



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 14 September 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 14 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 (10:01):** I advise members that a member of staff will be taking photographs and filming this morning from the gallery, and that media photographers are approved to cover question time today.

## *Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:02):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for:

- (1) The moving after the routine of business following question time by the Premier of a motion regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- (2) Debate on the motion to be adjourned without motion immediately following the contributions of unlimited duration from the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.
- (3) Resumption of the debate at this or any subsequent sitting to be called on at any time during the time allocated for Government business, with any member being able to speak for up to 10 minutes.
- (4) Following the adjournment of the motion, the House to proceed with general business notices of motions for up to 70 minutes, with the Speaker to leave the chair at 1.30 p.m., returning at 2.30 p.m. for the remainder of the allocated time for general business notices of motions, followed by the remainder of the standard Thursday sitting day routine of business.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (10:03):** I confirm that the Opposition has no objection to the suspension of standing orders by the Leader of the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (RED FLEET) BILL 2023

#### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Adam Marshall, read a first time and printed.**

#### Second Reading Speech

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (10:20):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Introducing the Rural Fires Amendment (Red Fleet) Bill 2023 to the Parliament today is the culmination of a number of years of work of many mayors, general managers, councils and members of this Parliament to right an error. I speak of an archaic provision buried deep within the Rural Fires Act 1997 that is innocuous but has significant consequences for local councils, their financial viability and their ability to deliver services and infrastructure for their local communities in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Members of this place, particularly those who have served in local government, may recall that when the Parliament wrote this Act in 1997 the NSW Rural Fire Service looked very different to what it does today. At that time the Rural Fire Service was almost exclusively volunteer based. There were very few paid employees. In fact, the vast majority of those paid employees—local fire controllers, as they were called at the time—were employed by the local council; indeed, some of them doubled as the SES controller. Local government was not just involved in the Rural Fire Service but was almost the heart and soul, along with the volunteers of the Rural Fire Service,

because it built the sheds, purchased the fire trucks and other equipment and employed the very few paid professional staff involved in the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Today the Rural Fire Service is a very different organisation. At its core it is still based around more than 60,000 volunteer firefighters, but obviously it has a strong executive structure and paid staff—the "white shirts", as we all call them—as district managers in fire control centres with staff underneath them, and above them zone managers, assistant commissioners, deputy commissioners and a commissioner. At the moment they are working hard planning for the fire season ahead, coordinating hazard reduction burns and section 44 fires et cetera. All members know the amazing work the Rural Fire Service does. However, what has not changed since 1997 is this old provision buried within the Act, section 119 (2), which states:

(2) All fire fighting equipment—

which is firefighting apparatus, buildings, water storage towers or lookout towers as defined under the Act—

purchased or constructed wholly or partly from money to the credit of the Fund—

that is, the fund that the State Government, insurance premiums and local councils contribute to via the emergency services levy—

is to be vested in the council of the area for or on behalf of which the fire fighting equipment has been purchased or constructed.

Despite the fact that today's Rural Fire Service is a world-leading professional organisation with many paid staff who procure, control and operate the firefighting equipment and solely decide when to dispose of or transfer those assets, this provision still buried within the Act states that the local council legally owns those assets. Therefore, in accordance with the Auditor-General—I will come to that in a moment—councils are required to account for those assets on their books, which is the financial issue councils have been experiencing.

It seems an anachronism that the Act states councils are vested with these assets but, as all members know, they have no say in how, when or at what price those assets are procured. They have no say—and neither do they necessarily wish to—in where those vehicles are then stored, how they are operated or when and how they are maintained. However, I acknowledge that a lot of councils have agreements with the RFS to maintain those assets through their council workshops, either for a fee or free of charge, as their contribution to the RFS and looking after the community.

Finally, councils have absolutely no say in when the RFS decides to move various parts of equipment or the fleet around the State, either in fire season or non-fire season, or when the RFS decides, "No, that particular vehicle has passed its use-by date. We're now going to dispose of that asset." Councils do not get a say in that, and nor should they. I restate for the record that councils do not wish to have such a say. However, I hope I have painted a picture for the House of the current situation, where the legislation states one thing but the current practice is completely the opposite.

It has worked okay for a number of years, which is fine. Everyone, particularly those in the regions, has just made that situation work. However, it became an issue when the Audit Office of NSW handed down its report entitled *Local Government 2021*. I am not at all being critical of the Auditor-General; the Auditor-General has a very important role to play. The report found that 68 councils across the State did not record rural firefighting equipment in their financial statements. It stated:

The continued non-recording of rural firefighting equipment in financial management systems of some councils increases the risk that these assets are not properly maintained and managed.

I dispute that assertion because there is no question that the RFS maintains and properly manages that equipment. However, that in itself highlights the ridiculousness of section 119 (2) remaining in the Act. The Auditor-General made it quite clear to councils that unless councils accounted for those assets and then depreciated them against the Australian Accounting Standard—and the standards enforced by the Auditor-General—they would run the risk of having their accounts qualified. In practical terms, members who have been in local government know that the only real consequence of having an account qualified is that it runs a financial risk when it is necessary to borrow funds. The borrowing of funds is critical for local councils to undertake major infrastructure projects.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It's a cost shift.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I note the interjection of the member for Kiama, who said it is a cost shift. Indeed, it is a statutory cost shift; it was not intended to be a cost shift in 1997 but it has become one. It is beholden on this House to ensure that legislation reflects current practice, particularly when the current practice is correct, but also to remove that cost burden of depreciating and accounting for those assets from councils and placing it on the entity that controls and runs the Rural Fire Service, which is the State Government. That is exactly the way that the same assets are managed for Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW State Emergency Service, VRA Rescue NSW,

and indeed by extension, NSW Police Force and NSW Ambulance. All critical frontline emergency services in the State have their assets vested in the State Government, except the Rural Fire Service. That is only because of section 119 (2) of the Act. The Auditor-General quite accurately picked up that section of the Act and said that councils are legally required to account for those assets on their balance sheets; 68 councils are not and they better start doing so. That has been the catalyst to bring the legislation to the House today.

Since that time Local Government NSW, the Country Mayors Association of NSW and individual councils have been quite active in lobbying MPs. There would not be an MP in the House who has not been contacted by their local council to raise this issue, which is a big issue for the financial viability of councils. It is costing councils, even the smallest of councils, hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. It disproportionately impacts regional and rural councils. They are the ones most at risk of financial viability because they have the largest geographic areas and proportionally the most RFS assets, brigades and sheds, and therefore the most firefighting appliances and trucks. It is a double whammy, because it hits hardest the councils that are struggling the most financially. Again, there is an issue of equity here removing this provision, but there is also an issue of ensuring that the legislation matches what is current day practice.

The bill is incredibly simple—a bit like the person who is bringing it to the House—but it is elegant in its simplicity. It is very small; it occupies less than a quarter of an A4 page. The bill simply amends section 119 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 to achieve one purpose: to transfer the ownership of all assets—firefighting apparatus, buildings, water storage and lookout towers as defined in the Act—to the Rural Fire Service. The bill makes the following three amendments:

[1] **Section 119, heading**

Omit "**Maintenance and disposal**". Insert instead "**Ownership**".

[2] **Section 119(2)**

Omit "is to be vested in the council of the area for or on behalf of which the fire fighting equipment has been purchased or constructed".

Insert instead "is vested in the Commissioner".

[3] **Section 119(3), (5) and (6)**

Omit the subsections.

The amendments provide that all of the assets in the State are vested in the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service instead of the local council. Item [3] omits subsections (3), (5) and (6) from section 119, which are simply clauses that relate to the existing subsection (2) of section 119, and describe how the councils should be involved in the maintenance of those assets. Those sections are now defunct and removed, because once those assets are transferred back to the ownership of the commissioner there is no need for those sections.

The bill is simple and reflects what is current practice. I hope it brings an end to this argy-bargy about who owns and accounts for RFS assets. Prior to the Auditor-General's report there were many RFS assets which, despite the Act saying that they were vested in the council as the Auditor-General found, no-one was accounting or depreciating those assets; they were ownerless assets. They had been purchased by the RFS, used by the RFS, maintained by the local council and the RFS, disposed of by the RFS but technically were not accounted for on anyone's balance sheets until the Auditor-General came along.

Last year, in defiance of that section of the Act, 43 of 68 local councils had their accounts qualified by the Auditor-General for the 2021-22 financial year. Either they did not account for the assets appropriately, or they just gave two big middle fingers to the Auditor-General and the State Government to say that they are not going to account for those things on their books because they are not theirs. They do not buy them, they do not get to control where they go or who looks after them and they do not control who disposes of them; therefore, they are not theirs. If we were to ask anyone about that and look at the Australian Accounting Standards as per the Australian Taxation Office, the councils are right. They are only held to be wrong because we have a piece of statute from 1997 that states those assets are vested in council. Yet, as we know, they do not control them, they do not maintain them, they do not procure them and they certainly cannot and do not wish to dispose of them.

The bill is simple. It ensures that all of those assets are vested solely within the RFS. It will be required to account for those assets and their associated depreciation and costs on its books so that the burden is removed from councils. The bill will allow councils to use their ratepayer dollars quite appropriately by not depreciating assets it does not own but by delivering services and infrastructure in their local communities. This is good for ratepayers, and good for councils and their financial viability. The bill also brings in line the treatment of Rural Fire Service assets, like vehicles and buildings, with all the other emergency services to ensure they are accounted for in a consistent way. At the moment the RFS is just an anomaly sitting out there on its own and it should not

be. It is a professional, modern-day, wonderful organisation doing brilliant work like our other emergency services and its assets should be treated and accounted for in exactly the same way.

A mayor said to me the other day, "Why should our council use our ratepayer dollars to account for and depreciate an asset which we don't purchase, we don't manage and we don't have the authority to dispose of? Why does our council legally own all these vehicles when we don't own police cars, we don't own Fire and Rescue pumpers and we don't own SES rescue trucks?" They are incredibly valid questions and the answer is they should not, but technically they do because of this redundant, arcane provision buried within an Act. It was quite appropriate when the Act passed through Parliament, but it is not appropriate for what happens on the ground today. It is not just an anomaly; it is a very costly problem for country councils and their communities. I urge the House to pass the bill to reverse that.

As I mentioned, depreciation costs each council and their ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. In my electorate of Northern Tablelands depreciation costs are in excess of \$4 million across the seven councils. For some people—with respect, maybe some of my metropolitan colleagues—\$4 million probably does not sound like a great deal. In rural and remote communities \$4 million is an enormous amount of money. That money could be used to fix potholes, seal roads, re-sheet gravel roads and replace playground equipment in towns. It could make a huge difference to many rural communities with a massive backlog of assets to upgrade and maintain.

I thank Local Government NSW, which campaigned hard. It pushed very hard during the election campaign to pressure everyone who was standing for election to this place to commit to remedying the issue. President Darriea Turley and the team do a great job advocating for it. I also acknowledge and thank Mayor Jamie Chaffey, the Mayor of Gunnedah Shire, and I am not just saying that because I am an old Gunnedah alumnus—

**Mr Geoff Provost:** Former mayor.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** Yes, back when I was younger—ancient times. Jamie Chaffey is also the chair of the New South Wales Country Mayors Association, which represents over 80 councils in rural and regional New South Wales. The association provided a letter to me this morning after I met with Mayor Chaffey yesterday to brief him on this bill. I will not read out the entirety of the letter, but the Country Mayors Association has read the bill and fully supports its contents. It is what the association and its members have been asking for. Members of this House who have attended Country Mayors Association meetings would be very familiar with its call to have the red fleet issue finally fixed. I acknowledge Jamie Chaffey and all of his executive and the association's members. It is a great organisation and a great voice for councils in regional and rural New South Wales. The local government sector wants this. I am not aware of any opposition from the Rural Fire Service to the bill.

I know the bill is not a Government bill. I have been in government and sat around the Cabinet table. The discussion is always "We have this non-Government bill. Just oppose it because if it is not a Government bill we will oppose it." I just want the outcome. If the Government wants to introduce its own bill, I am happy to work with the Government on that. We just need the outcome. I urge members to look at the bill. It will only take a couple of minutes. It is very simple; it is very clean. It simply changes section 119 of the Act to make it clear that the Rural Fire Service owns these assets. It reverses the arcane cost-shifting anomaly buried deep within the Act, which was revealed by the Auditor-General.

There has been a lot of talk about financial sustainability of councils. Let us pass this bill and do something very significant right now, something tangible to help local councils with their financial viability. Let us make the Act reflect what actually happens and bring the RFS into line with every other emergency service. I thank everyone who has contributed to the bill and I urge the House to consider the bill and ensure it passes to benefit our local councils and our local Rural Fire Service volunteers.

**Debate adjourned.**

*[The Temporary Speaker (Mr David Layzell) left the chair at 10:43. The House resumed at 11:00.]*

*Announcements*

**R U OK? DAY**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Orange raised with me that it is R U OK? Day today, and he asked me if I was okay. I will defer the answer until after question time.

*Members***MEMBER FOR OATLEY****MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS****MEMBER FOR HORNSBY****MEMBER FOR ROCKDALE**

**The SPEAKER:** I say happy birthday to the member for Oatley. He is sitting there being extraordinarily well behaved, so I am going to get him a glass of water. I also wish the member for East Hills and the member for Hornsby all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have wonderful celebrations planned for the weekend. In addition, I wish the member for Rockdale a happy name day. The Greek Orthodox Church commemorates the names of people and today is the name day for Stavros, or Steve. I will stick to Steve. Happy name day to the member for Rockdale.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to representatives of the Ukrainian Council of NSW, guests of the member for Rockdale. They are Andrew Mencinsky, Marta Artemenko, Natalia Borodina, Olya Olkhovyk and Galiya Faskhutdynova. It is with great pleasure that I welcome them to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I also welcome to the Chamber members of the Rotary Club of Wallsend-Maryland, guests of the member for Wallsend. A big welcome to George in particular. I hope to see some of them after question time.

