were in Government and notified his secretary that a service station at Toukley was allowing patrons to purchase cigarettes on the above card.

Did Mr Crouch phone me back to discuss this issue?

Certainly did not.

Fail to see how it falls on the Member for The Entrance Mr David Meehan.

Why did the member for Terrigal not phone him back? He asked the member for The Entrance to do his job for him. I am not surprised about that. People who have the travel card tell me that they can purchase other items in the service station. This is yet another example of The Nationals' untargeted programs. I compare that to this Government's programs—\$500 cash back for pensioners on their electricity bills in conjunction with the Federal Government. That is targeted and focused to make the most effective use of taxpayer money.

The regional seniors travel card was far from being a robust solution, as the member opposite called it; it was an untargeted solution. It helped those opposite to get lots of nice headlines, but do two tanks of petrol really help anybody? The lady who wrote to the Leader of the Opposition, saying that she wanted to travel Australia, will go a long way on two tanks of petrol! Under Labor, she will have heavily subsidised Countrylink bus services from every part of Monaro and heavily subsidised travel on trains from Queanbeyan to Sydney. That has always existed under this Government because Labor governments focus on services, public transport and targeted assistance that helps people in rural New South Wales. As the member for Monaro my objective is not to make someone travel to Sydney for their health service but to provide it locally in the Cooma hospital. My objective is to overcome the problem that the previous Government left us—for example, we cannot recruit nurses for hospitals because their income has slipped so far back. Nurses' incomes got to the point that they could not afford to live in our communities and work in our hospitals.

The Nationals members in New South Wales left us with a clear problem because they are more interested in headlines and political publicity. It is in their DNA. They are not interested in rewarding the people who provide services for regional New South Wales. There is a strong reason I am back in this place. It is because members opposite did not service the constituents of Monaro. They ignored the problems of the people of New South Wales and Monaro. They let our health services run down and they played political games with aged-care services with the people of Bombala by trying to shift things onto the Federal Government. Shame on them and their hypocrisy. That is why The Nationals lost the Monaro electorate at the last election.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:12):** I received a letter from one of my constituents regarding the regional seniors travel card. It stated:

Hello Mrs Thompson My name is Peter, I have been a resident of Forster for the last 11.5 years. Just regarding the change Premier Minns made to the Regional Seniors Travel Card, I & many signed the petition to have the card reinstated to its original status. We seniors in regional areas are severely disadvantaged as compared to seniors in large cities as there would be more United Service Stations, currently none in Forster/ Tuncurry, the closest are in Taree & Bulahdelah, this would be uneconomical for seniors in the Forster/ Tuncurry area to travel to these places just to save a few cents per litre. I did send Premier Minns an email regarding this but as I expected there was no reply. Could you please advise me if any progress has been made regarding the reinstatement of the card?  
Yours sincerely, Peter.

I highlight the fact that this new Labor Government continues to fail to recognise the impact across regional New South Wales of the suspension of the successful initiative of the regional seniors travel card, especially in my electorate of Myall Lakes, which has the oldest demographic in New South Wales. My office has been inundated with telephone calls, visits, letters and emails by concerned constituents just like Peter who have been and will continue to be affected by the Labor Government's decision to suspend the travel card on 7 July.

The travel card has been a hugely successful program, with more than 1.3 million cards distributed since 2020. From 1 January this year up to the suspension, 19,000 cards were distributed to my local government area, bringing the total for my electorate to close to 40,000 over a four-year period. The sole purpose of the card was to ease the pressure of travel costs for seniors living in the bush, and that is exactly what it did. Regional seniors do not have the luxury of subsidised public transport options with the same frequency and route operations as major cities like Newcastle, Sydney or Wollongong. We on this side of the House know that those cities are the Labor Government's idea of New South Wales.

Those cards were not only used for fuel. In my electorate they were used for taxis, community transport and NSW TrainLink and bus services. They enabled seniors to visit family and friends, which is an integral part of recuperating after the isolation felt from the pandemic. It meant that our senior communities could easily access local shopping centres to pick up their groceries. I highlight a comment made yesterday during question time in this place by the member for Maitland, the Minister for Regional Roads and Transport, about the regional seniors travel card. She made an outrageous allegation that seniors across the State have been using the card in a fraudulent manner—purchasing ciggies, Red Bull and the like. That comment is insulting to a generation that has worked tirelessly and contributed to its communities, and deserves a break. People right across our State are suffering in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, and none more than our seniors. Removing the program will only add to their burden but to insult their integrity is an entirely new low.

Brian and Julie from Green Point travel outside the electorate for medical appointments. They welcomed the use of the regional seniors travel card to be able to afford the extra fuel to get to those appointments. Cutting the card adds immense financial pressure at an already stressful time when dealing with illness. Val and Dennis from Taree have worked hard all their lives and are now on a pension. They budget out the travel card to catch the train to visit family outside the electorate throughout the year. They will not be able to afford to do that. Mavis from Forster used her travel card for community transport. That meant Mavis could travel to Newcastle for her specialist appointment without having to use her already stretched pension. Mavis does not know if she can afford to see her specialist now.

I could share many more stories of those who have been affected by the decision by those opposite to suspend and potentially cut the regional seniors travel card. One has to pause and think of a suitable reason why a government would set out to cause such distress to constituents at a time when they need the most support. It beggars belief. While I do not know the answer to that question and Labor certainly cannot provide a definite answer itself, I do know that this new Government is clearly out of touch with the needs of regional New South Wales. It is imperative that it recognises our regional seniors and reinstates the \$250 regional seniors travel card.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:18):** Before I begin, I place three facts on record. The first fact is that we were left with a \$187.5 billion debt because of your incompetence. You know it, and the member for Kiama knows it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** The second fact is that the member for Kiama has elderly people running around Nowra and Kiama with clipboards to get a petition signed, which is really data harvesting. He is good at running around getting petitions signed.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** And you have never used a petition.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I don't petition in an outrageous way. He knows that this petition he has got going is not only disrespectful but also not true. It is not true. I will have more to say about that in a minute.

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** It says a lot about the member for Dubbo that he would bring this public interest debate to this place. It really does. We have been left with a \$187 billion debt because of those opposite. I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads because she has got it right, and she will set the record straight when she makes her contribution. I have had one phone call to my office about the travel card—one. Those opposite would like to paint the Minns Government as mean instead of having a serious debate about the cost of living and what has happened since those opposite were in government. The reality is that the former Government, as I said, left us with a huge debt. The third fact is that the travel card was never in the budget. How does anyone expect any government to fund any project when it is not in the budget? Do those opposite know how this actually works? I do not think they do. The program was completely and utterly unfunded. It joins a number of other unfunded projects across different portfolios. We are doing what any decent government would do.

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** We are undertaking a review of this unfunded card to ensure value for money for the taxpayer. Would those opposite not think that is a pretty sensible thing to do and is what good governments do? No. They are so disingenuous and duplicitous that they would rather turn this into a political issue. It is entirely reasonable that we suspend the program while these investigations take place. Instead of commending the Government for undertaking a sensible review, on 7 August the member for Kiama, who was mentored by Scott Morrison—I bet he is proud of that—put out a media release. It was full of spin. He attacked not only me, which he does constantly, but also the member for South Coast.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Members will come to order.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** He personally attacked the good member for South Coast while trying to use his scare campaign to frighten his constituents into believing this Government had replaced the regional seniors travel card with a shopper docket scheme. Those were the words of the member for Kiama: a "shopper docket" campaign.

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

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** He was out and out telling fibs, and he knows it. This ridiculous claim was easily refuted by the Minister for Seniors, with even the local media in Nowra questioning the motives of the member for Kiama in making such a categorically false claim—and he knows it. It is very telling what information the member for Kiama left out of his 7 August media release, which is online if members want to read it. There was no mention that the card could be used to buy cigarettes, candy and other goods—and it was being used in that way at service stations across regional New South Wales. That is right. When we had a close look at what the card was being used for, we discovered that it was being used for exactly those purposes. But there was no mention from the member for Kiama about the cost-saving benefits currently offered by our Government, such as a range of transport concessions for eligible seniors living in rural areas— *[Time expired.]*

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:23):** I speak on behalf of the 41,122 seniors on the Central Coast. What is more, they are contacting me. The member for Monaro commented earlier about the one person who contacted my office about the rort in Toukley. We did a cursory search on that one person who wrote to the paper and found out that, first, they did not live in my electorate; secondly, somehow they were very well union affiliated; and, thirdly, they never contacted their local Labor member about this alleged rort. We also checked all our phone and email records and found that that person never contacted my office. How strange.

Let us be clear about this. We talk about the numbers of people who have been hurt by this decision. It is interesting that none of the four Labor members who represent Central Coast electorates are in the Chamber for this debate. When the debate started the member for Gosford left in a great hurry. Almost 10,000 people in her electorate are being hurt by the Government's gutless decision to remove the regional seniors travel card. When we announced this fantastic program the member was the first one to get out there on social media and say how wonderful it was. Only one Labor member from the Central Coast has said a single word about bringing this card back and, funnily enough, that was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer. When this card was suspended without any notification, he was asked about it. On 11 July—I emphasise that date—he commented to the *Coast Community News* that:

The department has been directed to investigate options to remediate the issues this card has and report back to the Minister.

We anticipate advice back in two weeks.

That was on 11 July. Let me tell members what has happened since 11 July: absolutely nothing, not a word. There has been not one word of support from any Labor member on the Central Coast for the almost 42,000 seniors who will be hurt by this gutless decision by a miserable government that is not prepared to stand up for people in our region. The Central Coast has more regional seniors travel cards than any other region in New South Wales. There are four Labor electorates on the Central Coast. The Government is taking the card from its own voters, and those members do not have the guts to stand up for them. It is absolutely appalling. What is more, all we have had is stone-cold silence from members opposite. They refuse to defend the most vulnerable in our community who need this support—whether it is Ray or Margaret, who use their regional seniors travel card to travel to see their families.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Why didn't we see this outrage when we had the wages cap? Where was the outrage then about people doing it tough?

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I note the interjection from the member for Shellharbour. She can come up to the Central Coast any day of the week and talk to the 42,000 seniors who are being rear-ended by this Government, which has taken away—

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

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** What made it worse was the insult from the member for The Entrance, who said that the card was being used to buy junk food and cigarettes. What a comment to make about our seniors on the Central Coast.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Outrageous.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is utterly outrageous and, what is more, disgraceful. He should apologise for his comments, and so should the Government for trying to take this card away from the people who need it most at a time when they need it most. This card is used by our seniors to pay for services such as the Shirley Shuttle. For those who do not know, the Shirley Shuttle is run by community transport and takes our seniors to get cancer treatment at Gosford and Wyong hospitals—both in Labor electorates, I might add.

Lifesaving services such as this are supported by the regional seniors travel card. Seniors use the card to help cover the cost of transport, whether it is taxis, coast community transport or the Shirley Shuttle, or to buy fuel for their cars—and anybody who has had a look at the price of fuel on the Central Coast at the moment will be gobsmacked. Government members are saying to those seniors, "Actually, no, you're not using that card. You are going off and buying cigarettes and junk food rather than fuel for your car to go and see your relatives and do vital things that keep you going in life." It is such an appalling display.

What is worse is the Government's abject incompetence in providing a basic response. It has refused to tell our seniors what is going on. By removing the program without any notification, months in advance, the Government has denied hundreds, if not thousands, of seniors on the Central Coast. It never told anyone that it was cutting the card until it had happened, and then it was too late. My office has received literally hundreds of calls from people who had no idea that this was happening because the Government was too gutless to say what it was going to do until after it was done. I call on the four Labor members from the Central Coast—including the Minister for the Central Coast, whose constituents probably get about 10,000 of these cards—to do the right thing, stand up for our region, defend this card and reinstate it immediately. The Government should put it in the budget and fully fund the card for our seniors across New South Wales but especially on the Central Coast, because it has rear-ended 42,000 people in our region.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:28):** I move:

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

- (1) Acknowledges that the New South Wales Coalition failed to fund the regional seniors travel card beyond 2023.
- (2) Recognises that residents in regional New South Wales are facing unprecedented cost-of-living pressures.
- (3) Notes the former Liberal-Nationals Government failed to ensure that the regional seniors travel card could only be used for travel-related expenses. It is good to have this debate in the House. I thank the Opposition for bringing on this public interest debate because it gives the Government the opportunity to set the record straight. I have never said that seniors were rorting the card. I became aware of the fact that it used the same mechanism as the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card, which is a Visa card. In addition, one regional seniors travel card costs the State Government \$250 a month. During the whole time the card is operable, it is able to be used at any merchant that accepts the card for any product the merchant sells. The former Minister was so badly across his brief that he actually argued for that. It is very clear that the advice from Transport was always: That card is for merchants. Once the card is accepted by a merchant, it is able to be used to purchase all products the merchant sells. That brings into play the potential to use it for gambling and purchasing cigarettes, junk food, lollies and any other products that are sold at service stations.

As soon as the potential for a rort in taxpayer-funded programs comes to the attention of members on this side of the House, we—unlike members of some previous administrations on the other side of the House—will not countenance it. We said that we want a robust solution. I have been working with Transport for NSW on it since then. The member for Dubbo said quite incorrectly in his question during question time yesterday that we had cancelled the cards. I have never cancelled any of the cards that have been issued for the simple reason that I do not want a senior, or even an apprentice, who received a card to be stranded.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** You cancelled them.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** No, they are not cancelled. People can use them.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** What we said was that a very small percentage of people who would have been eligible to apply for the card from the suspension date to the date in November when the program ceases under the funding arrangements of members opposite would not be able to apply for it. But many people would be able to use it. I will talk about that eligibility. When members opposite introduced the program in 2019, it took them a year to get it off the ground. They failed to include seniors on disability pensions, carers pensions and veterans pensions. What have members opposite got against them? Then they had the audacity to talk about the



program's funding in the House. I saw their Parliamentary Budget Office funding for 2023. They did not have funding for the program. They did not put that into the election commitments they made to the people of this State.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That is very terrible. It is beyond hypocrisy. It takes the hide of a buffalo for the Opposition to say to people that they have lost something that it did not even promise them. The "rort card" is a whole level beyond that. That is the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card. The former Minister was not even aware of the Vocational Training Assistance Scheme, which enables people who live more than 120 kilometres away from TAFE to receive up to \$56 per night for accommodation—far more than they got on the "rort card"—plus a rate per kilometre for their travel to TAFE. Former Government members were not even aware of it. Talk about a lack of a whole-of-government response.

Members opposite put the regional seniors travel card in place; it does not even work on the buses in a lot of areas in our State. There is no way that seniors could use the card in many areas because members opposite failed to deliver electronic ticketing, more transport connections and more buses. We just added 77 more buses in Griffith. The final thing I want to say is that half a billion dollars have gone into the program. Imagine that money being spent on our road network. Imagine that, in addition to the \$1.46 billion members opposite stole from Restart NSW. They are oxygen thieves and rorters. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:33):** Today I would much rather be congratulating the Government for continuing the regional seniors travel card, but what members just heard is an example of what the Government thinks of regional seniors: that the supports they need in regional areas are not worth considering. Members on this side of the House, who know regional communities, know how much harder it is to travel in those communities. There are longer distances and higher costs. We do not have all of the metros, bus services and train lines that many of those living in metropolitan areas enjoy. The card was a recognition of the importance of regional seniors and the costs that they face in their communities. Over 7,000 people have signed a petition in my electorate.

**Ms Anna Watson:** You mean data harvesting?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I take great exception to the comments made by the member for Shellharbour, who apparently does not like democracy. We know she does not like democracy because two of her preselections were rigged to get her into Parliament. She clearly does not like democracy and does not like regional seniors sticking up for their rights. I remind members of this House that when the then Opposition leader and now Premier was asked about those cost-of-living issues he said, "We will roll it all over." Then those opposite got into government and down came the axe. They said one thing before the election and did another thing after. It shows their absolute contempt for the 23,000 people in my electorate who received the card last year.

I address the chief criticism of the Government that somehow regional seniors are running around their electorates looking for a service station to buy their Winnie Blues and their meat pies, and that is all they are apparently spending that money on. That is offensive to every regional senior who received the card. It is a personal affront to every senior who has the right to expect that it will continue after hearing the Government say that it would keep the card after it was elected, even though it is now cutting it. They should be offended by those disgraceful comments. I certainly hope that the Government will do what it says it will do—review the card and bring it back.

The Government said a lot about its supports for regional seniors. One of the things that it announced amidst all this—albeit a different program—was a four-cent shop-a-docket deal through United Petroleum. Putting aside the fact that there are not too many United Petroleum stations in regional areas because most of them are in Sydney, I went to the website that outlines the Government's commitment on this four-cent program. I read a bit further and went to the website of United Petroleum. It says that two cents of the four cents will go to other community organisations. Guess where those community organisations are? They are East Leagues Club, Nerang RSL, Rockhampton Leagues Club, Southport Sharks and Greenbank Services Club. How many of those are in New South Wales? Zero.

Those opposite announced a scheme for regional seniors. They said that four cents would go to them, but half of it will go to someone else in Queensland. I know Palaszczuk needs some propping up at the moment, but she does not need help from members opposite and the help does not need to come at the expense of regional seniors. It is just disgraceful. Government members talk a big game about cost of living. They love parading in the Chamber, puffing out their chests and saying how much they are delivering for regional New South Wales when all we see is cuts. It does not matter whether it is regional hospitals, health care or roads and transport, the Government talks a big game, but it is "cut, cut, cut".

Where is the member for South Coast? Where are all the regional MPs on that side of the House. They promised thousands of people in their electorates at the last election that they would keep their cards. Where are those brave and courageous members of the New South Wales Government? They are hiding in their offices or perhaps they are out buying their Winnie Blues and meat pies with their seniors travel card. I do not know. But what I do know is that this Government is not long for this world. It is a government that promised a lot at the last election but has delivered not very much. In 3½ years' time, we will remind regional seniors that we made a promise to them and that those opposite cut those cards. They cannot be trusted. We know one thing: When Labor members make a promise, do not trust them. They hate regional seniors. They have continued to cut programs like this. We will continue to hold them to account for their shameful treatment of regional seniors and regional New South Wales.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:38):** By leave: It is a delicious day when I get to stand at the lectern and the member for Dubbo is already on three calls to order. It is just wonderful, and it is his motion—I love it. I will address most of my remarks to the new members of Parliament because they will need to understand what the other members did not. Next week members will get a series of books called the "budget". Most of them will probably be blue in colour. When members get those books, they will notice what we refer to as the "forwards". Existing members did not understand, but the forwards are the forward four years. When we put money into a budget and when there is planned expenditure for the next four years, it appears in the forwards. That is pretty straightforward; I am sure new members understand that. Members on this side of the House understand that. We will leave it at that.

In last year's budget, which was handed down by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, there was no mention of this money over the forwards that we are debating. That might have been an oversight, so I will fast-forward to the half-yearly budget review. There was still no money mentioned in the forwards of that review for the program. Perhaps that might have just been two oversights, so I will go forward to the pre-election budget review. If we look at that, one would think, "The money must have been there", but there was still no money in the forwards for the program from members opposite.

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Former Government members might have forgotten once, twice or three times, but surely as they headed towards the election they would have submitted that information to the Parliamentary Budget Office, because they are required to do that. I do not want to say that former Government members lied. That would be fair but unparliamentary, but I want to say that the former Government had four opportunities to put that money into the budget, transparently, so that we could see it going forward.

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Instead, what was planted into that budget was a timebomb for seniors, and it is going to explode on the seniors of this State because of a problem that was planted by members opposite. Former Government members went to the election saying, "We were gonna", and they have come to this House saying, "We would've", "We should've", "We could've", and, "We were gonna", but they did not. They did not do it when in government, they did not do it when they had control of Treasury and they did not do it when they had control of the budget. They did not put the money in the budget.

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** All they did was plant a bomb. I am quite surprised to see Opposition members in Parliament because, quite frankly, they sit out 90 per cent of each sitting day. They turn up for question time, but other than that they do not participate. They do not participate in debates on legislation or other debates. Not participating in debates on legislation means one of two things: Either the legislation is so fantastic that Opposition members agree with it 100 per cent—

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** —in which case they should come into the Chamber to applaud us, or they are just too lazy.

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Here is a tip for any person who has trouble paying for travel or pies—or whatever else members have mentioned in the public interest debate—and who lives in an electorate represented by an Opposition member: If you are having trouble, remember that your local member is earning a wage, 90 per cent of which they do not earn. Go to see your local MP and ask them to chip in for whatever it is you need.

Opposition members who are sitting out their job—their role and responsibility to this House—should hand their money over to people who are out there working hard, having trouble getting through life and who, if given the opportunity, would put their shoulder to the wheel. The former Government planted a time-dependent explosion for seniors in New South Wales. Now it is blowing up on seniors and former Government members cannot own up to the truth of their disgraceful record. Shame on the member for Dubbo! [*Time expired.*]

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:44):** By leave: I did not intend to make a contribution to this debate, but I was provoked into doing so while listening—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Only because you could have been a comrade. You were close, mate. You were close but not quite.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** The only Government member who had a swing against her—that is incredible. I want to put a few things on record in this debate. I have a lot of time and respect for the member for Cessnock, but when his leader, the now Premier of this State, was asked during the election campaign about the future of the regional seniors travel card, he said, "We will roll it over." On coming into government he said, "We will roll it over; we will continue it." But since coming to office the new Government has clearly changed direction and said that it will not be rolling it over. Quite frankly, I was surprised by that. I get that a new government would cut a project such as a metro or a highway upgrade, but this Government has displayed that mean-spiritedness early in its term.

I feel for the member for Maitland because she has had to defend that decision. I think it may well ruin her burgeoning ministerial career. Seniors in regional areas will never, ever forget and they will never, ever forgive. This is a modest amount of money in the scheme of a State budget that does so much to assist with the cost of living of some of our most vulnerable people. Members must remember that the lowest socioeconomic demographic in this State live almost exclusively west of the Great Dividing Range, where there is the least public transport and the widest gap between services and people.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Which your Government did nothing about. Come down to Shellharbour.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Do you want everyone to move to the coast? Is that your answer?

**Ms Anna Watson:** Even in coastal regional New South Wales you guys did nothing.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** The fact is that people should not be discriminated against because of where they grow up.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for Shellharbour will cease interjecting. The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** If members on that side of the House, of all people, truly believe they are in government it should not matter to them where people live. They should have equal opportunity and equal access to services.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Which your Government never did.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** You are in government now!

**Ms Anna Watson:** Twelve, long, painful, torturous years.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** You are lucky to be here.

**Ms Anna Watson:** I have won four elections and I have never lost to boot, mate. What about you? Yes, I am pretty lucky.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Members will direct their comments through the Chair. The member for Shellharbour will cease interjecting.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Coming into government, you were the only member who had a swing against you—what a record. The fact is that this decision is mean-spirited and nasty. The seniors of regional New South Wales will never forgive and never forget. To have members of the Government calling it the "rort card" on record is disgraceful and hugely offensive to seniors in the Northern Tablelands electorate and right through regional New South Wales, who are flat out trying to stretch their household budgets to cover electricity, fuel, bills and other essentials. To suggest that they would be using the card for what was described by the member for Kiama as "a pack of Winnie Blues and a meat pie" is incredible and farcical.

Members on the Government side of the House know that it is farcical, but they have splinters under their fingernails from scraping the bottom of the barrel as they try to find a way to justify a mean-spirited Treasury decision to save a few bucks in the upcoming budget, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of people in the bush.

Those card holders will suffer, but their families will suffer too. That will result in poorer mental and physical health outcomes as people will not be seeing their specialists as often because they simply will not have the cash to put fuel in their car. That is the harsh reality of this mean-spirited decision. Quite frankly, it is a decision the Government will come to regret. Again, I feel for the Minister, whom I have a lot of time for, because she has been made to front up and defend this disgraceful, indefensible decision.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I seek leave to make a short contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** I seek leave to make a short contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON:** I seek leave to make a lengthy contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave granted.**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:51):** By leave: I thank the Chamber for giving me permission to make a short contribution to this important debate. I acknowledge that I have been allowed to do that. I will be very brief. I could not resist the opportunity to make a contribution after enjoying the extended public interest debate so much last night. It is coming up now to 10 minutes to 6.00 p.m., and I would quite like this debate to continue a bit further. Perhaps the Chamber might consider allowing some more contributions from the Opposition side. I support the regional seniors travel card. It has been an important initiative in regional New South Wales and certainly in my electorate. The fact of the matter is that transport options are limited in regional areas, particularly in relation to accessing health services. In my electorate, I know many seniors have used the card for that purpose and have found it incredibly valuable.

Tumut in my electorate is about an 1¼ hours from Wagga Wagga. There is one bus service a week. I acknowledge the Minister has continued that service and visited the area, and I thank the Minister for doing that. As members can appreciate, one bus trip a week makes it difficult for people to access health services, particularly those on lower incomes. From Lockhart, which is 40 minutes from Wagga, there is no public transport service apart from community transport options. I do not believe anyone has been rorting the card. I think it has been a genuine benefit. There is clearly a debate about whether it was or was not funded. At the end of the day, the issue now is whether it should be funded. I feel strongly that it should.

I conclude by saying that I am making these comments today despite the fact that my Chamber colleagues in the National Party used the card to campaign against me in 2019. It was in the form of a credit-card-like distribution to members of the electorate, as I recall it. I certainly had a number of people come into my office at the time and basically say, "We'd like to vote for you, but these guys have given us a credit card." We took them through why that was not the case. Despite that, I have seen the operation of the card since that time. It did make a difference to people accessing services, particularly health services. I put on record my support for it as an initiative and ask the Government to consider funding it in the future budget.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** I seek leave to make a short contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Being one of the longest serving members of this Chamber at this time, I seek leave to make a contribution. I would be upset if members opposite said no, because when I sat on the other side I agreed to give it to them.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:57):** In reply: I think we have seen a new low from members on the other side of the Chamber. At least the member for Monaro came back after providing advice to say no to eight people who sought leave. Thankfully, he allowed the member for Wagga Wagga to speak. That was one of the most childish displays we have ever seen. After the Government dominated debate for three hours last night,

and congratulated itself, it is embarrassing what it has done today. It shows, once again, that not one Government member cares about their seniors. I thank them for their contributions, though. About 4,500 seniors will be disgusted with the member for Monaro. Around 8,000 seniors in Shellharbour will wonder what the member for Shellharbour is doing and why she is not supporting them, along with around 8,000 in the electorate of the member for Maitland and around 6,000 in the electorate of the member for Cessnock. This will show all of their seniors what they think about them and their future.

As I said at the start, the card is very targeted. It is means tested. A person has to be on the age pension; there is a limit on what a person can do. Not everyone qualifies for the card. Let us just think about what members are saying about people who are, as members call it, "rorting" the card. If somebody gets a pension, are they rorting the pension if they buy a pie or a cigarette with their pension card? Because that is the same as what is being alleged by members opposite. It is a government benefit that a person can use at a fuel station. I have spoken to hundreds of seniors. I have not heard one say that they would rort this, because they do not rort it. I dare members opposite to speak to any of their constituents—and this goes for the member for Cessnock as well. He made a lovely contribution, but he should speak to his constituents face to face and say to any of them, "I think you are rorting the card." That is what he is alleging.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That is exactly what I was trying to explain.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** No, you tried to explain a budget process that you clearly do not understand. For four years the card was funded to make sure that people got the help they needed. Now—unbelievably, to most of us—Labor is in government. So guess what its responsibility is. It is to do the same thing. Fund things that make a difference. This is its opportunity. Let us talk about the truth, because before the election the now Premier was asked specifically, "Will you roll the card over?" What was his response?

**Opposition members:** Yes!

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** What has he done?

**Opposition members:** Nothing!

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** Another election commitment, another lie. It is like the lyrics from a Fleetwood Mac song, "Tell me lies, tell me sweet little lies." It is Fleetwood Mac all around. We are sick of it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for Dubbo has moved a motion, to which the member for Maitland has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....11

#### AYES

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

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

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

#### NOES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K

Griffin, J  
Hodges, M

Roberts, A  
Saunders, D

## NOES

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

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

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

## PAIRS

Car, P  
Finn, J  
Minns, C  
Park, R

Williams, L  
Toole, P  
Cooke, S  
Henskens, A

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....11

## AYES

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

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

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

## NOES

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

Griffin, J  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Marshall, A  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R

Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R

NOES		
Donato, P	Provest, G	Wilson, F
PAIRS		
Car, P		Toole, P
Finn, J		Williams, L
Minns, C		Cooke, S
Park, R		Henskens, A

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK AUTHORITY AMENDMENT (HILL ROAD UPGRADE) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:14):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. The Hill Road upgrade will receive funding of \$140 million under the Housing Acceleration Fund, as it is a critical infrastructure project that will accelerate the delivery of housing. For the benefit of the House, the Housing Acceleration Fund was established in 2012 by the Liberal-Nationals Government as a grants program to support the delivery of critical enabling infrastructure that stimulates the acceleration of housing delivery. The Housing Acceleration Fund program provides grant funding through the Restart NSW Fund, which was supported by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's asset recycling program. The Minns Labor Government is very happy to spend money from asset recycling.

The Hill Road upgrade will not fulfil all the infrastructure needs for the people living in Wentworth Point or Newington, as they have experienced considerable growth in recent years. In light of that growth, the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals recognise the importance of better transport options in Newington, and Wentworth Point, as well as Sydney Olympic Park. Sydney Metro West will drastically increase the capacity of the Main Western Railway Line, which has long been strained. Parramatta Light Rail stage two will establish an important link between Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park and all the suburbs in between once both stages are complete. Both Sydney Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail were initiated under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and will be yet more proof of the Coalition's proud legacy when it comes to building infrastructure to help our residents commute around Sydney.

Sadly, the Premier has ruled out delaying or cancelling Sydney Metro West. Next Tuesday in the budget the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport will have an opportunity to provide certainty about the future of Sydney Metro West. Silence will clearly indicate that Labor is still trying to work out a way to delay or cancel that vital piece of infrastructure. The Government can only say that work will begin on Parramatta Light Rail stage two during this term of Parliament, whilst being unable to provide an estimated completion date. Local residents along the route deserve some clarity from the Government. As I said at the start of my contribution, the Coalition supports the bill but there is still much more to do to improve the infrastructure in Newington, Wentworth Point and Sydney Olympic Park. The bill is about supporting infrastructure to those communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:17):** I support the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. The bill is critical to deliver the necessary road infrastructure to support the development of the Carter Street Precinct, along with the local residents, businesses and visitors to the State's events capital Sydney Olympic Park, Lidcombe, Newington, Wentworth Point and Silverwater. The Carter Street Master Plan was adopted in 2020 to establish a new residential and mixed-use precinct. A significant population already lives in the Carter Street Precinct and it is anticipated that upwards of 6,200 homes will be built there. So upgrades to local road infrastructure are imperative to support that growth. The Hill Road Upgrade project is an essential component of delivering the Carter Street Precinct Master Plan vision, something the Government not only recognises but also is committed to achieving. Hill Road is already a vital link to the surrounding suburbs and over the coming years will become an increasingly important road link in this fast-growing part of the Parramatta electorate.

While the bill is vital for the Carter Street Precinct, it is equally important for the residents of Wentworth Point. Wentworth Point sits on a peninsula and is one of the most densely populated suburbs in New South Wales. In 2022 the 13,601 recorded residents occupied a space of just 0.57 square kilometres. According to projections,

that number is forecast to rise to a remarkable 18,500, an increase of 23.39 per cent. Those numbers say it all. They paint a very clear picture as to why the current dilapidated Hill Road—funding for which was completely ignored by the former Government—requires urgent attention to support this rapidly growing, high-density suburb and surrounding suburbs. Anyone who has visited Sydney Olympic Park understands that Hill Road is the only road in and out of the peninsula. It is the vital artery connecting that community to Parramatta Road and the M4. It is vital that it possesses all the carrying capacity and safety measures to ensure safe carriage of the Wentworth Point community.

I enthusiastically support the bill because it will give Transport for NSW the authority to secure the land necessary to make the upgrades. For too long the electorate of Parramatta has struggled under the weight of countless developments approved by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government without the necessary investment in regional roads like Hill Road. Parramatta residents understand better than most that development is important to address our rapidly growing population. However, development that is not supported with good roads, schools, public transport and other critical infrastructure is unsustainable. The Liberal-Nationals' track record is littered with examples of rezoning with zero infrastructure and times where councils such as the City of Parramatta have had to step in to fill the void left by the absence of leadership from a Coalition government that discarded its responsibility to communities to approve appropriate, sustainable development to support the communities created as a direct result.

The electorate of Parramatta was subjected to three urban activation precincts by the former State Government: Melrose Park, Carter Street and Wentworth Point. All three are good examples of putting development ahead of infrastructure, which the Minns Labor Government is committed to addressing. That is why the bill is a winner. Essential infrastructure cannot be budgeted for and delivered based on current population rates. Rather, it must be made with long-term growth in mind. That is evidently lost on members of the Opposition. The Minns Government understands the importance of sustainable development. That is why the bill is before the House. It will benefit thousands of current and future residents. The resulting upgrades will have a minimal environmental impact and ensure accessibility for the additional 6,200 residential, retail and commercial properties being created by the Carter Street urban activation precinct.

Community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken over a significant period, with an overwhelmingly positive response. It is safe to say the community wants the development for many reasons, but mostly because it is just common sense. A very large community living on a peninsula with a single access road requires that road to be safe and able to meet the travel demands of that population. The Hill Road upgrade will specifically support the Carter Street Precinct by transforming Hill Road into an identifiable boulevard with a high-quality public domain; improving traffic efficiency and access to the precinct to minimise congestion; prioritising road safety and access for all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists; improving active transport links and access to public transport; and promoting environmental outcomes and urban ecology and facilitating green infrastructure, which is very important in Sydney Olympic Park.

Works will include widening and upgrading the intersection at Parramatta Road, Hill Road and Bombay Street, Lidcombe, to provide dedicated dual right turns from Hill Road into Parramatta Road, new left-turn lanes from Parramatta Road into Hill Road, an additional through lane from Bombay Street, Lidcombe, into Hill Road and an additional right-turn lane from Bombay Street into Parramatta Road. They will also include widening and signalling of the M4 Motorway eastbound off-ramp into Hill Road to provide additional left-turn lanes from the M4 Motorway into Hill Road, creating dual left turns, and modifying the intersection at Hill Road and Carter Street to prohibit a right turn into Carter Street from Hill Road. One may wonder why I am going into so much detail. This is such an important piece of infrastructure for the people of the Sydney Olympic Park peninsula. They have been suffering for a very long time with inadequate infrastructure. Upgrades to Hill Road are so welcome. That is why they will be hanging on every word about what the bill will mean to them.

The upgrades will involve adding a new fourth approach at the intersection of Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade to provide main access to Carter Street Precinct through the future Stockyard Boulevard, formerly referred to as Green Spike Road area; new dual right lanes from Stockyard Boulevard into Hill Road northbound; a new through lane from Stockyard Boulevard into John Ian Wing Parade westbound; a new left lane from Stockyard Boulevard into Hill Road southbound; upgrading the intersection at Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade to provide a new left lane from Hill Road and a new through lane on Hill Road southbound; additional lanes into Stockyard Boulevard creating dual right lanes; and an additional right lane from John Ian Wing Parade into Hill Road creating dual right turns. New shared pathways for pedestrians and cyclists will be built on the western side of Hill Road between Parramatta Road and Carter Street, and on the eastern side of Hill Road between Carter Street and Stockyard Boulevard.

The upgrades will widen footpaths at Hill Road and Parramatta Road and John Ian Wing Parade intersections, and modify the curb on the north-west corner of the Burney Avenue and Parramatta Road



intersection to improve B-double and heavy vehicle access. The upgraded road will build additional capacity into the local road network, reducing traffic delays and improving travel times along Hill Road. That will benefit the existing and future development of the Carter Street Precinct to Sydney Olympic Park as well as the surrounding residential suburbs of Newington, Lidcombe and Wentworth Point.

The upgraded road will also complement the almost completed installation of traffic signals at Hill Road and Bennelong Parkway. Those have been funded by the Federal Government thanks to the Federal member for Reid, Sally Sitou, with works undertaken by the City of Parramatta. That intersection upgrade coupled with future works to Hill Road funded by the Minns Labor Government will support the existing community and future population growth of the Sydney Olympic peninsula suburbs. The Hill Road upgrade is being funded under the New South Wales Department of Planning's Housing Acceleration Fund, which provides funding for infrastructure projects designed to accelerate the delivery of housing, with construction works expected to commence in 2024. The project represents the fulfilment of a commitment by the Minns Labor Government for funding to correct the infrastructure oversights of the former Government and provide the necessary infrastructure and make hazardous portions of Hill Road safe.

The passing of the bill will give Transport for NSW the authority it needs to address issues that are well known to the community and raised constantly with me by local residents and visitors to the park. I look forward to seeing construction commence to support those who live, work and play on the Sydney Olympic Park peninsula. I am very proud to be part of the Minns Labor Government that is investing so heavily in the sustainability, safety, growth and wellbeing of Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park, Carter Street, Lidcombe, Newington and Wentworth Point. I thank the Minister for the bill and for not only recognising the infrastructure needs of this part of the electorate of Parramatta but also committing the \$140 million required to deliver it. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:27):** I contribute to debate on the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. As the member for Davidson outlined, the Coalition will support the passage of the bill. On behalf of the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, I thank the office of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, particularly for the consultation on this legislation the Minister's office provided. I recognise the Minister is in the Chamber; he can be particularly proud of his team. The Coalition had a strong record when in government of supporting infrastructure in local communities in New South Wales, particularly road upgrades to allow residents to get home sooner and safely to their families and reduce time spent in traffic congestion. The Hill Road project in totality was commenced under the Coalition Government as part of round four of the Housing Acceleration Fund, which was a key measure to support development in the Carter Street Precinct and Sydney Olympic Park. It will allow for the provision of 6,200 homes, which are vital in tackling the housing crisis.

The bill will enable the acquisition of a small parcel of land on approximately 1,070 metres square near the intersection of Hill Road and John Ian Wing Parade to allow for road widening which will make merging easier and safer. The overall Hill Road upgrade will deliver connectivity to the Sydney Olympic Park precinct and residential centres in Newington and Wentworth Point. The Coalition also welcomes that the upgrade will allow for the establishment of new and improved active transport links, including pedestrian and cycle paths. Transport for NSW has engaged in community consultation since 2017, and only 4 per cent of respondents objected to the project as part of a review of environmental factors that took place in late 2021. That process included 17,000 notifications via letterbox, 135 stakeholders reached by email, 1,800 webpage views and 25 formal submissions.

Newington and Sydney Olympic Park have experienced considerable growth in recent years and the community has been clear in the need for improved transport infrastructure. In light of that growth, the Coalition recognises the importance of better transport options in Newington and Sydney Olympic Park. We note that Sydney Metro West will drastically increase the capacity of the Main Western Railway Line, which has long been strained. Parramatta Light Rail stage two will establish an important link between Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park and all the suburbs in between once both stages are complete. More public transport will obviously help to ease road traffic congestion by allowing more people to leave their cars at home more often.

I note that the Premier has routinely refused to rule out delaying or outright cancelling Sydney Metro West. The budget next Tuesday affords the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Transport an opportunity to provide certainty about the future of Sydney Metro West. Silence will indicate that Labor is still trying to work out a way to delay or cancel this vital piece of transport infrastructure. The Government can only say that work will begin on Parramatta Light Rail stage two during this term of Parliament, whilst being unable to provide an estimated completion date. Local residents along the route deserve some clarity from the Government. The Coalition supports the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023, but there is still much

to do to ensure the communities of Newington and Sydney Olympic Park are serviced by better transport infrastructure. The bill is an incremental gain in that pursuit.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:30):** I support the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. The bill was introduced in the other place by the Hon. John Graham, the Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism, and supported in this House by Minister Paul Scully, the member for Wollongong and one of the best planning Ministers that New South Wales has ever seen—who is ably supported by a really good parliamentary secretary, rumour has it.

The Minister outlined the importance of the bill to undertake this road upgrade. The primary purpose of the Hill Road upgrade is to facilitate a new precinct. The purchase of land to facilitate the Carter Street Precinct, located adjacent to Sydney Olympic Park, will enable 6,200 new homes to be built and deliver a vibrant new commercial and retail centre. The upgrade works are in the Lidcombe area, near Sydney Olympic Park, and are within the Cumberland and Parramatta local government areas. The upgrade will provide connectivity and access to Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Newington and the new Carter Street Precinct. Importantly, it will also deliver new and enhanced active transport links, including pedestrian and cycle paths.

The characteristics of Wentworth Point, Newington and the new Carter Street Precinct provide important factors for consideration when compared to the rest of the Greater Sydney area. The precinct has a higher population density, including a high proportion of flats, units and apartments; higher levels of population mobility and a higher proportion of rental dwellings; a slightly younger population; more culturally diverse and non-English speakers; and a higher proportion of family and group households.

The benefits of the project include improving access by removing the need to leave the M4 Motorway at the Homebush interchange and use Parramatta Road to enter Hill Road when travelling to the city; introducing a shared-use path that may lead to health benefits by providing a safer means to walk and cycle to Sydney Olympic Park; attracting more businesses to the area; increasing business for the local and regional economy during construction from the purchase of materials, equipment, services, labour and workforce spending; increasing employment opportunities for the construction of the upgrades; improving access to the community facilities proposed in the strategic growth areas, including schools, shops and places of work; and potentially increasing affluence through improved standards of living and average incomes due to increased employment opportunities.

The precinct is covered by the Cumberland City Council under the leadership of Mayor Lisa Lake who has advocated strongly for built infrastructure to support the massive population growth that is to be supported by transport, employment opportunities and sufficient public spaces for communities to thrive. The former lord mayor and current councillor of Parramatta and, more importantly, the member for Parramatta, Donna Davis, recently spoke about the impact on the local community. She spoke about the growth of the area and how Wentworth Point is one of the most densely populated areas in Sydney. Hill Road must be upgraded for the rapidly expanding community.

I also note the strong advocacy of Parramatta councillor Paul Noack, who represents the Rosehill Ward, and his active community links, including Alison Taylor of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Business Association and all the residents for their passionate advocacy for a broad range of issues relating to their area. Paul is known for his strong advocacy concerning the safety of residents on Hill Road, and the influx of developments and high-density housing in Wentworth Point and Sydney Olympic Park. Parramatta councillor Dr Patricia Prociw is also a strong advocate for improving the urban environment with better community infrastructure and better consultation. As Minister Scully explained earlier, extensive community consultation was undertaken for the rezoning of what was industrial land to deliver this new residential and mixed-use precinct, with further extensive consultation on the review of environmental factors particular to the lost vegetation. I thank all the stakeholders, councils and government departments involved in developing the outcomes appropriate to deliver a sustainable development in this area.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:36):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Amendment (Hill Road Upgrade) Bill 2023. I thank them for their furious agreement that the bill should be passed without further debate and without amendment. I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Davidson and the member for Manly from the Opposition benches, and of the member for Parramatta. There is no more passionate advocate for Parramatta. She knows every single square centimetre of Sydney Olympic Park and the desires of everyone who lives there. She is also conscious of the future residents who will live in Sydney Olympic Park as it continues to grow as an events area as well as a residential area. I also acknowledge and thank the member for Blacktown. He is a fantastic Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces and a passionate advocate for good planning outcomes in the City of Sydney, particularly in Western Sydney. This bill is one of those good planning outcomes. To that end, I acknowledge and thank him for his contribution.

I thank also the following people for their assistance in the preparation of the bill: Annette O'Callaghan, Parliamentary Counsel, for her assistance in drafting the bill; Eloise Murphy, strategic policy lead at Transport for NSW, for her assistance with instructing on the preparation of the bill and the preparation of the bill folder documents; Peter Smith, senior manager of capital projects development at Transport for NSW, for his assistance with instructing on the preparation of the bill and the preparation of the bill folder documents; and Anthea Balzer, director of property and venues at Sydney Olympic Park Authority, for her assistance with instructing on the preparation of the bill. I furiously agree with the member for Manly when he said that I have a good team. I certainly do. In that vein, I acknowledge Gino Mandarino, my deputy chief of staff, who has overseen the passage of the bill through both Chambers. I thank him greatly for his assistance. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **CARLINGFORD-DUNDAS LIONS CLUB**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:39):** I congratulate Carlingford-Dundas Lions Club on 60 years of service to our community. Its longevity and success speak to the deep-rooted community spirit amongst its members over six decades. Carlingford-Dundas Lions has become an integral and reliable part of Parramatta, and we would not be the same without it, particularly the significant funding it generates for vital causes like the Manning Foundation, Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital and Disaster Relief, just to name a few. Like many others, my first contact with the Carlingford-Dundas Lions was buying a sausage sandwich at one of its many fundraisers, followed by a closer involvement through the Yates Avenue Public School fete and the Waratah Festival, along with the annual presentation of the Barbara Curran and Reg Klein awards presented to students at local schools. It was a pleasure to attend the club's sixtieth anniversary dinner. Thanks to Alan Sexton, David Evans, John Tumminello, Sigrid Rottman, Halina Hamilton and Clem Cawley for coordinating the event. Carlingford-Dundas Lions epitomises all that is to be admired in a strong service club. After 60 years, it has left a fine legacy. I look forward to seeing the club continue to thrive.

#### **NORTHERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:40):** One of the biggest global sporting events of 2023 arrived on our shores: the FIFA Women's World Cup. I am pleased that local football clubs in the Wahroonga electorate played their part in this great event. The clubs involved in the Northern Suburbs Football Association were involved in promoting the event, with a number of young aspiring footballers from teams including Kissing Point FC, Prouille FC, Hornsby RSL and more involved in a number of the fixtures as flag-bearers for the nations. The Northern Suburbs Football Association also organised three official watch party locations, in conjunction with various local councils across the North Shore. Leading into the opening fixture, Kissing Point FC was instrumental in hosting a refereeing course, which involved 18 new female referees looking to obtain their level 4 course credentials. The women's game on all levels has continued to grow in Australia over recent years, with Football Australia stating that women now make up 22 per cent of the participation pool. I thank Northern Suburbs Football Association and all the local clubs for playing a vital role in organising and promoting the event.

#### **JACQUI THOMPSON**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:41):** I will take every opportunity I can to stand up in this place and acknowledge our State's hardworking teachers. Today I will talk about Leura Public School teacher Jacqui Thompson. Jacqui recently received a Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence—an achievement that speaks volumes about her as an outstanding educator. The commemorative booklet at the ceremony described Jacqui as a "collaborative, compassionate and professional" teacher and commented that "to work with Jacqui is to be inspired". These are well-deserved observations about a woman who has tirelessly dedicated herself to her profession and the students in her care. Teaching, whilst undeniably a noble vocation, is tough at times. A changing landscape of professional and community expectations can be challenging to navigate, and we must acknowledge those in the education sector who stay and, year after year, deliver outcomes for our children that support their lifelong learning. I know that the Leura Public School community will join me in extending our

heartfelt appreciation to Jacqui and in expressing our immense gratitude that our local students reap the benefits of her expertise and guidance.

#### CLARENCE TOWN COBRAS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:42):** I have excellent news for the House because the Clarence Town Cobras had an amazing win in the grand finals last week. It was a huge win. First up was the ladies' match, the Ladies League Tag, and they defeated Morpeth 6-0 in that grand final. That was followed up by the men's team, and they defeated Tea Gardens 36-12. It was a huge result for the Clarence Town Cobras, whose sportsground is looking fantastic. There were huge celebrations that night at the local hotel. I got home from my function, and I could hear the celebrations from my place four kilometres out of town. That gives an indication of how exciting it was. I cannot forget my friends up in Dungog. Of course, they did very well in their match as well, coming home with a strong finish but lost out to Fingal Bay 16-10.

#### THIRROUL BUTCHERS

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:43):** The Thirroul Butchers are officially rugby league's number one team in the Illawarra after an incredible grand final win against Collegians earlier this month. It had been nine long years since the Butchers held the premiership trophy, but all that changed at WIN Stadium on 2 September. The Butchers finished fourth in the regular season—notching up nine wins, one draw and five losses. However, with their backs against the wall, Thirroul's first-grade side found a way to outclass Western Suburbs Devils 18-16 and then De La Salle in the preliminary final. Then came the grand final. The Butchers did not have it all their way though and headed into half-time trailing 18-12 against Collegians. However, a try from Monty Raper, a great local hero, with about 19 minutes left in the game handed Thirroul a lead that they held onto. It was an incredible end to what *The Illawarra Mercury* rightly described as a "fairytale" season. Congratulations to Monty, the Bowen brothers and all the Butchers players.

#### PHIL COLMAN

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:44):** I consider Phil Colman, a lifelong resident of Collaroy, to be a living treasure. Phil's association with Long Reef has been lifelong. Phil was a driving force in the area being declared an aquatic reserve over 40 years ago and in the establishment of the Environmental Education Room in the former boat shed at Fishermans Beach at Collaroy. Having observed and studied the marine environment most of his life, Phil has become the expert that educators, scientists, journalists, government departments, students and interested members of the public—even politicians—go to for information about the fauna and the marine life at Long Reef Aquatic Reserve. He even writes books on Long Reef reserve. Phil was a founding executive member of the Narrabeen Lagoon Committee in 1977, which was formed to protect and preserve Narrabeen Lagoon and its remaining natural catchment. He provided scientific information and played a leading role in organising public meetings and campaigns. I thank Phil for giving so generously to his community and to our community. Thanks for just being a bloke.

#### KYLIE MONTGOMERY

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:45):** I congratulate Kylie Montgomery and her Koonawarra business, One Cake Down, on donating to many Illawarra charities with proceeds from the sales of her cake offcut boxes. Kylie is a self-taught cake maker and went from baking for her friends and colleagues to becoming an award-winning wedding cake designer. With all of these cake designs, a lot of wasted cake offcuts were being thrown away, so Kylie came up with the idea of selling the offcuts and donating the proceeds to charity. Every Friday at 4.00 p.m., One Cake Down releases the flavours and the number of offcut boxes available, ready for pick-up on Saturday morning. Kylie has donated hundreds of dollars to local charities such as Talk2mebro, Need a Feed, Best Friends Forever Rescue, Barstool Brothers and Escabags. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I express our congratulations to Kylie and her business, One Cake Down, and wish her well in her future endeavours.

#### MEALS ON WHEELS

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:46):** It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the 70-year anniversary of Meals on Wheels and recognise the commitment and dedication of Tamworth's volunteers. Recently I had the privilege of attending the Tamworth celebration of 70 years of Meals on Wheels Australia in Tamworth, surrounded by volunteers and staff. Meals on Wheels has been providing an excellent and essential service to the Tamworth community for decades, with generations of volunteers donating their time since the first meal was delivered in December 1963. The service provides more than 14,000 fresh and frozen meals to clients in Tamworth, Moonbi and Kootingal. Seventy years ago Meals on Wheels was founded to ensure we could keep our elderly residents fed and in company. In Tamworth, that legacy lives strong thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, and we sincerely thank them.

### SHOWCASE STUDENT EVENT

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:47):** For three decades something special has been happening in my electorate of Port Stephens. For three decades school students have come together from different schools to showcase their creative talents on the stage at Irrawang High School. For three decades Ms Adele Robinson has been behind the scenes, pulling together the annual event known as *Showcase*. As musical director and head teacher of creative and performing arts at Irrawang High School, Ms Adele Robinson has been fostering creativity and confidence for years. Each year, for the past 30 years, Irrawang High School has hosted *Showcase*, which brings together students from Medowie Public School, Wirreanda Public School, Grahamstown Public School and Irrawang Public School to perform alongside the Irrawang High School performers. The students sing, dance, act and play instruments on stage over two amazing nights. The success of *Showcase* is a direct result of the tireless dedication of Ms Robinson and her faculty. I thank Adele and her team for 30 years of showcasing student's talents and giving them memories for a lifetime.

### TRIBUTE TO GARY POILE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:48):** Today I recognise the late Gary Poile. Gary was an extraordinary man who was equipped with many attributes and skills, and a community spirit that is to be highly praised and admired. With his ability to work with families, community and colleagues, he rolled up his sleeves when he saw tasks that needed to be done, and went about achieving completion. Gary was certainly affected by many obstacles in his beekeeping, such as weather, market prices, fires and the varroa mite. With intelligence and focus, he was able to market direct to consumers and diversify his beeswax and creamed honey. Gary was highly acclaimed for his work and contributions and was awarded the 2019 Upper Lachlan Citizen of the Year. He was also the recipient of the Emergency Services Medal and the ACT Emergency Medal. It is with sincere admiration that I pay tribute to Gary and recognise the enormous contributions that he has made. Vale, Gary Poile.

### CUDMIRRAH BERRARA RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:49):** I recognise the Cudmirrah Berrara Rural Fire Service. I recently had the honour of joining with the local community to celebrate its sixty-fifth birthday celebrations. Special mention goes to Steve Whatmough, the longest serving member, and Bill and Narelle Hay, the second longest serving members, who were all in attendance on the night. Other special guests there to celebrate included Captain Daniel Noordermeer and Senior Deputy Peter Dunnett. It is an amazing milestone and a true testament to the dedication of the Cudmirrah and Berrara communities, who all worked tirelessly during the Currowan fire to keep our communities safe. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our Rural Fire Service, and I sincerely thank each and every one of them for the work they do to keep us all safe.

### JEANETTE AND JERRAD ALLEN

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:50):** I congratulate Jeanette and Jerrad Allen from Pacific Palms Surf Life Saving Club, who are recipients of the 2023 Surf Life Saving NSW President's Medal. The annual Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence celebrate the achievements of its 76,000 members, who represented 129 clubs during the 2022-23 season. Jeanette and Jerrad hold various roles within their surf club, including as senior leaders, trainers, patrol captains, age and Nippers managers, rescue craft operators and key members of the club's call-out team. Notably, they have been involved in several daring and major rescues. The most recent was an after-hours rescue of two distressed rock fishers, earning them the Rescue of the Month award. Their volunteering extends beyond the beach to the flood emergency, collaborating with emergency service agencies to ensure the seamless delivery of a quick and professional flood response. Jeanette and Jerrad are fierce advocates for the surf lifesaving movement and make significant contributions, despite the club working with a very small patrol base. I congratulate them on their well-deserved recognition and thank them for their selfless service to our community.

### CHERYL MCCARTHY

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:51):** I congratulate Cheryl McCarthy of Bermagui Surf Life Saving Club. At the annual Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence on Saturday 26 August, Cheryl was awarded Surf Life Saver of the Year 2023. Cheryl has worked as the Bermagui Surf Life Saving Club secretary for 10 years. She was previously the director of lifesaving for the Far South Coast Surf Life Saving Club branch for five years and has been a trainer in jet ski and for the bronze medallion. Cheryl volunteered during the 2018 Tathra bushfires and helped coordinate the Bermagui Surf Life Saving Club evacuation centre in the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. In her typical manner, Cheryl modestly accepted the award by recognising her team. I congratulate Cheryl on behalf of the Bega electorate and thank her for her service.

### SCHOOL CROSSING SUPERVISORS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:52):** I recognise and appreciate some of the unsung heroes who play a crucial role in our communities. Our school crossing supervisors, affectionately known as the lollipop ladies and men, deserve our heartfelt gratitude for ensuring the safety of our children as they journey to and from school. I give a special shout-out to every school crossing supervisor across the State. Their dedication and commitment to keeping our children safe is truly commendable. In addition, I acknowledge the remarkable contributions of Maureen Kruss from Thirlmere. On top of her duties at the school crossing, her selfless efforts at the mini Yerrinbool market have enriched our community in so many ways. The mini Yerrinbool market has become a vibrant hub of local talent, showcasing the creativity and entrepreneurship of our residents. Thanks to Maureen's tireless work, the market has grown into a cherished community event.

### UNCLE GREG SIMMS

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:53):** I have known Uncle Greg Simms since the late 1990s, and he has always cared deeply for his brothers and sisters. Uncle Greg is an Aboriginal Elder in Western Sydney of the Gundungurra, or water dragon lizard people, of the Blue Mountains; and the Gadigal tribe, or whale people, of the Dharug nation. Uncle Greg grew up in La Perouse on an Aboriginal reserve and for the past few decades has lived in Mount Druitt. Uncle Greg is an acclaimed artist, philosopher, reconciliation activist, storyteller, cultural educator, mentor, leader and Elder. Uncle Greg has donated many of his artworks to charities, and he has received many community awards and accolades. I know him as a person who reaches out and makes everyone feel special. I fondly remember in the early 2000s when he took me as his plus one to meet the Governor and when we were involved in a Cobham Youth Justice Centre support program. Uncle Greg, you are a truly beautiful human being.

### FENG HUA CHINESE SCHOOL

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:54):** The Feng Hua Chinese language school in Ryde hosted a magnificent event this past weekend marking its twenty-fifth anniversary and the 2023 Moon Festival celebration. It was my pleasure to attend the vibrant and enriching occasion, alongside my friend Ryde councillor Justin Li. Under the wonderful principal, Caroline Xu, the school has become a beacon of cultural language education in Ryde. The Moon Festival celebration was a testament to the school's dedication to promoting Chinese culture in the local community, and the students showcased their language proficiency and artistic skills through various performances, capturing the essence of that important Chinese celebration. The highlight of the event was the traditional Chinese clothing parade, when the students donned creative homemade garments. It was a mesmerising display of colour and shone a positive light on everything that is great about our local Chinese community. I commend Caroline, her dedicated staff and the students of the Feng Hua Chinese School for their commitment to cultural preservation and education. The event is a testament to the multiculturalism of Ryde and a reminder that I truly do represent the most wonderful and diverse electorate.

### QANTAS WORKERS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:55):** I congratulate the Transport Workers Union [TWU] and the 1,700 illegally sacked Qantas workers who enjoyed a major win in the High Court of Australia today. This morning the High Court rejected Qantas' bid to overturn a previous decision that found that its outsourcing of 1,700 jobs during the pandemic was illegal. The court found that Qantas sacked the workers in large part due to a desire to avoid future industrial action, flouting protections enshrined within the Fair Work Act. Today's decision must come as a relief to the workers, who gave years of service, and I congratulate them on their community contribution. They were let down by their employer and had to search for new jobs during a global health crisis. Today their advocacy and determination was vindicated. I congratulate national secretary Michael Kaine, assistant secretary Nick McIntosh, New South Wales secretary Richard Olsen and the Qantas workers.

### GAI MCDONALD

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:56):** Spending more than half a century at a job is truly a remarkable milestone, so today I raise a glass of Milo to Susan McDonald, better known as Gai McDonald, in celebration of her retirement after 52 years at the Nestlé factory at Smithtown. Beginning her career as a canister worker to a fill-and-pack operator, Gai has been a long-serving asset to the company and a source of inspiration to other dedicated workers. Gai passes down a wealth of knowledge and experience to generations of Nestlé employees, imprinting a lasting legacy—including for her brother, who also works within the factory. The unwavering commitment, hard work and expertise that Gai showed has been instrumental in the success of the Nestlé factory. To remain a steady avenue of support over five decades is truly inspirational, as the Smithtown facility has evolved continuously over time. I thank Gai for her dedication, her hard work and the positive impact that she has made

over the past 52 years. She truly deserves all the happiness and fulfillment that retirement brings. I congratulate Gai. Everybody will miss her radiant presence at Nestlé.

#### **MANGROVE MOUNTAIN UNION CHURCH**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:57):** I offer huge congratulations to everyone involved in the Little White Church at Mangrove Mountain. The Mangrove Mountain Union Church was built in 2012 by a local union of churches and has been used by various combinations of church and community groups ever since. The church is of the community, by the community and for the community, so community members were rightly up in arms when local hall members decided it was their right to sell the church. They have banded together and sought every means of assistance, trying hard to fight the finer details of regulation and legislation. Disappointingly, and at great cost, the final fight has been in court, where they have proved that the church belongs to the people. I thank everyone involved in the journey to put the Little White Church back into the hands of the community, including very generous donors from across our community, with special thanks to locals Peter FitzSimons and John Singleton—two high-profile Aussies who are passionate about the coast—for their generous contributions. Welcome back, White Church. Our community built you, loves you and will continue to love you for a long time into the future.

#### **MR HAYDEN BARRINGTON**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:59):** I recognise Mr Hayden Barrington from Sing Australia, who recently announced his retirement from the group. Hayden was a significant contributor to the St George branch, holding the role of conductor for nearly 10 years. I had the opportunity to attend his wonderful farewell concert, held locally at the Peakhurst South Public School Community Hall. There was a fantastic turnout. The group did an amazing job on the evening, and some light refreshments were enjoyed by all following the performance. Whilst it was sad to see Hayden go, there were plenty of locals who had come specifically to see him off. Sing Australia has done fantastic work in communities right across the country, including in the Oatley electorate. The St George branch is made up of an incredible array of talent, performing at gigs whilst promoting the wellbeing of its members and the wider community. I wish Mr Barrington the very best moving forward and would like to thank him once again for his significant contribution to Sing Australia.

#### **SYDNEY YOUTH FC**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:00):** I am honoured to speak about the great work of the Sydney Youth FC football team. Providing a safe space for Afghan Hazara youth to feel accepted and supported is integral to Sydney Youth founder Jabir Hossieni. I also acknowledge team managers Ziba Gulami and Farzana Farzana for their dedication and passion. Sydney Youth FC has helped many young people from refugee backgrounds rebuild their lives via a much-needed outlet for physical activity, social interaction and personal development. The club's work was also acknowledged at the 2023 STARTTS Humanitarian Awards. The club was awarded the Sport Award for Outstanding Efforts in Promoting Sporting Endeavours among People from Refugee Backgrounds. It was well deserved, and I offer my congratulations.

#### **CELINA PERRETT**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:01):** I am proud to congratulate Celina Perrett on her Hunter and Central Coast Region 2023 Trainee of the Year award. Celina completed a certificate III in Agriculture (Dairy Production) at Tocal College whilst working at Forbes Dairy in Gloucester. I acknowledge her family and friends, who have supported her on this journey. I am informed that Celina's great-grandparents were Jersey stud dairy farmers. Celina loves taking on the daily challenges of dairy farming. I make a special mention of Tocal traineeship coordinator Jill Clayton, who has supported Celina in her training and career. I am thrilled to inform the House that Celina is now studying for a certificate IV in Agriculture and a Diploma of Agriculture. Further, I announce that Celina is currently a finalist for the 2023 NSW State Training Awards. On Friday, Celina will travel to Sydney Town Hall for the presentation of the awards. I wish her well. Go Celina!