I welcome a guest of the member for Coogee, Rabbi Mendel Kastel, OAM, the chief executive officer of Jewish House. I also welcome Mrs Kastel. I acknowledge the guests of the member for Orange, visitors from St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Canowindra. I welcome Principal Ken McNamara and teachers Mrs Jenny Waters, Mrs Louise Clulow, Mrs Vannessa Fisher and students from years 3 to 6. I hope they are not too traumatised after they leave question time. I also acknowledge my guests, members of the Lake Macquarie Rowing Club.

[Interruption]

The member for Oatley gets one pass for his birthday. That is it.

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:07):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Transport secretary Josh Murray is a 20-year friend of the Premier. Has the Minister been telling Labor MPs that the Premier has hung her out to dry?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:08):** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members constantly ask for answers to be directly relevant. They could not argue that was not the most directly relevant answer they have had. Members will come to order.

**HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:08):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is rebuilding essential services and reinvesting in health workers in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:08):** I will. It is an important question for New South Wales. Our health services do an amazing job during difficult periods, particularly during the COVID-19 emergency. They worked around the clock, put themselves second and the public first, and often wilfully walked into dangerous circumstances. They did not know the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the central nervous system or the lungs and yet they fulfilled their duty as public servants regardless. The COVID surge workforce included 1,112 full-time nurses who were put into the system by the previous Government to cope with the increase in demand on emergency services, intensive care units [ICUs] and wards. Unfortunately, in June 2024 the funding for that surge workforce was to be withdrawn.

I announce to the House that the budget to be handed down next week will include permanent nursing positions in the New South Wales public health system. To put that into perspective, that is 138 additional nurses on the wards today for the Hunter New England Local Health District; 119 for the South Western Sydney Local

Health District, one of the fastest growing communities in Australia and one of the busiest health districts in the world; 109 for the Western Sydney Local Health District; 104 for the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, to which the member for Rockdale and I belong; and 99 for the Sydney Local Health District.

To put that further into perspective, if we did not make that decision, we would be asking those local health districts to run their emergency departments and ICUs without 138 staff in the Hunter area and without 119 staff in south-western Sydney. It could not have happened and it would not have happened. Those are permanent positions, which are certainly important for the performance of public health. We did not do that just to employ essential workers in those positions, although that is necessary and laudable. It also shows that we will have increased and better services for the taxpayers of this State. There has been a slight improvement in that regard—some 60,000 patients went into an emergency department and left without receiving any treatment in the last quarter, which is down from 76,000 in the quarter before. So there is slight progress, but not nearly enough. Elective surgery waiting lists have again been cut from 14,067 beyond clinically recommended to 9,142, which is still high. I am not pretending otherwise. Critical emergency case times have improved slightly, from 51 per cent to 53 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

There are slight improvements, but nowhere near enough. In order for us to get appreciable improvements in the provision of public health for the people of New South Wales, we need to invest in the workforce. We have done that in two important ways. The first change is to lift the wages cap in New South Wales. That means a registered first-year nurse will receive an additional \$2,694 per year. That is crucial for two reasons: to attract nurses to the profession and, perhaps more importantly, to keep experienced veteran nurses on the wards. That is a big change. The second change is to implement safe staffing levels in New South Wales—one nurse for four patients on the ward and one nurse for three patients in emergency departments. That will lead to a retention of nurses in our public hospital system and recruit more nurses to this essential public service. We know that we were elected to turn around the performance of health in New South Wales. That can only happen with record investment in the people we rely on to keep us safe and repair us when we are unhealthy.

#### **SYDNEY METRO CITY AND SOUTHWEST**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (11:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. In 2019 she said, "The Sydney Metro southwest is nothing more than a Trojan horse for development along the line." Does she accept that property owners close to the metro line will have an uplift in property values?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:13):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question, and the answer is yes—that is absolutely clear. The community in Sydney's south-west and the community that I represent in Sydney's inner west are thankful that on this side of the House we have taken a responsible and methodical approach to the challenges that we inherited. In fact, Sydney Metro City and Southwest was one of those challenges. That is why we instituted the independent review, headed by Mike Murdock and Amanda Yates, to look at the Sydney Metro project, not just the south-west line but also the city line and the airport line. The review will ensure that we deliver those projects efficiently and effectively, that we deliver the world-class public transport system that those communities were promised and that we do that in a responsible way for the taxpayers of New South Wales. As the member would well know, those communities are thankful that we rescued the Sydney Metro City and Southwest project because those opposite were going to cancel it. Those opposite did not know how to fix it or how to build it. They were going to cancel it.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order: Standing Order 130 is "Answer not to debate". The Minister was entering into a debate while answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** In light of the conventions of the House, it would be extraordinary for me to uphold the point of order. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The fact is that those opposite are uncomfortable about this project because they were going to cancel it. They did not know how to deliver it. Thankfully, in March the people of New South Wales decided to elect a government—

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** —that cares about public transport and about delivering an effective way to ensure that taxpayers get value for money. Yes, the residents along the south-west line will benefit hugely when in 2025 they are delivered the world-class public transport system that they were promised. This Government is getting on with delivering the public transport services that people need and deserve.

## SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:16):** My question is addressed to the wonderful Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the infrastructure backlog inherited by this Government and the actions being taken to improve schools in Western Sydney?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney, and Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:17):** I certainly can answer the question from the wonderful member for Liverpool—right back at her. When it comes to the education of our children, we all agree that we need two key ingredients. Firstly, we need a government that values teachers by ensuring that they are properly paid. We know that this Government is doing that. We have had much discussion about that this week. We know that we are delivering that, and those opposite hate it. Secondly, we need to ensure that there are schools where people live. What do we know about that? We as a government elected in March this year inherited a situation where our fastest growing communities in south-west Sydney and north-west Sydney were failed by the Liberals and The Nationals failing to build schools where they were needed.

There is a reason the member for Camden is so vocal about this issue. Many communities in Western Sydney were promised schools time and again, but they were never delivered. It has taken the election of a Minns Labor Government to actually start the work to deliver those schools in growth areas of the State, particularly in Western Sydney. We are talking about families who have been crying out for schools in Leppington, Tallawong, The Ponds and Sydney Olympic Park. They have been crying out constantly and campaigning against their own Government for the past decade, saying, 'We need schools.'

**Mr Mark Coure:** We announced it!

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** If the member for Oatley would like to go to Gregory Hills or Jordan Springs and say that, I dare him to do that. We are a government that believes in providing the public schools where they are needed, in the upcoming State budget on Tuesday we will announce a record \$3½ billion—that is billion with a B—for building and upgrading 60 new schools and upgrades in Western Sydney. For the benefit of members and the communities of Western Sydney, I am happy to say that that investment includes new high schools in Tallawong, Leppington, Melrose Park, Jordan Springs—which is very special to my heart, and those opposite said that it was not even needed; wait until that school is full—and for the communities of Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills, which are also close to my heart. Those communities were treated appallingly by members opposite when they were in government. [*Extension of time*]

I am reminded by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces that Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills were represented by a Liberal member at that point, and he could not even get through to the education Minister about that need.

**Mr Paul Scully:** That is how much they hate that area.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is how much they hate the area, indeed. He could not get through to the Minister about the need for a high school or even for the timely delivery of a primary school in that community. They campaigned, and what did they hear? All they heard was absolute silence. It is probably the same thing anyone would hear in response if they went to Camden and showed people a picture of Mark Speakman, the Leader of the Opposition. It took the election of a Labor government to deliver the high schools and the primary schools in these growing parts of Western Sydney. I remember so many times—and the member for Camden may remember this as well—when families had to hold their own press conferences to beg the previous Government for schools.

We have had a lot of debates this week about teachers and education. At one point the member for Hornsby started saying that the teacher shortage was a fairytale. Really, the biggest fairytale of all is what those opposite did to education through a lack of investment in schools where they were needed: where young families are moving in on the promise of schools. Those families have children, who—surprise, surprise—need to eventually go to primary school and, once they have finished year 6, somewhere to go to high school. The Government is proud to be delivering these upgrades and these new schools. Not only that, we will deliver a once-in-a-generation pay rise for the teachers who will be in the classrooms at the new schools at Leppington, Gregory Hills and Jordan Springs, which those opposite opposed every step of the way.

## COAL ROYALTIES

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (11:22):** I wish the member for Oatley happy birthday; I thought he was born yesterday.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr GARETH WARD:** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Government's announcements that it intends to increase coal royalties by 2.6 per cent, has the Premier been briefed on the impact this cash grab will have on household electricity bills and people's overall cost of living? If not, why not?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:22):** I will take the question on notice.

#### NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:22):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is resourcing the NSW Reconstruction Authority to better prepare communities in the event of natural disasters?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:23):** I thank the member for Lismore for her question. I acknowledge her efforts as the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for disaster recovery. She has been doing some great work with me and Minister Scully as part of that remit within the Reconstruction Authority. As members would know, the Reconstruction Authority was established in November 2022 with bipartisan support, after Resilience NSW was dissolved. That was in line with the Fuller-O'Kane report, as well as calls to do better from the member for Lismore and the then Opposition as well as members from the other side of politics.

Since 2019, we have had over 60 declared natural disasters. Combined, they have cost the State over \$5 billion. In 2022 alone, over 20,000 homes have been damaged as a result of the natural disasters that we faced. Climate change will exacerbate that further. We will see more frequent and more intense natural disasters. We will meet this by addressing the situation holistically and addressing the full cycle of a disaster response. We have to look at adaptation, mitigation, recovery and the reconstruction. We need to see this as a continuum, not just as a response after the natural disaster.

Some 97 per cent of the funding that is being used on natural disasters is spent after the event. We get much better value for money when we can do that beforehand through mitigation practices to better adapt communities and ensure that, when natural disasters occur, they are protected as best as possible so we can get them back home as quickly as possible. That is the whole purpose of establishing a body to see things across the entire continuum rather than just at a point in time. Anyone would think that members opposite would have funded the Reconstruction Authority a bit better when setting it up. Anyone would think that with an idea like this and with an acceptance that we need to look at the entire continuum—

**Mr Paul Scully:** With bipartisan support.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** —with bipartisan support, as I was reminded by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces—that we would fund it properly. Well, no. The party of the \$7 billion black hole decided that it would not fund it. Those opposite took away Resilience NSW and quadrupled the responsibility of the Reconstruction Authority, but they did not add one extra dollar. We cannot ask a new entity to do four times as much work and not give it any money to be able to do that work. That was a short-sighted and reactive approach by the previous Government, which we unfortunately saw on a regular basis. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the Parliamentary Secretary. I was pleased to join the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Premier and the member for the South Coast down at Nowra a couple of weeks ago to announce that the Minns Labor Government will commit \$115 million of funding to the Reconstruction Authority to make sure that it can get on with doing the job of creating adaptation plans and mitigation plans, which start with a State plan. Members who have been in this Chamber for a long period will know the routine. Every time we have a disaster, we set up an agency or an organisation to deal with it. It is not up to the task. Then we have a review. The review says that it was not up to the task. We criticise it. Then do the same thing over and over again. We must change that thinking. We must change the approach. We need a fresh approach, and we have seen that with the Minns Labor Government. We are looking at every step—from mitigation and adaptation to recovery and the rebuild. All along that way is the community.

We have a bit of a duo happening, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and me. We have worked out that we are not a good a cappella group, because we sang happy birthday to someone and it did not work. But we have been doing a lot of travel together. We went to the Northern Rivers, where we met with everybody that we could. We went to the Central West, where we met with everybody that we could, and we went to the Hawkesbury. We did that because we want to hear from communities. We do not sit in an ivory tower and come up with some chart or some plan. We went into communities and said, "Be frank with us, be open with us, and tell us what it is that we can do better." It was a reset of some sorts. We now have additional support with an outstanding Parliamentary Secretary. We will continue doing this. It points to a government that wants to look at



the whole picture to work with communities. We know that there will be natural disasters, but we want to get better at adapting to them and at dealing with them.

#### MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT PROPERTY DISCLOSURE

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:28):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. The Premier referred the member for Newcastle to ICAC after he apparently failed to disclose his family's property interests. Having regard to clause 10 in the schedule for the ministerial code, in addition to the normal disclosure returns, when did the Minister—if at all—give written notice to the Premier relating to her ownership of two properties in Marrickville 300 metres and 550 metres from the metro south-west line?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:29):** I thank the member for her question. Yes, I live in Marrickville. I live in the community of the electorate that I proudly represent. In fact, most members in this place do the same and live in the communities that they represent.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have declared my primary place of residence, my family home, to this Parliament as I am required to do. That ordinary return is then declared to the Premier. That is the usual process. The member also referred to an investment property that my husband and I used to live in, and I have declared that property as well, as I am required to do.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order: The Minister is not being relevant to the question, which was: Outside of the ordinary disclosures, did the Minister write to the Premier given that she has stated in this House that property prices have risen?

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order. I will hear from the Leader of the House.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The point of order has no substance or merit. It breaches Standing Order 131. It is interfering, repetitive and vexatious. Mr Speaker, I ask you to deal with the member for Vaucluse for interfering with a directly relevant answer given by the Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not hear from the Manager of Opposition Business on the point of order. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I appreciate that the member for Vaucluse is new to this House.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I am very happy to explain how the ministerial code works. It refers to the importance of a Minister notifying the Premier if they have a conflict of interest. I absolutely agree. How does a conflict of interest arise? It arises if someone has a private benefit. Now, what is a private benefit? A private benefit arises if someone has a financial or other advantage. However, that does not include if that merely rises because the person is a member of the public or a member of a broader demographic group of the public, and is held in common with, or is not different in nature and degree to, the interests of other members—that is, whole-of-community benefit. That is what we are talking about, isn't it? We are members of the representative Parliament and I represent the community that I live in.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time. Members will come to order. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the second time. Members will behave with decorum. I call the member for Cabramatta. The member will be heard in silence.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (11:32):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please inform the House on how the Minns Labor Government has delivered on its commitment to conduct an independent and holistic review of health services?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:32):** I thank the member for Cabramatta for his hard work and dedication to the people of south-west Sydney. He has certainly hit the ground running in this place. Well done to him. Last night I did one of my weekly unannounced visits. I picked a hospital just outside my area in Hornsby; it is one or two kilometres away from my electorate of Keira! I went to see the emergency department [ED].

**Mr Matt Kean:** I would have cooked you dinner.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He would have ended up in the ER.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The member for Hornsby would have given me mushrooms. I met Andrew, the emergency department director and a number of nurses and allied healthcare workers. It was great to be there. One of the first things I asked them was: "What are the challenges you are facing?" So far at all times I have asked that question, people all say the one thing: staffing. I think most members on this side of the House, who are deeply engaged with their hospitals and healthcare services, hear that loud and clear. What the staff did not say to me last night, which was unusual given that their local member made the decision, was: "Geez, we really didn't need those 1,112 nurses and midwives. Minister, we certainly do not want those. We are so overstaffed here at Hornsby, the last thing we need is 1,112 nurses or midwives." It is unusual. They did not say that.

One of the nurses was at the nurses and midwives conference that the Premier and I spoke at recently and they said they were really appreciative of our reform to start to move to a safe staffing model—one to three in ED and one to four on the floor will make a big difference. How good is today's announcement? Ninety-three direct mail-outs will go around. Members should not worry; we have got one for each of their communities. They are coming. Every duty MLC is doing it. Staffing is important because we need to make sure we have the income and funding to deliver the health services of the future. I know the member for Cabramatta understands that one of the ways we are going to do that is through the special commission of inquiry. [*Extension of time*]

It is the first inquiry of its kind since 2008 when Peter Garling handed down that landmark report into New South Wales acute health services, known colloquially as the Garling report. Our report and inquiry will go down to finite detail on the way in which we fund health in New South Wales, the biggest area of public expenditure, and look for every single opportunity to deliver additional funding to health services and healthcare workers to ensure that across our communities in every electorate—whether they are regional, rural or metropolitan—we can deliver better services.

Some people will ask: Why would a Minister want to do such an independent and landmark inquiry into their own portfolio and area of expenditure? That is because I want to know that every single time a taxpayer hands over a valuable dollar to this Government we are doing our very best to improve health care right across New South Wales. I will work every single day to implement any recommendations both before the final report and at the end of the final report to make sure that our community gets the very best health care for the funding they provide. I thank the Health Services Union for being very strong advocates for that type of reform. I also thank the team at NSW Health and the healthcare workforce of New South Wales, who understand that that reform is overdue and who, more importantly, will benefit from its findings, which will deliver better services and more staff for the people of New South Wales.

#### **SYDNEY METRO CITY AND SOUTHWEST**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (11:38):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Did the Minister receive legal advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] on whether the Premier was required to authorise her to act on the Sydney Metro City and Southwest and on managing any conflict, notwithstanding her property interests, including an investment property?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Under Standing Order 128, members cannot ask a question that contains an imputation or an allegation of impropriety. If those opposite want to assert some conflict of interest, they are entitled to put it expressly and specifically to the Minister. They cannot do it by innuendo that contains an imputation. If the member for Miranda wants to ask a legitimate question, she should put a fact to the Minister and give her an opportunity to answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear the start of the question.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order: The start of the question was "Did the Minister receive legal advice from DPC legal about a matter?"

[*Members interjected.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will not argue the point. I will hear from the Manager of Opposition Business on the point of order taken by the Leader of the House.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** And then it specified the matters in respect of which there was the question, "Did the Minister receive legal advice?" That is entirely appropriate.

[*Government members interjected.*]

I am wondering whether the same rules will apply to members on both sides of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Government frontbench members will come to order. The member for Keira will come to order. I will hear the rest of the argument from the Manager of Opposition Business so that we can move on.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** There is no imputation. It was a basic question of fact: Did the Minister receive legal advice on a matter which is specified in the question?

**Mr Chris Minns:** Why don't you read the full question?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Mr Speaker, you have the question in front of you.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The member for Miranda asked the question. She will repeat the question and then I will rule on it.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Don't change it.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS:** I am not changing it; there is no need to.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the original question and then I will rule on it.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS:** The question was this: Did the Minister receive legal advice from DPC legal on whether the Premier was required to authorise her to act on the south-west metro in managing any conflict, notwithstanding her property interests, including an investment property? It is all matter of fact.

**The SPEAKER:** I believe the Minister is able to answer the question. It is not an unreasonable question and the Minister can deal with it quickly, if she so chooses. It is up to her. I ask the Minister to answer the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:41):** Firstly, I absolutely reject the premise of the question. I have answered this question in multiple forms over multiple days. I am very happy to inform the member for Miranda what I informed the member for Vaucluse of earlier, which is that a private interest does not arise if a person is a member of the public or a member of a broader demographic group of the public and the interest is held in common with or is not different in nature to the degree of the interests of other members, that is, the whole-of-community benefit. That is the fact.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Minister is arguing the matter rather than answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is answering the question.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question was about whether she received legal advice.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat or depart the Chamber. It was a loaded question. The Minister is answering it. I have given a concession to the Opposition in allowing the question. Opposition members should respect that and allow the Minister to answer.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I definitely would not ask for legal advice from Opposition members because their tactics are absolutely terrible—let us be honest. The fact is that they are asking me a question about a process.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** They are stuck in the weeds. They cannot ask me questions about public transport because they left it in a total and complete mess for us to clean up.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** For example, they cannot ask me about the Mariyung intercity fleet because those trains were supposed to be on the tracks by now. They were supposed to be travelling to Newcastle, the Central Coast, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: I ask that the Speaker direct the Minister to return to the leave of the question, which was about whether she sought legal advice.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I answered the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister said that she has answered the question. The answer is concluded.

#### **TASKFORCE MAGNUS**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:43):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister please update the House on what the Government is doing to keep our community safe from organised crime and on the important work of Taskforce Magnus?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:44):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. He is such a dedicated MP and he is incredibly invested in the NSW Police Force. I thank him very much for his assistance. I am very pleased to report again to this House that Taskforce Magnus is out there doing an absolutely fantastic job of protecting our community from organised crime. Just some months ago I stood here and said that I had full faith that Taskforce Magnus would act swiftly and decisively to tackle the worrying spike of violence that we have seen on our public streets. Nobody wants to feel unsafe, whether it be in their own community or at the shops. It sickens me—and I know we all feel the same—to think that these criminals can wreak havoc on our streets without a thought for the safety of the broader public. It is just not on.

I inform the House that the 100 police officers we seconded to this work as part of a dedicated workforce have been working hard to make that a reality, and 70 elite detectives have been working around the clock to track down criminals and bring them before the courts. I am very pleased to report to the House its most recent statistics. There have been 217 arrests, with a staggering 1,444 charges laid—33 arrests were made in the past week alone—and 170 firearm prohibition order searches have been conducted.

**Mr Paul Scully:** That is the Toplace investigation.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It is. Thirty-five firearms and 1,206 rounds of ammunition have been seized, including 22 rifles, seven handguns, one shotgun, five replica firearms and two tasers. Twelve knives have been seized, along with 20 vehicles, and there will be more on that to come. Various large quantities of illegal drugs have been seized, along with almost \$1 million in cash. Nobody can say that we are not taking forceful action against organised crime in this State. I take the opportunity to thank Taskforce Magnus and the NSW Police Force for the methodical work they have done over the past few months. They vowed to hold those who are responsible for these violent acts to account, and that is exactly what they have done. Of course, the NSW Police Force tracks down these criminals, and it does a fantastic job, but I also make mention of the New South Wales Crime Commission, which does a fantastic job as well. [*Extension of time*]

I am pleased to say that we will be committing \$2.1 million of investment into the Criminal Assets Confiscation Team. We will be seeing the Lamborghinis on the back of the tow trucks sometime soon. As the member so aptly put it, this team is like the police Raptor Squad but with calculators. Criminals use their street-level thugs to prosecute their drug wars against each other while they make fortunes on the inside drug trade.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I also bring to the attention of the House another taskforce. It is quite a sensitive taskforce—"taskforce lava".

**Mr Paul Scully:** Taskforce lava?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Yes. The member for Lane Cove will know what that is because it is a Latin word, and I think the member for Willoughby will know what it is because he has an MBA, and he has been to London and New York. That taskforce was established to find this missing person. I say to the House that if anybody knows the whereabouts of this man, please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. I must say, it is becoming a very critical time. He has been missing for so long. I want to let the House know that if it comes to it I will definitely consider a sizeable reward.

#### REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:48):** My question is directed to the Minister for Seniors. In good news, the Government has now backflipped on the cancellation of the Regional Woman of the Year Award.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on two calls to order. The member for Oatley is on three calls to order, the member for Wahroonga is on three calls to order and the member for Hornsby is on two calls to order. I will not hesitate to put more members on calls to order. I have had enough. The member for Dubbo will ask his question.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** As Minister for Seniors, is the Minister working to get a backflip on the regional seniors travel card or, like yesterday, has she been left in the dark?

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer. I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:50):** I thank the member for Dubbo for his question. I am really pleased to answer it, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the 320,000 regional

seniors travel cards that are still in the community able to be used and being used. The Government has paused new applications for the regional seniors travel card.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The reason we have paused new applications is the incredible mismanagement of the regional seniors travel card under the previous Government. The regional seniors travel card was so poorly designed that in my electorate of Charlestown people who lived on one side of the street were able to get it and people who lived on the other side were not. That is not the only problem with it.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance. The question was whether the Minister for Seniors is going to ensure that the regional seniors travel card is kept, or it is going to be cut.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Minister is being relevant to the question. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the second time.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The question is totally incorrect, and I am taking the time to clarify the facts on the regional seniors travel card. The fact is that new applications have been paused because of the total mismanagement of the regional seniors travel card in the past. On one side of the street in my electorate people could get it, and people on the other side could not. Not only that but some people were able to use the regional seniors travel card for other things. It was very rare indeed, and I totally acknowledge that. It was not the majority; it was certainly the minority. But people were using it to buy scratchies and cigarettes, not just to pay for travel-related expenses.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Members opposite let them. They were quite happy for that rorting to happen.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** When we have a \$187.5 billion debt, with a \$7 billion interest bill—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: It is again on relevance. Is she actually going to stop the cuts? Is she going to backflip on this one or not?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired.

### RAIL NETWORK

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:53):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the action the Government is taking to repair our rail system?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:53):** I thank the member for Blacktown for his question. It is a very important issue. I know his community talks to him regularly about it, as do all of our communities because we know they need reliable public transport services. We have been left to fix the mess that members opposite left when it comes to our trains. We are embarking on one of the largest programs of rail maintenance ever undertaken in our State's history, the Sydney Rail Repair Plan. We have to do it because the independent review into Sydney Trains headed by Carolyn Walsh found that the former Liberal-Nationals Government left our train network in a mess. We have had breakdown after breakdown, and we have had passengers left stranded again and again.

The Walsh review found that our train network was no longer resilient or reliable, and that the 2017 timetable that the former Government implemented meant that the maintenance our network needed could not happen. Equipment that should have been replaced, refurbished or inspected could not be replaced, refurbished or inspected because there was not enough time to access the tracks. We need to get this done because otherwise we will not have essential services running reliably again. When disruptions happen somewhere on our network, the rest of the network will continue to suffer.

This is not easy. We know that maintenance and track work cause disruptions on weekends, and we thank passengers for their patience. We are doing our best to minimise inconvenience, but it is inconvenient for them. We have said many times in the House that we are committed to delivering a reliable public transport system. That is what our citizens expect, and that is what our Government is working to deliver. We cannot fix every problem on our rail network. It is over 100 years old. One million people use it each and every day. But through our Rail Repair Plan we are getting on with fixing the job that those opposite left us. In just 16 weekends of work, we have removed 49 per cent of the targeted high-priority defects across the network.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Say it again.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It was 49 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister does not need assistance from the member for Canterbury. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That is 937 of 1,916 targeted high-priority defects. To give members a comparison, under normal circumstances, on average, we only remove 600 high-priority defects a year. But we have removed 937 in just 16 weeks. [*Extension of time*]

In addition, we have also completed 111 of the 144 targeted electrical inspections through Sydney Trains. We have done 370 kilometres of track grinding, and we have removed 46 speed restrictions. That is like removing a pothole from a road. It means that our rail traffic can run faster, and that is good news for passengers. I thank our workers. It is not easy work, but it is making a real difference. We know that members opposite blamed their failures in transport on transport workers. People will not see that from us.

Rather than going to war with our transport workforce, we are looking to cooperate. We are looking for solutions rather than conflict. That is why I am really proud that, just over a month ago, I signed a memorandum of understanding with our five rail unions, with Sydney Trains and with NSW Train Link that underpins the introduction of major change. It clears the way to unblock programs that those opposite had given up on, like maintenance on our railways and the Rail Repair Plan. It will pave the way for digital signalling and the introduction of electronic train control systems. The systems will improve safety and allow us to increase the number of services on the network without laying even an extra metre of train line.