#### **FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARE WEEK**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:02):** I acknowledge that this week is Foster and Kinship Care Week. It was established in 1990 to thank those angels in our community who care for some of our most vulnerable children. The week also spotlights the ever-increasing need for more carers. Currently 15,000 children and young people are in the child protection system in New South Wales. Each year, 600 new foster carers are needed in New South Wales to take care of children who cannot live safely at home. Carers can be family members or foster carers and come from a diverse range of backgrounds and all walks of life. I congratulate My Forever Family NSW on the celebration picnic for carers arranged at Penrith Showground last Sunday. I also thank the Minister for Families and Communities for the invitation to attend the picnic.

### HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE SCOUTING COMMUNITY

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (19:03):** I recognise scouting achievements in the Liverpool local government area. This year, five leaders and two parent committee members from across the Liverpool district were recognised for their distinguished service as leaders and adult supporters of Scouts NSW. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the following individuals. Kim Budge was bestowed with the prestigious Silver Wattle award for her unwavering dedication and exemplary service as an adult member in an active leadership role for over a decade. The Meritorious Service Award was conferred on Belinda Howell and Melanie Lucas in recognition of their continuous commitment spanning more than six years. Bryan Binskin, Ricky Howell and Leanne Hyatt were recipients of the Special Service Award for their exceptional contributions to a major event or activity that has left an indelible mark on the scouting community. These honourees exemplify the spirit of selflessness and dedication that makes scouting thrive. I am immensely proud of their accomplishments and look forward to their continued impact on the Scouts NSW community.

### FAIRFIELD WEST SALVATION ARMY

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:04):** On 31 July I met with Corps Officers Russell and Katharine Brown from Fairfield West Salvation Army to discuss their remarkable community service. We explored their wonderful initiatives and work, including food distribution, shelter assistance and wellbeing programs for my constituents. Russell and Katharine's dedication to our community is truly inspiring. Their genuine compassion and commitment to their roles as Corps Officers shines through in their work. They are not just doing a job; they have a calling to help those facing challenges. I am deeply appreciative of their efforts and eagerly anticipate the positive influence they will continue to bring to our community. Their ongoing commitment to improving lives demonstrates the true spirit of community service. Fairfield West Salvation Army, led by them, is a beacon of hope, especially during this difficult time. I look forward to seeing their continued impact in my community.

### SENATOR MARISE PAYNE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (19:05):** I recognise the substantial contributions and distinguished career of Senator Marise Payne, a dedicated public servant, stalwart of the Liberal Party in Western Sydney and valued constituent of the Badgerys Creek electorate. Marise announced her retirement from the Federal Senate last week and it is fitting to recognise her 26-year career as Australia's longest-serving female senator. The senator held several significant portfolios relating to foreign affairs, women, defence and social services. Her steadfast commitment saw her oversee the government response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and she played a pivotal role in reshaping the culture of Federal Parliament through the Jenkins review. Her call for an independent inquiry into the origins of COVID-19 underscored her fearless dedication to transparency and global accountability. I deeply respect her enduring passion for Western Sydney, as she consistently championed our community in Federal Parliament. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Senator Marise Payne for her years of service and unwavering commitment to our nation. May her next chapter be as impactful and fulfilling as her time in the Senate.

### HEATHER JONES

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:06):** I acknowledge Heather Jones for her commitment and dedication to the Wallarah Fire Brigade and on being awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. Heather is currently the Senior Deputy Captain of the Wallarah Fire Brigade. Her qualifications include response driving, advanced resuscitation techniques, community engagement and community liaison. Heather has assisted in numerous local and out-of-area emergencies, like the serious bushfires in 2002 and 2013, the Black Summer bushfires in 2019 as well as the east coast low storms and floods in 2007, 2015 and 2022. As Community Liaison Officer during the Three Mile fire during the Black Summer bushfires, Heather spent many weeks providing information to communities in the direct line of fire. Her knowledge and effective communication were integral in supporting the firefighting effort and ensuring the safety of the community. I congratulate Heather. She is a worthy recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

### KIAMA KNIGHTS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:07):** I recognise the Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Club for its tremendous recent sporting success. On Saturday 9 September 2023 the club won both the under 13-2s and the under 15-1s grand finals at WIN Stadium in Wollongong. The under 13-2 premiers had a sensational game, defeating the Thirroul Butchers 24-12. The under 15-1 premiers made a tremendous effort, sealing back-to-back premierships titles and defeating the Stingrays from Shellharbour 32-6. I always love seeing a win over Shellharbour. I thank Kiama Knights senior players Keiron Poole and Tom Angel for attending the two events. I know that the local Kiama community is extremely proud of what the Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Club



has achieved on the footy field—and off it. I congratulate all of the Kiama Knights junior players, coaches, trainers, officials, parents and the referees involved. Well done. Go the mighty Kiama Knights!

#### **KEIRA WILL**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:08):** I congratulate Keira Will from Lidcombe Auburn Cycling Club who recently won a gold and silver medal at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago. Just 18, she won gold in the Women's Road Race and silver in the Women's Individual Time Trial—with her Australian teammate Lauren Bates taking out the gold. In March she starred at the Oceania Track Cycling Championships, taking out titles in the Madison, Omnium and Team Pursuit. Keira is considered one of the top cycling prospects in the country and has been selected to represent the country again at the World Junior Track Championships in Columbia this August. She has been an avid cyclist and member of Lidcombe Auburn club for 14 years. Well done to Keira and the Lidcombe Auburn Cycling Club, and good luck at the World Championships.

#### **JOHN HASSARATI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (19:09):** I acknowledge a good friend of mine, John Hassarati, who has recently joined the executive of the Ryde local government conference [LGC] in my electorate of Ryde. John is a longstanding, lifelong member of Ryde who, like me, grew up in the area and is now a great contributor to the community. He takes on the role of treasurer in perhaps the most successful LGC in Ryde's history. He is joined by the amazing president, Frank Moshfeghi; the new secretary, Keenan Smith; and the vice-president, Jason Cowland. I am confident that, as we head into a local government election in 12 months' time, they will provide the leadership that our great community needs. I am, of course, a benefactor of the wonderful LGC as a former mayor of Ryde. I look forward to working closely with John, particularly in his new role as treasurer. I look forward to having a topped-up kitty as we go into this campaign. I thank John for his service and congratulate him.

#### **NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:10):** I was delighted to join Nepean Food Services recently to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of Meals on Wheels. At the heart of Meals on Wheels are the thousands of dedicated and compassionate volunteers. They not just deliver a meal but also provide companionship and a sense of belonging and combat social isolation. Locally, Nepean Food Services, which has been operating for over 30 years, held a volunteers lunch at Nepean Rowing Club on the banks of the beautiful Nepean River. It was an opportunity to applaud the outstanding contributions of our local volunteers and the unflagging commitment, empathy and willingness of the staff to make a difference. It is more than a service; it is a community of individuals making a positive impact. They create ripples of goodness throughout the Penrith and Nepean communities. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Ditte Kovak, her team and every volunteer who has been a part of Meals on Wheels.

#### **EASTERN SUBURBS POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:11):** I warmly welcome our community's newest recruits to the Eastern Suburbs Police Area Command as they begin their careers in supporting our community and keeping our local area safe. These new probationary constables are a welcome boost, with eight joining the area command on 21 August. I also acknowledge Detective Superintendent Jodi Radmore and thank her for her leadership and the work that she does across the eastern suburbs. I recently had the opportunity to meet Superintendent Radmore and some of the new probationary constables to thank them in person for the work they do in our community. It was wonderful to sit down with them personally and hear about the work they are already undertaking locally and what drew them to a career in the police service. I thank our outstanding new recruits and all police officers for choosing to make an important contribution to public service and keep our community safe.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE KOALAS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:12):** Koalas are one of our most treasured national icons. They are one native animal that I am particularly passionate about protecting, preserving and promoting. The Heathcote electorate is fortunate to be home to a healthy local population. In fact, on a personal level, one of my proudest moments as a community advocate was helping to save koala habitat at Woronora Heights. As a result, one of the colony's koalas was named after me. The Premier had one named after him too. Unfortunately, koalas face a number of serious threats, including deforestation, domestic animals, urban sprawl and, of course, vehicles. I have lost count of the number of deceased koalas I have seen on the side of Heathcote Road over the past 50 years. There is still much more that we can do as a government and as a community to ensure that koalas not only survive but also thrive.

Under this Government, the future of koalas has never looked brighter. It was pleasing to work with the Minister for Roads, the Hon. John Graham, to secure six new permanent koala warning signs along Heathcote Road. Two large, temporary digital signs have also been erected along the road for the next three months to alert motorists of koalas that are particularly transient during the breeding season. The need to install the signs was raised by WIRES, and it was a pleasure to be able to help facilitate that request promptly. I have also been in discussions with local Rural Fire Service members about what measures can be taken to ensure that koalas do not become casualties of hazard reduction operations. It is pleasing to see that the RFS and the Minister for Emergency Services have been eager to explore options to ensure the protection of koalas during such operations.

Technology such as drones is now used to locate koalas in the days leading up to hazard reductions. As a result, locations of burns are able to be altered to ensure that koalas are not impacted. During a recent visit to the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO], I was informed that the organisation had introduced stringent measures to ensure the impact on koalas was minimised during hazard reductions. ANSTO engages the services of a Queensland company, with drones being used for a few days prior to the burn commencing. Koalas in locations that have to be burnt are able to be relocated to ensure they are not placed in harm's way.

It is particularly pleasing, after 12 long years under those opposite, to have an environment Minister who is passionate about ensuring the preservation of the State's koala population. Under the former Government, koalas went from being listed as "vulnerable" to "endangered". The listing of koalas as "endangered" can only be described as a gross failure by those opposite. This Government's commitment to the State's koala population, on the other hand, is evident. We will establish the Great Koala National Park on the State's mid North Coast. That commitment shows that the Government is serious about protecting the endangered marsupial. Once an animal is gone, it is gone forever.

One has only to look at the former Government's refusal to adopt all the recommendations of the 2020 inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales to see how it views the native animal's survival. Those opposite could only "support in principle" the recommendation to increase resources to local councils to assist them with mapping for koala management plans. Those opposite only "noted" the recommendation to establish the Great Koala National Park. They were basic recommendations that will make a real difference to the survival of koalas throughout New South Wales, yet the former Liberal-Nationals Government refused to adopt them. Lastly, I acknowledge all the koala rescuers, carers and advocates throughout the Heathcote electorate for their continued dedication. In particular, I recognise the efforts of Tom Kristensen and Steve Anyon-Smith, who have been instrumental in the protection and preservation of Heathcote's koala colony. Their efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed by me or the local community.

### LIFELINE

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:16):** Each year, over one million Australians reach out to Lifeline for support. Its crisis support line receives a call every 30 seconds. Lifeline has 41 centres, 10,000 volunteers and 1,000 employees providing life-saving national infrastructure for people experiencing immense pain and anguish. In total, there are 3,500 crisis supporters working with Lifeline so that no-one in Australia has to face their darkest moment alone. For context, 8.6 Australians take their life every day, which is more than double the road toll. An estimated one in three Australians report feeling lonely. Unfortunately, that is more prevalent among seniors. Despite this, Lifeline is there to listen.

Local branch Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury services Wahroonga and the surrounding electorates. Since I became a member of Parliament, many constituents have contacted my office providing positive feedback on their experience with Lifeline. Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury has helped many of my constituents with their mental health and has provided emergency relief due to financial crisis, including ongoing support for positive, long-term outcomes. I recall a local pensioner who approached me in public many months ago to thank me and my office for liaising with Lifeline to ensure that she received emergency financial support. I thank the volunteers who worked directly with her, as well as all the volunteers and staff at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, who help thousands in our community.

The financial counselling work that Lifeline performs is incredibly important. It is certainly more than just a crisis line. Lifeline conducts many local fundraising events, which help to raise funds that go back into the community through its critical services. In July, Lifeline held Sydney's biggest book fair at Knox Grammar School, as it has in past years. It was well supported, with a range of more than 110,000 pre-loved books, DVDs, CDs and more, as well as a large community turnout. The line is always incredibly long before the doors open on the first day. The funds raised go back to Lifeline to support its suicide prevention service. Lifeline supports a range of other events, including the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic, or the Bobbo, which raised \$78,000 this year, as well as Lifeline's golf day at Pennant Hills, the Castle Hill Book Fair, Go For Broke and the Sapphire Gala Ball.

The former New South Wales Government recognised the importance of good mental health in the 2022-23 New South Wales budget, where it allocated a total of \$2.9 billion to mental health services. That included \$3.4 million a year to support Lifeline telephone crisis services in New South Wales, with an additional \$28.5 million over four years from 2022-23 for Lifeline to meet the increasing demand for mental health crisis services. I hope that our strong record of funding mental health services and Lifeline is continued in the upcoming 2023-24 budget of the New South Wales Labor Government. It was disappointing to see the rolling back of several initiatives such as Active Kids, so I urge the Minns Labor Government to continue strong funding for critical mental health services, particularly as demand is growing.

I thank Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury CEO Elizabeth Lovell, who took on that challenging yet rewarding role last year, and all the volunteers and staff who keep it running on a day-to-day basis. Their efforts do not go unrecognised, neither by my office nor by the constituents who regularly contact me, grateful for Lifeline's presence in our community. I look forward to seeing them recognised by the Minns Labor Government. Lifeline can provide continued benefits to our local and broader community into the future. Walking around the call centre in Gordon and meeting the volunteers, I got a sense of the incredible people who give their time free of charge to help the most vulnerable in our community. Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury is a great community organisation. It has one of the few round-the-clock crisis lines in Australia. They take calls from all over the nation to help people during their most dire moments. I cannot speak more highly of the incredible work that Lifeline and its volunteers do in our community.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I thank the member for Wahroonga. I have been to that book fair many a time. My bookshelf is lined with books from it. Before I call the member for Port Stephens, I welcome guests of the member for Shellharbour to the gallery. They are Overnight, an overnight sensation. They have just been on *The Voice*. I welcome them and Dionne Garcia, who is also a proud mum. Enjoy the show.

#### **TEA GARDENS HAWKS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:22):** I welcome Overnight. I cannot guarantee a show anywhere near what they can do. We will see how we go. At the beginning of 2021 I visited a special club at a special place. It was the Tea Gardens Hawks rugby league football club at beautiful Hawks Nest in my electorate of Port Stephens. It was not so much the facilities at the club that made it special, because it was operating out of a shipping container complete with electrical cords running across the grass to connect to power; what made it special was the club's committee members, who were determined to deliver better facilities for their members. Their determination was contagious.

Since then I have secured \$100,000 to kick off the build of a new clubhouse. Committee members and I met onsite with MidCoast Council, which confirmed that the container clubhouse was 100 per cent noncompliant and agreed to kick in more funds to make a new clubhouse a reality. Then the club's committee and members of the community did the rest. In December 2022 I was there when they turned the first sod for the start of construction. Since then it has gone gangbusters. For a project run entirely by volunteer club members, it has gone so well that I recently joined them for a very special day: the official opening of the new clubhouse. The sun was shining, the smiles were big, and the familiar aroma of Dencorub was in the air as players prepared to run on the field.

It was awesome to see that the club now has a proper kitchen to operate out of, plenty of room for storage and even a special storeroom that may also occasionally become a bar. By drawing on the generosity of local businesses and tradies, they made more out of the funds they received than I could have imagined. In particular I give a massive thankyou to Reoweld, Hunter Valley Concrete Pumping Service, Neil Hadfield Concrete and Hunter Readymixed Concrete for their generous contributions to the club. But none of it could have happened without the dedicated volunteer committee members, who have been tireless in their pursuit of better facilities for their members: president Rob Smith, also known as Dakka; vice president Aaron Neighbour; secretary Neil Reynolds, also known as Cyc; and treasurer Tony March.

We all know that a sporting club does not kick goals with just a hardworking committee. It takes a real team effort. That is certainly the case with Tea Gardens Hawks Football Club. The committee is backed by a dedicated and growing band of countless volunteers, who help with the club's day-to-day activities, fundraising, coaching and events, combined with some very loyal club sponsors. I give many thanks to the club's regular sponsors—Tea Gardens Hotel, Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Golf Club and Tea Gardens Country Club—combined with a very long list of other local businesses that I have not got time to mention tonight. They have all helped out the club. It is clear that the club has the full backing of that beautiful small community.

The level of support is a real testament to the club, its members and its players. President Rob Smith tells me he is looking forward to a fantastic end of the season following a year that has seen a massive amount of growth and change. The Hawks currently have a number of junior teams, with boys and girls on the same team.

Now they are seeking expressions of interest for a new girls tackle team, along with the existing women's senior Oztag team that plays alongside the current Hawks men's teams. The Matildas' journey in the World Cup has flowed on across our nation. I look forward the ripple effect across all sporting codes, giving girls and young women the confidence to try their hand at a new sport or push themselves harder in a sport that they have already been a part of, knowing the heights it may allow them to reach.

With the opening of the brand new clubhouse in Hawks Nest, the club's ambitions are not nearly complete. It still has more in its sights so I will keep working with it whilst it pursues more upgrades to change rooms and lighting. Until we get there, I do not think the gently worded text messages from president Rob will stop. Sporting clubs play such an important role in our communities. I know that countless volunteers are doing a lot of hard work across all of Port Stephens, giving children the confidence and skills that come with playing sport. Clubs like the Tea Gardens Hawks Football Club help build stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities. Well done to Dakka, Aaron, Cyc and the entire team. I am pleased to have played a very small part in turning their container clubhouse into bricks and mortar. I am grateful for all their hard work to bring the project to life for the benefit of their players and the community. Finally, I look forward to cheering on the Hawks from the sidelines and enjoying a cold beer from the new clubhouse soon.

### SYDNEY AIRPORT REGIONAL FLIGHT SLOTS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:26):** Country councils and their communities have to be on red alert to save our slots at Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport. Last week we saw the rather innocuous green paper released by the Federal infrastructure Minister, Catherine King, on Australian aviation to 2050. But contained within that green paper and, indeed, announced by the Minister was the pronouncement that the slot allocation system at Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport would be reformed in due course. When we hear the words "the slot allocation scheme will be reformed" in country New South Wales, it sends shivers up our spine, particularly those of us who were around for the great fight 11 years ago in 2012, when the then Federal Government and State governments released the *Joint Study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region*, which sought to curtail and reduce the number of slots for regional flights into the capital city of New South Wales in exchange for increasing the number of slots for international flights.

If that report and its recommendations had been adopted at the time, it would have been easier to fly into Sydney from overseas than it would have been from country New South Wales. We need to be on guard. I am not suggesting for a moment that the Federal infrastructure Minister would go down that path again, because she would be aware of the fight that she would be up against. But we need to be alert, aware and on guard to make sure that the ring fencing of those regional slots continues. Regional aviation is economically fraught. It operates on a very thin margin. Indeed, if you talk to the operators of Kingsford Smith Airport, they will tell you that they lose money on regional slots. The money made on the larger domestic and international routes is a real gravy train. That is where the money is. There is always pressure on Federal governments, which regulate the operations of that airport, to reduce or reallocate slots in favour of the profitable routes. That is all well and good, but aviation is an essential transport link—and it is for people in the bush—so that equity of access to our airport in Sydney must be maintained. Some would say that the Western Sydney airport is being built, so people will be able to fly there.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Why not? What is wrong with it?

**Mr Stephen Bali:** You don't like Western Sydney?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Well, no, because regional people want to fly into the heart of Sydney. They do not want to land in Western Sydney and then come into Sydney.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** We're not the heart of Sydney? Are we the backside of Western Sydney?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Listen to the confected outrage of members opposite. I am talking about country people who need to get to Sydney to access medical appointments. Slots into Kingsford Smith Airport are absolutely vital. We will not tolerate being shunted out to the new Western Sydney airport. Country communities must be alive to the fact that this rather innocuous green paper has been released, and the Minister has made it quite clear that the slot allocation scheme will be reformed. I have written to the Federal infrastructure Minister asking for two things: first, that the regional slot ring fencing agreement that was struck after 2012 is maintained; and, secondly, that we keep the door open to increasing the number of regional slots. So we need to maintain what we have and keep open the option to increase those slots, not reduce them.

The Northern Tablelands electorate is typical of country New South Wales. The community of Moree is serviced seven days a week by QantasLink and provides direct flights to Sydney. Inverell is serviced six times a week by Link Airways and Armidale is serviced seven days a week by QantasLink and Rex. Those services are essential. Collectively, they carry around 250,000 passengers a year through those three airports direct into Sydney.

to connect with other parts of Australia and internationally for people to conduct business. Those air slots are absolutely critical to the viability of country communities for medical services and tourism.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Hear, hear!

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I note the interjection of the member for Murray. We cannot afford to lose those slots. While we acknowledge that the green paper has been released, the Federal infrastructure Minister must be aware of how important those slots are. If she tries to go down the path of 11 years ago, she will know about it very quickly and very loudly.

### HOWARTH DRILLING PTY LTD

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:31):** For the sake of Hansard I will call this speech "Howarth Drilling: Part Two", in a three-part series, because two weeks ago I stood at the lectern and spoke about the injustice of the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill that passed this House on 30 January 2014. To be fair to all members who are in the Chamber, none of them were here at that time. There is a little bit of history to this, for which none of them have responsibility. But I was there, and I do have responsibility. I continue to fight on behalf of a local family company that is made up of entrepreneurs, which has done incredible stuff around mine drilling and which at the time was worth in excess of \$20 million. Ultimately, it was killed off by Barry O'Farrell's mining amendment bill.

I begin my contribution by giving that brief background but also mention that in introducing the mining amendment bill, an interesting thing happened that was lost on me at the time but now resonates with me far more clearly. Ironically, the premier of the day, Barry O'Farrell, was found to have engaged in corrupt conduct, or he left because he was concerned about that. It was almost as though people in his own department and his own speechwriters were concerned about what was taking place in this House. They inserted into Premier Barry O'Farrell's second reading speech that the Act would "abrogate common law rights" in New South Wales. Those words were spoken not once, not twice, but three times.

If we had all been paying a little bit more attention and listening a little bit more carefully, and if we thought about what those words might have meant, it was essentially belling the cat—whatever the saying is; I really do not care. The point is that the phrase meant, "We are doing something exceptional in this particular piece of legislation. We are essentially standing aside all common rights of law known in New South Wales to pass this particular amending bill." Members will appreciate and perhaps understand that that bill rescinded a licence to mine a coalmine—in this particular instance, Doyle's Creek coalmine, which was to be a training mine for underground coalminers. Although it was unproven at that time, Barry O'Farrell was suggesting and asserting that the Minister responsible for signing off on this particular lease, Ian Macdonald, had acted corruptly.

Subsequent court cases found that he had acted corruptly, so I do not defend that at all, but my point is that at the time that he signed off on that lease he was a Minister of the Crown in this State. He had the power and authority to sign off on a lease, and he did that. Subsequent to that, a second company purchased that lease and then that was onsold to a third company called NuCoal Mining. NuCoal Mining is really interesting because, essentially and by definition—and even by declaration from then Premier Barry O'Farrell—it was an innocent party. It had purchased a lease to mine coal that had been signed off by a Minister of the Crown. So we abrogated common law on that day. The consequence was that NuCoal lost the ability to mine for coal. Howarth Drilling, whose owners are local constituents of mine, was the one contracted company that did the drilling for NuCoal mine.

The owners of Howarth Drilling invested their time and energy and put to task their \$20 million family business for that purpose. As it turned out, the consequence of that piece of law was that NuCoal had to extinguish its contract with Howarth Drilling to drill and locate the coal. Howarth Drilling, an innocent party, became directly affected by that law. In introducing that bill, Barry O'Farrell said, "Shareholders take risks; they have to take that responsibility," and this, that and the other. Of NuCoal he effectively said, "They are investors; they took that risk." We can agree or disagree with that but let us park NuCoal to one side. So NuCoal is over there, shareholders are over here, and in the middle we have a family-owned business that had a contract to drill for a company that had a ministerial-signed lease. Barry O'Farrell abrogated common law that day. I sat on the Opposition benches and voted in support of that legislation because the Labor Party decided to support it. We have ruined a family and their business, which was worth \$20 million and comprised of three generations of drilling miners. They now live in a tent. I am ashamed; we should all be ashamed.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:37):** I refer to an article in *The Australian* written by respected business writer Robert Gottliebsen entitled *Scorching heat to reshape economies as inflation soars*, printed on 14 July. On reading this piece, we can see the recklessness of Tanya Plibersek's forced water buybacks. In the

article Mr Gottliebsen wrote about a looming global shortage of food and said that "foodflation" would become rampant. He wrote that India had banned exports of non-basmati white rice at the same time that Russia had targeted grain ships, which pushed up wheat and corn prices. Rice prices in India have risen by 11.5 per cent in the past year, and 3 per cent in July alone, as world demand for Indian rice soared, putting pressure on supply to the local market. India is the world's biggest rice exporter and it has also put a tax on some of its rice exports. The next largest rice exporters are Thailand and Vietnam, and they will not be able to fill the gap.

Rice is a staple for billions of people worldwide, and while Australia is also a big rice producer, that production is threatened by Tanya Plibersek's attack on water in my electorate, which is where the bulk of Australia's rice is produced. In normal times rice demand can be switched to wheat and corn, but at the same time that India started to ban exports, Russia began bombing Ukrainian silos and boycotted the Black Sea Grain Initiative. In the past 11 months, that initiative allowed more than 30 million tonnes of green and edible oil from Ukraine to be exported around the world. Wheat and corn prices have jumped around 10 per cent in response. With events like this around the world, Tanya Plibersek's political decision to pursue compulsory water buybacks is staggering. These water buybacks will cut production at a time when a global shortage of fathom looms increasingly large. The water buybacks mean less food and more inflation. The world needs more food, not less food, and I make that very clear.

Premier Chris Minns can also help with this. He should categorically reject these compulsory water buybacks. Instead of rolling over and saying, "It's just too difficult", he can take a page out of Victoria's book. Victoria stood up for the cause of State rights; it stood up for its farmers; it stood up for its communities. Victoria made a strong statement and said it was opting out of Tanya Plibersek's new Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Victoria will not have a bar of it—consequences be damned—but not "rollover New South Wales", with its Minns Government anxious to please Canberra. Not at all.

New South Wales is more interested in appeasing The Greens than standing up for rural communities, the same way that Tanya Plibersek is appeasing The Greens. Many States, including New South Wales, are seeing inner-urban areas increasingly voting Green. With that in mind, and noting that Tanya Plibersek is a member for an inner-urban area, this water buyback decision from Canberra seems to be as much about saving Tanya's seat and warding off The Green tide as it is about anything else she claims. We know it has little to do with the environment. That is just a convenient cover-up for her well-known political ambitions. It is the people of rural New South Wales and the Australian grocery shoppers who are set to pay. I say no.

### OVERNIGHT MUSICAL BAND

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:40):** It is an honour and a great pleasure to welcome local boy band Overnight to the New South Wales Parliament. I congratulate and acknowledge the achievements of Overnight, who have made the Illawarra so proud performing on Channel Seven's *The Voice*. Overnight consists of five young men: Tyler Wade, 19; Emerson Garcia, 18; Harry Herbert, 18; Kye Spindler, 18; and Jai Ellefson, 17. All attended Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts, where they all excelled in music. For many years the boys have performed together as part of the Illawarra South East Regional Performing Ensemble, where they perfected their performing skills and harmonising talents. The Regional Performing Ensemble travelled around New South Wales once a term to perform a one-hour show, consisting of dancers, singers and a stage band. They performed for New South Wales public school students, with both primary and high schools involved.

Overnight have also performed on a number of occasions at the Public Education Foundation Awards at the Sydney Town Hall, and in 2022 performed the song *Midnight Memories* together as Overnight at this event. All have performed as featured artists at *Southern Stars: The Arena Spectacular* at the WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong. *Southern Stars* is an exciting showcase of dance, drama and music performed to a live orchestra by students from kindergarten to year 12. Only Jai, who is in year 12, performed at this year's event. Emerson Garcia was selected to perform at the *Schools Spectacular* in 2022. The *Schools Spectacular* is a world-class arena production and one of the largest annual events of its calibre anywhere in Australia, and arguably the world. From its ability to produce national and international stars to its role in promoting inclusiveness and reconciliation, the *Schools Spectacular* has no peer. The event took place at Qudos Bank Arena last November, and was telecast Australia-wide on Channel Seven.

Harry Herbert, Kye Spindler and Emerson Garcia are also musical theatre performers. Harry and Kye are currently rehearsing for Rockdale Musical Society's production of *Heathers: The Musical*, and Emerson has recently been cast in *Sweet Charity* with the Arcadians Theatre Group. Tyler Wade is not only an outstanding singer but also an accomplished guitarist, pianist and songwriter. In fact, all the boys in Overnight are enjoying their performing success and enjoying the opportunity to write their own songs. They have been lucky enough to collaborate with experienced songwriters and have had songs written for them. In June this year, they were honoured to be able to record at the famous Studios 301 in Alexandria, Sydney. Many top names in the musical industry worldwide have recorded there, such as Bruce Springsteen, Justin Bieber, Jimmy Barnes, Maroon 5,

Kanye West, Coldplay and Lady Gaga. Overnight have already released two singles: *All That I Like*, which has had over 20,000 streams, and *Not Around*, which has had 19,000 streams, with more new music coming out shortly.

Overnight's first blind audition on *The Voice* received over seven million views on Instagram. We can only wish that any of us in this place had seven million views on Instagram. These guys are outdoing us quite embarrassingly. They have had responses worldwide from countries such as the United States, India, France, Mexico, Brazil and Nigeria, with people also making numerous fan pages for the boys on Instagram and TikTok. Overnight became the record holders for the fastest ever chair turn on *The Voice Australia*, with Rita Ora turning after just one note. Overnight have had a number of performing opportunities lined up after appearing on *The Voice* both in the Illawarra and interstate. The people of the Illawarra are so proud of Overnight's achievements so far.

I also personally congratulate one of the mums, Dionne Garcia. She works in my office and her son is Emerson Garcia. That is how we have come to have Overnight in the Parliament. The boys will be in the history books forever, and I will make sure they get a copy of this speech. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, we wish them all the very best for their futures. We know they are bright.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** Thank you. That is a great story.

#### **RETURN AND EARN CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:45):** The Return and Earn deposit scheme is one of the great success stories of the former Coalition Government. Since its commencement in 2017, the scheme has seen 9.6 billion containers returned via the return point network and 2.8 billion containers returned via kerbside collection. That is an incredible achievement. Over 12 billion items have been saved from landfill and, importantly, saved from entering our waterways and from the bushland. Before New South Wales introduced the Return and Earn scheme, more than 160 million drink containers littered our streets, beaches, waterways and parks. Drink container litter made up 44 per cent of the volume of litter in the State and cost more than \$162 million a year to manage. Since its commencement, though, Return and Earn has recycled over 885,700 tonnes. We have seen a 54 per cent reduction in drink container litter compared with litter rates before the scheme commenced. That is a pretty big deal, and a great success.