We are also working with our unions to design our future rolling stock, because we know what happens when a government does not talk to the workforce and buys trains from overseas. That is the approach members will see from this Government, because we are committed to delivering a world-class public transport system. We will do that with the cooperation and support of our essential workers to deliver the services that the people of New South Wales need.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Sydney. Government frontbench members will come to order and allow the member for Sydney to ask his question.

#### **PYRMONT PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:58):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. How is the Government working to improve public transport options for the Pyrmont community?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:59):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question and his interest in public transport services, particularly those servicing the community he represents. Earlier this year I was pleased to join him in meeting the Pyrmont Peninsula Public Transport Forum. Members would think a community so close to our city would be well served by public transport. However, as representatives of the forum have explained, there are gaps in our public transport provision for this part of Sydney. I share the view of both the forum and the member for Sydney that public transport is critical for supporting the residents of Pyrmont and the thousands of people who work on the Pyrmont peninsula.

The forum has raised concerns with me about changes to bus routes and services under the former Government. The changes made to the 389 service on the former Government's watch meant that Pyrmont passengers who commuted to King Street and Elizabeth Street were no longer able to do so. In December 2021 the route was modified to turn right onto York Street and then left onto Druitt and Park streets, no longer operating via Elizabeth Street. The forum has asked that an additional stop be installed to replace the stop that was removed. The 389 passengers also lost the Murray Street stop in Pyrmont. Prior to January 2020, the 389 terminated in front of the Maritime Museum on Murray Street. However, when the museum undertook redevelopment works the driveway where buses previously turned around was blocked. As a result, the 389 was modified to do a turnaround, making a loop via Pyrmont Street; it now terminates in front of The Star on Pirrama Road. Transport for NSW continues to investigate options to resolve these issues. I look forward to informing both the member and Pyrmont residents of progress in that area.

We also know that the forum is keen to make sure that our ferry services better provide for the residents of Pyrmont, particularly the F10 ferry service. We are committed to adding the additional stop that has been requested and is required. Some additional work needs to be done to assess the impacts on the ferry fleet, timetable and wharf infrastructure. We want to make sure it is accessible for everybody. As with all communities across Sydney, the people of Pyrmont deserve public transport that is connected, accessible and reliable. Transport for NSW is currently undertaking work to develop a Pyrmont-Ultimo transport plan that will deliver for the future transport needs of people living on the Pyrmont peninsula. The plan will be on exhibition in coming months following more detailed conversations with the City of Sydney and other key stakeholders. We will continue to work together to update the Pyrmont Peninsula Public Transport Forum as to the progress.

**SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:02):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on what important decisions have been made to increase the delivery of affordable housing since taking office?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:03):** I am happy to provide an update. I thank the member for Penrith for her question. Coming from Penrith, she understands all too well the struggles that people face in finding and securing affordable housing and the current pressures on family budgets. I congratulate her on her advocacy. The housing crisis that this Government must confront is considerable. Over the past five years, less than half of Sydney council areas met their housing targets. Vacancy rates are low. Communities have too often opposed sensible developments in their areas, which has contributed to a supply shortage. The former Government did nothing to champion affordable housing that will help more young people and key workers get a home. As a result, house prices are up, rents are up and more households are in housing stress across Sydney and regional New South Wales.

In the past six months the Minns Government has taken more steps to address housing availability and affordability than the previous Government did in its last six years, when it had two Ministers who had two goes each at Planning. Even with a do-over, neither of them could get it right! Why? It is because members opposite have not met a housing proposal they did not want to oppose. There is a reason they call themselves conservatives: They want nothing to change. The Minns Government has taken an unashamedly pro-housing and pro-affordable housing approach to tackling this problem. Why? It is because we are pro-worker and we are pro-families, and that is the approach to take to deal with this issue. We have commenced an audit of government land to identify surplus land. That land will have a minimum 30 per cent social, affordable and universal housing target.

We have provided additional self-assessment powers to government agencies that deliver housing. We have provided an additional planning pathway to Landcom—a great government-owned developer of homes—when it puts forward projects including 50 per cent affordable housing. We have increased the amount of social and affordable housing in the Waterloo redevelopment, up from 34 per cent under that mob opposite to 50 per cent under the Minns Government—an uplift of 500 houses. We have reduced minimum lot sizes for government agencies to develop dual occupancies. That means there will be more homes created in more areas. We have announced bonuses for private sector developers that deliver at least 15 per cent affordable housing as part of their proposals. We have made affordable and social housing exempt from State infrastructure contributions. Not only that, we have introduced the first Rental Commissioner in the State to make renting fairer. That is good work. *[Extension of time]*

The CEO of the Housing Trust, Michele Adair—who is known to many in this place—described these reforms as some of the most positive developments in relation to affordable housing in years. They will deliver more affordable homes, more social homes and more market homes—but there is more on the way. Recently the shadow planning Minister was in the media. It is a rare event; I think there have been more sightings of the Loch Ness monster than this guy in the media.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Who is it?

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Who is it?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I cannot remember his name. He was attacking the Government for outrageously considering using a parcel of government land for housing. He said that the Liberal Party's own policies were not relevant because it is not in government. This is a guy who has already complained about additional density and additional height bonuses. "How will the communities cope?" he asks. Well, how do they cope without housing? They need homes. The shadow Minister fails to understand that his Government let things get so out of hand that it is now a shared responsibility of everyone in this place, whether they are members of the Government, the Opposition or the crossbench. We must deal collectively with the housing crisis because housing for people should be above petty political pointscoring. However, when members think about petty political pointscoring on housing, there is no greater example than the birthday boy himself, the member for Oatley—or Each-Way Coure, as he has come to be known. He has not only backed a housing development in Riverwood but also opposed the same development!

**Mr Ryan Park:** Not the same one!

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Exactly the same development. What changed? His electorate boundary changed! That sort of low-rent politics will not lower rents or help people get into homes. The people of New South Wales deserve better—and they will get it next week in the budget.

*Announcements***PARLIAMENTARY LIONS CLUB**

**The SPEAKER:** On behalf of the member for Gosford, I encourage all members and parliamentary staff to join the Parliamentary Lions Club barbecue on the rooftop garden at 12.30 p.m. All money raised will go to Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre in Redfern, supporting women and girls escaping domestic violence. It is a very worthy cause. I hope all members can get along to the barbecue.

*Documents***PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER****Correspondence**

**The SPEAKER:** I table the following advice from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser:

- (1) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to Mr Victor Dominello, former Minister, dated 28 June 2023.
- (2) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to Mr Victor Dominello, former Minister, dated 4 September 2023.

I order that the documents be printed.

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the earlier resolution, I invite the Premier to move his motion.

*Motions***UKRAINE CONFLICT**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:10):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Stands with the people of Ukraine in their fight to liberate their country from the Russian invasion.
- (2) Offers its continuing support to the 1,500 Ukrainians in New South Wales who have been displaced by the war.
- (3) Condemns Russia's illegal, immoral and unprovoked war, which has caused thousands of deaths and the displacement of 14 million Ukrainians.

On 24 February 2022 Russian military forces entered Ukraine from Belarus, Russia and Crimea. The invasion started 567 days of violence and suffering for the people of the Ukraine. That is 567 days of air sirens, missile strikes, burning buildings, burying loved ones and, in many cases, fleeing from imminent danger. For 567 days the brave people of Ukraine have been fighting back to drive the invaders out of their country. As a government, and perhaps more importantly as a democracy, we have a duty to condemn this illegal, unprovoked war. Ukraine, like every other nation, has a right to territorial sovereignty and peace. Its citizens have a right to enjoy their freedom and to practice democracy, to live according to their customs and traditions. This war has destroyed millions of lives.

Just over a year ago I met with Ukraine's ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Vasyl Myroshnychenko. When the war started the now ambassador was working in Kyiv. He was forced to cross into Romania on foot before flying to Australia to begin his term as the ambassador. I think that kind of grit and determination exemplifies Ukraine's fight for freedom. While his story is extraordinary, his experience of crossing borders and of fleeing on foot, unfortunately, is not unique. Fourteen million Ukrainians have been displaced by the war. As these terrible events continue to unfold, we are working with the Commonwealth Government to facilitate the resettlement of Ukrainians to New South Wales.

Australia has granted 10,000 visas to Ukrainian nationals since early 2022 and in New South Wales 1,500 Ukrainian nationals have arrived since 23 February 2022. We say in the halls of Parliament, in private meetings, wherever we meet them, that they are welcome and we are proud to have them. Many have already settled and are making a wonderful contribution to the Australian community. It has been great to see these new arrivals embraced by the State's existing vibrant Ukrainian expat community. They have been warmly welcomed into the wider community in the State by all Australians.

Last week I met with Mr Daniel Wolody and Andrew Mencinsky, the president and vice president of the Ukrainian Council of NSW. I expressed—I hope not prematurely—on behalf of the entire Chamber, all 93 of us, our willingness to stand with the people of Ukraine in this struggle to condemn the illegal military aggression and to support the Ukrainian diaspora. In New South Wales we have a proud history, and admittedly across party lines, of helping people when they are in crisis. Since 2015 more than 35,000 refugees have arrived in New South



Wales. By common consent, they are part of a vibrant, dynamic and peaceful State that they call home. We must never take this peace for granted.

I extend a message of support from the Parliament to the people of Ukraine who are still fighting this very day to liberate their country from the Russian invasion. We do not glorify war; we want peace. But nobody could look at the conspicuous heroism of the leader of Ukraine and his courage, dedication and resilience, exemplified by all members of the Ukrainian resistance, with nothing but awe and respect for their resistance over the past 500-odd days. Russia's war is a gross violation of international law. Our nation's military aid to Ukraine must be seen in light of our commitment to a rules-based international order.

Finally, no parent should have to put their child to bed in fear of an aerial bombardment, but that is a reality millions of people are living with right now in Ukraine, a democratic country. We call upon Russia to end this illegal and immoral war and allow for peace to be restored. On behalf of the Government, the Legislative Assembly and the people of New South Wales, we are proud to stand with the people of Ukraine.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:15):** On behalf of the Opposition, we support the motion and join with the Premier and the Government in extending our affirmation that this Parliament stands with Ukraine in its continued struggle against Russian occupation and in the fight to liberate its territory. Since 24 February last year, 19 months ago, Ukraine has stood fast in the face of invasion and diplomatic coercion. For 567 days Ukrainians have woken to face another day of air raid sirens, artillery attacks and the all-encompassing pressure that arises from living so close to the frontline of a contested occupation.

Shortages of the essentials—food, water and medical supplies—and power outages have been a daily occurrence. In the midst of this indefatigable spirit stands the indomitable figure of Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, who has given exemplary leadership to his nation and his people. Facing an existential threat to Ukraine, its citizens have shown extraordinary resilience and fortitude. It is hard to encapsulate in words the disparity between our comfortable surroundings here in Parliament and the reality on the ground in the streets and towns of Ukraine.

I acknowledge the help that has been extended to Ukraine to date by the Federal Government, including the provision of military equipment to the Ukraine forces; and the imposition of targeted sanctions on over 1,000 entities involved in Russia's defence, technology and energy sectors and individuals closely connected to the Kremlin. We would always welcome more. New South Wales has welcomed over 1,500 Ukrainian refugees who have been displaced by the war. I acknowledge and thank the efforts of all government agencies involved in their safe transportation and resettlement. I offer the Opposition's continuing support for resettlement programs and to individual refugees. In particular, we extend our deep thanks and appreciation to the Ukrainian Council of NSW for the crucial resettling service it provides.

Among the many stories of the collective diaspora who are now thriving safe and secure in Australia, I place on the record the individual cases of Valeria and Olga. Valeria and her family evacuated from Kyiv in the opening days of the invasion. They arrived here in March last year. Since then, they have found stable accommodation and they are determined to contribute to the community that has welcomed them with open arms. Valeria is studying English, working towards rebuilding her family's successful landscaping business here in Australia. They are thrilled that their now 10-year-old, who was homeschooled in Ukraine because of his anxiety, is now attending a local school and making friends with his classmates for the first time.

Olga and her two daughters have also found refuge in Sydney after fleeing home in Odessa. Like many Ukrainians who have left the country, Olga's friends have been a core support for her and her girls. Having migrated to Australia 20 years ago, they encouraged her to seek asylum and have allowed her family to live with them in Sydney for the first six months. With a 20-year career in Ukraine as an accountant, Olga quickly found part-time employment as a finance administrator. She is working towards acquiring the English language skills that she needs to have her overseas qualification and experience recognised in Australia. Those two stories highlight the success of Australia as a multicultural nation that has welcomed displaced refugees to our shores for many years.

I thank all Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Australia for their bravery and their resilience, and for their pride in adapting and giving back to their local communities. The Opposition stands with the Government and the Parliament in condemning Russia's illegal, immoral and unprovoked war, which has caused thousands of deaths and displaced millions of Ukrainians. In line with existing calls from Australia's international partners, we demand that Russia disband its operation and withdraw immediately from Ukrainian territory.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS****Reference**

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

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

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in its report entitled *Investigation into the conduct of the then member of Parliament for Wagga Wagga and then Premier and others (Operation Keppel)*, dated June 2023, and make recommendations for further action to be considered by the House, the Speaker, the Clerk and the Government, as appropriate.
- (2) As part of the inquiry, the committee is to examine any relevant matter arising from the commission's report entitled *Investigation into the conduct of the local member for Drummoyne*, dated July 2022.
- (3) In undertaking the inquiry, in accordance with Standing Order 311, the committee shall have leave to confer with the Legislative Council's Committee on Privileges.
- (4) The committee shall consult the Speaker, the Clerk and the Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption as appropriate.
- (5) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the terms of reference for the referred inquiry.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions***HUNTER VALLEY BUS ACCIDENT**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:22):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the tragic bus crash at Greta, in the Hunter Valley, on Sunday 11 June 2023.
- (2) Sends its condolences to those families and communities affected.
- (3) Recognises the incredible work of our emergency services workers and all other workers and volunteers who assisted during the response and recovery of that event.

Many people will know that on the night of 11 June 2023, 30 minutes before the first King's birthday public holiday to have been celebrated for some time, a terrible and tragic accident happened in the Hunter Valley. On a roundabout above an expressway, a bus carrying 35 attendees from a recent wedding was travelling home, trying to get from the Hunter Valley vineyards to Singleton, when it fell onto its side while traversing the roundabout. Subsequently, 10 people died, 25 people were injured and things have been difficult since that point. I gave notice of this motion shortly after that happened because I wanted to talk to this motion at a time when the grief of all members in this place and of the community was not quite so raw. I remember distinctly trying to speak to this particular event in the week after it had happened, and I found it incredibly difficult.

There are stages of grief when tragic events happen, and we need to all work through our grief. Everyone works through their grief in their own way and people experience grief in different ways. I made the point in a speech some months ago that for most of the community, including me, our grief was vicarious because we did not personally know any of the guests at the wedding or the two people who had been married that afternoon at a joyous occasion. But there was certainly a strong sense of grief, a pall of grief, a tsunami of grief across the community that was felt by community leaders and the community at large.

Since then a couple of really significant events have taken place. On 15 July I was very happy to join my colleague the member for Upper Hunter and the Premier, Chris Minns, at the first AFL game for the Singleton Roosters since the bus crash. The Singleton Roosters took on the Cardiff Hawks in the women's game and Bateau Bay in the men's game. Why are the Singleton Roosters and AFL such an important part of this story? Because, of the 10 people who died in that particular crash, eight were attached to, connected with or directly played for the Singleton Roosters AFL team. The bride and groom, who were not in the bus crash, were also players and were connected to the Singleton Roosters. For approximately four weeks after the bus crash, they had not been able to get back onto the field, and that is entirely understandable. It was quite daunting but also quite thrilling to be at the return to the oval for those players and that club.

I recognise that on that particular day the Premier announced that \$1.7 million would be injected into that particular club for things like referees' change rooms and for commentary or scoring facilities, and most importantly, perhaps, for female change rooms and the like. I note that at the time there was some language around that particular \$1.7 million being potentially referred to as a memorial. I think that the Premier, at the media

conference on the day, went to lengths to point out that this is a sporting infrastructure grant and commitment, which the club itself may choose to use as some sense or type of memorial, but it is not the memorial that will ultimately recognise the bus crash. We are still working through that process. I said at the time that we will go through the journey of where a bus crash memorial will be placed and what it might look like with the families, those directly affected and the local communities. That is a work in progress.

To that end, I mention two local council mayors who did a fantastic job of representing their communities in those difficult days. I talk about Mayor Jay Suvaal from Cessnock City Council and Mayor Sue Moore from Singleton Council. I particularly mention Sue because, while the bus crash occurred inside the Cessnock local government area, the real grief and hardship was felt in Singleton. Sue was a real leader at a time when the community needed a leader, as were the member for Upper Hunter, the Premier and so many elected officials across the Hunter, because the Hunter bleeds as a family and as a single unit.

On the day of the crash an enormous number of our emergency services workers were asked to drop what they were doing and head off to that tragic event. Some of the scenes, the injuries and what took place in and around that tragic event that day has had an incredible impact. Shortly after the event, a number of those emergency service workers were off on workers compensation to try to grapple with what they had participated in. I report to the House that approximately 10 workers continue to be on workers compensation today.

I do not want to use this debate as a platform, but the workers compensation system as it is at the moment suggests that those workers will need to get back to work pretty quickly, otherwise it will have a financial impact on them. Changes will be brought to this House in the future that will tackle that problem, and I hope we can get some across-the-board support for a solution. These emergency services workers—these heroes—who have seen and dealt with terrible things and who are not fit for work should not be penalised for not going back to work because they are simply not ready. I hope the House agrees to the motion. Tragedies happen to communities sometimes. I am so impressed by, and we are blessed to have, the emergency service workers that we have in this State.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:30):** I thank the member for Cessnock for bringing the motion to the House. The Hunter bus crash was a significant event in our area that affected a great number of people, directly and indirectly. It is fair to say it probably affected the whole nation. People are really touched by bus crashes, because buses are a main way to get around, whether it is to go to school or to travel to work. In this case, the tragedy occurred while people were travelling back from the joyous occasion of a wedding. With 10 people lost and another 25 taken to hospital on the night of 11 June, it is the worst bus crash we have seen since 1994.

There have been bus crashes in the past in the Hunter Valley, including the Mangoola Road bus crash in 1986. It was my wife's school bus; luckily, she was not on it that day. But that is still remembered today in that area with the tragic loss of two people. In 2012 there was another serious bus crash in which the life of a child was lost. That tragedy is still acutely felt today. We remember that very well. This tragedy will also be remembered for a long time. The Hunter bus crash has affected a large number of people. It is amazing to see how many people who had a link to it. The Singleton mining community, the Hunter Valley mining community and our sporting associations, including a large number from Victoria, were all affected. The Singleton Roosters and the Warrandyte Cricket Club were also affected as the groom was a former player. Everyone who worked in the Mater Hospital knew one of the victims, and they were all touched by the tragedy.

It was a challenging time, and we needed leadership. The whole of New South Wales and Australia was affected. I acknowledge the leadership of Premier Chris Minns, who stepped up. Indeed, the whole Cabinet did amazing work leading the community. I also acknowledge the member for Cessnock, who did great work on the ground to support the whole community. The Minister for Health did amazing things with the health department. His leadership not only helped them to manage their own grief after losing a young doctor who was a victim but also helped the first responders. The Premier's leadership in acknowledging the efforts of first responders was amazing as well.

The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads worked tirelessly during the initial tragedy. Since then, she has continued to show her compassion for the victims. The Minister for Families and Communities was also involved with setting up the disaster centres to manage the community. While we might not have seen many people walk through the door, we did achieve the goal of providing support for the community. The towns of Singleton and Branxton felt supported in the early weeks when grief was all around us. Mayor of Cessnock Jay Suvaal and Mayor of Singleton Sue Moore both did amazing work to support those centres and the general community. It was a very difficult time for everyone involved.

I acknowledge the leadership because, as the member for Cessnock mentioned, we need to come together when things like this happen. If there is one thing that the people of New South Wales should know, it is that

when there is a tragedy everyone in this House will step up because we are here as representatives of our communities. I hope members do not have these tragedies in their communities but, if they do, they have the mettle to step up. In this case, we saw a great effort from members on both sides of the House.

It is important that we know the effect of the tragedy on our emergency services. What happened that night will be inquired into, and other information will come out in the criminal case. But when the night was broken down into words and experiences, the toll it had taken on emergency services became abundantly clear. It also showed how well they performed. They had truly gone above and beyond the call of duty. There were a lot of people there. Our emergency services are made up of both those with experience and those who do not have so much experience, but they all performed exceptionally. We should be proud of our emergency services. As we go forward, we will talk more about seatbelts on buses. As in the past, we would like to seek the positive from a tragedy like this. But I say to the victims, rest in peace. To the families, our hearts bleed for you. To the entire nation, thank you for your support during this time.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:37):** I thank the member for Cessnock for bringing the motion to the House and giving members the opportunity to speak on this important matter. It has deeply impacted his community, along with the communities represented by the member for Maitland, who is in the Chamber, and the member for the Upper Hunter, from whom we heard an eloquent contribution. I thank him for that.

The bus crash in Greta on Sunday 11 June 2023 was truly a shocking tragedy that claimed the lives of 10 victims and forever changed the lives of countless families and friends. The scale of this tragedy left the Hunter heartbroken. Indeed, it left the nation heartbroken. Many of the victims were locals, with ties to the community and sporting groups. The tragedy has been felt so deeply by the community that it will take years before it fully comes to terms with this horrific event. I offer my deepest condolences to all of the families and friends of the victims of this tragic accident.

I spent time in the community with the member for Cessnock and my other parliamentary colleagues in the days after the accident. I met directly with police officers who responded to the accident. Many of the police first responders were locals and part of the community themselves. The professionalism and dedication shown by the members of the NSW Police Force, NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service in responding to the incident was inspiring. Many of the first responders were not scheduled to work but showed up because they knew that there was a significant incident and they wanted to help. Many stayed far beyond their shift and scheduled work hours. I thank them for their tireless efforts, which did not go unnoticed.

In response to the crash, police commenced a large-scale emergency response, which included officers from the Hunter Valley, Maitland, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah police districts. I acknowledge a number of the police involved in the operation, including Sergeant Kristen Rafter and the Crash Investigation Unit; Acting Assistant Commissioner Tracy Chapman, who kept the community informed; Matt Zimmer, who was in charge of the scene; and Assistant Commissioner Dave Waddell for his contribution and leadership. I also give a shout-out to the family liaison officers. I met with them and they spoke with me. They assisted the families in the immediate aftermath of the crash and have continued to do so to ensure that, many months later, the families are okay.

I cannot speak highly enough of the efforts of our first responders. I had the opportunity to visit and thank local police officers, along with the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Cessnock, the Premier and others. It was lovely. We thanked the police officers and all other first responders for their work, and assured them that the Government is committed to helping them with their mental scars from confronting such a horrific scene. This tragic accident will not soon be forgotten by the people of the Hunter, and the Government stands ready to support the community to deal with the aftermath.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (12:41):** I express my support for the motion moved by the member for Cessnock concerning the tragic bus crash that occurred in Greta, Hunter Valley, on Sunday 11 June 2023. That incident, which unfolded following the wedding of Mitch Gaffney and Maddy Edsell, turned a joyous occasion into a devastating tragedy that marked one of Australia's worst traffic disasters. It resulted in the loss of 10 lives and left 25 people injured. As the member for Myall Lakes, I stand in solidarity with the families and communities affected by this heart-wrenching incident. I acknowledge the remarkable efforts of our dedicated emergency services workers and all other individuals who contributed to the response and recovery efforts.

On that night, lives were forever changed as the community was confronted with an unimaginable tragedy. Families, friends and loved ones have had to bear the heavy burden of loss, and the scars of the event will undoubtedly linger for years to come. My husband works within the mining community in the Hunter Valley and had to travel home from work after hearing the news. He was so upset. It was difficult to watch his pain over the loss of his friends—a loss in such tragic circumstances. It was hard to comprehend why this had happened. The

pain is immeasurable and the grief is shared by us all. We will continue to stand with the community and to support and comfort it in any way we can for as long as we are needed to.

It is crucial that we recognise the extraordinary efforts of our emergency services workers and the countless volunteers who played an instrumental role in responding to and recovering from this devastating event, including our first responders; Traffic and Highway Patrol Command and police rescue teams from Hunter Valley Police District; NSW Ambulance paramedics; Fire and Rescue NSW; NSW Rural Fire Service helicopter pilots and staff; patient transport; and hospital staff, particularly from John Hunter Hospital, Maitland Hospital, Calvary Mater and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Every volunteer who stepped forward to assist demonstrated great courage, dedication and selflessness in the face of sheer adversity. They worked tirelessly to save lives, provide comfort and restore hope during a tragic time.

In the midst of such a heartbreaking event, we are reminded of the strength and resilience of our communities. I acknowledge the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Cessnock for their strength for their communities at this time. We see that, even in the darkest of hours, the spirit of unity and support shines brightly. I know that every member in this place is united in our continued support for the families and communities affected by this horrific event. We pay tribute to the heroes among us, from the emergency services workers and volunteers to the families, communities and survivors. They remind us that in the face of tragedy we can find hope, strength and the power to heal.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:45):** I contribute to debate on the motion of the member for Cessnock, and thank him for moving it. I was thinking back to my contribution to debate on the condolence motion about the tragedy, when I spoke of the ongoing impacts for people. It is appropriate that we are having this debate on R U OK? Day. The media moves on, but members must understand that we are still with those people who were on the bus, their families and their community. Last night I spoke with family members. In fact, I spoke recently with you, Mr Temporary Speaker, and I appreciated that opportunity very much. I told the families that anger, grief and trauma will come in waves. As a government, we must be careful that we respond to people's anger not with defensiveness but with love and compassion for the pain and grief that they continue to experience on an ongoing basis. One family member said, "I just wish I could be angry again because I had that pull to make me keep going."

I say to the victims and families that we are all behind them. In the moments when they feel like they cannot go on and they are absolutely exhausted from grief, the community, the Government and the Parliament are behind every one of the victims and their families. We need them to keep reaching out because there are new territories in this situation. People will have needs that we have not yet experienced or understood. The member for Cessnock spoke about workers compensation for the emergency services workers. I know from speaking to the family members last night that some people who were involved the incident still cannot work and have written off the whole year because they cannot focus on anything other than their loss or their recovery after seven weeks in hospital, with more surgeries to come.

I pay special tribute to Sue Moore and Jay Suvaal, the two local mayors. I spoke to Sue on the weekend and she raised the need to support Mitch and Maddy, and to understand that there are victims who died in the crash, victims who were on the bus and who survived the crash, and also those who have lost so much because of the crash. Those victims need all the love, support and practical assistance that we can give them. I am working with them to see what we can do. I focus on the R U OK? message because however they feel is okay—there is no time frame for recovery from this accident. It takes the time that it takes for every member of our community to recover. While we should be asking, "Are you okay?", we also need people to be honest and say what they need because the whole community, the State and, indeed, the nation want to help them. Even the bus companies that I speak to want to do more.