We are continuing to see that the use of the Return and Earn scheme is growing every day. Over \$42 million has already been returned to charities and community groups since the scheme commenced. The scheme helps them too, through donations and fees for hosting return points. In my electorate of Vaucluse, we have Return and Earn sites at the North Bondi Grocer and the Diamond Bay Bowling Club, and a brand-new site has just opened up in Edgecliff, so members should check that out. I note with pride that the scheme was introduced by the former member for Vaucluse Gabrielle Upton, and she should be so proud of its progress and the benefits that we are seeing today. We know that our incredible Return and Earn scheme is only one part of the solution to prevent problematic plastics damaging our natural environment. We must reduce plastics and our reliance on them. New South Wales generates 800,000 tonnes of plastics every year, with only 10 per cent being recycled. It is not good enough and it is harmful to our planet. Every single one of us has a role to play in reducing our reliance on problematic plastics.

In my community, we have countless organisations, individuals and small businesses doing amazing work to protect our natural environment through new innovations and practical solutions. Brew Coffee in North Bondi is just one of those great businesses. Madam Temporary Speaker, I encourage you to have a coffee with me one day there. You will love it. It is owned by Sondra Beram, and last year Brew Coffee used 100 single-use, plastics-free cups. Nothing was served out of plastic that was not recycled. It also has a fabulous mug library, where customers can borrow a mugs that the business has got from an op shop or elsewhere, and they can bring it back when they like. It is a great example of clever ways to help our environment.

I am also proud of the fact that the former Coalition Government delivered, in last year's budget, \$286.2 million over four years to introduce the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 and the NSW Plastics Action Plan. To give members an idea of what that means, New South Wales will phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025, reduce plastic litter items by 30 per cent by 2025, reduce the total waste generated by 10 per cent by 2030, achieve an average 80 per cent recovery rate of resources from all waste streams by 2030, and significantly increase the use of recycled content by government in industry. Those are just a few of the things that will be captured in this scheme. I was glad to see that the new environment Minister is a strong supporter of the former Government's plan. Recently she stated that it remains the aim of New South Wales to triple its plastic recycling rate by 2030. The Opposition welcomes that.

We are already seeing the positive outcomes of the former Coalition Government's work, with the supply of lightweight plastic bags and single-use plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery banned since last year. In 2019 around 575 million plastic items were littered in New South Wales. Most of those were single-use items like straws and single-use plastic bags. Our plastics ban will prevent almost 2.7 billion items of plastic from entering the environment. For example, new data released by Seabin this week shows a 37 per cent reduction in plastic straws in Sydney Harbour this year. We welcome that great outcome. We hand a great success story to the new Government in the form of the Return and Earn system and those decisive actions already underway to reduce waste now and for future generations.

### TICK BITES

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:50):** Today I bring to the attention of the House and the community the under-recognised conditions of tick-bite-induced mammalian meat allergy and tick bite anaphylaxis. I know all members will find this fascinating. I have experienced both these conditions, as have many residents of the Bega electorate and, indeed, the whole east coast of New South Wales. Some years ago, after several tick bites, I noticed severe gastrointestinal symptoms—which I will not expand on—at night, some hours after eating red meat. I made a self-diagnosis and referred myself to an immunologist, whose testing confirmed an allergy to the mammalian meat carbohydrate alpha galactose, or alpha gal. After that, unfortunately, there were no more meat pies, sausages, osso buco or cassoulet.

Then I experienced something that could only happen to a rural obstetrician. At 2.00 a.m., scrubbed and assisting a GP with a birth, I felt something biting my neck. Unable to scratch it, I had to wait until the staff found a large tick on back of my neck. On my way home I got about five minutes from the hospital when I started to blow up with an anaphylactic reaction to the tick bite and had to return to the hospital. Since then, not only is there no red meat for me but also I have an EpiPen in the cupboard and an investment in overalls and insect repellents.

It will surprise members to learn that the worldwide prevalence of mammalian meat allergy and tick anaphylaxis is highest in our region. The Sydney Basin has a prevalence of 113 per 100,000, nearly 10 times higher than in the United States. But it is not just the Sydney Basin; the cause of this allergy—Ixodes holocyclus, the Australian paralysis tick—is distributed anywhere within 20 to 30 kilometres of the eastern seaboard, from Cape York to Lakes Entrance. This is a region with approximately 50 per cent of the Australian population.

A tick is a tick is a tick, whether it is larval, a nymph or an adult. When a tick bites a mammal and then bites a human, it essentially inoculates us with antigens to which we would not normally be exposed, bypassing our normal immunological defences. In the case of alpha gal this can lead to mammalian meat allergy or, in the case of tick salivary protein, tick bite anaphylaxis. Some people only experience quite large local allergic reactions, which are quite unpleasant enough. But both mammalian meat allergy and tick bite anaphylaxis have caused fatalities.

It is important to recognise that alpha gal allergy causes problems not only with meat ingestion but also with dietary and medical gelatine products, porcine and bovine heart valve prostheses and Cetuximab, a treatment for bowel, head and neck cancers. It can cause allergic reactions to certain vaccines and snake antivenenes. Tick bite anaphylaxis is much more common than reactions to bee or wasp stings and, according to recent literature, has caused four fatalities. It is more common than being bitten by a shark or struck by lightning.

Both these allergies are avoidable. You must dress for the occasion: Wear a hat and cover well with long sleeves and trousers or overalls, and tuck your trousers into your socks. Spray yourself and your clothing with insect repellent or consider permethrin-impregnated clothing. If you are bitten, do not scratch anything that you cannot see. Do not disturb a tick; kill it where it is. According to studies at Mona Vale Hospital, following these steps has resulted in an almost 100 per cent lack of anaphylactic reaction.

For larvae, nymphs or ticks on young children, or near the eyes or genitals, dab, don't grab: Use a topical permethrin cream such as Lyclear. For all other ticks, freeze, don't squeeze: Use Tick Off or some other ether-based spray. And remember that household tweezers are tick squeezers: Invest in a pair of fine-tipped forceps. If you have had a previous anaphylactic reaction, have the tick removed at the local emergency department. I acknowledge the work of Professor Sheryl van Nunen and TIARA, the Tick Induced Allergies Research and Awareness group, and refer people to their website for further information. Mammalian meat and tick bite anaphylaxis are preventable and their diagnosis warrants increased awareness in both the medical community and the general community.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I thank the member for Bega. His contribution was fascinating, as always.



## MANNING RIVER

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:55):** Today I address an issue that holds profound significance for the people of Myall Lakes and our entire region: our Manning River entrances, particularly the issue of a reliable entrance to the Manning River between Harrington and Manning Point, and a permanent opening of Farquhar Inlet. The mighty Manning River, which is 156 kilometres of navigable waterway, is famous for being the only river in the Southern Hemisphere to have a double delta formation, which means there are two entrances to the river. I am sure members of this House remember Stephen Bromhead often talking about that in this place.

Farquhar Inlet, the southern entrance to the Manning River, is what is known as an ICOLL, or intermittently closed and open lakes and lagoons. ICOLLs are separated from the ocean by a sand or beach barrier. This entrance barrier forms and breaks down depending on the movement and redistribution of sand and sediments by waves, tides, flood flows and winds. ICOLLs open and close to the ocean naturally in a constant but irregular cycle. In a previous cycle, Farquhar Inlet was closed for seven long years. When ICOLLs are closed, they do not exchange water with the ocean and water levels within them fluctuate depending on rainfall, catchment inflows and evaporation. Historical records show that about 70 per cent of the ICOLLs in New South Wales are closed the majority of the time.

The challenges posed by the intermittent closure of Farquhar Inlet cannot be underestimated. We have seen compromised water quality, flooding of low-lying areas and disruption of fish stocks when the inlet is closed. These concerns highlight the need for action that ensures the health of our waterways and creates opportunities for sustainable economic development. In the past Farquhar Inlet has been manually opened by our local council, but that is only a temporary solution. Heavy machinery such as excavators are used to artificially open the inlet by digging a channel through the sand between the ICOLL's edge and the ocean. The reason for artificially opening Farquhar's entrance previously was to mitigate and reduce the impacts of flooding, which we saw being done only a few days before the catastrophic 2021 mid-coast floods.

Our journey towards securing a reliable entrance to the Manning River between Harrington and Manning Point has been long and enduring. It is important to acknowledge the groundwork laid by my predecessor the late Stephen Bromhead, who in August 2022 championed a petition containing 11½ thousand signatures to the New South Wales Parliament, calling for funding. The result was an unanimous show of support from the Legislative Assembly for both a permanent navigable entrance at Harrington and a permanent non-navigable entrance at Farquhar Inlet. I was disappointed to learn that the allocated funding for the project's next phase was unexpectedly withdrawn and the project was abruptly shelved shortly after the March 2023 election. This development hit not only me but also the passionate advocates of the Manning River Action Group.

A legacy of over 100 years of community resilience and dedication is at stake. A permanent opening of Farquhar Inlet has the potential to reduce the flushing time from over 31 days in a closed state to less than one day with an open entrance. This reduction, coupled with strategic measures like rock training walls and breakwaters, will not only restore ecological balance but also stimulate economic growth in our region. I firmly believe that the project's undeniable economic and environmental benefits deserve attention. With the unanimous support of the Legislative Assembly and the profound potential to catalyse positive social change, I am now calling on the Minister for Transport to reinstate the funding and allow the project to continue its development. Stephen Bromhead's dedication to this cause was profound. He fought hard to secure the funding needed to see this project through and I stand here today to continue that legacy. I will continue to fight to see this project through.

## RSPCA BLUE MOUNTAINS SHELTER

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:59):** The topic of my private member's statement today might be a little uncomfortable for some. I will be speaking unfavourably about a well-known charity: the RSPCA. In July the RSPCA announced it would be closing the Blue Mountains shelter, citing a "decline in demand" as its primary reason for this decision. The RSPCA's CEO was quoted in the local media as saying that our community "displays an unwavering commitment to positive pet guardianship" and that we "prioritise the wellbeing" of our pets, which has led to a significant decrease of the number of animals coming into the Blue Mountains shelter. I would really love to believe that. I have such faith in the good people of my community, but these statements by the RSPCA are challenged by those same good people in my community. The story they tell is something altogether different.

The story that other animal shelters in neighbouring electorates tell is that they are struggling under the weight of abandoned and rescued animals, yet somehow miraculously the RSPCA is essentially claiming that the shelter in Katoomba is no longer needed. My community is amazing. However, I do not think we have set an exemplar of animal welfare standards that surpasses those of other animal-loving communities. Something in this

narrative just does not add up. The history of the Blue Mountains animal shelter is unique. It commenced operations in 1981, largely due to the unwavering determination of a local woman, Silvia Ford. Silvia joined the RSPCA in 1976, becoming a life-governing member of the Blue Mountains branch and president of that branch in the same year. According to Silvia, whilst the RSPCA discouraged the set up of a facility in Katoomba, she remained resolute in her belief that it was desperately needed in the Blue Mountains. A shelter committee was formed and an animal shelter fund was launched, with local community support growing for Silvia's vision.

In 1977 the committee rented its first shop in Blaxland, with more shops to follow in other villages, the profits from which enabled the committee in 1980 to purchase land in Mort Street, Katoomba, to build a shelter. Once it was built, Silvia was appointed as the shelter administrator and managed the facility for 22 years. I have heard from Silvia and others who have been involved with the RSPCA locally that in 2002 when Silvia retired, the Blue Mountains shelter was self-financing and described as a model shelter. I want to know what happened between then and now for one of this State's most recognised charities to come to the decision to close its doors to a shelter that I hear time and again is desperately needed, despite claims by the RSPCA that it is not.

There is a lot more to the history of the Blue Mountains animal shelter but unfortunately I do not have the time to go into complexities—and it is incredibly complex. Many of those involved with the RSPCA locally have expressed anger and dismay over what they believe are the actions of a charity with a changing model that cares less about grassroots animal welfare and providing shelter, and more about running a profit-making corporate machine aimed at boosting the profiles of senior management. My community acknowledges those within the RSPCA who are hardworking, compassionate and there for the right reasons, but the overall feeling is that locally we have got a pretty raw deal. A shelter that was set up and funded by community efforts, and by all reports financially independent until relatively recent times, is now being closed. Locals do not believe the spin that is being fed to us from those at the top.

My community's perspective is that a declining trust in the RSPCA has been fuelled by what they describe as a deliberate and deceitful winding up of operations at the Blue Mountains shelter. Some local branch members, including Silvia Ford, have had their memberships revoked, with Silvia in particular being investigated for allegations relating to potential breaches of RSPCA policy. Loosely translated, I think that means she expressed her profound dissatisfaction and disappointment with a charity that she has selflessly dedicated so many years of her life to. It is worrisome to think that this era of heartfelt free speech can be the catalyst for such a drastic response. I would like to see the history of our shelter recognised and acknowledged, along with the unwavering advocacy of the incredible Save Our Shelter community group.

I would also like to see a reason for even a little of my community's faith to be restored in a charity that has received millions and millions of dollars in recent years from government and community donations, yet cannot extend itself to continuing to support our local, much-needed shelter. Earlier this year after meeting with the RSPCA executive and our mayor, our local council was assured of an agreement that would enable them to continue using the shelter as a pound facility up until 2029, but the RSPCA has walked away from that deal leaving our council with that immense burden. Shame!

### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:04):** Tonight I highlight six major community projects in Wollondilly that are in need. This small list does not capture everything, but the mixture of these projects shows the areas left uncared for. For community groups that give so much, it is time they received assistance so they can provide even more. Thirlmere Tennis Club is in need of a tennis ball machine, which will benefit the community through enhanced tennis opportunities. Newer machines allow diverse practice on the same court, allowing for those with disabilities the opportunity to practise against a machine. It will also aid players in the Tennis NSW sanctioned tournaments and encourage senior engagement, supplementing the existing seven-weekly tennis fixtures held on weekdays, nights and Saturdays at Thirlmere Tennis Club.

The Warradale Men's Shed in Warragamba needs a new home on council-owned land for certainty to create a permanent location for their organisation. Recognised as part of the Men's Shed initiative, the Warradale Men's Shed plays a role in fostering community resilience. While the organisation has saved about \$40,000 for its new shed, by today's standard that is not enough. While Warragamba is remote, it is a growing area with an aging demographic and is close to the new airport. We need more services like the Warradale Men's Shed, not less. Similar to the Warradale Men's Shed, the Tahmoor Uniting Men's Shed focuses on enhancing physical and mental wellbeing by providing support and a collaborative project engagement. This shed, like many, focuses on woodwork and is in need of a new bandsaw. The members recycle fallen timber in the area by cutting it into slabs and blocks for various projects like wood-turning and furniture repairs. This tool not only saves time but also minimises waste, while fostering a supportive community environment.

From these two men's sheds, I turn to a very different shed, but a much needed one: the Alpine/Aylmerton Rural Fire Brigade, which is in need of a new mower for its station. This station serves as a Wingecarribee Rural Fire Service training centre, hosting regular visits from brigades in the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly areas for training. This year the brigade celebrates its seventieth anniversary. The new mower would contribute to the station's overall functionality, allowing volunteers to uphold the station's condition and ensuring a well-maintained environment for training and community events in the outlying village of Alpine.

Like Alpine, Yerrinbool and Hill Top have had very few mentions in this place before. The Yerrinbool Bargo Soccer Club hosts members from the Bargo, Yanderra and Yerrinbool townships. Their needs are extensive, including CCTV, new facilities and upgrades, as well as improved equipment. It is all well and good to come here wearing the colours of our national football teams when they achieve so much, as the Matildas did, but without club investment in the boys and girls of today, they will not be able to be the stars that will inspire so many of us tomorrow. The Hill Top War Memorial Hall has been in use since the celebrations at the end of the Second World War when it was constructed in 1947 by returned servicemen and community members. Like many buildings of its age, it is now in need of replacement, not due to many performances that blew the roof off, but sadly for its aging condition. The new roof will update the hall's appearance, giving it the street appeal and functionality deserving of a valued community facility. Some people said we probably should have it without a roof, but in the Southern Highlands it would not be used for very many weeks without everybody freezing.

The last project is one that interconnects the villages of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands and is one of constant need. Wingecarribee cycleways have been a focus in the media with growth in the sport, both in mountain tracks and traditional cycleways. With the growth in popularity, this has led to some really unfortunate conflicts. Together we need to work towards a solution and the council must plan for the future. Integrated cycleway plans should be drawn. I look forward to the extension of the network to provide healthy alternatives, tourism and, most importantly, activities for the young people who have spoken so passionately about the need for these facilities in our area.

#### CANTERBURY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL NAIDOC WEEK EVENT

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (20:09):** I extend a heartfelt commendation to Canterbury Girls High School for its exceptional NAIDOC Week event. The school's dedication to celebrating and embracing the cultural heritage of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was truly commendable. The highlight of the event was the brilliant performance of *Freedom* by our talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The powerful showcase of their artistic prowess and cultural pride left all in attendance deeply touched and inspired. It was a poignant reminder of the importance of preserving and promoting Indigenous culture. The morning tea that followed the performance provided a wonderful opportunity for our local Elders to engage in meaningful conversations with the school community. I love to have a yarn, so it was great to have one with all the Elders. The atmosphere was filled with warm laughter and insightful discussions, fostering a genuine sense of connection and collaboration.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Ms Joseph, the young Aboriginal prac teacher, for her exceptional leadership in organising and orchestrating such a remarkable event. Her dedication to nurturing cultural understanding and appreciation among the students is truly appreciated. Furthermore, I express my gratitude to principal Ms Conway, the deputy principals, teachers and staff for their outstanding NAIDOC Week initiatives. Their commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment sets an inspiring example for all. Canterbury Girls High School has demonstrated its commitment to promoting cultural diversity and inclusion, which are values that resonate with the wider community. By fostering respect for Indigenous culture, the school serves as a beacon of unity and collaboration.

The engagement of our local Elders in the event exemplifies the school's effort to bridge intergenerational gaps and ensure that cultural knowledge is passed down to future generations. It is through such interactions that our students learn the significance of their heritage and the importance of preserving their cultural identity. The upcoming meeting between the Elders and the school community to discuss ways to improve connections with local youth services is a commendable initiative. By working together, we can develop meaningful strategies to support the wellbeing and success of our youth, nurturing them to become future leaders of our community.

I also acknowledge the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. I have regular meetings with Elders and I am grateful for their contribution to our community. I appreciate them bringing forward their ideas, particularly ideas about engaging local youth and ensuring that our multicultural youth are engaged in community contribution and community charity. I am very pleased to see the work that Ms Joseph has done, which I have raised with the Minister for Education and Early Learning. I am sure members will agree that it is very important that the Government and the community encourage young leaders to take on, as Ms Joseph has, roles in local schools, health and TAFE, and educating younger generations.

It was beautiful to see the Elders talking to young people. The storytelling was so important; I love that. Storytelling is very important in the community that I represent. That is how we preserve our culture. Coming from a Greek background, I know how important it is for one generation to talk to the next generation. Through song, dance and stories we preserve language and culture. In conclusion, I wholeheartedly commend Canterbury Girls High School for organising a memorable and meaningful NAIDOC Week celebration. The event not only celebrated the remarkable talents of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students but also exemplified the importance of cultural appreciation and inclusion.

### GOULBURN ELECTORATE PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:14):** I bring members' attention to the crisis we are facing within our healthcare system that is affecting patients and their families who require palliative care services in the electorate of Goulburn. We are all aware that we have an aging population. My electorate demographic is a majority of constituents aged between 65 and 84, with an increasing percentage of the population suffering from chronic disease and complex morbidity, emphasising the need for acute palliative and end-of-life care. In 2019 I met with concerned constituents regarding the closure of the Bourke Street Health Service in my electorate. It was formerly known as the St John of God Hospital and opened in 1916. St John of God Hospital was transferred to the Southern NSW Local Health District in 2004 and renamed Bourke Street Health Service.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek an assurance that, with the completion of the Goulburn Base Hospital redevelopment in 2021, aged-care and palliative nursing would not be affected and the high standard of care would continue to be delivered to our ageing and increasing population within the new clinical services building. On 13 December 2021 I was advised by the local health district chief executive officer that the new clinical services building at the Goulburn Base Hospital would have four dedicated palliative care suites. With the closure of the Bourke Street Health Service, the community lost 16 bed dedicated to palliative care and terminally ill patients. The Bourke Street Health Service was a centre of excellence for geriatric medicine and palliative care, oncology care, nursing, aged care, mobility assistance, transitional care, pastoral care, bereavement and family support services. That was all provided by a wideranging and highly compassionate, skilled team.

The health care that people receive in the last years, months and weeks of their lives helps to minimise the distress and grief associated with death and dying for the individual, for their family and for their friends and carers. Life-limiting illnesses can cause significant distress and suffering for patients and their family. Safe, high-quality, end-of-life care requires appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced health teams. During the well-discussed voluntary assisted dying debate, we heard from experts across the State about the impact that palliative care services have on patients and families at the end-of-life stage.

I have been contacted by many constituents in my electorate advising that palliative care beds at the Goulburn Base Hospital are almost always unavailable. Patients are being treated in clinical settings on surgical wards and often only transferred to palliative care wards when they have hours or, at best, days to live. Furthermore, families are being pressured to remove their terminally ill and often bedridden relatives from the hospital and into home-based care or nursing home care. These patients were once transferred to the Bourke Street Health Service for quality end-of-life care, where a qualified palliative care team provided for all their needs. It was a hub where all allied health professionals were available to provide a broad range of multidisciplinary services for a range of palliative care patients.

The service also gave support to families by building trust and providing certainty that their loved ones were adequately diagnosed and treated for pain, as well as delivering non-clinical care such as emotional support, hope and dignity to patients. There is an undeniable shortage of palliative care services within our local and regional health area. Families and carers have become the unqualified and out-of-depth carers for terminally ill family members. Sometimes carers are required to perform tasks for terminally ill family members that are profusely inappropriate and distressing. Palliative care should not be left to families—for those who are lucky enough to have family. I am aware that some patients are not so fortunate.

Our health system and the health district have done a disservice to our community by failing to provide adequate palliative care beds and services to our most vulnerable. Care of the dying is urgent care. There is an urgent need to provide patients and families with an option of end-of-life care in a hospital setting that not only manages all the associated symptoms of dying but also offers respectful and compassionate care that maintains a person's sense of self. We need to address those issues in the district immediately. I call on the Government to please look at this particular concern in my electorate. Let us be compassionate and make sure that we get it right. I call on the Government to help fund this important service.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:19):** We are at the precipice of a new era. Coined by many as the fourth industrial revolution, something that both excites and scares me, is the dawn of artificial intelligence [AI]. McKinsey and Company equates AI to a machine's ability to perform the cognitive functions we associate with human minds, such as perceiving, reasoning, learning, interacting with an environment, problem-solving and even exercising creativity. Theoretically, AI's potential seems almost limitless. It may hold the answer to cure illnesses, create super-efficient businesses, revolutionise education and even make us a multi-planetary species. To put the contemporary powers of computers into perspective, some computers can perform as many calculations in a single second as an individual could in 31.7 billion years.

As with all change, many people I speak with about AI are somewhat apprehensive. I do not blame them. None of us truly understands the implications of what awaits us. As governments around the world grasp at what to do, an ever growing number of questions persist: How should we develop and use AI? How do we protect ourselves from AI? How do governments both domestic and foreign work together to regulate AI? And how do we posture ourselves to best adapt to the possibilities that AI produces?

I do not have the answers to those questions. The reality is we are not keeping up with the rates of change that confront us. Good or bad, AI is not around the corner, not at our doorsteps but already in our homes. In fact Deloitte reports that a quarter of Australia's economy—approximately \$600 billion in economic activity—faces significant and imminent disruption by generative AI alone. All of this precipitates the need to start a serious conversation about adaption via detailed preparedness and action.

In terms of Fairfield, one context of AI likely to adversely impact my community is the job displacement effect. AI and the productivity-enhancing opportunities it presents will create a greater reliance on capital and technology in producing goods and services. From a business standpoint, if robots and computer programs can do things a person does quicker and cheaper, it makes sense that the unemployment line will get longer with workers from traditional labour-intensive industries. As a government, how do we cater to this structural shift in the labour market? How do we support workers who find themselves unemployed? How do we prepare for the ensuing mental health crisis when people lose purpose? How do we set up our working-age population for success both now and in future?

Against the backdrop of all of this is the aggravation of economic inequality propelled by AI. In history, the beneficiaries of great change were those who were best able to adapt. As such, nations that can form competitive advantages in AI-related industries will no doubt prosper and shift the global order. Agile and tech-savvy businesses are also likely to thrive. On the other hand, those who are not technologically adept will fall behind. On that, Deloitte reports that Australia ranks second last out of 14 leading economies on its deployment of generative AI.

The Fairfield electorate is way behind national and State standards. My community already has significant digital literacy problems, including minimal access to technology. This, coupled with Fairfield's workforce being engaged in industries susceptible to AI disruption, reinforces the need for sensible intervention. A relevant starting point I am working on is to bolster the electorate's technological infrastructure and know-how. The provision of digital literacy training and even front-loaded investing in giving people access to computers and other related devices will create the platform for AI fluency training and competence. This is just the tip of an ever expanding iceberg of what we must do. I will have more to say in the future as I try to improve my digital and AI IQ and nest it within public policy. Overall, we have two choices: to leap ahead or to fall behind. With prudent strategic planning and execution, we can set the global standard, prosper as a society and make life better for all.

## DIAMONDS NETBALL TEAM

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:24):** Many Australians will remember the heartbreak of Liverpool at the 2019 Netball World Cup, but now the Netball Word Cup Trophy is back in Australia's possession after the Diamonds crushed England 61-45 to be crowned Netball World Cup champions for the twelfth time. In the past four-year cycle Australia has reclaimed all three pieces of silverware that went missing from its netball trophy cabinet: the Commonwealth Games Gold medal, the Constellation Cup trophy and now the Netball World Cup crown. The Australian team were also crowned the Quad Series champions in Cape Town in January with a 56-50 win over the old enemy, New Zealand, and they also claimed the England Test Series.

They have delivered the biggest winning margin in a world cup final in 28 years. They are one of the greatest sporting teams in Australian history. When members are searching for superlatives on women's sport, we are sure to run short of them for our national netball team, the Diamonds. But the quote I like best about our national team is this:

Diamonds are the result of pressure and time—all those afternoons on sun-soaked netball courts, the endless training sessions and schoolyard grudge matches, every league victory and soul-crushing defeat. When Aussie kids watch the Diamonds, they don't just see world champions. They see mothers and daughters, sisters and wives—world-class athletes who have dedicated their lives to netball.

The 12-strong team, plus three reserves, was led by captain Liz Watson, vice-captain Steph Wood and coached by head coach Stacey Marinkovich and assistant coach Nicole Richardson. Watson was joined in the midcourt by New South Wales players Ash Brazill and Jamie-Lee Price, alongside Paige Hadley. Steph Wood joined goalers Kiera Austin, also from New South Wales, and Sophie Garbin and Cara Koenen. The defenders include Sunday Aryang, Courtney Bruce, Joanna Weston and Sarah Klau, also from New South Wales, who was outstanding against England. Ruby Bakewell-Doran, Kate Moloney and Donnell Wallam were all travelling together with the team as the reserves.

But for all the cheer squadding for women's sports, the issue of funding is not going away. The outstanding result by the Diamonds at the World Cup is even more remarkable, given many of the players were not even sure they would have an income when they got back. Netball has the highest participation rate of any team sport for women and girls in Australia. Overall, netball is the fourth most popular team sport across both sexes after football, basketball and AFL, and comes well ahead of both rugby codes. There are nearly 440,000 adult participants and nearly 400,000 girls play netball on any given day in Australia. Still, coverage for women's sport consistently makes up less than 10 per cent of the overall sports media coverage in Australia. The Australian media seems to be rarely able to get more than one women's sports story on in a day, despite often having up to 10 pages of sport in the papers. More often than not, women's sport does not even get a run.

Yet the Australian domestic netball competition is arguably the best in the world and attracts the world's best netballers. Anyone who attended the preliminary final of the Super Netball this year of the Swifts versus the Fever will still have ringing in their ears from the noise at that nailbiter. Now it is up to the Government to come to the party. Would it not be nice to see our professional netball teams have as many centres of excellence as the NRL, particularly as netball does not have a lazy \$250 million lying around to invest in hotels? If governments want to celebrate women's sport and are putting up more funds to get more women playing, then our best national team coming from our largest women's team sport is not a bad first cab off the rank to maybe get a centre of excellence or two.

#### STATE BUDGET AND KIAMA ELECTORATE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:28):** Next week NSW Labor will hand down its first budget of this parliamentary term. Budgets are important because they not only provide vital funding for State services and projects but are also reflective of the priorities of the Government. As a local MP, I have taken the opportunity to diligently raise important issues that require New South Wales Government funding and support with Ministers. Whilst I appreciate that governments cannot deliver on every request, what I do not appreciate is governments cutting commitments that have been made to our local community. When in opposition, NSW Labor promised it would keep the regional seniors travel card, the Active Kids rebate, the Creative Kids rebate and the First Lap voucher. But these were all cut in spite of those pre-election promises.

Thankfully, I secured more than \$1 billion for healthcare infrastructure, with an upgraded hospital at Shoalhaven and a new hospital at Shellharbour on the way. I would like to see the Minister resolve the bizarre situation of the new Shellharbour Hospital not having a helipad, and I would also like the Government to invest in maternity services at Shellharbour Hospital to service a growing community. I reiterate that those are some projects that our region needs. Most of the projects I highlight are infrastructure projects. We need growth that is delivered alongside infrastructure that shoulders that growth.

The Nowra bypass is a priority for our community. I urge the Government to seek a funding shandy with the Commonwealth, as has been done on the Pacific Highway. An 80-20 funding split for this and other Princes Highway projects would provide the funding certainty we need and ensure that lifesaving works can continue along the Princes Highway. I acknowledge the Government's commitment to the East Nowra Sub Arterial, which will help divert traffic bound for the eastern villages out of the Nowra CBD and away from the Kalandar Street and Greenwell Point Road intersection. I am confident that, should the Government come good on that road, it will make a real difference to traffic congestion in Nowra. I am also keen to see in the budget the money for the Jervis Bay Road interchange. That project is one of many that is subject to more Labor Government reviews. I am not sure what more information those opposite need, but this intersection is the most dangerous intersection on the Princes Highway south of Nowra. The Government promised to fund it and it should keep that promise.

Then there is the Toolijooa rail passing loop. If ever there was a project that warranted support, this is it. The passing loop would allow two trains to pass each other and effectively double the capacity of the South Coast line. Combined with hybrid trains that operate on both diesel and electric power, we can deliver the effective electrification of the South Coast line for a fraction of the price that a duplication and electrification would cost.

I call on the New South Wales Government to honour its election commitment to deliver its promised additional \$20 million to the Tripoli Way bypass in the north of my electorate. Whilst I am proud to have helped Shellharbour City Council secure more than \$20 million from the previous Government, I want to see the Labor Government deliver on its promised additional funding.