The Minister has established a position on safety through the bus taskforce, and there is more to come. We want to know what people think will work and what they think we can do to make sure an accident like this never happens again. Most importantly, we want them to stick around and remember that, no matter how dark their days are, we are with them every step of the way.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:49):** Today we acknowledge and remember the tragic event that struck at the heart of the Hunter Valley community: the bus crash in Greta on Sunday 11 June 2023. On that fateful day, 10 lives were lost, leaving behind families, friends, and communities in deep mourning. As Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism, I thank the member for Cessnock for moving this motion to recognise the incredible work of our emergency services and all other workers and volunteers who assisted during the response and recovery of that event. First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and communities affected by that tragedy. The pain and loss they have experienced are immeasurable, and our thoughts are with them during this difficult time. We recognise that many of the victims

were not just passengers on a bus; they were integral members of their communities, with strong ties to local sporting groups and a shared sense of belonging.

In the face of such a devastating event, it is crucial to acknowledge and appreciate the incredible work of our emergency services workers, as well as all the dedicated individuals and volunteers who rallied together during the response and recovery efforts. Local police officers were on the front line during this tragedy. They responded swiftly and with unwavering dedication, providing assistance and support to the victims and their families. The response was a collaborative effort, involving officers from various police districts, including the Hunter Valley, Maitland, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah. Their collective response showcased the strength of our law enforcement agencies working seamlessly together in a time of crisis.

In addition to our Police Force, the operation was strengthened by the presence of Police Rescue, the Traffic and Highway Patrol, NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service. Their collective efforts ensured that the injured victims promptly received necessary medical attention. We must also recognise the leadership and guidance provided by Acting Assistant Commissioner Tracy Chapman and Assistant Commissioner Dave Waddell, under the leadership of the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Hon. Yasmin Catley. Their tireless efforts ensured that the response operation ran smoothly and efficiently, and they kept our community informed throughout the process. The work of police family liaison officers cannot be overstated. They provided invaluable support to the affected families in the days and months following the crash, offering comfort and assistance during an incredibly challenging time.

As we reflect on this tragedy, we must remember the strength and resilience of our communities. Our emergency services workers, volunteers and all those involved in the response and recovery efforts displayed remarkable courage and dedication. While we cannot erase the pain caused by this tragedy, we can draw strength from the unity and resilience of our community. Together, we will honour the memory of those we have lost and support those who continue to endure the aftermath of this tragic event.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:53):** By leave: I acknowledge and make a brief contribution to the motion moved by the member for Cessnock, whose personal experience with the tragedy must have deeply affected him. Mr Temporary Speaker, I acknowledge your contribution to the emergency that happened in June. In keeping with the theme of this motion, I want to make sure that both of you are okay. I speak partly from a professional position, relating to my previous profession, and also in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health. I have been through that experience professionally, and I know how lonely it is in an emergency department, a delivery suite or a ward in a country hospital in the middle of the night, where you feel so isolated. I can only imagine the scale of that emergency that occurred on the night of 11 June.

I experienced something on a much smaller scale when travelling from Canberra to my home on a 40-degree day. After going around a bend just before Nelligen, between Braidwood and Batemans Bay, I came across an overturned car. There were bodies everywhere and only one ambulance. I had to go through a triage with minimal resources. Suddenly—like life flashing before your eyes—the value of our State health system was on display as one helicopter landed at one end of the road and another landed at the other end, and paramedics came out to assist. It was not just that. Off-duty nurses and people who had no other professional experience were stopping to help those people. Every day I drive down that highway where those 10 lives were tragically lost. Country members are familiar with seeing white crosses and flowers on the sides of roads, and we have all had the experience of driving past a car with a tarpaulin over it, knowing that a great tragedy has taken place.

Our thoughts are always with the first responders: paramedics, ambulance officers, police, and Fire and Rescue. Even though it may be our profession or we are volunteers, we are humans. We are touched by the sight of suffering and those things that we should not have to experience. Some of those people say, "That's my job. I just forget about it and move on to the next day." I cannot think that that is a normal human reaction. Deep down, I can only feel for those people and commend their responses. Whatever went on in the various hospitals where those poor victims went, I commend the doctors and nurses who assisted them. Whether their family members were injured or their family members died, I think the community were reassured by the human comfort people received in those last moments—the presence of someone holding a hand and telling that person it is all right, even though it is not.

That human comfort needs to be extended to our first responders and all the people who have dealt with this tragedy. I hope that in the future, whether it is a single vehicle accident or a single fatality, let alone these huge fatalities that occur, the health system and our social system have the ability to help members of the community who respond to those incidents and also those who lose their loved ones at those times.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:57):** In reply: If it is okay with you, Temporary Speaker Layzell, I start my reply by saying that this is not my motion; it is essentially our motion. It is the motion of two MPs who worked through this closely together. I thank the members who participated in the conversation. The member for

Bega just told us about that personal experience. I wonder what it is like for him, with so much training, when he pulls up at a car crash. Most of us would feel quite helpless, and no doubt that sticks in his mind.

I thank the member for Mount Druitt, who reminded us about the role of the commissioners and their leadership, as did the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. I thank the member for Swansea. On the Sunday six days after the event, the Minister used Cessnock Police Station to host a big gathering of all of the emergency workers. I found out on that day that they do not get together that often, but they got together that day and we had a lovely barbecue. All of those leaders, assistant commissioners and commissioners put down whatever they needed to do on that day and attended the get-together. I know that that was deeply appreciated by all of the emergency service workers. As a little piece of trivia, I found out how many emergency service workers marry workers from different emergency services.

It was a lovely day. It was lovely to see them introducing themselves to each other when they might only normally see each other on a job. They could actually have a nice conversation—or a sad conversation, but in a nice way—over a sausage burger and a bottle of water or something like that. The member for Maitland rightly pointed out that today is R U OK? Day. The member for Bega touched on it as well. I have to say that, for a while after that event, I was not okay. I did recognise that. I think that is the first thing. You have to recognise it. Sometimes you articulate it to people around you. And sometimes it means you want some company; sometimes it means you want some distance. That may be difficult for all those around you who want to help, but it is important to articulate that. I commend the member for Maitland for talking about that.

I would never have thought, in the midst of the grief at the time, that tragedy would come knocking on the door of the member for Myall Lakes, 200 kilometres away, through her husband. It is just incredible. People go off to work and they know people at work and they have friendships through their work. Sometimes they are impacted despite the distance. The member's story links a little with that of the member for Bega regarding the work that the mine rescuers do. They are highly trained. They see part of their mission as not just service in the mines but service at those times when there might be a car crash or a bicycle accident or some other event where they need to step up. It was a great reminder. I commend the entire mining community. I know those big companies stepped up at the time and they looked after their workers. I hope the husband of the member for Myall Lakes is doing okay.

I mentioned the member for Swansea and the barbecue at Cessnock. Her leadership team in the NSW Police Force is just incredible. Its members give you so much confidence whenever you are around them. I thank them as well. The member for Upper Hunter made possibly one of the most important points of the day. He said that, when there is a tragedy—whether it is a flood or a fire or, in this instance, a bus accident—we all put down our tools in this place. We come together and we all turn up. The people of New South Wales should rest assured that, if it happens on their doorstep, we will be there together arm in arm and we will be there for them. I acknowledge the staff in our electorate offices, who took a tremendous amount of calls. I am sure it happened in Maitland and other areas. Finally, on Saturday 21 October at 11.00 a.m. the next stage of our grieving will commence at Singleton Showground. It is a memorial service. The entire public are invited to attend. A number of members will be there. May all of those who died on that occasion rest in peace.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

### *Motions*

## **WORLD OCEAN DAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:03):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Friday 8 June was World Ocean Day.

- (2) Notes that 11 different marine and environmental groups joined together on World Ocean Day to support the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals' proposed legislation to prevent offshore coal, gas, mineral and petroleum mining, and exploration in New South Wales waters.
- (3) Notes that our local communities have been long opposed to offshore drilling for gas.
- (4) Recognises that the Opposition is committed to ensuring our coastline remains pristine and protected.

Oceans cover more than 70 per cent of the Earth's surface, providing us with life-sustaining resources, shaping our climate and offering a sanctuary for an astonishing diversity of marine life. We know that the health of our oceans is inextricably linked to the health of our planet as a whole. Our oceans have some of the most incredible marine ecosystems, which are precious and also easily damaged. Overfishing, pollution and climate change threaten the delicate balance of those vast marine ecosystems. World Ocean Day aims to rally communities around the world to raise awareness about the importance of our oceans and encourage actions to preserve and conserve them. It serves as a reminder of the vital role that oceans play in regulating our climate, providing food and livelihoods and supporting diverse ecosystems.

Many World Ocean Day initiatives involve beach clean-ups or coastal restoration projects and other conservation efforts. In recognising World Ocean Day this year, I also acknowledge the incredible work of the Sydney Institute of Marine Science [SIMS] for its efforts in marine conservation. I am very fortunate that the institute calls my community home. One of its key projects is the Living Seawalls project, which includes an amazing new invention of panels fixed to man-made structures along our harbour. It is now being rolled out in harbours around the globe. The panels mimic natural features such as rockpools and crevasses. They allow for a variety of marine life to thrive in what would otherwise be urban environments. The institute also recently released over 400 endangered baby white seahorses in Chowder Bay in my community. The team at SIMS has reported they are doing well so far. I know they have a day coming up soon for the community to check out the seahorses in their underwater hotel.

This year I was grateful to spend World Ocean Day with a number of my colleagues—some of whom are in the Chamber today in support of the motion—the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Pittwater, the member for Vacluse and the member for Manly, and a range of organisations that care about our oceans and our environment, including Australian Parents for Climate Action, Surfers for Climate, Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action and 1 Million Women. On that day the Liberals reaffirmed our commitment to introduce legislation that would put a stop to offshore coal, gas, mineral and petroleum mining in New South Wales waters. I acknowledge the member for Pittwater, who is in the House today, for all of his work in preparing that legislation and introducing it to the House. I look forward to it coming back to this place for consideration, and I will be supporting it.

But why are we opposed to offshore coal, gas, mineral and petroleum mining off our beautiful coastline? Why are we choosing to take a stand on it? The NSW Liberals know that New South Wales boasts some of the most breathtaking coastal landscapes in the world, with our golden beaches and our pristine waters. Offshore drilling is notorious for the disastrous consequences it can have on marine ecosystems. Oil spills, leaks and accidents can lead to catastrophic damage to marine life, fisheries and coastal habitats. Surveying activities such as seismic blasting as close to a few kilometres off our coast could also take place for those operations. We know that marine life is abundant in that stretch of coastline. I have seen many photos recently of different dolphins and whales, but there are also seals, penguins, rays and sharks. Seismic blasting in particular can have a devastating effect on those marine species, with the barrage of noise causing hearing loss and disturbing some of their natural behaviour such as navigation, communication, and feeding and breeding cycles.

We also know that offshore drilling is inconsistent with public opinion and what our communities expect of us. Time and again local communities in our electorates and many others across New South Wales have told us that they are opposed to offshore drilling, particularly PEP 11. The fact that the area that the PEP 11 licence covers is over 4½ thousand square kilometres is concerning to many. That region stretches from Manly to Newcastle. It is such a vast area of pristine marine ecosystems. Those ecosystems are all threatened under the shadow of PEP 11. Our beaches and coastal regions are not just a source of natural beauty, although we do love them for that, and they are not just important for the tourism industry, although they are the backbone of that sector in many areas.

Visitors from all over the world come to Australia and New South Wales to enjoy our gorgeous beaches and coastal waterways. We know that offshore drilling jeopardises the tourism sector, which provides countless Australians with a livelihood and contributes significantly to our economy. We must not be swayed by the promise of potential—not confirmed, but potential—short-term economic benefits that any offshore drilling may offer. The potential for environmental damage, the long-term consequences of climate change and the threat to our vibrant coastal communities far outweigh any potential temporary financial gains. Prior to the recent State election, when the Liberals were in government we committed to ending PEP 11 off the coast of New South



Wales. We did this because it is the right thing to do. It is the right policy outcome for the people of New South Wales and for the marine ecosystems off our coast.

We listened to our communities and we backed in their views. We listened to the science and the evidence, and we backed in that advice. The New South Wales Liberals are still committed to ensuring that our coastline remains pristine and protected, and we will work to ensure that happens. Obviously, we are working to ensure that happens through legislation in this place, and I call on Labor members to recognise the importance of such legislation and support it. World Ocean Day is the perfect global initiative aimed at promoting awareness, education and action to protect our oceans and ensure their sustainability for current and future generations. We can all come together as individuals, communities, organisations and parliaments—even members from different parties can come together—to take concrete steps to safeguard our precious oceans and what our oceans do for our health, wellbeing, environment and future.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:10):** I thank the member for North Shore for bringing this motion to the House to highlight the importance of World Ocean Day to the people of this State and the planet. I thank the organisers of World Ocean Day and the people in the United Nations who support it, including the youth advisory committee, which really drives the agenda for World Ocean Day. I think they would like me to acknowledge their aims. They state:

World Ocean Day rallies the world for action on 8 June and throughout the year. We work in partnership with youth leaders and organizations, zoos, aquariums, museums, conservation and community organizations, and a huge range of other diverse organizations and businesses from all sectors in a growing global network. Together, we effectively engage the public, inform policymakers, and unite the world to protect and restore our one shared ocean and climate. World Ocean Day belongs to all groups and individuals, collectively, everywhere. It's about how, by working together, we can create a better future with an abundant ocean and a stable climate.