I know that all members are proud of their RFS volunteers, and I am no exception. But three brigades desperately need a new station—Broughton Vale-Berry RFS, Calderwood RFS and Dunmore RFS. With drier than expected conditions coming this summer, my hope is that our volunteers have the facilities they need to keep us safe. Totally inadequate toilet facilities, a lack of separate male and female change rooms, and an old station that cannot house the latest category of fire engine due to the narrowness of the entry way are just some of the challenges faced by the brigades. The dedicated and tireless volunteers deserve so much better.

I raise the issue of child care because more and more I hear from parents that they struggle to find child care for their children. From Shoalhaven Heads to Jamberoo, from Bomaderry to Minnamurra and from Albion Park to Gerringong, I am constantly inundated about the need for more childcare services and teachers. I call on the Government to provide those services. Parents have shared stories with me of driving long distances from their workplace so they can place their children in affordable child care. On the topic of child care and schools, I have heard whispers that the New South Wales Government is planning to cut funding to the planned upgrade of Bomaderry High School, which is my old school. That school has not had any major upgrades since it was built more than 50 years ago. It needs a major injection of funds. I call on the Minister to recommit to the full upgrade project, and to do the real deal upgrade and not a half-baked job. I will continue to lobby for a new primary school at Calderwood and a new primary school between Cambewarra and Bomaderry at Badagarang.

Sport is also an important part of our community. I commend Shoalhaven City Council for its excellent work on the Bomaderry sports complex master plan, Kiama Council for its work on the Kiama sports complex master plan at the old Kiama quarry and Shellharbour City Council for its work on new sports facilities at Croome Road. All of those plans have considerable merit and I hope that this Government considers funding them. I will continue to work with council on that. I have known the Treasurer since our days at university and I have nothing but high regard for him. I wish him every success in his first State budget.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:33):** I make a comment about the regional seniors travel card to say that it is paused. People who have cards are still able to use them. It was paused because it was able to be used for things other than travel and fuel. People could go to service stations and buy all sorts of things, like cigarettes. It lacked the institutional integrity that such programs should have. I repeat that it is currently paused.

#### **HAWKESBURY RIVER COUNTY COUNCIL SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (20:34):** I inform the House that on 26 August I attended the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the Hawkesbury River County Council. The Hawkesbury River County Council is in fact a single purpose council that we endearingly refer to as the weed's council. As the current Chair of the Hawkesbury River County Council, it was a pleasure to welcome community, constituent councillors both current and previous, and council staff to celebrate this great milestone of 75 years of unbroken service to the people and the environment of our Western Sydney region.

The county council model has been used extensively in the historical development of Sydney. It was employed to address regional issues and it established the bedrock of society we take for granted today. County councils were used to build the first roads and to supply water and electricity to homes. All the while, they were led by people elected democratically by the surrounding citizens. The size and growth of Sydney meant that many of those early models supplying essential utilities were later absorbed into State government or even privatised.

Hawkesbury River County Council also has a long historical past. It had its genesis when the Colo shire called a meeting of surrounding councils in 1945 to address the issue of water hyacinth weed on the Nepean-Hawkesbury River. Its growth rate was so high that it would completely block access to navigation and irrigation. It was well understood at the time that weeds would not stay within the boundary of a single council but would move with the power of tides and wind. That precursor led to the formal establishment of Hawkesbury River County Council in September 1948, and its original members were the shires of Blacktown, Baulkham Hills, Colo, Windsor and Penrith.

The county council of today still maintains a similar geographical area, and its modern members are Blacktown, Penrith, Hawkesbury and the Hills shire. It has endured amalgamations, government reviews, floods, bushfires and most recently a pandemic. The fact that it has existed for so long is testimony to local government shared services and its inherent economic value proposition. It is a shining example of councils working in cooperation for multiple benefits that ideally suit the challenge of weeds management. Because weeds still have no boundaries, they are much more effectively managed in a coordinated way across our four councils than they

could be alone. That is especially so when the issue at hand far outstrips the available professional resources required to manage it.

Yet Hawkesbury River County Council is not stuck in the past. It is a modern organisation that is staffed with some of the best weeds experts in the industry. The organisation employs up-to-date technology by taking advantage of advances in the science of biocontrol, satellite imaging and drones. The county council has built strong links with the community by partnering with Landcare and is helping to expand that model across the region. Hawkesbury River County Council provides value for its membership and good governance of our funds by providing regular transparent reporting to the community from our regular meetings and website. Indeed, I have never seen an organisation stretch a dollar further than ours.

It was an honour to be involved in this celebration of our local history. To commemorate the occasion, we planted a native tree that will stand proudly next to the tree that was planted for the fiftieth celebration. The Hawkesbury River County Council staff also arranged a morning tea for community. The staff, led by general manager Chris Dewhurst, went all out on the day, with displays and information on hand to answer all those weedy questions and distribute free native plants. To all the current and former councillors who have served on Hawkesbury River County Council, and especially former and current staff, I formally congratulate all on achieving the outstanding milestone of 75 years of continuous service to community.

### STATE BUDGET AND PITTWATER ELECTORATE

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (20:39):** I have often said that Pittwater is the most beautiful place—in fact, the best place—to live in the world. However, like every community, there are things that the New South Wales Government must deliver for Pittwater. This Labor Government has promised to deliver for all of New South Wales. Next week's budget will be a critical test of that promise. Under the previous Liberal Government, there was significant investment in infrastructure, health care and schools across our State—including Pittwater. The previous Government had a vision for New South Wales. Delivering projects from the \$16.8 billion WestConnex to the \$3 billion CBD and South East Light Rail, the Liberal Government invested in the future of our State.

Pittwater benefited from the previous Government's vision, from the \$53 million dollar upgrade of Mona Vale Public School to the introduction of the B-Line and Keoride bus services and much more. Under the Liberal Government, several projects were also in the pipeline that would serve and benefit the Pittwater and broader northern beaches and Sydney communities. Since being elected to represent Pittwater, I have sought to engage with the Government regarding the needs of the community that I serve. I am disappointed to report that this initiative has not been reciprocated. At times, the Government has failed to respond to letters and has provided evasive answers to questions. It is clear that Pittwater is not a priority for the Labor Government—as was made very clear with the cancellation of the Beaches Link tunnel. It is clear to me that the Government is more interested in governing for only some, rather than fulfilling its promise to govern for all of New South Wales.

The cancellation of the Beaches Link tunnel was not a surprise; Labor has always promised to do so. However, it is disappointing to see how Labor has played politics with northern beaches infrastructure. The Labor Government knows that punishing the northern beaches plays well with its base. It plays so well, in fact, that it decided to cancel the Beaches Link more than five times: first in May in the Legislative Council; again in June via departmental notice; then in July via a statement by a spokesperson; then twice in August via a question on notice and a letter to me; and then one more time just last week. My community deserves its fair share. If this Government will not proceed with the Beaches Link tunnel, it must invest in other critical projects on the northern beaches and in Pittwater.

Last month I wrote to the Premier and to the Treasurer in good faith, summarising and outlining the priority infrastructure needs of Pittwater. The last Government invested \$250 million in safety upgrades and widening the eastern section of Mona Vale Road. It is essential that the already budgeted funds for the \$340 million upgrade of the western section of Mona Vale Road, from the Baha'i Temple to Kimbriki Tip, are preserved in Labor's budget. This is not just about alleviating congestion on our road network; it is about making that road safer and saving lives. The need for this project was demonstrated recently with a near-fatal crash.

The Wakehurst Parkway needs to be fixed. I commend the Government for agreeing to give council a further \$13 million for flood mitigation works. That is in addition to the \$18.1 million provided by the former Liberal Government. The previous Government also budgeted \$75 million for upgrades to the Wakehurst Parkway. Labor must include the full \$106 million for the Wakehurst Parkway in the upcoming budget. The Government must also provide funding to ease congestion at pinch points across the northern beaches road network, including \$5 million to upgrade the Narrabeen entrance of the Wakehurst Parkway intersection.



I have previously reported to this place about the state of Narrabeen Sports High School. While pressure from the community has seen progress on some of the necessary upgrades—and I am grateful to the Minister—much more work needs to be done. Labor's budget must include at least \$60 million to fix this school properly. It is also essential that the Labor Government provides funding for a new preschool and air conditioning at Terrey Hills Public School. Pittwater's local surf lifesavers are heroes, volunteering their time to keep beachgoers safe. In this budget it is critical that Newport Surf Life Saving Club receives \$8 million in funding, once its upgrade is approved, and that North Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club receives \$1 million funding for its much-needed upgrades. These are but two of 12 surf life saving clubs in Pittwater.

The last Government announced \$6.34 million to establish a five-chair renal dialysis unit at Mona Vale Hospital, which will complement and enhance services provided by the Northern Sydney Local Health District. The Government must fund the unit in this budget. Pittwater's offshore communities are unique and beautiful. The Scotland Island community need funding for water and wastewater infrastructure. The Rural Fire Service needs an all-terrain vehicle and an adequate fire boat. The Government must honour its election commitment of the Local Small Commitments Allocation program. I call on the Government not to punish residents of the northern beaches and commit to funding each of those projects.

### TEACHER WAGES

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:44):** I applaud the recent wonderful agreement struck between the Minns Government and our teachers. It truly is an historic agreement, which will take 95,000 New South Wales public school teachers from being the worst paid in the country to the best paid. But there is more, with changes to administration. Yes, our teachers deserve extra pay. We know that, and we have all said so—particularly members on this side of the House. It means that their worth, their value and their key role in society of shaping our children, educating them and helping them to learn is recognised. It is professional recognition for what they do each and every day.

The agreement comes on top of other key measures. I congratulate the Minister for Education and Early Learning on securing this agreement. Teachers in their first year will go from a salary of \$75,791 to \$85,000, which will then scale up to a top of \$122,000. They deserve every cent for what they do. Over the next three years their wages will continue to rise in line with the broader public sector wages policy put in place by the Government, having got rid of the wages cap imposed by the previous Coalition Government that tied everybody down. Other significant measures include offering 16,000 temporary teachers and school-based staff permanent contracts by term 4. That is substantial. It is unbelievable that we got to 16,000 temporary positions. Hundreds of extra support staff will be on deck. They will be hired to lighten the red tape burden—the administrative burden that teachers talk about—as part of the school administration program.

Addressing workload challenges is one of the four focus areas in a statement of intent that was agreed to by the NSW Teachers Federation, the Public Service Association and other key stakeholders. I have sat with teachers and talked about their day—on school holidays too. The amount of administration they had to do in a day was unbelievable, with lesson after lesson and reporting everything. Lessons were very structured—"We have to do this at that time and English at this time." It made no sense. Good teachers can teach. They know what they are doing. They do not need instruction on when to do this and when to do that, and how to report on it.

New administration staff will help to lessen teachers' workloads by performing tasks such as preparing excursions, liaising with bus companies and their drivers, and organising permission slips—all important and necessary tasks but not something we need teachers to do. We need in those roles great administration staff who are as committed to education as teachers are. Inputting student performance data onto spreadsheets takes a lot of time. There is a new app—I get it from my grandson, who is at a public school—where they report on what the children do.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Seesaw?

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** No. What is it called? I have it on my phone.

**Mr Matt Cross:** You can update *Hansard* later.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I have it on my phone; it is an app that is used in all schools. It says that students have a tick for this or that or for some behaviour. That is wonderful, but I do not want the teachers having to do it regularly—all day, every day—because it takes them away from being with the children. When parents, carers or grandparents attend special days, they can get that information. Or they get a letter that says, "Come and meet", et cetera. That is just one thing. But they also manage parental payments, update newsletters, social media and school apps; text parents about events; fill out health plans for students; and do lesson timetabling. The teacher pay rise is historic. It is shameful that today members on the other side of the House said it is a fairytale. The former Treasurer called it a fairytale about teachers.

### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:49):** The Davidson electorate has amazing higher education. As Elin Nordegren said, "Education is the one thing that no-one can take away from you." I know firsthand that many constituents and residents make the decision to live in our community due to the educational excellence and opportunity in both private and public schools. The Davidson electorate is home to 11 schools that offer a secondary education: Brigidine College, Covenant Christian School, Cromehurst School, Davidson High School, Killara High School, Ku-ring-gai High School, Lindfield Learning Village, Masada College, Ravenswood, Roseville College and St Ives High School. I believe in delivering a strong investment into education.

I am proud that the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals built over 170 new or upgraded schools. Killara High received investment for 17 new permanent teaching and new specialist teaching spaces. St Ives High received investment for two new multi-use indoor sports centres, two new learning spaces, a fitness lab and refurbished technical and applied studies facilities. Ku-ring-gai High received an investment for a new multipurpose hall and the refurbishment of 15 existing learning spaces. But, of course, there is more to do. Over the next four years, I will be a strong advocate.

Over the past week I was pleased to write to the over 1,000 graduating students at each of the secondary schools in the electorate with words of congratulations and hope. I know that in the weeks and months ahead, our graduating students will be at an exciting crossroads in their lives. My only advice for them is to find and to follow their passion. One of my favourite quotes is from the recently passed singer Tony Bennett: "If you follow your passion, you'll never work a day in your life." I offer my best wishes to the graduating class of 2023, who are sitting their Higher School Certificate exams. I am cheering them on. Over the past few months I have had the opportunity to visit the 11 schools in Davidson. As an Australian, I like to say that I have visited schools from "Davo to Ravo". By the end of 2023, I hope to visit all the schools to offer my support as a dedicated local member of Parliament.

On 20 May I visited Roseville College and was hosted by principal Deb Magill at its annual learning festival, which showcased the wonderful work of its teachers and students through interactive learning activities, exhibitions and performances. On 20 May I visited St Ives High P&C to hear directly about how I can assist them with transportation of students. I thank P&C members Con Koulouris, Libby Cameron and Sarah Gibbons. I have spoken in the past in this House about the school's transportation and roads precinct. This week I received a response from the Minister for Roads about flexible school safety zone times as St Ives High finishes before 2.30 p.m. one day a week. The response is not favourable but I will keep working with the P&C on the matter.

On 17 June 2023 I supported Killara High during its multicultural food festival, which hundreds of people attended. There were stalls on Iran, Pakistan, Colombia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Italy, South Korea, Malaysia, Israel, China and India. I again thank the P&C president, Joseph Chia. I am working with Killara High to monitor its transportation and roads precinct. On 25 July I visited Masada College with the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman. We met with the year 11 students who are becoming the new school leaders. I thank principal Mira Hasofer and deputy principal Ryan Gill. I have visited Masada quite a few times in the past and I always appreciate its hospitality.

On 17 August I visited Ravenswood School for Girls and received a tour from principal Anne Johnstone. In particular I enjoyed the Philly-inspired "Ravo" logo and looked at its impressive Learning Resources Centre. It was the second time I visited, the first being for the Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize in May 2023. On 30 August I visited Lindfield Learning Village, hosted by principal Stephanie McConnell. The school was opened in 2019 on the site of the former University of Technology Sydney Ku-ring-gai campus. I agree with the Department of Education, which praised the school as impressive and a high achievement place for learning. I look forward to sharing news from that school with my colleagues from all sides of the Chamber in the future.

On 7 September I visited Davidson High. I thank the principal, Dave Rule. I take note of its policy to effectively manage phones in schools by using pouches that are sealed as students enter the school and unsealed when they leave. I am also helping the school with action around its transport and roads precinct by writing to Northern Beaches Council. On 11 September I visited Cromehurst School in Lindfield. I thank the acting principal, Melinda Ritsinias, for hosting me. I also joined the school at a Bunnings barbecue and cake stall on 2 September, with thanks to P&C president Dusanka Matic. The well-known quote says that you can judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable. I say to the students, parents and volunteers at Cromehurst that I look forward to supporting their work. I am also looking forward to visiting Brigidine College in St Ives, Covenant Christian School in Belrose and Ku-ring-gai High in the coming weeks, as well as every school in the coming months and years.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:55 until  
Thursday 14 September 2023 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**WOLLONDILLY WOMEN IN BUSINESS NETWORK**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The Wollondilly Women in Business Network marked its eighth milestone birthday at Vaby's Restaurant in Picton, drawing nearly 70 local businesswomen to celebrate the occasion. Founded by Michelle Legg, WWIB filled the evening with warmth and inspiration. Special honours were given to foundation members for their service. The WWIB network's substantial accomplishments include winning the 2022 Australian Women's Business Champions Awards, launching a new website, rebranding its social media, and growing into an organisation with nearly 200 members representing a diverse array of business sectors. Michelle's reflections on lifelong friendships and expanded networks underscore WWIB's vibrant community spirit. The network has also announced a partnership with South32 Illawarra Metallurgical Coal to set up free Business Bricks workshops. These workshops are open to all and designed to help established businesses and start-ups enhance their skillsets and foundational knowledge. The offering ranges from topics on finance, marketing, human resources to strategic networking, and more, with exciting incentives like free WWIB membership and a chance to win a \$1,000 Business Boost. WWIB's continued commitment to empowerment, creativity, and growth is a testament to its enduring impact on the business community in Wollondilly.

**ROTARY PICTON CHANGE OVER**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Last month was the Picton Rotary Change Over. This occasion provided an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the Picton Rotary and extend gratitude to their outgoing President, Lyn Fairley-Davey, while welcoming Terry Lillie, the incoming President. The evening was filled with joy and camaraderie as 65 guests joined. We commend Terry on assuming this esteemed role and express confidence in his leadership. The event took place at Vaby's Restaurant, where the team ensured a delightful experience for all attendees. We also extend our appreciation to musician Gary Brown for adding a touch of musical ambiance. A special thank you goes to Tahmoor Inn and Camden Valley Inn for generously donating raffle prizes, which were well-received and added excitement to the evening. The Rotary Club of Picton NSW has a long-standing record of making a positive impact within our community, including their notable U Turn The Wheel program. We acknowledge their dedication and commitment to various local projects that uplift our community. I commend the Picton Rotary for their achievements and extend my best wishes to President Terry Lillie. May their continued efforts bring about positive change and benefit our community.

**TELOPEA PARK YOUTH ZONE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—At the end of last month, we gathered to celebrate the Official Opening of the Telopea Park Youth Zone in Buxton. This project represents the dedication and support of our community in creating a vibrant space for our youth. During this special occasion, I am humbled to receive a beautiful painting from the Buxton, Bargo, and surrounds community. Crafted by local artist Jannene Gauci, this artwork symbolises our spirit of unity and collaboration. The Youth Zone is more than a physical space; it's a sanctuary for our young residents to grow, connect, and explore. Through various programs and events, we will nurture their talents and foster community belonging. Gratitude goes to Jannene Gauci for capturing our community's essence in this stunning artwork. It will be displayed in the Wollondilly Electorate office as a constant reminder of our collective effort. Let us empower our youth to flourish and create a promising future together.

**ARTS THEATRE CRONULLA**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—The Arts Theatre Cronulla celebrates its sixtieth anniversary this year. It has bounced back strongly after COVID-19 closures. There are four productions this year. Michael Gooley directed David Williamson's 'Dead White Males', with actors Liz Vassilacosx, Indianna Erickson, Bryce Grover, Peter David Allison, Alex Amditis, Gary Clark, Margaret Short, Michelle Erickson, Jodianne Kanagias, Emmanuel Nicolaou and Allannah Jarman. Kathy Petrakis directed Melanie Tait's 'The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race', with actors Christiane Brawley, Ann Sayegh, Melissa Myles, Brooke Salisbury, Sahar Neale and ensemble. Susan Geldart directed Andrew Bovell's 'Things I Know to be True', finishing 9 September, with actors Elizabeth Coote, Michael Gooley, Izzie Bland, Kirsty McGowan, Alex Baum and Mark Merko. Tom Richards will direct Ken Ludwig's 'The Fox on the Fairway', opening 27 October, with actors Matthew Coumpas, April Ilic, Gary Clark, Lila Micevska, Michael Barlow and Meili Bookluck. Congratulations also to the committee members: President Michael Gooley, Vice President James Bruce, Secretary Margareta Moir, Treasurer Heather Sedman, Front of House Manager Betty Lyon, Props and Wardrobe Coordinator Karen Firmstone, Publicity Officer

Michele Potter, Stage Co-ordinator Dennis Batchelor, Technical Manager Craig Oberg, Ticketing Manager Melanie Roffey, and Ordinary Members Zena Kak and Tom Richards.

#### **SYDNEY HILLS BUSINESS CHAMBER, NORWEST BUSINESS SUMMIT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Sydney Hills Business Chamber held its annual Norwest Business Summit on 6 September 2023. The Chamber is the premier business chamber in the Hills District. The Chamber through its relationships and business expertise aims to add value to its members. The annual Norwest Business Summit is one of the premier business events held each year. This year I was honoured to be part of the panel of speakers including Mayor Dr. Peter Gangemi; Nick Carlton, Manager Forward Planning, Hills Shire Council; and Tim Spencer, Head of Development, Mulpha International. The panel was asked to address the broad and important topic, 'What's coming next for businesses in Norwest and the Hills.' As the Hills is one of the fastest growing areas in Sydney the panel discussed topics including the future of infrastructure projects, planning, development, community, and public spaces. Sydney Hills Business Chamber has provided a valuable business resource to its members for over 30 years. I recognise the importance of the Chamber to our business community. I make special mention of Chamber President Kerrie Sheaves and entire Committee for everything the Chamber does to support businesses with the Hills.

#### **CASTLE HILL ROTARY, EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Castle Hill Rotary Excellence in Policing Awards provides the opportunity to acknowledge our brave police officers who serve our community. The Awards acknowledge the achievements of our police officers for their contribution to society. The Policing Awards this year were held at the Castle Hill RSL on 30 August 2023. There were four categories of awards. The Constable of the Year Award nominees were Constable Kayla VAMVAKARIS, Probationary Constable Kyle STEWARD, Constable Hamish McKENZIE and Constable Darcy WAYMOUTH. The winner was Constable McKENZIE. The Customer Service Excellence Award nominees were Constable Joshua EVANS and Chief Inspector Phillip BROOKS. The winner was Chief Inspector BROOKS. The Irene Juegens APM Fellowship award nominees were Senior Constable Ethan West and Constable Brooke EDWARDS. The winner was Sen Constable WEST. The Metropolitan NSW Field Operations Police Officer of the Year Award nominees were Probationary Constable Tyler FIELD, Leading Senior Constable Shane COCORAN, and Constable Tylor NEVE. The winner was Leading Senior Constable CORORAN. Thank you to all police officers who serve our community. Special recognition and commendation is given to Amanda Firkin, Sonya Simpson and Lisa Pelayo from Castle Hill Rotary for arranging the awards evening.

#### **AUSTRALIAN TAMIL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ANNUAL GALA DINNER, 2023**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—On 10 September 2023 I attended the Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce [ATCC] Annual Business Dinner. The achievements of Tamil business community have an underlying foundation in the desire to succeed and hard work. Events such as the Annual Business Dinner provide important networking opportunities for the many Tamil businesses in our society. The event also provided the opportunity to hear from motivational business leaders who each answered the question as to what it takes to succeed in business. The distinguished panel of speakers on the night included Ramesh Pemmasani, CEO of Power IT; Dr. Avnesh Ratnanesan, Founder of CEO of Engergesse; Kumar Vembu, CEO and Founder of GoFrugal; and Manjula Viswanath, Founder, Dancer, Guru & Choreographer of Rasika Dance Academy, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of Indian classical arts. I thank the Chairman of ATCC Anton Rock Fernando for service not only to the Tamil community but to the wider business community. I lastly take the opportunity to recognise and thank the entire ATCC for the continued dedication and service to Tamil business across in Western Sydney.

#### **LIFELINE SAPPHIRE BALL – LIZ LOVELL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently attended the Sapphire Gala Ball in support of Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney. It was a great evening that raised over \$200,000 for the critical work Lifeline H2H do supporting vulnerable members of our community. Each year, Lifeline H2H answers 100,000 phone calls, and offer vital suicide prevention, crisis support and counselling services to Sydney's north side. I commend Dan Price for his inspiring speech, sharing with 600 attendees about his personal mental health journey and the importance and power of Lifeline. I acknowledge Lifeline H2H CEO, Elizabeth Lovell, a Pittwater local and former president of Rotary Upper Northern Beaches who was critical in the organisation and success of this year's ball. I also acknowledge the wonderful job of superstar emcee, Juanita Phillips, who answered the call to help. Thank you to all who generously donated goods and services to be auctioned in support of Lifeline H2H. I particularly wish to thank local Pittwater business Jonah's Whale Beach, who donated an overnight stay including a 3-course dinner and gourmet breakfast that raised \$1,550. Congratulations to all involved in putting together the Gala Ball. Your dedication is valued, and it does make a difference!

### AVALON COMMUNITY LIBRARY 40TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I wish to acknowledge and congratulate the Avalon Community Library as they celebrate their remarkable 40th anniversary this October. I thank the all the staff and volunteers who have served our community over the last four decades. Congratulations to President, Meg Dunn, Coordinator, Jane Park, and every volunteer. From its modest beginnings, a collection of 3,000 donated books and a vision to serve the northern end of the peninsula, to a vibrant community hub that is home to 23,000 items, the Avalon Library is a cultural institution in Pittwater. Avalon Library is a beloved sanctuary, where lifelong learning is celebrated and locals are welcome to read, work, and relax. The library hosts a diverse program of events for our community, including engaging author talks and story time sessions for young people. I am pleased that acknowledgement of the Avalon Library is now preserved in the records of the oldest Parliament of our country. I extend my warmest congratulations to the Avalon Library on this significant milestone. May the Library continue to be a beacon of knowledge, a haven for community, and a source of inspiration for generations to come. Happy 40th anniversary, Avalon Library!

### ROSINA KNIGHT

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Today I acknowledge a remarkable individual within the Pittwater community, Rosina Knight, affectionately known as "Ro". Ro is a dedicated volunteer at Kiddiwinks Play Laugh and Learn in Warriewood. Ro's selfless commitment to our local childcare centre has had a profound impact on our community. Kiddiwinks is a top-quality early learning centre and was recently honoured with the Outstanding Early Childhood Centre award at the 2023 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Together with the staff, Ro helps to foster a nurturing environment for children to learn and thrive. When I visited Kiddiwinks, I was touched by Ro's dedication. One of the staff let me know of Ro's is humility about her contributions, maintaining that the exchange is equal. Through interacting with the children, Ro imparts her wisdom and warmth and gains immeasurable inspiration from the young minds she engages with. The families of Pittwater are truly fortunate to have access to such an exceptional centre and an extraordinary volunteer like Ro. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Ro's selfless contributions is now preserved in the oldest Parliament of our nation. Thank you, Ro.

### FLAGSTAFF GROUP

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—A couple of weeks ago, I had the privilege of visiting Flagstaff Group at their location in Smeaton Grange. Flagstaff is a not-for-profit organisation that works to provide life skills and work for people with a disability in a supportive and inclusive environment. It was great to meet the CEO Rodney Von Clark and all the staff and to see the fantastic work, they do to help disabled people. Flagstaff is a registered provider on the NDIS and provides several community programs and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including laundry services, packaging, and assembling, frozen meals, printing, mail and digital amongst many more. Along with these programs Flagstaff also runs emergency preparedness tools for people with disabilities providing essential skills in case the worst was to happen as well as disability inclusion programs for local communities and businesses. Their vision statement "A world that only sees abilities" sums this brilliant organisation and the work that they do best. Flagstaff truly is an excellent organisation and the work they do for the community cannot be understated.

### M LEAGUE AWARDS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On Wednesday the 30th of August I have the privilege of attending the annual M-League Awards. The Macarthur Football Associations Wests Group Macarthur M-League 2023 awards recognise outstanding achievement by players and clubs involved in the Macarthur Football Association's M-League. It was a great night full of talented players and their coaches. I was honoured to award Player of the Year in Women's First Grade which was shared between 2 recipients this year - Chantelle and Rhea! I would particularly like to congratulate the Camden Tigers FC on winning the club championship trophy and the 22 players that were awarded a place in the Men's and Women's teams of the year. It was fantastic to see recognition to all those involved in the competition who put in the hard work of organising the competition and the players and coaches who are involved with each of the teams who participated. Congratulations to all involved, especially award winners and those who organised the evening!

### LINDA ROESLER – DRIVING THE COMMUNITY FORWARD

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to congratulate Wagga Wagga local Mrs Linda Roesler on being named the most outstanding NDIS/disability driving instructor in Australia for the 2023 Enablement Awards. The Enablement Awards celebrate and reward excellence, innovation, and exemplary achievements in the disability care sector. Linda said to the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser that she realised that local disability driving training services were lacking in Wagga Wagga as the closest instructor with suitable modifications fitted

to their vehicle was in Wodonga. For the disability focused work produced as a Specialised Driver Training driver Linda was nominated, won, and later received her award at the Enablement Awards on the 28th of July 2023. I would also like to acknowledge the community service and advocacy that Linda has contributed over the years. Linda has previously served as a member of the NSW (New South Wales) police force for twenty-three years and also kick-started Wagga for Kidney Health after her son Jarrod was diagnosed with kidney failure. I am pleased that Jarrod attended the Enablement Awards to support his mother.

#### **THE DORMITION OF OUR LADY, GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge recent community achievements of The Dormition of our Lady, Greek Orthodox Church in Wagga Wagga. Firstly, I would like to welcome Father Agathangelo Masteas on his full-time appointment in April 2023 as the first Greek Orthodox priest in Wagga Wagga. This is the first such appointment in over twenty years; previously the Church has been supported by visiting priests. I wish Father Masteas all the best in his new role as the Greek Orthodox Priest in Wagga Wagga. In June 2023, the Church was honoured to be visited by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios. This was the first time Wagga Wagga had received such a by an Orthodox Primate in over forty-three years, the last time being in 1980. I thank His Eminence for the visit, it meant a tremendous deal to the Greek community of Wagga Wagga. And on the 4th of September 2023 Greek Ambassador His Excellency Georges Papacostas, made a surprise visit to the Church where he was greeted by the parishioners and local officials. I thank The Dormition of our Lady for making Wagga Wagga such a welcoming place for their community.

#### **REGINALD MAHONEY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate retired police officer and youth mentor Reginald ('Reg') Mahoney, who has been named the 2023 NSW Southern Sydney Volunteer of the Year for his dedicated support for communities across Southern Sydney region. Reg is also the 2023 Southern Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year. Reg volunteers with the Youth to Inspire Change program run by the GyMEA Community Aid and Information Service. His Centre for Volunteering citation states: Reg's volunteering dates back decades and across many organisations where he has been a role model and provided support to people from all walks of life. This includes volunteering with Elouera Surf club, Legacy, as a judo instructor with the NSW PCYC and with anti-violence support group Enough is Enough. His volunteering work with the Youth to Inspire Change program helps support youth leadership workshops for Year 9 and 10 students across five schools in St George and Sutherland Shire. His volunteering supports multiculturalism, young people and aims to bring an end to domestic violence.

#### **DAN SOUTHERN AND NAOMI ROBINSON**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Daniel Southern and Naomi Robinson on their recent wedding. The couple's unique and eccentric celebration has caught the attention of the Shellharbour electorate. In a delightful twist, Daniel donned a custom-made suit adorned with SpongeBob SquarePants characters, while his new wife, Naomi, radiated in a vibrant array of colours and pom-poms. Surrounded by a cheerful gathering of friends and family dressed in equally bright and colourful attire, they tied the knot in their own special way. It is truly inspiring to witness people embracing their individuality and fearlessly expressing themselves by breaking away from traditional norms to create their dream wedding. From myself and on behalf of the entire Shellharbour Electorate, I send our warmest congratulations to Daniel and Naomi on their wonderful and unforgettable wedding. May their journey together be filled with love, joy, and endless happiness.