In that spirit, we welcome the opportunity to highlight the importance of World Ocean Day in this Parliament. However, my colleague the member for Gosford will move an amendment to the motion to bring it back to what it should be focused on, and that is recognising properly the importance of World Ocean Day—the way it is used to build consensus and better understanding in the community and the idea of working together and building agreement across the board to make sure we do all we can to protect our world's oceans and improve the climate of the planet.

In that regard, it is a little disappointing that the motion has been used to support a piece of legislation that is currently before the House, which I will talk about in a minute. Some would say the motion has a partisan tone. We will address that with an amendment, which my colleague the member for Gosford will move. I ask members to support that amendment because it is important that the House sends a clear message that we support the ideals of World Ocean Day. We want to work together in a spirit of consensus, rather than use the event for partisan or political gain. This Government acknowledges the significance of World Ocean Day, which provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the benefits we derive from our oceans and our collective responsibility to manage them sustainably for future generations.

Members should be aware that in 2008 the United Nations General Assembly adopted World Ocean Day as a day that should be recognised, and it set up the World Ocean Day Youth Advisory Council to drive the agenda of World Ocean Day across the globe. In New South Wales the Government's focus is on managing our magnificent coastal and marine environment. That is so much a part of our way of life in this State. Let us face it: Most of us in this State live in the coastal environment. The management of our coastal areas can be challenging. Improving our coastal environment is about supporting initiatives to help all levels of government as well as industry and the community play their part in conserving our coastline and marine environment.

That is why, at the environmental Ministers meeting the day after World Ocean Day, this Government agreed to strengthen Australia's marine protection and identify shared marine and coastal protection pollution abatement and restoration actions to include in a national sustainable ocean plan. The Government will work positively with the Australian and other State and Territory governments to develop and deliver the national sustainable ocean plan by 2025. As a new government, we will look at what can be done in New South Wales as work on the sustainable ocean plan progresses. I encourage all members in this place to engage with their communities about the development of that plan and to take whatever action they can to make a positive contribution to the development of the plan.

We are committed to the sustainable management of our network of six marine parks and 12 aquatic reserves, which represent around 35 per cent of the marine estate in this State. I note that in her contribution to debate on the motion the member for North Shore referred to the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023. The member will be well aware that on 29 June this House referred that bill to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning for investigation. The remit of that investigation was for the committee to investigate any constitutional and unintended

consequences of the bill, whether there are any other ways to achieve the intended outcomes of the bill, enforcement and compliance issues, and the environmental impacts of offshore drilling. The committee will report its findings by 21 November this year.

That being so, it would be entirely premature for this House to pass judgement on that bill, as this motion does today and as suggested by the member for North Shore. I also bring to the attention of the House the current New South Wales offshore exploration and mining policy, created on 23 February—so only this year—which I am sure the member for North Shore is aware of. The policy does not support the exploration and mining for minerals, coal or petroleum in New South Wales waters for commercial purposes. That is the current policy of the State. I assume the member for North Shore still supports that. Government members are doing a bunch of things as we get our feet under the desk to improve our environment and live up to the objectives of World Ocean Day.

I note that this House has already referred the bill that was mentioned in debate to a committee, and that those opposite seek to interject during my contribution. The House has made a decision about how to handle that bill, which was referred to in debate on the motion. My colleague the member for Gosford will move an amendment that seeks to return the motion to what it should be about, which is promoting World Ocean Day for the betterment of the planet.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (13:17):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the motion. I thank my friend the member for North Shore for raising this important matter. On World Ocean Day I was in Manly with members representing the electorates of Manly, Pittwater, Cronulla and North Shore. We joined 11 environmental, community and sporting organisations to reaffirm our commitment to the oceans and the environment. We are getting on with the job of doing what our communities expect, such as introducing legislation to prohibit offshore drilling in New South Wales waters and putting nails in the coffin of PEP 11. The member for Pittwater introduced the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023, and I thank him for the work he has put into that. It is a great shame the Minns Government delayed the passage of the legislation by referring the matter to a committee. I am on that committee, and I will be holding the Government to account.

While we were disappointed the legislation could not pass the House earlier this year, I am hopeful it will pass early next year because it is important legislation. In New South Wales, we are truly blessed to have some of the most pristine beaches and waterways in the world. As the member for Vaucluse, I will stake the claim, although it may be disputed, that Bondi Beach is the best in the world.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** I'm afraid not.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** That may be another debate. The New South Wales marine estate is one of our State's most significant natural resources. It includes around one million hectares of estuary and ocean, with more than 1,750 kilometres of ocean coastline, 6,500 kilometres of estuarine and coastal lake foreshores, 826 beaches and 44 offshore islands. All of us in this place know the importance of our marine estate, whether you measure its importance in the tourism dollars estimated at around \$15 billion annually, or whether you place its significance in the cultural importance it holds for Indigenous Australians and communities throughout New South Wales.

I know many in this place and beyond measure the importance of coastal communities through their childhood memories—of going to the beach, catching up with friends, trying to go fishing or catching a wave. Our way of life in New South Wales is intrinsically linked to our marine estate. It is part of who we are. The Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW, which was commissioned by the former Government, succinctly stated:

... the NSW marine estate is owned by all people and has to be managed for all people.

From grassroots to government, every one of us has an important role to play in protecting our oceans, not just for the benefit of today, but for generations to come. I am proud of the fact that the former Coalition Government was at the forefront of innovative ocean policy, from the introduction of the NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 to the launch of the first ever NSW Blue Carbon Strategy.

Last year the Coalition Government committed more than \$180 million to continue to fund projects that protect the State's iconic coast and estuaries, and that support stronger coastal communities and industries. It banned lightweight single-use plastics, and we are already seeing how those bans are helping our marine estate. New data released recently by Seabin shows that the number of plastic straws floating in Sydney Harbour is down by 37 per cent since the introduction of the single-use plastic bans last year, which is a great result. The former Coalition Government also commenced one of the largest harbour restoration projects of its kind in the world. There is so much work to be done. I commend the motion to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:21):** In June this year the United Nations World Ocean Day celebrated the theme "Planet Ocean: Tides are Changing". The United Nations Secretary-General asked, "Humanity counts on the ocean. But can the ocean count on us?" More than six million people live within 50 kilometres of the New South Wales coastline. This Government recognises that the coastal and marine environment is essential to our way of life, culture and identity in New South Wales. We also acknowledge the challenges associated with the management of our coastal and marine areas. Members on this side of the House are committed to supporting initiatives to help all levels of government, industry and the community to play their part in conserving our coastal and marine environment. That is why at the Environment Ministers' Meeting held on the day after World Ocean Day this Government agreed to strengthen Australia's marine protection and identify shared marine and coastal protection pollution abatement and restoration actions to include in a national sustainable ocean plan to be delivered by 2025.

In contrast to the Opposition, Government members are deeply committed to the sustainable management of our network of six marine parks and 12 aquatic reserves, which represent around 35 per cent of the marine estate, and in which mining cannot ever occur. We also recognise there is much more to do. That is why we are supporting ocean restoration and further action on marine wildlife by continuing to deliver the innovative Seabirds to Seascapes project. Seabirds to Seascapes aims to restore marine ecosystems and wildlife in Sydney Harbour, support the recovery of penguin and seal populations across New South Wales and empower the community to actively manage the New South Wales marine environment into the future. The project is being delivered in partnership with the Sydney Institute of Marine Science and Taronga Conservation Society Australia. Seabirds to Seascapes has already made incredible progress. Some highlights include monitoring seagrass beds in Sydney Harbour; the tag and release of seals, including Skip the seal, who travelled more than 10,000 kilometres from Sydney to Tasmania; and the Great Big Little Penguin Count, which kicks off this month.

The Government also recognises the dedication and hard work that local government and local communities have been putting into the preparation of their coastline management programs to manage their coastal environment. We recognise the work of all of our community groups in coming together to protect our oceans. I support the motion with the foreshadowed amendment.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (13:25):** I thank the member for North Shore for moving the motion. For all the crocodile tears that we see from members on the other side of the House, the only people in the Chamber right now who voted to protect our oceans around World Ocean Day were the member for North Shore, the member for Vacluse, the member for Terrigal, the member for Lane Cove, the member for Kellyville, and the member for Drummoyne. The only people who voted against our oceans in June around World Ocean Day were the member for The Entrance, the member for Gosford, the member for Leppington, the member for Coogee and the member for Canterbury. For them to say that we do not have a serious record on ocean protection is frankly hypocritical.

Not only that, but this is also the group of people who voted to refer a bill to a committee to inquire into the environmental impacts of offshore gas exploration mining. I went to the Terrey Hills kindly recently, and I read the students a book about the impacts of gas exploration on the oceans. Even the preschoolers knew the environmental impacts of gas exploration mining on our oceans! But those opposite need an inquiry costing tens of thousands of dollars and taking up experts' time to inquire as to the environmental impacts of offshore gas exploration and mining. They can protest as much as they want, but the reality is they sit on their hands having done nothing for our oceans whatsoever.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Typical northern beaches.

**Mr RORY AMON:** It is typical northern beaches, because on the northern beaches and in the eastern suburbs, we care about our oceans and waterways. We appreciate them because we see them every single day.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** That is why you lost seats!

**Mr RORY AMON:** I will keep surviving and thriving. The Liberal Party has a strong record on protecting our oceans. The Government we led had, as at the end of last year, banned more single-use plastics than any other government in the nation. Banning single-use plastics means healthier waterways, healthier oceans and a healthier environment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Canterbury will come to order. The member for Pittwater will be heard in silence.

**Mr RORY AMON:** It is time for the Labor Government to get on board with preserving our waters and our oceans. When we debated referring the bill to stop offshore gas exploration and mining, I said, "If we do this, steps will be taken to progress offshore gas exploration." It was quite sage foresight from me at the time. As sure as night follows day, this month market announcements were made by the owners of Petroleum Exploration

Permit 11 licences that they were progressing steps to mine offshore gas. One has to wonder, notwithstanding the Government's official stated policy, whether the mining interests of its union mates are dictating its policy and its delay and preventing it acting on this matter.

It is the Opposition that has led on the issue of PEP 11, and it is the Opposition that has brought a private member's bill to this place, notwithstanding those opposite attending protests and circulating petitions. The member for Gosford stood with Anthony Albanese at the time and said, "We oppose PEP 11." Where was the Government's bill? Nowhere. Where was its action? Nowhere. Where were the steps taken to protect oceans? Nowhere. If the Government was really serious about this issue, it would vote for the motion. They would support it.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:29):** I appreciate the motion that the member for North Shore has brought to the House today, but I propose an amendment. I move:

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

- (1) Acknowledges that Friday 8 June was World Ocean Day.
- (2) Notes that 11 different marine and environmental groups joined together to celebrate World Ocean Day.
- (3) Notes our local community's commitment along the New South Wales coastline to ensure they remain pristine and protected.
- (4) Recognises the importance of ocean health.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It being 1.30 p.m., debate is interrupted in accordance with the resolution of the House. I set down resumption of the debate for a later hour. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:31):** I continue my contribution to debate on the motion of the member for North Shore regarding World Ocean Day. As someone who is proud to represent the Gosford electorate and who, as a sailor, loves the ocean with an absolute passion, I acknowledge the member for Pittwater's earlier contribution. We have a fantastic seal colony that lives in his electorate but comes to swim in the gorgeous Brisbane Water on a regular basis. Between our two electorates we have wonderful Lion Island, a place of significance to Aboriginal people that is home to a beautiful fairy penguin colony. The oceans are alive and well on the coast of New South Wales, especially between the electorates of Gosford and Pittwater.

This Government acknowledges the significance of United Nations World Ocean Day and the fact that the management of coastal and marine areas remains challenging. Our saltwater environments, including world-class beaches and vibrant marine ecosystems, have always held a special place in the hearts of all people of New South Wales. They are not just natural wonders but also cultural and recreational hubs that connect us to our coastal heritage and inspire a sense of stewardship for these invaluable treasures.

The people of New South Wales cherish coastal and marine areas. At the meeting of environment Ministers the day after World Ocean Day this Government agreed to strengthen Australia's marine protection, and to identify shared marine and coastal protection pollution abatement and restoration actions to include in a national Sustainable Ocean Plan by 2025. As a new government, we know we need to look at what can be done in New South Wales as our valued coastal and marine ecosystems respond to a changing climate.

As someone who did a couple of Sydney to Hobart yacht races between 2009 and 2011, the slight rise of ocean temperatures even in that time was quite frightening. From then to now there has been such a significant rise in those temperatures that it is clear it is time to act. In the recent Environment and Heritage Group-led EnviroPulse Survey, only 29 per cent of respondents thought that government was performing sufficiently to conserve biodiversity on land and in waterways in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** In accordance with the earlier resolution, the House will now proceed to Community Recognition Statements.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **CLANCY DAY**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:34):** Clancy Catholic College's Clancy Day took place on Friday 25 August. As part of Clancy Day, I was honoured to attend a prayer service and investiture of the college leaders for the 2024 school year. Jonathan Caprarelli and Ariel Mazzetti were appointed college captains. I congratulate Jonathan and Ariel on their elevation to this position and wish them all the best as they lead their school for the next 12 months. Jonathan and Ariel will not be alone. They have a comprehensive leadership team behind them, including vice-captains Gabrielle Barilla and Andre Paceskoski, Catholic life leaders Mary Azzi and Joshua Berry, leaders of learning Jeremy Bonanno and Jorja Suga, co-curricular leaders Benjamin Lovell and Bianca Quilter and wellbeing leaders Cristina Issa and Lachlan Pham. I congratulate all the leaders on their new

roles. They serve as an example to their school community. I also congratulate outgoing college captains Nicholas and Carla on their tenure and wish them well in their HSC.