#### **JORDAN BARLOW**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Jordan Barlow, from Warilla High School, who recently completed a successful week at Territory Rugby League Stadium in Darwin representing the NSW All Schools 2nd team in the Australian Under 15's Touch Football Championships. Jordan played in the middle of the field and was an integral part of the team, finishing 3rd in the Championships. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Jordan and wish him continued success in his future sporting endeavours.

#### **ANÉ PRETORIUS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Ané Pretorius, from Flinders Public School, who recently competed in Gymnastics at both the NSW Country Championships and the NSW State Championships. Ané attends Carmel and Co Gymnastics in their modern and purpose-built gymnastics facility in Barrack Heights. At the NSW Country Championships, Ané competed in Level 6 Division 1 and placed 1st on Vault, 4th on Bars, 1st on Beam and 1st on Floor. Ané placed 1st overall in Division 1 and was the highest points scorer out of 66 gymnasts that competed in Level 6. These amazing results ensured that Ané was selected to

compete at the State Championships, held in August 2023, where Ané placed 5th on Vault and was selected to represent the NSW Country team. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Ané and wish her well in her future Gymnastic endeavours.

#### **EDWARDS FAMILY BUTCHERY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It is with great delight that I recognise the three generations who have owned and operated the Edwards Family Butchery in Woy Woy for almost 100 years. The butchery was first opened in 1925 by Jack Edwards, and later passed to his son Barry, before it was passed to his son and final owner of the family, Marc Edwards in 1977. This is such an incredible feat for any business to be able to survive this long – imagine how things would have changed operating through the great depression, through times of war and more recently through the pandemic. It fills my heart with joy to reflect on how the Edwards Family Butchery would have adapted to new technologies over the course of almost 100 years. Earlier this year Marc decided that it was time for him to hang up his apron, with the final sale of the butchery going through on Friday, 1 September. Congratulations to Jack, Barry and Marc on being such an integral part of our community for almost a century and I wish the new owners well in your new endeavours.

#### **JANE BOWTELL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Congratulations to a wonderful super star of our community – Jane Bowtell. Jane has recently stepped down as President of the Country Women's Association Woy Woy Branch. Jane has been the go to person for many years within the CWA and she is remembered by fellow members as helping the Woy Woy branch become vibrant, busy and community focused once again. Jane is stepping down from her role to spend more time with her family, including her gorgeous 2 year old grandson. How spoilt are her family going to be now that they'll be the main recipients of her delicious cooking and fun craft activities. I wish you all the best in the next phase of your life Jane, enjoy every precious moment and thank you for all that you have done in our community.

#### **PICKLEBALL**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise today to congratulate the Hallidays Point Pickleball Club, who recently welcomed their 100th member! Founded in 2019 with just 14 members, the club's president, Sheila Capperauld, inspired by a trip to Florida, envisioned bringing pickleball to their community. Since then, pickleball's popularity has surged across Australia, and this club has kept pace. Members now compete in major championships across New South Wales and interstate, showcasing their skills and sportsmanship. The club's remarkable contribution lies in transforming unused tennis courts at Wrigley Park in Taree into a pickleball centre with nine courts, supported by the MidCoast Council. This centre, opened in 2022, has already hosted state and regional events. The Hallidays Point Pickleball Club's journey from 14 to 100 members is a testament to their inclusive and community-driven approach. Their dedication to the sport, spirit of competition, and contributions to their community are commendable. I congratulate them on this significant milestone and look forward to their continued success in promoting pickleball's joy and camaraderie in the years ahead.

#### **TERRY GREEN**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise today to recognise Terry Green for his invaluable contributions to our community. Terry's dedication as both an individual and the manager of Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club has significantly enriched the Mid Coast. Terry's support spans numerous sectors, including local rugby league, the Great Lakes Women's Shelter, Great Lakes Pearl Dragons, Tuncurry Public School, and involvement in a dementia committee with the late Stephen Bromhead. He has also supported Western NSW communities during challenging times like bushfires and droughts. One notable achievement is Terry's Men's Walk, which has grown from a small group to an informal support network, fostering social connections among men. Terry was instrumental in collaborating with Pinks Carnival to give children with a disability the opportunity to enjoy the many rides at their own pace, while children and their families visiting Ronald McDonald Family Retreat Forster are treated to free entertainment. Terry, as you transition to retirement, I extend my congratulations and best wishes. Your legacy of community service will continue to inspire us – we are grateful for your dedication.

#### **WINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise Wingham Public School for raising \$576.25 for The Kid's Cancer Project and to support Captain Australia. Simon Harvey aka Captain Australia visited the school to meet the students as he is making his way walking around Australia to raise funds for The Kid's Cancer Project. There was one special person at Wingham Public School that he wanted to visit and that was Archer Pittorini, a student who has been dealt the burden of a cancer diagnosis. In 2019 Archer was diagnosed with T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Since being diagnosed he has had two bone marrow transplants and

spent a lot of time in hospital. Students and staff celebrated Captain Australia's visit to the school by dressing in superhero costumes. An assembly was held with the whole school in attendance, with Captain Australia explaining to the children why he was there and taking questions from them. At the end of the assembly, Captain Australia was presented with a cheque, which was raised on the day for The Kids' Cancer Project. Thank you Captain Australia and Wingham Public School for fundraising for such an important cause.

#### **KIAMA KNIGHTS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Club for their tremendous recent sporting success. The Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Club last weekend won both the Under 13-2s and the Under 15-1s Grand Finals at WIN Stadium in Wollongong on Saturday 9th September 2023. The Under 13-2 Premiers had a sensational game, defeating the Thirroul Butchers 24-12. The Under 15-1 Premiers was a tremendous effort sealing back-to-back Premiership titles and defeating the Stingrays from Shellharbour 32-6. A massive thanks also to Kiama Senior Knights players Keiron Poole and Tom Angel for attending these two events. I know that the local Kiama community is extremely proud of what the Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Club has achieved on the footy field this year! A huge congratulations and well done to all of the Kiama Knights junior players, coaches, trainers, officials, parents and the referees involved. I also acknowledge Mr Carl Middleton, current President of the Kiama Knights Junior Rugby League Football Club. Go the mighty Kiama Knights!

#### **KIAMA TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Tennis Club. Every Monday at the Kiama Tennis Club, four women players over the age of 80 enjoy playing social tennis. Gerda Keast is 81 years old and enjoys playing with her friends every week. Gerda is joined by Margaret Bywaters 86 years old who hopes to continue playing until she's 90. There is Gwen Ilic who is 81 years. Brenda Davis is 80 and is still playing Division One competition tennis. The Kiama Tennis Club is located in Stead Reserve at the end of Noorinan Street in Kiama. It is one of the largest and most active clubs on the NSW South Coast. It is a non-profit community organisation that offers its members and visitors excellent facilities, coaching and events all year round. Stead Reserve was named after caretaker Norma Stead OAM. Norma was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her dedication to the tennis community. She was a club champion. Norma is now 98 years old and gave up playing tennis at the age of 84 and is still involved with the club's ladies competition.

#### **KIAMA MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises National Meals on Wheels Day. On 30th August 2023, I was pleased to attend Kiama Meals on Wheels National Meals on Wheels Day morning tea. I acknowledge and thank the Manager of Kiama Meals on Wheels, Joanne North, for inviting me. I also acknowledge patron Ann Dawes who helped established the local branch 53 years ago. National Meals on Wheels Day is held in August each year. It highlights the significant contribution made to Australians by over 700 Meals on Wheels services and around 80,000 volunteers across Australia. I want to sincerely thank all of the Meals on Wheels volunteers and all those part of this essential service for their ongoing involvement. Meals on Wheels NSW has over 14,000 volunteers and delivers around 4.5 million meals to clients each year. Meals on Wheels volunteers are often the only point of contact for recipients, serving to decrease their social isolation and assist in monitoring their health. I'm proud to support the invaluable work which Meals on Wheels does in our communities.

#### **NUESTRA SEÑORA DE PEÑAFRANCIA-ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 9 September 2023 I was delighted to represent Premier Chris Minns at the Penafrancia Fiesta 2023, culminating in their 9 Days Monthly Novena Masses at St. Joachim Parish in Lidcombe. Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia-Archdiocese of Sydney is an apostolate principally established by Bicol Inc to provide the Bicolanos of NSW the opportunity to continue our devotions to Our Lady of Penafrancia, the Patroness of the Bicol Region in The Philippines. The annual fiesta replicates the traditional ways that Bicolanos honour our Lady of Penafrancia. It was a marvellous event where the community came together in the spirit of unity and celebration, saying, "Viva La Virgen! Viva El Divino Rostro!" My thanks go to Mr Bobby Lastica, Fiesta 2023 Coordinator and Father Ed Orilla, Pastor for the kind invitation to attend.

#### **WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 2023 – AUSTRALIA NEPAL LINK INC**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 10 September 2023 I joined members of the community commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day at a special event hosted by the Australia Nepal Link, in my electorate of Granville. Mental health issues and the alarming rise in suicides affect us all, transcending borders and demographics. Suicide is a global challenge, and the Australian Nepalese community has not been immune, with over 140 lives



lost to suicide since 2009. I commend the Australia Nepal Public Link for their efforts in promoting mental health literacy and Cumberland Council for funding Mental Health First Aid training programs. The theme for this Year's campaign is "Creating Hope Through Action." Through open dialogue and awareness, we can encourage individuals to seek help, break the silence surrounding mental health, and dismantle the stigma. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and it's our collective responsibility to stand together, be vigilant, and extend a helping hand to those silently suffering. To Australia Nepal Link thank you for the invitation to attend and thank you for your ongoing commitment to making a difference in our community.

#### **WEE WAA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB PLAYERS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Wee Waa United Football Players Ashleigh Dudman, Olivia Bray, Vivian Sarau, Bethany Bray, and Sarah Trevaskis recently took part in one of the world's largest fun runs, City2Surf, to raise money for mental health organisation Beyond Blue. The Wee Waa locals named their team "The Best Of The Northwest" and together, along with over 80,000 other participants completed the 14 km run and conquered the courses famous "heartbreak hill" challenge, while raising awareness for mental health and having fun. I would like to thank Ashleigh, Olivia, Vivian, Bethany and Sarah for raising awareness for an important cause.

#### **JOHNSON'S GOURMET BUTCHERY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Gilgandra's local butchers has recently celebrated 40 years in business. Alan and Susan Johnson purchased the butchers in August 1983, naming the business Johnson's Gourmet Butchery. After 18 years Alan decided he wanted to change career paths, so his wife, Susan continued to run family business, and when old enough their son completed his apprenticeship and together, they keep the business thriving, whilst also providing the country town with employment opportunities. Their business is supported by not only locals, but from Coonamble, Walgett and even Dubbo. Which is a great asset to the community. Employment opportunities like this in small country towns are imperative to enable the town to continue to thrive and to teach new skills. I congratulate Johnson's Gourmet Butchery on reaching 40 years in business.

#### **CLAREMONT MEADOWS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—I would like to congratulate Claremont Meadows Public School, who officially named the fourth tunnel boring machine for the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport project. Claremont Meadows Public School won the competition, naming the final tunnel boring machine 'Marlene,' after Dr Marlene Kanga AO. The machine named in honour of Dr Kanga, recognises her outstanding work in engineering and highlights her contribution to women in STEM. Dr Kanga is a leading role model for young girls and women across Australia, who seek to pursue a future career in STEM. Furthermore, I would like to recognise the other five primary schools, who also entered the competition to name the tunnel boring machine. This competition gave school students the opportunity to participate in the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport project and learn more about infrastructure in Sydney. Congratulations to all schools that participated in the naming of the fourth tunnel boring machine.

#### **ASHA AND RAFAELA FROM AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MARSDEN PARK**

**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 Asha in Year 9 and Rafaela in Year 10 from Australian Christian College Marsden Park for their outstanding performance at the Australian School Sport National Swimming Championships. Both students received amazing results at this event that saw students across Australia participate in the competition. Asha won two gold medals in the relay teams, silver in the 50-metre freestyle and relay, and bronze in the 50-metre breaststroke, 200-metre freestyle and medley relay events. Rafaela claimed gold in the 200-metre individual medley and 200-metre butterfly, as well as a silver medal in the 400-metre individual medley. What outstanding results for these two students who have made our community and I very proud. Both Asha and Rafaela have bright futures ahead of them. Congratulations!

#### **CYNARA JONES**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Cynara Jones, who this year became the first female president of the Parkes Show Society. In fact, Ms Jones is leading the first fully-female executive of the Parkes Show Society with treasurer Jenny Kingham, secretary Michelle Hoey and last year's Parkes Show Young Woman winner Sarah Townsend the vice president. Take the reins has been a long-held goal for Ms Jones after joining the Parkes Show Society's committee 11 years ago. Not long after she stepped into the VP role, holding that position until taking the helm for last month's 142nd Parkes Show. Serving on the show society committee is a labour of love for Ms Jones, who remembers attending a show with her young family and

enjoying it enormously. That day she took notice of the work involved and the community spirit it invoked and she wanted to be involved. Agricultural shows play an enormous role for rural communities, providing a link between city and country and opportunities to network and promote innovation. I salute Ms Jones and her committee for their efforts in ensuring a strong future for Parkes' show.

#### **GORDON MCMILLAN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the professional and volunteering life of the late Gordon McMillan of Orange. For ten years from the 1980s, Mr McMillan was the breakfast radio announcer at the ABC studios 2CR in Orange. His passion for and wide taste in music extended to a role where he personally chose the music to be played for his rural-based listeners across a wide area of the Central West. It was during his years at 2CR when local cinemas often became 'dark' due to the phenomenon of the local video store, Gordon's other passion for film became an important part of his life. He was a founding member of the Orange Film Society and was later honoured with Life Membership due to his passion for bringing niche films to a discerning audience in Orange and district. Following his retirement, Gordon continued in his role in the sound booth and behind the microphone at Orange's local community radio station which became another of his life's passions. His eclectic taste in music endeared him to listeners and his dulcet tones on the airways will be missed. Vale Gordon McMillan.

#### **JASON FRENCH**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate my constituent Jason French on being named Orange's sports volunteer of the year for 2023. The recognition is fitting for Mr French, who has contributed to the Orange sporting landscape for two decades through multiple codes and multiple age groups, with a special focus on indigenous participation. A player, coach and administrator, Jason has dedicated countless hours to encouraging people to be involved in local sport. Like most volunteers, Jason's involvement began when his children started playing soccer and football and his people-skills and organising abilities have provided opportunities for countless players, particularly those with First Nations backgrounds. He was a founding member of the Orange United Warriors, which started as four basketball teams. In 2015 the club had grown so much in popularity Jason was approached by the Department of Communities and Justice to offer more sports. Warriors now include rugby league, league tag, hockey, athletics and netball under its colours. Jason has also been involved in touch as a player and referee and established Orange's first all-indigenous cricket team. Amazing achievements from a wonderful member of Orange's sports community and I congratulate Jason.

#### **LINDFIELD ART SHOW AND FAIR AT HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On the first weekend of September, I attended the annual Lindfield Art Show at Holy Family Catholic School in Lindfield. For 47 years, the Lindfield Art Show has been a wonderful inclusion to the local community's calendar, and the school's marquee fundraising event. The money raised is for the school to improve their ever-growing population to improve infrastructure, facilities and spaces. The art show, as well as the fair that ran over the weekend, brought together families, residents, friends and artists. Artists in the painting and photography form, but also in music. There was a wonderful cover band, made up of parents that knew how to pop and rock. I came for the art but stayed for the music! I acknowledge the tireless work of volunteers, led by President Olwyn Connole and committee members Christine Chan, Pam Diaz, Jen Frauendienst, Kate Wheeler, Michelle Williamson and Stephen Xu. I also acknowledge newly appointed principal, Pauline Dinale. I look forward to attending this annual event again next year.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION WOMEN'S GRAND FINAL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was excited to attend the Women's Grand Final day of the Manly-Warringah Football Association on the last Sunday in August at Cromer Park. This was still in a time of Matilda's fever captivating the nation, and it was an honour to present trophies to the winning women's sides. The Davidson electorate is home to two football clubs who play in this competition – the Belrose Terry Hills Raiders Football Club and the Wakehurst Tigers Football Club. I acknowledge the board of the Manly Warringah Football Association led by President David Wilson and committee members Linda Ward, Joseph Sorbara, Rhonda Ferguson, Terry Gatward and David Anglicas. Thank you to Chief Executive Officer David Mason. I believe women's football is getting even more and more popular, and I am happy to see young stars thriving here in our community that will score, or save, a winning goal in a World Cup or Olympic final.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In September 2023, I attended and presented awards at the Northern Beaches Volunteer of the Year Awards. I acknowledge all those who were nominated and thank them for their ongoing contributions to our community. Judy Kelly is the Volunteer and Senior Volunteer of the Year. Judy was nominated for her work as a volunteers with the CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay Community Visitor's Scheme and has previously volunteered for the Red Cross Telecross service and palliative care. Cathy Hurditch

is the Adult Volunteer of the Year. Cathy was nominated for her work as a volunteer for the Manly Warringah Netball Association, serving as Honorary Secretary, President and Umpires Convenor at Curl Curl Sports Netball Club. Max Forbes is Youth Volunteer of the Year. Max was nominated for his work helping children in a free after school program at Willoughby City Library. Finally, Bear Cottage Children's Hospice is the Volunteer Team of the Year. Over 110 people assist at the hospice – an inspirational organisation that helps children and families. This awards event was an honour to attend, and I am proud to have been there to share this special moment with our amazing volunteers.

#### **BANKSTOWN SPORTS STARS FOOTBALL CLUB ALL AGED MEN DIV9**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am pleased to congratulate Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club all aged men on their successful win in their 2023 grand final. These talented men proved to society that no matter how old you are if you put in the time and dedication to something you love, you will be successful. Bankstown Sports Football Club is a family grassroots football club founded in 1959 and has operated successfully for the benefit of the community. The Club is a family-orientated club providing a sporting, recreational, and social environment for those interested to learn, participate, develop, and enjoy the team sport of football. Bankstown Sports Football Club believes that grading players or teams in a grade appropriate to their skill levels plays an important role in achieving success. They are an extremely proud and ambitious club that thoughtfully is served by many volunteer members and their families. Once again, I would like to congratulate the Bankstown Sports Star Football Club All Aged Men DIV9 on their win in the grand final and I am pleased to have such an incredible sports club within my electorate of Bankstown.

#### **ROSELANDS FOOTBALL CLUB - U13 BOYS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—The Roseland Football Club, known as the Roselands Raptors, strongly supports and encourages a friendly environment that fosters enjoyment, skills development, and friendships for all ages and levels of ability. It is with immense pride that I congratulate the Roselands Raptors U13 boys' team on their successful win in the 2023 soccer grand final. The team has put in lots of time and commitment in their training and in improving their soccer skills. Tony and Grace Martin established the club in 1972 and immediately began their journey towards success. From the beginning, their unwavering spirit led to a remarkable achievement when four out of their eight teams emerged as runners-up in their respective divisions. Their traditional kit consists of green and yellow shirts, green shorts, and green socks, and it is wonderful to see this sporting club grow and develop within my electorate of Bankstown. Roselands Raptors' strong dedication to keeping our community active in sport is a great thing to have and I'm proud to say that having such a dedicated club is of great benefit to young people in our community. Congratulations to the U13 boys' team and coaches!

#### **GREENACRE EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB 12/2 BOYS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Saturday 26th of August 2023, the Greenacre Eagles FC 12/2 boys played their 2023 Grand Final game at Nick Kearns Reserve. I want to offer my congratulations to these boys on their remarkable victory in the 2023 grand final and on becoming champions. Winning this grand final is a significant and well-deserved achievement. Greenacre Eagles FC is a family-orientated soccer club located at Allum Park, in Greenacre. It is heart-warming to see such passion and drive from these young players who have dedicated their time and effort to this soccer season to reach the grand final and succeed with a win. What an incredible feat by this team! Their outstanding performance and relentless determination have brought them a well-deserved triumph, making it a truly remarkable achievement. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the contribution of their dedicated coaches, John Helou and Adel Watfa, and all the volunteers who have assisted through the soccer season. Once again, congratulations to the 12/2 boys, this grand final win serves as a testament to their talent, perseverance, and teamwork and has brought immense pride to the club, their families, and supporters.

#### **MAJOR PAUL MOULDS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I want to pay tribute to the admirable work of St Clair's very own, Major Paul Moulds. For 30 years, Major Moulds has been a beacon of hope and compassion, selflessly serving the Salvation Army and by extension, our community. Having spent many years based in the city, working closely with youth refuges and homeless programs, Major Moulds observed firsthand the urgent needs of children from Western and South-Western Sydney. His recent appointment as a team leader of Salvation Army locations in Greater Western Sydney epitomises his dedication and deep understanding of the region's unique challenges. I am particularly inspired by his emphasis on local support. As Major Moulds aptly highlights, community assistance is about neighbours helping neighbours. It's a profound reminder of the interconnectedness of our lives

and the shared responsibility we bear for each other's well-being. In recognition of Major Paul Moulds, I encourage our community to continue supporting endeavours that fortify the bonds of community solidarity and compassion.

#### **BELINDA LEONARD**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I want to acknowledge and celebrate a remarkable milestone in our community. Belinda Leonard, the accomplished CEO of Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy, has been appointed to the Board of Panthers, marking her as the first woman to hold such a position in the club's history. Belinda Leonard's appointment is a testament to her exceptional record in leadership and service. Since 2013, she has steered Nordoff Robbins with distinction. Prior to that, she has shown her prowess as the CEO of the Cure for Life Foundation and held pivotal executive roles at global entities like Visa and Mastercard. Her extensive commercial and community experience makes her uniquely qualified for this role, and it is commendable that such an experienced and community-driven leader is breaking barriers in this capacity. This is not just an achievement for Belinda but a symbol of progress for all women in our community. I extend my hearty congratulations to Belinda and anticipate the positive impact she will undoubtedly bring to the Board of Panthers.

#### **CADET GRADUATION**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise ten students from Dubbo College Delroy Campus, who recently graduated from the Rural Fire Service Secondary School Cadet Program. Open to students in Year 9 and Year 10 as an alternate physical education activity over nine weeks, the program is designed to teach cadets such skills as basic firefighting, appreciation of community and volunteer spirit, the role of emergency services, fire behaviour, fire safety and confidence, teamwork, leadership, and initiative. This is the fifth year that the program has been undertaken at the Campus and was delivered by volunteers and Orana Rural Fire Service staff, with support from the College. Congratulations to Brayden Cox, Tamara Derrick, Alexander Douglas, Lucy Eather, Youseff El Kacimi, Charley Elliott, Justine Leven, Charlotte Redding, Bhoomi Sagar and Jaden Whelan on your graduation. Programs like these play a vital role in preparing young individuals for various life situations and future opportunities, whether it is for employment or joining volunteer rural fire brigades. Thank you to the volunteers and Orana Rural Fire Service staff who dedicate their time and expertise to make this program possible.

#### **MOTORFEST**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to acknowledge Dubbo Motorcyclist and Drivers Club Inc., the organisers of Dubbo's inaugural Motorfest. Over six thousand attendees filed through the gates of the Dubbo Showground to experience the event that promised to be an unforgettable event for families, car enthusiasts, and everyone in between. That was exactly what was delivered with a day full of activities and excitement, including casual cars 'n' coffee, show 'n' shine competition, FMX Motorcross exhibition, family fun arena, swap meet, food and coffee vendors, trade expo, helicopter rides and live music. The success of Motorfest was palpable, as it became the talk of the town. Attendees could not help but rave about the high-quality vehicles on display, the exceptional organisation of the event, and the reasonable prices for admission. Your dedication to ensuring a memorable experience for all who attended truly paid off. Congratulations to Dubbo Motorcyclist and Drivers Club Inc. on what was an incredibly well received and successful event. I look forward to roaring into 2024's.

#### **NARROMINE SHOW**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate the Narromine Show Society, volunteers, sponsors, participants, and those who attended for making the 118th Narromine Show such a resounding success. This two-day extravaganza was packed to the brim with activities and entertainment, ensuring there was something for everyone. The festivities commenced Friday evening with an event dedicated to sponsors, followed by the grand opening, after a day of intense judging. Day two was action-packed, featuring exciting events including yard dog trials, the hilarious "dachshund dash," speed shear competition, a farmers' team challenge, the delightful junior and tiny tots' quest, and grand parade. Machinery enthusiasts had their own treat with a thrilling tractor pull, while motorcycle stunt shows, and the adrenaline-pumping smash-up derby kept the excitement levels high. And, of course, the classic "side show alley," the dazzling fireworks display, and the live entertainment that kept the party going. The pavilion was a treasure trove of talent and creativity, with hundreds of exhibits showcasing the district's finest in arts, crafts, cooking, preserving, produce, photography, sewing, and flower arranging. Such remarkable events would not be possible without the tireless efforts of countless volunteers and the generous support of sponsors – thank you!

### **BANDANA CULTURAL SCHOOL - STEM EXHIBITION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Bandana Cultural School for hosting an incredibly successful STEM Exhibition, aiming to reignite a love for science and technology amongst students. STEM, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, is not just a collection of subjects, but instead, a gateway for innovation and progress. It was wonderful to see several exhibitions displaying the importance of STEM research amongst students. Our students in NSW represent the future for a competitive Australia on the world stage, in terms of creative development and entrepreneurship. As the Shadow Minister for Jobs, Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, I understand the significance of teaching school kids about STEM. Not only are there ample career opportunities in this field, but STEM teaches kids about the importance of critical thinking and working together to solve problems. I'd like to personally thank Dr Tanima Banerjee, director of Bandana Cultural School, for her hospitality and successful organisation of the event. I have the privilege of working closely alongside the Bandana Cultural School, and I look forward to strengthening our bond into the future.

### **CASS – BUS POLE LAUNCH CEREMONY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility in Campsie, who recently implemented a fantastic initiative designed to support sufferers of dementia. With the support of the Kowloon Motor Bus Company based in Hong Kong, CASS has installed a brand new 'bus pole' in their facility, specially designed to reignite fond memories of home for seniors who grew up in Hong Kong. CASS has worked incredibly hard to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate services to seniors for the last forty years. This is CASS's latest endeavour in the aged care space, after opening a brand new 63-bed facility in 2015. I am beyond proud of the work that CASS continues to do for locals in my community, ensuring that those from diverse backgrounds have support services available to them at a moment's notice. I would like to congratulate the Board of Directors from CASS, including Dr Bo. Zhou, Anthony Pang, Henry Pan OAM, Dr. Leng Tan and Tica Lee. I am incredibly pleased to work so closely alongside an organisation that operates to such a high standard within my community.

### **ANDY PASCHALIDIS – WESTFIELD LOCAL HERO**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate a community hero within my Electorate, Mr Andrew Paschalidis, who was recently nominated as a finalist for the Hurstville Westfield Local Heroes program. The Westfield Local Heroes program aims to shine the spotlight on individuals throughout Australia and New Zealand who have made a significant contribution to their community or the environment. Each finalist receives a \$5000 grant for the organisation that they represent, with the winner receiving a \$20,000 grant. Andy is among three finalists, meaning he has already secured an additional \$5000 in funding for the 'Heartbeat of Football' association. As the founder and CEO of the organisation, Andy understands the power of working alongside the community to deliver positive outcomes for locals. The Heartbeat of Football has done significant good for our Electorate and works to raise awareness surrounding heart-related deaths and issues both on and off the sporting field. They have achieved this through a set of ongoing campaigns, including heart-testing and education days at local football clubs. I am so proud of the work Andy does, and I wish him all the best as a finalist.

### **CAROLYN WALKER - WESTERN SUBURBS LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Association is an Inner West institution. Founded in late 1912 the Association is now one hundred and eleven years old and is one of Sydney's most historic tennis clubs. The Association has been home to many great players, most notably Daphne Akhurst, after whom the Australian Open Women's Singles trophy is named. Harry Hopman was also a member of the Association, gaining top rate match practice and competition on the local courts. Harry would go on to win the Australian and US Open Doubles Championship and represent Australia in the Davis Cup for many years. Organisations like the Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Association are only able to survive this long off the back of many hours of volunteer service. One notable volunteer is Carolyn Walker who first joined the club in 1968. Since then, Carolyn has held many positions including Secretary, President and Director. Congratulations Carolyn and the Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Association for your long-standing commitment and contribution to the Inner West community.

### **BURDEKIN ASSOCIATION NEW PREMISES CHAPEL ST**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to extend my congratulations and warmest welcome to the neighbourhood to the Burdekin Association who have recently moved into their new premises at 99 Chapel St Marrickville. Established in 1998 in the Northern Beaches, Burdekin began serving the Inner West just a couple of years ago. The Burdekin Association provide an amazing service, working with the

community to offer an integrated approach to solving issues of child and youth homelessness. Burdekin believes every young person has the right to a life that offers opportunities to fulfil their potential. At the new premises the team now have four different rooms to choose from, enabling them to host visitors or clients, undertake training and inductions, hold smaller confidential meetings, or have an informal chat. The new spaces bring opportunities for children, young people, and staff to connect, create and feel at home. It also includes an industrial kitchen. Congratulations Burdekin Association!

#### **ADDI ROAD – WINNER NSW PREMIER'S MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARD**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Addi Road has recently been awarded a NSW Premier's Multicultural Communications Award for their documentary *Die. Or Die Trying: Escaping the Taliban*. Winner of the Public Interest Award category for "outstanding public interest journalism upholding the NSW Multicultural Principles" this documentary details the extraordinary efforts of a group of community activists who worked to free fifteen young women trapped in Kabul as it fell to the Taliban. Working using only WhatsApp messages, blurry iPhone pictures and scattered identity papers, the group worked to gain visas and permission to enter Australia and helped to support a dangerous and difficult escape across Afghanistan and international borders for the young women. This award recognises not just the documentary itself, but the role it has played in sharing this story and building connections with communities in Australia. I congratulate the team involved in supporting these young Afghan women and those who produced and featured in the documentary; Rosanna Barbero, Craig Foster, Roberto Arocha, Tamkin Hakim, Marwa Moen and Farhat Kohistani. You have inspired us all with this shining example of how communities can support each other despite great distances and challenges.

#### **AL-FAISAL'S SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable student leadership team at Al-Faisal College on their well-deserved appointments. Securing the trust and support of their peers through a democratic election is a truly commendable accomplishment, and these students should take great pride in this achievement. I urge them to seize this incredible opportunity to make meaningful contributions to their school community and to cultivate the skills that will mould them into future community and professional leaders. It is my privilege, in this session of the NSW Parliament, to recognize and commend the outstanding student secondary leadership team for the year 2023, comprising the dedicated Captains Alishba Sarwar and Abdul Jabber Issa, Vice Captains Lara ElSayed and Syed Abdullah Ahmed, and Prefects Suha Qaisar, Maram Robi, Tasneem ElZahr, Yaseen Hasmi, and Zain ElHassan. I have every confidence that these committed students will skilfully lead their peers through what will undoubtedly be a pivotal year in their educational journey, setting an inspiring example for the entire school community. As they continue to embody the values of Al-Faisal's motto, "Faith, Knowledge, Success". I extend my warmest wishes to these student leaders.

#### **AL FAISAL COLLEGE'S PRIMARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable student leadership team at Al-Faisal College on their well-deserved appointments. Securing the trust and support of their peers through a democratic election is a truly commendable accomplishment, and these students should take great pride in this achievement. I urge them to seize this incredible opportunity to make meaningful contributions to their school community and to cultivate the skills that will mould them into future community and professional leaders. It is my privilege, in this session of the NSW Parliament, to recognize and commend the outstanding student primary leadership team for the year 2023, comprising the dedicated Captains Ameenah Khan and Ayan Mohammed, Vice Captains Alana Elsayed and Youssef Terra, as well as Prefects Manha Waqas, Saffiyah El Assad, Isaac Ghalayini, Majed Bitar, Sumaiya Elmasri, Omar Mustapha, Alisha Samad, and Ata Beha. I have every confidence that these committed students will skilfully lead their peers through what will undoubtedly be a pivotal year in their educational journey, setting an inspiring example for the entire school community. As they continue to embody the values of Al-Faisal's motto, "Faith, Knowledge, Success". I extend my warmest wishes to these student leaders.

#### **GOODWILL CARE**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On Tuesday 29 August 2023 it was a pleasure to host clients from the NDIS provider Goodwill Care at State Parliament. During the visit, we had the opportunity to sit down for an informal meet and greet in the Speaker's Dining Room, a tour around the fountain court to view all the artworks as well as the opportunity for a guided tour of both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council Chambers. The clients had such a wonderful time as they made their way through Australia's first and oldest Parliament in their bright orange shirts. A big shout-out to Christopher Greenwood, Ellie El-Khawand, Rasha El-Chami, Saman Jebara, Ibrahim Ramadan, Stephen Hanna and Anissa for their engagement and interest – including plenty of tough questions to a Member of Parliament! I would also like to thank the Goodwill Care team Jacob Abel,

Daniyel Mariam, and Amani El Shihne for assisting with the organisation of the visit – there were plenty of big smiles from everyone and I hope they enjoyed the experience.

#### **DR ANNETTE BEAUFILS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—For the past 40 years GP Dr Annette Beaufils has been servicing Helensburgh and surrounding suburbs. But in December, Dr Beaufils will hang up the stethoscope and retire. The vital role that local medical practitioners play within their communities should never be understated. I know for a fact that my colleague, the Member for Bega Dr Michael Holland, is held in extremely high regard within his local community – and in this place to of course. Dr Beaufils is certainly no exception to that rule. During her 40 years in Helensburgh, Dr Beaufils has helped generations of locals during their time of greatest need. That is certainly something none of the doctor's patients will ever forget. In an article in the latest Illawarra Flame, Dr Beaufils said it was a 'privilege and honour' to be a part of the Helensburgh community and the residents' lives. There is no doubt that feeling is reciprocated by the many patients of Dr Beaufils. On behalf of the entire Helensburgh community, I would like to thank you to Dr Beaufils for your four decades of service. We all wish you well in your retirement.

#### **EDIBLE GARDEN TRAIL**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—Edible plants are a great way to introduce people to the benefits of gardening. And that is why the edible garden trail – that will be held from Helensburgh to Woonona during the month of November – is such a wonderful concept. The brains behind the project include Otford residents Grant Lubyckij, Anna Jane Linke, Claudia Walters and Zoe Schmidt. The first was in the Blue Mountains, however the concept has now spread to other areas such as the Illawarra, Sydney and the Central Coast. To date, there have been 16 edible sites at schools, bushcare sites and residences that have signed up to the trail. There are plans to expand the trail further south next year as well. The good news is that there is still time for others to sign up and register their site on the trail. There are so many benefits to growing your own produce such as knowing exactly what pesticides may or may not have been used. Of course, it is also convenient to step out the back door and pick the ingredients for dinner. Well done to everyone involved for establishing the edible garden trail.

#### **LORNA FISHER**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the selfless work of lifetime volunteer, Ms Lorna Fisher. Ms Fisher has been graciously volunteering her time and energy at St George Meals on Wheels NSW for the past 14 years. St George Meals on Wheels is a community-based organisation focused on supporting the St George area by delivering fresh meals to those in need. Ms Fisher is the ambassador of the "Morning Tea Program", which aims to improve social interaction by visiting a client's home for an extended period of time, to chat, laugh and reminisce over beautiful memories. Lorna is well-known to her clients as an extremely cheerful, caring and loving person who goes above and beyond to ensure they feel supported. A perfect example of this, is the fact that she continued to carry out social welfare cars, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Lorna is someone who always puts their hand up to help, the dedication she shows to helping others is truly inspirational. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Fisher for the wonderful work she does to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of our local community.

#### **WENDY AGZARIAN**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and recognise, Ms Wendy Agzarian, who has been giving up her time and energy to volunteer at the Kogarah Historical Society for almost 10 years. The Kogarah Historical Society was formed in 1970 and set up by the local Carss Cottage Museum to promote awareness of the history of the Kogarah Municipality. Ms Agzarian was first elected to the society's committee in 2016 and has since taken on the responsibility of Museum Custodian due to her excellent time management skills and attention to detail. Wendy is primarily responsible for organising group tours, collecting bookings and promoting awareness of Museum events. In addition to this, she advocates for grants and support to acquire new display cases and has spent countless hours at the Cottage changing and improving the displays. The Carss Cottage Museum would not be able to run so successfully and efficiently without the dedication and commitment of volunteers such as Ms Agzarian. I want to sincerely thank Ms Agzarian for the wonderful work she does to promote and celebrate Kogarah's rich history.

#### **PETER GROVE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate lifelong volunteer Mr Peter Grove. Mr Grove joined the St George Division of St John Ambulance NSW in 1988 and has been selflessly giving up his time and energy to help our local community ever since. Over the course of this time, Peter has volunteered over 17,000 hours, providing advanced first aid and medical care services to our local

community. Peter currently serves as the Operations Manager for the St George Division and works with event organisers to ensure that the needs of community members are being met at local events. One of his many outstanding achievements, was the development of the first ever Bicycle Emergency Response Team. This rapid response crew roam events where vehicle access is limited, supplying medical equipment to manage basic life-threatening injuries. For his distinguished contribution to the community of St George, Peter was awarded Kogarah Citizen of the Year in 2013 and is currently an Officer in the Order of St John. I want to thank Mr Grove and the amazing team of volunteers at St John Ambulance, for the life-saving work they do.

### **RUN FOR THE HILLS**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—The annual 'Run For The Hills' was recently held at Bella Vista Farm within my electorate of Kellyville. Formerly The Hills 'Cross Country Challenge', the run was as successful as ever this year, with running courses being available for all levels and many hundred runners taking up the challenge. Raising money for Fr. Chris Riley's Youth off the Street, Positive Vibes and Youth Insearch, the run has already raised close to \$10,000 – a number that is expected to rise as donations from the day are still being counted. My thanks go out to all involved in organising the event, particularly former Hills Councillor Mike Blair and I look forward to attending next year.

### **STEVE SCHAUSINGER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I extend my congratulations to Sergeant Steve Schausinger from Albury, in recognition of his remarkable 44 year career of dedicated service in the police force, and who has decided to embrace retirement. As a tribute to the Sergeant, 100 police officers and family members gathered at a surprise service to honour his long-standing tenure. Surrounded by his colleagues, Sergeant Schausinger's final shift culminated in a fitting salute, followed by a symbolic ride in an historic Highway Patrol vehicle. A great way to celebrate his extensive service in the Albury region. With a mixture of gratitude and emotion, Sergeant Schausinger expressed his continued love for the job. Sergeant Schausinger has held a strong focus on road safety for all who travel on our highways and country roads. This is the community leadership that saves lives, and I thank Steve for his dedicated service and wish him all the best in retirement.

### **VALE TONY BRANDT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the life of Tony Brandt, a well-known and distinguished lawyer in Albury, who passed away on Sunday, August 27 at the age of 78. Tony's career in the law was a testament to his desire to help others, through the provision of legal advice, representation and guidance to many individuals in need. Born in Sydney, his journey in life led him to the Border where he attended Albury Grammar School. As a student Tony joined The Scots School Albury Pipe Band and enjoyed playing the pipes throughout his life. He was involved in many local community groups in the neighbouring cities that are part of our border community. In 1980 he joined the Rotary Club of Albury Hume and became a lifelong member, and is well remembered for his willingness to volunteer and assist in Rotary programs for the benefit of the community. I extend my heartfelt condolences to Tony's wife Nan, three children, Nina, Neil and Nikki and their families. Vale Tony Brandt.

### **BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR - YOHAN LIM**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, Yohan Lim, from Teambros Fitness Club in West Ryde, has earned the prestigious title of Northern Districts Business Person of the Year. His remarkable achievements in the fitness industry have not only transformed the health and wellness landscape in the region but also set a new standard for excellence. Yohan's dedication to promoting a healthy lifestyle is evident in the success of Teambros Fitness Club. Under his leadership, the club has become a cornerstone of the community, offering cutting-edge facilities and personalised fitness programs. His commitment to helping individuals achieve their fitness goals is truly commendable. Furthermore, Yohan's contributions extend beyond the gym doors. He actively engages with the local community through initiatives that promote fitness awareness and wellbeing. His passion for fitness is contagious, inspiring countless individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles. Yohan Lim's recognition as the Northern Districts Business Person of the Year is a testament to his outstanding leadership, unwavering commitment to health and fitness, and positive impact on the community. He embodies the spirit of entrepreneurship and serves as an exemplary role model for aspiring business leaders in the region. Congratulations Yohan!

### **BUSINESS OF THE YEAR - PANETTA MERCATO**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Panetta Mercato, Macquarie Centre is an Italian green grocer that has a profound love for food. Their commitment to quality and variety sets them apart as a deserving recipient of the Northern Districts Business of the Year award. What makes Panetta Mercato truly exceptional is their dedication to offering an extensive range of products. At the heart of their success lies the daily delivery of the freshest produce sourced wholesale markets and local growers. This commitment to freshness ensures that customers can



always count on the highest quality. When you step into Panetta Mercato, you'll be greeted by a treasure trove of gastronomic delights. From well-curated fromaggio fridges to a meticulously crafted meat section, a delightful deli counter, and a bountiful selection of fruits, vegetables, and grocery items, this store has it all! It's not just a shopping experience; it's a culinary adventure. Panetta Mercato's continuous pursuit of excellence in the world of food retailing has earned them the prestigious title of Northern Districts Business of the Year. Their dedication to providing customers with a diverse and exceptional food selection makes them a true gem in the heart of Macquarie Centre. Congratulations!

#### **NORTHERN DISTRICTS BUSINESS AWARDS FINALIST**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, The Northern Districts Business Awards were held on 23 August 2023, where we saw the best and brightest of Ryde's local business community on display. I acknowledge the following finalists on their success, and congratulate them for being recognised as outstanding businesses: Beauty Services: Australian Skin Clinics at Top Ryde City Shopping Centre; Education Service: Justfootball Academy; Fitness Services: The Fitness Edge Health and Aquatic Centre; Fruit & Vegetable Shop: Panetta Mercato at Macquarie Centre; Health Improvement Services: West Ryde Physiotherapy; Performing Arts: The Edge Dance Centre; Pharmacy: Pharmacy 4 Less at Top Ryde City Shopping Centre; Professional Services: Asa Studio; Service & Trade: Macquarie Locksmiths; and, Specialized Retail Business: Good Games at Top Ryde City Shopping Centre. Each has made a positive contribution to our community by providing essential employment opportunities, delivering great goods and services, and for their impeccable customer service. These businesses have set the benchmark for the Northern District, and as a Parliament, we owe them our support every step of the way. Congratulations to all the finalists!

#### **KOTARA SCHOOL**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It was my pleasure to attend the 2023 NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence on 5 September, celebrating the achievements of outstanding schools, students, staff and teachers from across the state. It was especially pleasing to see Kotara School receive a Secretary's Award for an Outstanding School Initiative, which is presented to NSW public schools that demonstrate their commitment to building a sustainable learning environment with the development and use of a specific program. The school's successful implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds [QTR] has led to significant improvements across the board, changing teaching practices, fostering collaboration and reflection among the school's staff. Teachers have built their skills utilising structured observation and feedback, which has had an evident flow-on effect across school culture. Most importantly, students have experienced increased engagement, deeper learning and improved academic achievement. My thanks to the amazing, committed staff from Kotara School for undertaking QTR to build a stronger school community and better outcomes for the students. My congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE STUDENTS (MINISTER'S AWARDS)**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It was my pleasure to attend the 2023 NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence on 5 September, celebrating the achievements of outstanding schools, students, staff and teachers from across the state. It was great to see students from Warners Bay High School in the Charlestown Electorate recognised with Minister's Awards for Excellence in Student Achievements. This award recognises outstanding Year 12 students who have excelled in their secondary years across all areas of achievement, including academic excellence, sports, cultural, community and leadership. Congratulations to Noah Brown and Dakota Kellar Bridgart on this amazing and well-earned recognition. Only forty students from across the state were chosen to receive this award, from amongst the tens of thousands in year 12—I am sure I speak for the entire Charlestown Electorate when I say that Noah and Dakota should both be so proud. My congratulations to all the students whose hard work saw them earn this extraordinary commendation. What a great achievement! I wish you all the best with your future learning.

#### **WHITEBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL (MINISTER'S AWARDS)**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It was my pleasure to attend the 2023 NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence on 5 September, celebrating the achievements of outstanding schools, students, staff and teachers from across the state. It was especially pleasing to see Whitebridge High School receive a Secretary's Award for an Outstanding School Initiative, which is presented to NSW public schools that demonstrate their commitment to building a sustainable learning environment with the development and use of a specific program. Whitebridge was recognised by the VET Student Pathways for the Future program, which has been a game changer for students at the school. With an innovative curriculum model that increases

student engagement through a skills focus and direct industry credentialling, the program actively engages young people, employers and the broader community. From high achievers to those requiring additional support, the program ensures students are on track for a successful future. My thanks to Whitebridge High School principal Nadene Harvey and her team on introducing and running this fantastic program, and my congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **WAR WIDOW CELEBRATES CENTURY WITH LEGACY - JOAN BALSARINI**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Joan Balsarini who has reached 100 years of age, on July 18, 2023. Joan's story indicates an incredible life being lived with grace and strength and is a testament to the enduring power that comes from connecting with the community through Legacy and having the unwavering spirit of strong independence. Joan has spent over 70 years on the land, working in a range of activities from rabbiting to shearing. A war widow, Joan's life was shaped by the legacy of her late husband, a war-veteran who passed away last year. With five children, 13 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren her journey continues to be shared by her with her family. The torch of Joan's family connection to Defence also continues as it is carried by her great-grandson William who joined the Air Force in 2022. Joan, it was a delight to have the opportunity to meet with you for your birthday. May your story inspire each of us to cherish the connections we forge in life, to embrace life's challenges with grace, and to carry the torch of legacy for the generations to come.

#### **DR JENNIE KING**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my constituent Dr Jennie King for being recognised for her exceptional lifetime contribution in this year's Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. The NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards acknowledge the passion, dedication and contributions of nurses and midwives, who positively impact the health outcomes of patients, women, and families across NSW. Dr Jennie King is a Nursing and Midwifery Research Manager at Central Coast Health and has been named as a finalist for the Judith Meppem Lifetime Achievement Award. This award recognises the contribution of an outstanding nurse or midwife who, throughout their career, has had a positive and sustained influence on patients, the health system, and their profession. Jennie is well admired and recognised amongst her peers as an inspiring leader and research mentor, dedicated to evidence-based practice. Over many years, she has driven nursing and midwifery research activities to improve patient care on the Central Coast. Congratulations Jennie, you have given so much of your professional life to nursing and midwifery research and the Central Coast Local Health District here on the Central Coast and we applaud this important and well-deserved accolade.

#### **CENTRAL COAST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Recently I had the pleasure to once again be an adjudicator for the Central Coast Catholic Primary Schools Southern Cluster of Schools Public Speaking Final. Two Year 6 students from St John's the Baptist Woy Woy, St Patrick's East Gosford, Our Lady of the Rosary Wyoming, Our Lady Star of the Sea Terrigal, and Holy Cross Kincumber represented their schools on the day. I would like to congratulate all the students who participated. To get up in front of a room full of people is a challenge which would make most adults shudder, but these students were fantastic. I was very impressed with all the students' performances throughout their prepared and impromptu speeches. It certainly made judging very entertaining with a diverse range of topics but also very difficult due to the high standard of speeches. I would like to thank the schools and the teachers involved for their passion, dedication, and support of your students to participate in these events. Special mention to Elijah from Holy Cross Kincumber who was awarded Central Coast Public Speaking Champion and will now represent the Central Coast at the upcoming Diocesan Final in Asquith.

#### **HARDYS ARCHIE COMPETITION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Everyone is very familiar with the annual Art Gallery of NSW's Archibald Art Prize, but did you know we now have our very own "Archie" competition on the Central Coast? Recently one of my local community clubs, Hardys Bay Community Club hosted the inaugural Hardys Archie Competition which was a great community event showcasing the talent of our local artists. Local art group The Garage Girls who paint together in a garage at Pretty Beach came up with the idea and put together the competition which included an exhibition, six weeks of judging and prizes for first, second and third place. Taking out top prize was Heidi Montanari for her portrait of Keith Peaker. Second prize went to Peter Langmaid and third place to Georgina Macken. Congratulations to The Garage Girls, participating artists and their subjects and the Hardys Bay Community Club for such a great community event. I am sure next year's event will see more entries and continued enjoyment for locals and visitors to our region.

### YASS LANDCARE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Ross Webster and Yass Landcare. Ross, a well-known figure in Yass due to his participation and leadership roles in football, the Council, Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups, and his passion for the environment. It is unbelievable in 1986 that NSW Fisheries found there to be no native fish in the Yass River. As a result of invading exotic fish and plants destroying the natural habitat. The invasive plants included Basket Willow, Hawthorn, wild plum, and blackberry bushes, species that will grow whilst diminishing and destroying the prospects of survival of native flora and fauna. The introduction of European and Asian Carp collapsed the local fish ecosystems, along with the prolific invasion of willows, inhibiting egg laying. In conjunction with NSW Environmental Trust, Yass Valley Council and the Yass Landcare Group, Ross co-organised work to clear the invasive plants along the Yass River and Manton Creek. Undoubtedly a significant feat, with two kilometres being cleared. It is with a great sense of gratitude and thanks to Ross and the Yass Landcare Group for their ongoing, tireless, work to clear and regenerate our waterways and natural environment.

### BAYLEY AND CHRISTINA FROM PICTON AMBULANCE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Bayley and Christina from Picton Ambulance, whom a recent patient contacted me to express their gratitude. With an abundance of calming reassurance and emergency medical expertise, Christina and Bayley attended this patient providing an almost instantaneous sense of relief, alleviating their feelings of stress and anxiety. Driven by knowledge, professionalism, and an unfailing duty to care for those in need, Christina and Bayley successfully administered the initial treatment required, and transported the patient to hospital safely to receive further treatment and care by the team at Bowral Hospital. With a sense of gratitude and relief, the patient reflected upon the compassion, knowledge and care provided by Christina and Bayley, praising them for their dedication to their profession and the community more broadly. I acknowledge and sincerely thank Christina, Bayley and their many colleagues within the NSW Ambulance Service who proficiently and respectfully attend to the needs of our communities every day. I am delighted to receive such positive feedback from constituents who bring their experiences of exemplary service to my attention.

### VALE ANNIE GEORGESON

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the late Annie Georgeson who was a much loved 88-year-old Camden Haven resident who sadly passed away on 14th August. Annie was renowned in the local, national and international artistic world for her textile creations, some of which are held in the Powerhouse Museum. She received numerous awards acknowledging her extraordinary talent including the 1981 Australian Design Award and Churchill Fellowship. I had the pleasure of meeting Annie on many occasions and I remember well the first time was when she and her late partner, Ian were discussing the heritage listing for the two chimneys on their property in Kew. Annie's flair, passion and enthusiasm for design and for life were evident in every conversation and more often than not with the community benefit front of mind. She also shared with me her dream for the former quarry site in Laurieton with a vision for a world recognised amphitheatre and public green space. If Annie was still here I know we would be continuing that discussion with her usual determination and enthusiasm to explore the possibilities. I extend my sincerest condolences to Annie's family and friends. Rest in peace Annie.

### DRAGON BOAT FEDERATION WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I am excited to announce Port Macquarie's very own world champions Elizabeth Harrison and Ken and Lorrae Fitzgerald who were successful at the 16th Annual International Dragon Boat Federation World Championships in Thailand on 7-13 August 2023. Arriving home with a throng of medals, Elizabeth, Ken and Lorrae were certainly triumphant after competing in the Senior C, 60 plus Division World Championships held at Rayong and Pattaya, Thailand. The Aussie trio paddled their way to victory across a number of heats, winning a series of gold, silver and bronze medals while proving the sheer talent, speed and technique our Aussie competitors possess on the water. Accompanying our Port Macquarie trio were Kevin Buehler and Sam Fowler from Coffs Harbour who also powered their way to claim silver and bronze medals. Elizabeth, Ken and Lorrae are proudly a product of the Flamin' Dragons Dragon Boat Club and it is no surprise they have reached the highest pinnacle in the sport, as I can attest that this Club breeds champions. I congratulate Elizabeth, Ken, Lorrae, Kevin and Sam for their overall success, which dominated at the IDBF Dragon Boat Racing World Championships.

### SENIOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2023 – GEOFFREY BOND, FRONTIER SERVICES

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise Port Macquarie local Geoffrey Bond and commend him as the recipient of the Senior Volunteer of the Year - Mid North Coast. Geoff's voluntary work

is imbedded in the Outback Links program. He travels to rural and remote areas in NSW and Queensland to help farming families with practical assistance and jobs around their properties. The communities Geoff helps often lack resources and/or support which has been heightened in the wake of natural disasters or significant environmental events. Geoff's dedication to doing what needs to be done is inspiring. He goes above and beyond by lending a hand with tasks such as cleaning, painting, clearing/tidy up jobs, working with animals, gardening as well as patching and repairing. These jobs are often a lower priority in farm management, however with Geoff there to help it means the farmers can concentrate on core business. Various farmers have reflected on how truly extraordinary, brilliant and reliable Geoff is, by simply stating that they wished Geoff could stay longer. Thank you and congratulations Geoff.

#### **ABILITY ADVOCATES**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to Ability Advocates on their official launch on Monday 28 August. Their work to combat the stigma surrounding disabilities will make a profound difference to many lives. It is wonderful to see people who care so much, taking the initiative to build an organisation based on helping others. Founder Lorraine Salloum says the foundation is 'born from a deep-seated necessity and personal experience'. Ability Advocates' objective is to cater for families whether they are supported by the NDIS or not, indicating the value of a service that puts the community at the core of its advocacy. Ability Advocates will service the Parramatta, Cumberland, Fairfield and Bankstown regions with a mission to ensure everyone, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive, to break down barriers, shatter stigmas and foster a community that not just includes, but celebrates every unique individual. I look forward to following their journey, watching them fill the gaps in service provision across our region and living up to the motto that information is power. Also, congratulations to Lorraine on the release of her co-authored book "Shaken, stirred but not deterred" which shares valuable insights from her lived experience that can benefit us all.

#### **WEST CUMBERLAND MEN'S SHED AGM**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was a privilege to attend the West Cumberland Men's Shed Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 16th August 2023. The West Cumberland Men's Shed is a not-for-profit community organisation based in Western Sydney whose primary objective is to provide a safe space for men to improve their health and wellbeing. The West Cumberland Men's Shed aims to address social isolation and boost men's mental health by establishing a safe space, making friends and sharing meaningful activities. The participants include those from a range of backgrounds, those who wish to learn a new skill, and those who want a safe space to socialise. The participants are provided with opportunities to learn new skills during various activities such as manual crafting, gardening, beekeeping, first aid and community projects like making toys for local childcare groups. West Cumberland Men's Shed hosts various health and well-being events and provide contacts for men to track and follow up their health progress and needs. Thank you to West Cumberland Men's Shed President Rob Grey, leadership team, and members for the fantastic community work they engage in improving the health and wellbeing of men in our Western Sydney community.

#### **ASSYRIAN MARTYRS AND GENOCIDE DAY - ASSYRIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (ZOWAA)**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was an honour to attend the Assyrian Martyrs and Genocide Day Commemoration, hosted by the Assyrian Democratic Movement [ZOWAA] - Sydney Chapter, on Monday 7th August 2023, with members of our wider Assyrian community in Western Sydney and across NSW. Together with the Assyrian Aid Society – Australia and Assyrian Women's organisation, we remembered and paid respect to our Assyrian martyrs and their loved ones who have been impacted by genocide and generations of dislocation. Through their courage and resilience, our Assyrian community have had the opportunity to re-establish their vibrant culture in Western Sydney. ZOWAA – Sydney Chapter is an active, diligent social and political organisation based in Western Sydney. Its members and volunteers aim to preserve and protect Assyrian culture and language, through advocacy efforts that strengthen our Australian-Assyrian community in Western Sydney, and their loved ones who are living overseas in their traditional homelands including the Nineveh Plains. Thank you to ADM President Mr Immanuel Sada, the leadership team, and volunteers for your ongoing efforts to recognise, strengthen and preserve the richness of Assyrian culture. I look forward to continuing to support your organisation and our Australian-Assyrian community.

#### **ASSYRIAN MARTYRS AND GENOCIDE DAY COMMEMORATION AND WREATH LAYING CEREMONY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was an honour to attend the Assyrian Martyrs and Genocide Day Commemoration and Wreath Laying Ceremony, hosted by the Assyrian National Council - Australia, on Sunday 6th August 2023, with members of our wider Assyrian community in Western Sydney and across NSW. Together, we joined in a thoughtful wreath laying ceremony at the Assyrian Genocide Monument in Western

Sydney, which commemorates the victims of the Assyrian Genocide during WW1 and the Simele Massacre, and holds great significance to our Assyrian community. Assyrian Martyrs Day is an important day for our Assyrian community, and for our community all over Western Sydney, where we remember and pay respect to our Assyrian martyrs and their loved ones who have been impacted by genocide and generations of dislocation. The Assyrian National Council – Australia is an active and diligent social and political organisation based in Western Sydney that is dedicated to recognising, strengthening and preserving the richness of Assyrian culture. Thank you to the Assyrian National Council President Mr Hermiz Shahan, the Administrative Board, and volunteers for hosting a moving ceremony. I look forward to continuing to support your organisation and our Australian-Assyrian community.

### **1ST WYONG SCOUTS 75TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—**It was a pleasure to attend the 1st Wyong Scouts 75th Anniversary celebrating with new and current scout members of all ages. Wyong scouts began in 1948 and moved from several locations and currently reside near the train station in Wyong. The Scout Section ranges from 5 to 25 years old providing Joey Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venturer Scouts, Rover Scouts and Adult Volunteers. The scouts deliver fun diverse programmes with challenging opportunities to grow through adventure and engages young people to develop confidence resilience and leadership. During the celebration I met original Wyong Scouts and learnt a rich history of our area as well as scouting. Congratulations to the 1st Wyong Scouts on this special milestone celebrating 75 years.

### **BLUES AND ROOTS REVIVAL**

**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)—**Blues on the Mountain was established in 2013 and is organised and run by volunteers bringing some of Australia's finest touring Blues and Roots musicians to the Central Coast hinterlands supporting local talent such as The Little Quirks, Woodie McClean, Grizzlee Train and Lil G to name a few. The Events have been held in three of the Central Coast hinterlands most historic community halls, Mangrove Mountain Hall, Yarramalong School of Arts Hall and Dooralong Hall and Recreation Reserve. The annual event has been running for 3 years at Dooralong Hall and has grown to support Central Coast artist showcasing an exhibition of works by some of the Coast's best emerging local artists including Anna Seymour, Claire Paul, and Madeleine Bell. The festival is a boutique community focused live music event for every age group surrounded in a family environment with the finest local musicians performing including 19-Twenty, Owen Campbell, and Genevieve Chadwick, along with Central Coast talent such as Taj Farrant, Toby Wells and Niksta. The event is popular with Blues music lovers across the Central Coast region and attracts visitors to the Central Coast from Wollongong, Sydney, Newcastle, and the Mid North Coast.

### **TOUKLEY DISTRICT AND ART SOCIETY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—**Toukley District and Art Society were a successful applicant in the Community Building Partnership program, receiving a \$20,449 grant. The grant went towards new vinyl flooring laid throughout the gallery and carpet laid in the smaller rooms giving the space a fresh modern look. Derry's Flooring Warehouse from Tuggerah did a fantastic job installing the vinyl floor along with the helpers who dismantled the cabinets. The art gallery has over 100 members who have artwork on display in the gallery including paintings in oil, acrylics, watercolour, and pastel, along with handcrafted giftware and original cards for every occasion. President Wendy Symons and members were very pleased of the outcome with their project. The group discussed future projects on how they want to improve the premises for the locals and visitors.

### **THE 2023 JESUIT MISSION BAZAAR**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—**On a pristine Sydney day, over 8,000 people flocked to the 2023 Jesuit Mission Bazaar; a fantastic event championing a noble cause. The dedication of current and former students was evident as they volunteered their time; the Old Boys' famous Ham Wheel was back in action again and current students' stalls consistently delighted attendees, bringing smiles to many faces. The money raised will go directly to community development work in over 10 countries in Africa and Asia. It's deeply moving to see so many people in our great community band together to stand in solidarity with people they will never meet, but whose lives will be transformed by their generosity. While it was an exciting day for the community, we mustn't lose sight of the fair's profound significance. Thanks to the money generously donated, people's lives will be changed for the better. I'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the boys who gave up their time in service of the school and the Jesuit Mission, all those who attended and to all those who contributed to this remarkable cause.

## **A THANK YOU TO THE PARISHIONERS OF RYDE-GLADESVILLE FOR THE NEW VINNIES VANS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—I am extending my most heartfelt appreciation to the Parishioners of Ryde-Gladesville for their extraordinary efforts in raising over \$160,000 money to acquire, equip and operate two Vinnies vans. The Vinnies vans are an indispensable component of our community, serving not only as providers of essential food and blanket supplies, but also as catalysts to create meaningful conversation at each stop. To the dedicated volunteers who forgo their time working in the Vinnies vans, you are performing a truly vital role within the community and your work does not go unnoticed. By lending a compassionate ear and vital goods, you are making an immeasurable positive impact on the lives of so many. It is fantastic to witness the community rallying together to selflessly support those in need; the volunteers truly exemplify the Australian spirit of looking out for those less fortunate than ourselves.

### **SHIHAN LINDSAY GUY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Shihan Lindsay founded Guy's Karate School at Telarah Public School 12 years ago. During this time Lindsay has trained students for local, State, National and International championships. Students from Guy's Karate School make up close to half of all the members of the current Australian National Team. This record is due to the dedication and passion that Lindsay and his team display. One of the programs Lindsay has implemented in the Karate School is a Junior Leadership program. Students are given leadership responsibilities within the school, assisting with teaching and other tasks. As students graduate through the program, they grow, show initiative and increase their self-confidence. On graduation the students regularly become paid employees of the school, providing them with the skills and experience that can be added to their resume. Recently, Lindsay was inducted into the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame for his contribution and dedication to The Martial Arts community over the last 40 years. Outside of the sport Lindsay has also served as a volunteer Surf Life Saver since he was 15 years old. I wish to acknowledge Lindsay's hard work and contribution to our community; he is most worthy of this recognition.

### **ELIZABETH REID**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—East Maitland's Elizabeth Reid has recently completed her Bachelor of Arts Honours thesis at the University of Newcastle. These research efforts have added to the recording of the rich history of Maitland. Elizabeth's thesis is titled "Questions of Life and Death: How Religion Served the Maitland Community Throughout the First World War". It looks at how religion in the city of Maitland impacted its citizens on the home front, on the battle field and in post war ceremonies. Elizabeth identified a gap in research on the impact of the first world war on rural communities. To bridge this gap, Elizabeth documented how communities that had previously been divided along religious lines came together. She also recorded how religion supported the communities as they were impacted by the realities of war. Elizabeth relied extensively on the State Library, Maitland Library, the historical editions of the Maitland Mercury and various churches and memorials in Maitland as sources of information for her thesis. She will officially publish her work and findings within the next 6 months. Thank you Elizabeth for your dedication, and for adding to our understanding of Maitland's history.

### **JOHNNY ROBINSON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Woodberry Indigenous artist Johnny Robinson is certainly leaving his mark in our community. Johnny's murals, sculptures and artworks are prominently displayed throughout the Maitland community and showcase his passion for telling stories through art. Johnny's other passion has been to work with young people in Maitland. His work with schools across Maitland includes facilitating art and didgeridoo workshops, creating school murals and producing art installations. Johnny has worked with students at Woodberry Public School, Francis Greenway High School, Maitland High School, Singleton High School, and many pre-schools. Currently Johnny is working with students at Hunter Valley Grammar School. Johnny and his didgeridoo have also played a prominent part in Maitland community events and fundraisers over the last 15 years. Johnny has featured in countless NAIDOC Week events, Corroborees, movie nights, and The Maitland River Lights Festival. His murals are on display at Huntlee, Kotara and Greenhills shopping centres. They also feature on Aurizon trains and recently Johnny's art was used on the NRL St. George Illawarra Dragons Jersey for the Indigenous round. I would like to acknowledge Johnny for his generous spirit in sharing his culture, art and music.

### **LINDSAY AND LAURIE GREEN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—In a small village called Rydal couple Lindsay and Laurie Green have made a big impact. These long-standing community members have played a vital role in the running of the Rydal

Village Association and the much-loved annual Daffodils at Rydal event. Lindsay and Laurie Green have opened their beautiful garden full of daffodils to the public every year since the beginning of the festival. Their role in the festival's success has included distributing flyers and mailouts to advertise the event, arranging celebrity guest appearances, organising musical entertainment, and cooking food every year to serve in their garden's entertaining area. Beyond the festival, it was Lindsay and Laurie who obtained the first grant for the Rydal Village Association in which they set up the village's tourist and historical website, brochure, and map with. Our history is important, and they have kept it alive by Lindsay collating and creating a pathway that names all the past showgirl winners from Rydal Show and Laurie restoring a WWI honour board for the village. The service to this community from Lindsay and Laurie over many years has been outstanding. Thank you for your selfless contribution to Rydal.

#### **BRAD DE LOSA**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Lithgow's very own woodchopping champion Brad De Losa is headed for the Australian championships. Competing in six different disciplines with axes and saws at the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS Australian Pro Championship held in Wollongong Brad will be doing his local community proud representing Lithgow and the Central West. The best of the best in 12 timber sports from all around Australia will compete for the winning title. The Australian Pro Championship will be the first major woodchopping event for Brad since he came runner up at the Australia trophy in Glendale, Adelaide in March this year. Brad has been dedicated to the sport for some years competing across Australia at various shows and consistently training to perfect his technique and grow his skillset. Good luck Brad, who has the support of his sponsors Hutcheon and Pearce, family, friends and the Lithgow community behind him.

#### **KATE GULLIFER**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Kate Gullifer isn't shy of a challenge. She's a busy young professional and a well-known name around Bathurst for her involvement in sport and business. Now she is taking to the stage as on of this year's Stars of Bathurst Dance for Cancer. Kate's family has been heavily impacted by cancer losing her sister to the cruel disease last year and finding out she had the same BRCA1 gene, making her more susceptible to breast and ovarian cancer. A few surgeries later and Kate has minimised her risk of contracting cancer and is ready to dance. She is on track to reach her fundraising goal allowing Kate to contribute whatever she can to finding a cure to save other families from heartbreak at the hands of cancer. Kate is a dedicated team member Bell Conveyancing, player at Bathurst Bulldogs Club, member of the Bathurst Business Chamber and a small business owner herself. Arid Skincare was her sister's dream which Kate is now keeping alive running the organic skincare brand in her sister's honour. Good luck on the dance floor Kate and congratulations on your impeccable drive to cure cancer.

#### **BOB HOLDER**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of Bob Holder of Cootamundra, who is recognised as the 'world's oldest cowboy'. Born in 1931, Bob is ninety-two years young. Bob's father was a drover in Cootamundra, and since winning his first Bronc Ride at just fourteen years old, Bob hasn't looked back and competes at Rodeo's whenever the opportunity presents itself. Last year, Bob pledged he would return to the rodeo scene after being knocked from his saddle and experiencing a severe infection. Some of Bob's biggest achievements include a 1959 tour of the Americas, including a 17-night rodeo at Madison Square Gardens in New York, riding in front of Queen Elizabeth II in the same year, and being inducted into the Australian Professional Rodeo Association's Hall of Fame in 2017. Recently, Bob saddled up for the Mt. Isa Rodeo, one of Australia's Premier Rodeo events where he was the recipient of a "Good Australian" award from the Prime Minister. Further, Bob's daughter, Kerrie is an accomplished cowgirl and Barrel Racer in her own right. Bob's achievements are simply incredible, and I wish him the best of luck for the upcoming Cootamundra Rodeo in November.

#### **OUR MURRINGO MATTERS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise the efforts of Paul Morris, editor of 'Our Murringo Matters' and the Murringo Community Association for the recommencement of this wonderful community newsletter. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of meeting Paul who shortly later advised me that the newsletter was returning bi-monthly. The first edition was successfully launched on 4 May with an overwhelmingly positive response and since then, two more editions have been released. The diverse content so far has covered topics including ANZAC Day, community projects, shows, awards, tourism, local events, advertising and information from various schools, groups, and organisations. Newsletters in smaller communities, particularly our villages are incredibly important as they are a reliable source of information and foster a sense of connectedness within the local community. but also requires extensive contributions from the local community and tireless effort by the Editor. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Murringo community for their show of support for the revitalized newsletter, and further, my thanks to Paul Morris and members of the Murringo

Community Association including President Gina Galvin, Vice-President Heather Ritchie, Secretary Sheryl Smith, and Treasurer Anne-Maree Doyle.

### **REGIONAL LAWYER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to congratulate Georgiena Ryan of Illabo on being awarded Regional Lawyer of the Year at the recent annual awards night hosted by the Women's Lawyers Association of New South Wales. The Regional Lawyer of the Year Award recognises outstanding women lawyers, mentors and firms who have not only achieved excellence in legal practise but have advanced the opportunities for women in the law. Georgiena is the Principal Lawyer of Regional Business Lawyers and is the only Accredited Specialist in Business Law located in rural NSW. She was one of four finalists nominated for the prestigious award. Georgiena is a highly respected female voice for regional and rural law who commits a large amount of her personal time to the legal profession. She is a member of several groups, including three Law Society committees / working groups, as well as a number of local community volunteer groups. Congratulations Georgiena on this wonderful recognition and thank you for being such a strong advocate for regional businesses.

### **LYNDELL ROBERTSON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Passionate, born and bred Novocastrian music teacher, Lyndell Robertson, started at Elmore Vale Public School in 1990 – now she has retired after 33 years there. Elmore Vale Public School Principal Luke Somerville and students celebrated Lyndell's passion and desire to teach, her temperament and patience. School Captain Harivansh Shah noted that a number one song in Australia at that time was "Nothing Compares to You". Lyndell established the school band, percussion bucket band, junior and senior choirs, Year 6 vocal ensemble, ukelele ensemble and produced creative and performing arts evenings, school concerts and Carols by Candlelight. Lyndell Robertson believes that music is for everyone, no matter their ability – playing, singing and feeling music and benefiting from practice and persistence. After educating hundreds of students, and countless lunchtime rehearsals, it's time for a change of pace. She has always loved the school, will miss the students and leave with a mix of emotion. She is looking forward to a change of pace - playing the piano, music therapy and mentoring piano students. Congratulations, Lyndell, on a brilliant career. Your commitment and dedication are appreciated - and will be missed.

### **NEWCASTLE PREMIER LEAGUE T20 CRICKET SEASON 2, 2023**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Administered by Newcastle Hunters in conjunction with Cricket NSW, and collaborating with Lake Macquarie, Maitland and City of Newcastle Councils, the Newcastle Premier League T20 Cricket Season 2 was launched 15 May, 2023. After a successful first season involving 8 teams, Season 2 has expanded to 14 teams and may eventually reach 16 teams – around 300 players. Players vie for weekly awards including Superstars, Player, Economic Bowler, Super Striker and Lightning Bowler of the Week. The competition is supported by generous local sponsorship. The colourful team names comprise of: Agency XI, Blue Stallions, Blue Tigers, Brown Munde, Elmore Vale Lions, Knights Watchmen, Maitland Monsters, Mighty Dark Horses, Newcastle Falcons, Newcastle Hunters, Newcastle Qalandars, The Fine Legs, Turana Titans, and Wallsend Tigers. Season 2 ran over 18 weeks and was played on Sundays at six Hunter region ovals. It is wonderful to see individuals from our community joining together, from many different cultural backgrounds, motivated to find such exciting outlets for their cricketing talent and enthusiasm.

### **STAR STRUCK IGNITE 2023**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Star Struck is a monumental annual performing arts event, showcasing dance, drama, choirs, vocalists, orchestra, and rock bands. This year more than 3,500 students from Kindergarten to year 12 had the opportunity to perform and develop an appreciation of the performing arts. Students also participate in stage management, choreography and props design teams. VET entertainment students gain first-hand professional experience through working with industry experts. Callaghan College Jesmond Senior Campus had a number of talented students performing in Star Struck Ignite this year, including: Abel Lambert as a featured singer, Rebecca Hardy as a backing vocalist, Lucinda Paterson in the orchestra, Abby McDonald as a featured ballet dancer, and a featured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancer, Bella James and Abby McDonald as featured contemporary dancers, Hayley Abraham in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance ensemble, Sophie Butler, Bella James, Lauren Krohn, Eden Launt, Abby McDonald, Felicity Young, Kristina Johnston, and Randy Taylor in the dance ensemble, Brooklyn Evans with the puppets, and Zali Kilgour, Ryan Lenton, Jaden Macko, Winter Milton, Issac Newman, Emily Williams in the student backstage team. Congratulations on a wonderful show!

### **ROB LONG WINNER OF THE REGIONAL SYNGENTA GROWTH AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise Rob Long of Pallamallawa on being awarded the winner of the Regional Syngenta Growth Awards, which recognises leading growers and



advisers for their contribution to the agricultural industry. I congratulate Rob for being selected as an individual who is leading the way through exemplary practice, innovation, collaboration and passion for the industry. Mr Long was counted among an impressive cohort of 23 regional winners and chosen from a long list of nominations. I commend Rob for his commitment to the agricultural industry and we wish you well in the National Awards. The future of Australian and New Zealand Agriculture is in sound hands with Rob and his co-nominated awardees at the helm.

### **ALL SCHOOLS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of students from the Northern Tablelands electorate, for their outstanding performances in the All Schools Cross Country Championships held in Sydney recently. I congratulate Kayden Elliott of Glen Innes High School and Bella Griffin from Macintyre High for winning gold and Jesse James from Moree Secondary College for being awarded a bronze medal at the Championships. Bella won double gold as the first runner to finish overall and subsequently for the Combined High Schools [CHS] in the 12-14 years girls multi-class race. Elliott's gold was for CHS in the 16 years boys event and Jesse's bronze for the CHS 17-19 years boys multi-class. I commend each of the runners on their hard work in their preparation and practice leading up to the Championships and their commitment to the sport. Each are great representatives for Cross Country running and we wish Bella and Jesse all the best in the upcoming NSW School Sport Australia Championships later in the year.

### **RECOGNITION OF DR KOCH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Dr Mahri Koch who will be retiring from her role of Project Manager and Management Consultant with the Glen Innes Natural Resources Advisory Committee. Dr Koch has worked in natural resource management in this region for an impressive 20 years. I congratulate Dr Koch on receiving international recognition from the Ramsar Steering Committee in Geneva and as the recipient of the 2022 NSW Landcare Awards for her work to protect Little Llangohlin Nature Reserve. Adding to her accolades, Dr Koch is an educator, mentor and active volunteer for a raft of environmental and local organisations. I commend Dr Koch for her contribution to improving environmental outcomes in the Northern Tablelands region and I wish Dr Koch all the best in her well-earned retirement.

### **CHATSWOOD SPRING FAIR**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—To celebrate the first Saturday of Spring (2 September), I had the joy of taking part in the annual Chatswood Spring Fair. Taking place in the heart of Chatswood, the Fair is the showcase event of the Emerge Festival which attracts tens of thousands of people from across Sydney. On a sunny spring morning, the streets of Chatswood were abuzz with more than 120 stalls, tasty goodies, fashion, home accessories and more. The Spring Fair also featured a colourful parade of cultural groups, community organisations and marching bands to entertain the crowds of onlookers. The talent of the local community was on full display with dancers, singers and performers gracing the entertainment stage. The Chatswood Spring Fair was a great festival of the cultural diversity, artistic talent, enterprise and community spirit for which Willoughby is renowned. Such a wonderful celebration of community!

### **CASTLE COVE PUBLIC MASQUERADE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Saturday 26 August, I had the pleasure of attending the masquerade mid-year fundraiser for Castle Cove Public School. It was a fun and entertaining night, and I commend the Parents and Citizens of the school for organising such a fantastic fundraising event. I would also like to thank the sponsors McGrath Real Estate and the Trade Mark Group of Companies for their generous support of the event. Castle Cove Public prides itself on the rich learning experience it provides for its students in a safe, secure and caring environment. Importantly, the school serves as a focal point for community-based activities and the masquerade event typified this outreach and engagement. I am proud of this wonderful local school which epitomises public education at its best. I look forward to working with the leadership, parents, staff and community of Castle Cove Public to make it even better still.

### **WILLOUGHBY SENIORS MORNING TEA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Our Seniors are the backbone of our community who contribute more than their fair share to volunteering, charitable work and other forms of community service. Borne of life experience, our seniors are a source of wisdom from whom we can learn so much. In August I had the great pleasure of hosting my second Willoughby Seniors Morning Tea at Northbridge Golf Club. With special guests including my parliamentary colleague, the Hon Rachel Merton MLC, and representatives from the NSW Police Force and Service NSW, our seniors were treated to an informative session on issues affecting them as well as

some friendly chats over morning tea. It was my pleasure to be able to listen to our local seniors during morning tea and better understand the concerns and issues that matter to them.

### **THE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP VET EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I was privileged last week to join The Youth Partnership for its annual Vocational Education and Training (VET) awards, where it was great to see a number of local students recognised for their outstanding achievements and dedication to VET. I congratulate Georgia Cowan of De La Salle Catholic College Cronulla who received an excellence award for hospitality for her outstanding commitment to her VET course and application to her work placement. Woolooware High School student Jack Dransfield won an excellence award for hospitality, and I congratulate him on his commitment he showed to his work placement and to VET. The Youth Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation helping young people successfully transition from school to work or further education. It coordinates work placements for students studying VET courses as part of their HSC. I commend The Youth Partnership for its work to give students real experience in industries matching the courses they are studying.

### **DARREL CHAPMAN FUN RUN KEEPS ON GIVING**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Our Kids is one of the fabulous charities we have up in the Northern Rivers, raising money and awareness for many of our key health facilities including our major hospitals. A highlight of its fundraising activities is the annual Darrel Chapman Fun Run, which was held this year on 27th August. Darrel was a husband, father and distinguished academic at Southern Cross University who grew up in the Lismore area and played rugby league for Australia as well as captaining the South Sydney Rabbitohs. Darrel lost his own personal battle with cancer in October 1992 but his legacy lives on through the fun run which has been going for more than 25 years. This year's fun run attracted 725 runners and walkers competing across a number of events, including the Lord Taverners 10km run, the Lismore Masters Half Marathon and the family-focused Our Kids 4km walk and run. The event raised over \$17,000 which will go towards the purchase of the final piece of software for an ultrasound machine. Congratulations to the team behind the event including Fundraising Coordinator Rebekka Battista and sponsors NAB and Lord Taverners.

### **LISMORE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY OPENING**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I attended a delightful event in Lismore recently, when I joined the local Mayor in opening the new Lismore Children's Library at Lismore Central shopping centre. This was a very lively and happy event with the new library space filled with babies, toddlers, children and parents, colourful sensory play activities, and of course, plenty of new books. This was in great contrast to the scene in March last year when thousands of dollars' worth of ruined books were piled up outside the flood damaged library building. I want to recognise the enormous efforts of Lucy Kinsley, the tireless Regional Manager of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library network, and Michael Lewis, the Lismore Area Librarian and their dedicated staff since the flood. The Children's Library is the latest pop-up facility they have set up to serve the people of Lismore while waiting for the restoration of the original library building. As I said at the opening, it was an inspired decision to set up in the Lismore Central shopping centre as it is a great way of bringing the library to families. In the first five days they signed up 40 parents and children as new members.

### **NIMBIN RFS CELEBRATES 70 YEARS ON 28 OCTOBER**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to the Nimbin Rural Fire Service, which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary. The brigade started life in 1953 after a particularly difficult fire season. Back then local volunteers were armed with leather fire beaters and galvanised tin knapsacks of water, a far cry from the much better equipped and trained volunteers that turn out these days. However, many of the challenges remain the same including the high-rainfall and rugged terrain in which the volunteers operate. This year presents another major challenge as the landscape dries out after a very wet couple of years. The volunteers are already hard at work getting ready for the approaching fire season, but they will take time out on Saturday 28th October to celebrate their 70th anniversary at the Nimbin Showgrounds. There will be an honour roll and gallery of past members, some firefighting themed games, medal presentations and a complimentary lunch put on by the CWA. A special shout-out to Brad Soward and Charlie Cohen for their 40 years' service in the brigade, and to Brigade Captain Marcus Mantscheff. I wish you all the best for your special day.

### **MATILDA THE PLATYPUS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—While Matilda's fever swept Australia, there was a very special new member of the Taronga Zoo family who was admitted to their Wildlife Hospital earlier this year. Named in honour of our incredible women's soccer team the Matildas, this little Platypus was just four months old when she was found under a bush on the NSW Central Coast, weak, severely malnourished, and covered in ticks. However thanks to the incredible work that Taronga Zoo Wildlife Hospital do, little Matilda has thrived

under attentive, around the clock care from Taronga's expert Platypus team who hand fed her six times a day for two months. While Matilda still has some growing to do she is now eating and foraging on her own and will soon be on display for all to see in at nguwing Nura Nocturnal Country in the brand new immersive Nura Diya attraction. While you're there visiting Tilly, you will also be able to get a close up look at an array of nocturnal species including Bilbies and Yellow-bellied Gliders. I thank the extraordinary efforts of the Taronga Zoo Wildlife Hospital and all involved in helping Matilda on her road to recovery.

#### **NEW LIVING SEAWALL INSTALLED AT MOSMAN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—The new Living Seawall installation at Ellery Park on the Spit was recently unveiled by the team at Sydney Institute of Marine Science and Mosman Council. We know that structures such as seawalls, pilings, and pontoons offer shoreline protection and ability for recreational activities, but offer little assistance to our marine environment, particularly in Sydney Harbour. The team at SIMS are doing amazing work, introducing these panels to improve ecological sustainability. They mimic natural features such as rock pools and crevices, allowing for a variety of marine life to thrive in otherwise urban environments. I congratulate the team at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science for their continued dedication to restoring our marine habitats, and look forward to seeing their Living Seawalls program expand across our local community.

#### **OUT OF THE SHADOWS WALK WITH LIFELINE - CASINO**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to the organisers and participants of the Out of the Shadows Walk with Lifeline Northern NSW, recently held at Queen Elizabeth 2 Park in Casino. Participants walked together to remember friends, colleagues and loved ones, and help Australians in crisis come out of the shadows and into the light. The event, 9 Laps for 9 Lives, is to recognise World Suicide Prevention Day. To remember those who have died to suicide, to support survivors and to raise awareness and decrease stigma in the community. Out of the Shadows Walk is an annual event held nationally. Participants were asked to walk for 9 laps to remember the 9 people lost to suicide each day. Congratulations and thanks to Casino Rotary Club who served up a delicious BBQ breakfast for the participants. Thanks to Darragh's Plaza Butcher and Country Crumbs Bakery for their support. I would also like to recognise all the volunteers and participants who contributed their time to such a successful event. Well done to all involved.

#### **JOHN GORRIE REFEREE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise the dedication of veteran referee John Gorrie of Grafton who has been contributing to the local Soccer community for over 50 years. John first became involved with soccer in the 1960's and since then has refereed from the junior level right through to the World Fun Cup for Supa Oldies. Over the years John has also been involved in coaching, as well as the development of the Round Robin Carnivals which have become a fixture on the football calendar. I congratulate John on his commitment which ensures that young players benefit from the many years of experience he has gathered. This year John turned 84 but still enjoys refereeing and finds it motivational. I want to thank John for the significant impact he has had to North Coast Football over so many years of dedication to the game and wish him all the best for the future.

#### **GRAFTON MOTORFEST**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge the Grafton Vintage Motor Vehicle Club on the recent outstanding success of Motorfest 2023, one of the key events presented to help celebrate over 60 years of classic and vintage motoring in the Clarence Valley. Thousands of motoring enthusiasts and families visited Motorfest at Jabour Park, South Grafton recently for a day of family entertainment and to see some beautifully presented motor vehicles. The Club canteen, food vans, coffee vans and ice cream outlets were very busy throughout the day keeping the visitors fuelled. Over 320 cars of all types were on display and were at one point joined by 80 motorcycles on a local weekend rally in the Valley. The planning for Motorfest 23 commenced early in the year and would not have been the success it was without the volunteers who organised the day and the many sponsors and contributors. Bennys Grafton Smash Repairs were again the major sponsor together with Clarence Valley Council. This is the 5th Motorfest that has been held and the event is going from strength to strength each year. I look forward to the 2024 event. Congratulations on this year's success.

#### **SAM FOWLER WORLD DRAGON BOAT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, congratulating Kempsey's upcoming sporting star, Sam Fowler, and his achievements on the international stage at the 16th Dragon Boat Federation World Championships in Thailand. Elected as team captain, Sam's natural aptitude and leadership earned him one silver and two bronze medals in the junior category. While it wasn't the smoothest waters, picking up an ACL and PCL injury, Sam worked in the wake of adversity, switching from sweep to onshore lead and steering the Auroras home. Sam is a superstar on the rise – since starting his dragon boat journey just a couple of years prior, he's competed at the

NSW Regional Championships, the Australian National Championships and Nationals with the NSW Junior Crew. With one international tournament locked under his belt, Sam is set to become a formidable force in the dragon boating world with sights locked and set on the next world championship event in Germany. Well Done, Sam! You are a testament to young aspiring athletes in the Macleay Valley, and a role model in the making. You will continue to achieve great outcomes – there is no stopping you now!

### **BUCKET BREWERY INDEPENDENT BEER AWARDS 2023**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Serving up success in the heart of the Macleay Valley. I rise today, congratulating Kempsey's family-owned Bucket Brewery for their well-deserved achievements at the 2023 Independent Beer Awards. Proud Owners Amanda and Sam Preston have been recognised for their quirky concoctions and innovations – with their Mandarin NEIPA and Hot Dog Chilli Lager winning gold medals, and the Route 666 and Octopus Ink Black IPA picking up silver. The fierce competition rewards the quality of the Australian independent brewing industry, and with more than 1300 entries this year alone, I am proud that brewers hailing from Oxley were dubbed the best. The win highlights our small brewers' hard work and dedication in the wake of cost-of-living pressures and unexpected times. In eight years, Bucket Brewery has grown its product line to 21 beers and continues to grow daily. Well done, Amanda and Sam for this momentous win, and for serving the best coldie in the Macleay Valley. You will continue to go a long way, paving the Bucket Brewery name throughout the industry.

### **WAUCHOPE COUNTRY CLUB SERVING UP A STORM**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, congratulating a Mid North Coast Club that has tantalised the tastebuds of its patrons by serving up the perfect plate. The Wauchope Country Club has taken out top honours in the Perfect Plate, Far North Coast category at the ClubNSW Awards. The club's eatery, 'Bowl 'N Slice', served up a Bavarian Pork Belly that captivated its hungry audience between May and July. The dish's excellence was a notch above the rest and was voted in for gold. The Perfect Plate Awards is the New South Wales Club industry's premier dining competition. There were over 174 participating eateries from 146 clubs. To see the Wauchope Country Club not only contend among the best but also win, is a testament to the direction of the eatery and the capable staff cooking up a delectable feast. The past few years have been tough on the hospitality industry with bushfires, floods, and the unforeseen pandemic. These awards is a reminder for the community to continue supporting their local clubs as they rebuild from impacted trade. I am very proud of the Wauchope Country Club for its accomplishment.

### **BRIARS WOMEN'S RUGBY 7'S**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise a local rugby club, Briars Women's Rugby who hosted the China Women's Rugby 7s team on the 6th of August. The China 7s team were in Sydney as part of their training for the upcoming Asian Games being held in China from September to October this year. As part of their time in Sydney, Briars hosted the Fast 5 Rugby 7s tournament in the Drummoyne electorate at Rothwell Park in Concord. It was great to attend the game and meet athletes and support young women in sport. Women's Rugby 7's is a growing sport and it was amazing to see the community get involved and support the teams during the friendly tournament. Congratulations to both teams for inspiring generations of young girls and women to get involved in sport and follow their sporting aspirations. Kate Mateffy, Briars Women's Rugby Team Captain said that 'it has been fantastic to promote women in sport and be taken seriously.' I would like to acknowledge Briars and President of Briars Women's Rugby, David Lannan. David is a wonderful supporter of Women's Rugby who is committed to elevating and growing women's sport in our local community.

### **STRATHFIELD MEN'S SHED**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recently visited the Strathfield Men's Shed, a wonderful local community hub. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the kind invitation to visit and join members for lunch. I congratulate the Strathfield Men's Shed for the welcoming environment and camaraderie they have created. The Strathfield Men's Shed website states that, 'If a man's shed is his castle, then the Strathfield Men's Shed is his kingdom.' I would like to recognise the friendly nature of the Men's Shed, open to all men from across my local community, including from diverse backgrounds. Members work together to learn from one another and share skills in woodworking, wood turning, metalwork and other hand crafts in a safe and supportive environment. This Men's Shed is doing an amazing job to provide an option to improve men's mental and to support men in an accessible and practical environment. I wish to thank the committee and dedicated members of the Strathfield Men's Shed. Thank you for all that you do to support our local community and work to provide this wonderful service. I hope to be back soon.

**ST PATRICKS CATHOLIC CHURCH PARISH HALL**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recognise St Patrick's Catholic Church in Mortlake. I was grateful to have been invited by Father Thomas Stevens and the Parish to the opening of the newly renovated Parish Hall. The project was made possible through a Community Building Partnership grant and it was a special occasion for the parish community. I am sure that the new hall will serve generations to come and will stand as a testament to the unity and support that brings the parish community together. The church has a long and proud history in the community with the Dean Callaghan McCarthy Hall first being opened in 2005 on the Parish's 110th Anniversary of the first mass being held at the St Patrick's Parish in Mortlake. This renovation to the hall will mean that the parish can continue to service its growing parish community for years to come. I wish to thank Father Tom for the warm welcome. I also wish to acknowledge the hardworking Parish Committee for its commitment to continue improving the Parish and Church. It was wonderful to join a dedicated and passionate parish community. I wish the community at St Patrick's all the very best.

**SCYLLA DISTILLING COMPANY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Scylla Distilling Company in Taren Point on winning the Best Liqueur award at the 2023 Melbourne Royal Australian Distilled Spirits Awards. Founded in 2020, by John and Zoe Williams and Justin Atic, Scylla Distilling Company creates liqueurs and spirits that are premium quality and modern in design such as their raspberry liqueur which beat almost 100 other competitors to win the award. The inspiration behind the company was the magnificent backdrop of our NSW coastlines and their personal passion for the outdoors and creating memories with friends. The trio are committed to working directly with Australian farmers across NSW and Tasmania offering customers an alternative and Australian-made liqueur which focuses on ecofriendly farming practices. I acknowledge the exceptional team at Scylla Distilling Company who provide high quality and tasty liqueurs. I recognise John Williams, Zoe Williams and Justin Atic. Small businesses like Scylla Distilling Company are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the team at Scylla Distilling Company on the success of their raspberry liqueur and extend my best wishes for the future.

**ASHLEIGH IACONO**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise talented local artist Ashleigh Iacono of Caringbah for her recent achievement of painting 100 portraits in 100 days. An artist since her school days, Ashleigh paints those who inspire her. Her paintings include her family members and Matilda's soccer legend Sam Kerr. Whilst you would imagine painting 100 portraits in 100 days was a feat in itself, it was Ashleigh's 97th piece that generated the most interest. By way of background, Ashleigh launched a competition on Facebook with the prize being a hand painted portrait for a lucky winner. Upon entering Ashleigh's competition, a former paramedic indicated that if she was the lucky winner her request would be a painting of Steven Tougher, a paramedic who sadly lost his life on April 14 in Campbelltown. This motivated Ashleigh to turn Steven's tragedy into a memorable moment for one of her final paintings. Ashleigh's A5 watercolour artwork encapsulates the warmth that Steven was known for by his family, friends and colleagues and will be generously donated to Campbelltown Hospital to honour Steven's memory. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Ashleigh's thoughtfulness and her ability to capture everlasting joy through her talent.

**ROBERT WILSON**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Robert (Bob) Wilson of Bangor who was awarded a meritorious service award for his dedication to marine rescue as part of the King's Birthday Honours. Bob was recognised for his more than 15 years volunteer service with the Botany Port Hacking Unit of Marine Rescue NSW. His passion for the organisation has seen him contribute greatly to Marine Rescue NSW both on the water and in leadership positions serving as director of the board from 2010 to 2014 and again from 2018 to 2023. By way of background, a day out on Botany Bay teaching his sons to fish led to Bob joining the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard patrol. Bob and his sons were heading home when the outboard motor of their boat wouldn't start. It was at this time that Bob and his sons were safely returned to the ramp by an Australian Volunteer Coast Guard patrol. I commend Mr Wilson for his highly deserving receipt of a meritorious award as part of the King's Birthday Honours and extend my best wishes for the future.

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