#### **RETIRED AND FORMER POLICE ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:35):** Recently I was delighted to attend the Retired and Former Police Association Central Coast branch meeting with retired Inspector Irene Juergens, a good friend. The meeting was hosted by chairman Geoff Talbot. I congratulate the branch and its members for all the great work they do looking after the ongoing welfare of retired police officers and police widows on the Central Coast. In addition, I highlight the outstanding work of our current serving policemen and policewomen at both the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes commands. Especially, I note those serving in the current Strike Force Raptor, who are doing an amazing job dealing with the scourge of drug crime. I congratulate those officers for the great work they are doing, which is making a significant impact in stopping the insidious spread of drug crime on the Central Coast and throughout New South Wales. Once again, I thank those brave men and women in blue on the Central Coast. They do a great job every single day in keeping our community safe.

#### **CASSIE VOYSEY**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (14:36):** There are many talented sportspeople scattered throughout the Heathcote electorate. One of those sportspeople is Cassie Voysey. The Engadine resident has forged quite a reputation as a thrillseeking downhill mountain bike rider. It would take far more time than I have been allocated to list all her achievements. However, they include silver and bronze medals at the 2015 Cannonball Festival; four silver medals at the 2016 Cannonball Festival; four gold medals and one silver at the 2017 Cannonball Festival; one gold and three silver medals at the 2018 Cannonball Festival; and one gold, one silver and one bronze medal at the 2018 Crankworx events in Rotorua and Canada. She was crowned Queen of the Mountain at the 2019 Australian Interschools championship, an event she has competed in since 2015. She was second at the national Australian championships in 2021. The former Heathcote High School student has collected a raft of medals and places at various other events, including first place at the National Downhill Series in 2023. I congratulate Cassie.

#### **PALMERS ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (14:37):** I offer my congratulations and thanks to the Palmers Island Public School P&C. Recently I attended the school's Spring Fair and Fete. What an event it was. The grounds were chock-a-block full of face painting activities, jumping castles and food stalls. There was a pie-in-the-face competition, where I volunteered to cop a cream pie in the face. Well done, Craig—you are a top shot! All the talk on the day was about students coming to Sydney the following day to watch and support one of their fellow students, Joseph Novicky, in the 100-metre butterfly at the national titles in the pool at Homebush. Young Joseph not only made the trip to Sydney but also won the national event. In doing so, he has inspired a school and a valley. He was also the feature story on *7NEWS Sydney*, so he is now famous. I congratulate Joe on his performance in the pool. I am sure we will hear more about him in the future. You have done us all proud, mate.

#### **PATRICIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (14:38):** Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield recently marked its seventieth anniversary—70 years of excellence in education, sports and giving kids a chance to achieve their dreams. The college also welcomes many kids from disadvantaged backgrounds who are mentored by positive role models and always taught to give back to help make the world better. I was one of those kids, and everything I do for Fairfield stems from life lessons taught by teachers such as Gary Hamer, Michael Kelleher, Mim Andriano, Mark Kambas, Anthony Chidiac, Bruce Carr, David Walker, Lisa Strazzeri, William Bourke, Layla Mardini, Sandra Fellows, Michael Bilton, Natlene Misfud and many more. When we are kids, we do not tend to appreciate how much teachers sacrifice to help make our lives better and often we never get to thank them. I take this opportunity to thank them now. Special acknowledgement also goes to the current team at the college, including Peter Wade, Jackie Daniel, Rachel Quirk, Kerry Logue, Fiona Ahad, Anna Facer and Anthony Ndaira. Well done and keep up the great work.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH SOFTBALL**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (14:39):** Congratulations to the Manly Warringah under-16 girls' softball team, which last month won the New South Wales State Championship at Blacktown International Sportsspark after a stellar undefeated season. This awesome team also won the State championship last year, making them back-to-back champions. The girls on the team work super hard, usually training 15 hours to 20 hours per week to achieve these kinds of results. Special congratulations to the six girls on the team who have

been selected to play for the New South Wales under-16 softball team, which will represent New South Wales in the national championships in Victoria in January next year. Best of luck to all of them.

#### **CHRIS BERRY**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:40):** I recognise Chris Berry from Mollymook. Chris Berry is 59 years young and was selected to represent Australia at the outrigger IVF World Long Distance Championships in Samoa last week, and won gold. Chris was part of a six-man squad and this was his debut row in green and gold. The race was two 12-kilometre laps of the course. After the first lap the Aussies were sitting in fourth place but powered home to finish 500 metres in front of their closest rivals. Chris was grateful for the support he received from everyone in Australia. He appreciates the support from his family and is very proud of his team. The victory was hard fought in 36-degree heat with 90 per cent humidity, up against a strong group of international rowers. To win was a great reward and worth all the effort. Congratulations, Chris.

#### **NORTHOLM GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (14:41):** I recognise the fortieth anniversary of one of the best schools in my electorate, Northholm Grammar School. Established in 1983, it is situated on 10 hectares in the rural village of Fiddletown. In March 2019 Chris Bradbury was commissioned as the fifth and current principal of Northholm. Chris is doing a great job with the school, and this is reflected in its impressive academic results. Northholm Grammar's flexible academic curriculum is provided for students from kindergarten to year 12 and is combined with Christian values. It includes a house system, tutor groups, leadership programs and specialist counsellors. Over the years, the school has produced some outstanding sports alumni, including Wallaby Matt Dunning, and his brother Casey Dunning, who represented Canada in rugby union. Others include Julia Hargreaves, who represented Australia at the 2012 summer Olympics in equestrian; Molly Taylor, a professional rally driver; Craig Lewis, who represented Australia at the 2004 summer Olympics in baseball, winning silver; and Hannah Dodd, a dual Paralympian in wheelchair basketball and equestrian. I make special mention of Jenny Pluss, who has taught at the school since its inception. Congratulations to Northholm Grammar and the entire teaching staff and community.

#### **VIETNAM VETERANS DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (14:42):** On Friday 11 August 2023 at Canley Heights I had the honour of attending the commemorative reception organised by the veterans of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to mark Vietnam Veterans Day. Vietnam Veterans Day is commemorated on 18 August every year. The day was originally known as Long Tan Day, chosen to commemorate the 108 Australian soldiers who fought one of the fiercest battles in the Vietnam War against possibly more than 2,000 North Vietnamese soldiers in the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. In commemorating this year's Vietnam Veterans Day I honour and thank all those who served in the Vietnam War and the sacrifices of their families. Our veterans and their families have made our nation proud. I congratulate the committee, especially president Mr Huy Bach Phan and vice-president Mr Xuan Lam for organising the event.

#### **SUNHAVEN HOSTEL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (14:43):** I congratulate manager Kim Meale, Roberta Thompson and all the wonderful staff at Ashford's Sunhaven Hostel. With 36 staff and 18 residents, Sunhaven Hostel is a unique aged-care facility and is locally owned. Thirty years ago the community had a dream to have its own aged-care facility, even though the number of residents in Ashford tally up to only 200 to 300 people. Thirty years on, the facility is vibrant and well supported by the community. On the weekend it had a magnificent celebration, with cake, speeches and stories from residents and former staff. It was a lovely community celebration. I acknowledge not just Kim and Roberta but also Bob Byrnes, a life member who has been with the board for the whole 30 years; board chair Gilbert Fitzwilliam; JB, a hilarious resident who has been there for 14 years, who regaled the crowd with some lovely stories; and all the wonderful team. It is a magnificent facility. Happy birthday.

#### **REVESBY WORKERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (14:44):** Congratulations to Revesby Workers Football Club on reaching an incredible milestone, its sixtieth anniversary. This momentous occasion is testament to the unwavering dedication and passion of all those involved in the club over many years. For six decades Revesby Workers Football Club has been a shining example of a great community sporting club that supports women, men and children playing this great game. From the players who have graced the field with their skill and determination to the coaches, staff and volunteers who have selflessly supported the club, each one has played an integral role in shaping its success. I give a special mention to president Daniel Kurtz and secretary Liz Errington for their leadership in building a welcoming and inclusive club. As the club celebrates this remarkable milestone, it should

take pride in the legacy it has built and the memories it has created. Here's to many more years of thrilling matches, inspiring moments and continued success. Congratulations once again.

#### **BEYOND BEST BEFORE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:45):** On behalf of the electorate of Newtown I acknowledge Beyond Best Before, a new grocery store in Newtown working to divert food from landfill. New South Wales produces 1.7 million tonnes of food waste annually. That is the equivalent of \$965 worth of groceries per person in the State. Beyond Best Before is tackling this issue by sourcing food close to its expiry date directly from suppliers and selling it to the community at a discounted price. In many cases this would otherwise be destroyed by suppliers for whom the cost of donating it to those in need is higher than sending it to landfill. As grocery costs rise and we all seek ways to reduce waste, Beyond Best Before is an environmentally and socially conscious alternative to the big supermarkets, who are charging more and more. This is exactly the kind of initiative that we need more of in Newtown and throughout New South Wales. On behalf of the electorate of Newtown and the New South Wales Parliament I congratulate the Beyond Best Before team, Maggie Quach, Katie Quach and Michael Quach, on their work to reduce food waste and look forward to supporting their work for many years to come.

#### **SAINT NECTARIOS CHURCH**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:46):** Last Sunday I attended the seventieth anniversary celebrations to commemorate the translation of the holy relics of Saint Nectarios at the Saint Nectarios Church in Burwood. It was a special occasion, with His Eminence Archbishop Makarios officiating the hierarchical divine liturgy to mark 70 years since the translation of the relics of the church's patron, Saint Nectarios. Saint Nectarios Church has served the local Greek community since 1970, with over 200 parishioners coming through the church every week. I was reminded of how lucky we are in Australia to be surrounded by our diversity of faiths and cultures. I also saw the wonderful results of the cottage courtyard beautification, completed with grant funding from the 2022 Community Building Partnerships Program. I say a warm thankyou to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, Father George Liangas, president Penelope Kioussis, secretary Christina Efthymiades, AM, the parish board and all members of the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Burwood and District Saint Nectarios for inviting me to this occasion.

#### **CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (14:47):** This year marks several significant milestones for Sydney's Central Synagogue in Bondi Junction, which is Australia's largest. I was delighted to attend a special celebration to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Shule's rebuilding after a devastating fire in 1994. We also celebrated another special anniversary: 20 years of service by Rabbi Levi and Rebbetzin Chanie Wolff. They are much loved and respected within our community and I am grateful for their warm welcome when I became the local member. I cannot mention the Shule without pointing to one of its most recognisable contributors, Chazan Shimon Farkas, OAM, who is celebrating a remarkable 50 years with the synagogue. It is quite an achievement. Shimon is a revered cantor and I am blessed to have enjoyed his singing on several occasions. Congratulations to the board, the management team, and importantly the congregation at Central Synagogue for such a wonderful celebration. Mazel tov.

#### **CATHERINE CANNULI**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (14:48):** Anyone who followed the Matildas' glorious World Cup campaign last month would recognise Catherine Cannuli. Catherine has long been a champion for women's football in south-west Sydney, fighting to create pathways and opportunities for talented girls and women—often pathways that she did not have access to. Last week I saw her passion and drive on full display as over 160 keen female footballers in the under-eights to under-12s divisions came together for the second annual Catherine Cannuli Cup. That is double the number of participants from the inaugural cup last year. Local public schools, including Cecil Hills Public School, Hinchinbrook Public School and Miller Public School, were all keen participants. Establishing an effective talent pipeline would not be possible without the efforts of people like Catherine and initiatives like the Catherine Cannuli Cup. I also recognise the efforts of volunteers and staff from Southern Districts Soccer Football Association, and teachers, parents and students from Bossley Park High School, who performed game leader duties on the day. I look forward to seeing the talented young participants reach their potential in the years to come.

#### **SS PETER AND PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:49):** The Parliament of New South Wales recognises a group of local students from Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School in Kiama. The outstanding students recently won their category at the prestigious Tournament of Minds, becoming the New South Wales South Coast Regional winners in the Primary STEM category. Three groups of students from Ss Peter and Paul's took part in the tournament

held at University of Wollongong on 20 August, which saw primary and secondary students compete to solve authentic, open-ended challenges that foster creativity, divergent thinking and teamwork. The Ss Peter and Paul's STEM team, dubbed "The Black Cockatoos", won first place in its category by constructing from recycled parts a bird that could fly unaided. The bird was able to perform two different manoeuvres in the air completely unassisted. The team consisted of Jacob and Hayden from year 6, Nicolas from year 4, Eden and Evelyn from year 3, and Noah and Hugo from year 2. I acknowledge the head of diverse learning needs at Ss Peter and Paul's, Ms Bec Burbs. The Black Cockatoos went to the final of Tournament of Minds held on 10 September 2023 at the University of New South Wales. I congratulate them all.

#### **PAROULA THURBAN**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:50):** I congratulate Mrs Paroula Thurban as she celebrates 60 years of teaching Greek dance in Sydney. Mrs Paroula has built a legacy over the past 60 years as one of Sydney's most well-known Greek dancing teachers. Mrs Paroula arrived in Australia in 1964 with her two brothers. She began to teach the Greek language at a school run by the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales. After classes, Mrs Paroula would dance with the kids as their parents would pick up their children. Mrs Paroula taught thousands of children and their children and grandchildren. A strong advocate for the conservation of Greek heritage and language in the changing world, Mrs Paroula educates and engages the community by telling stories in ways that awaken a sense of place and belonging. Kyria Paroula has continued to inspire a generation of Greek dancing performers to follow their passion, be proud of their cultures, and form bonds and friendships. Mrs Paroula's legacy is enduring in our community.

#### **DONNA ANTHONY**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (14:51):** I commend the courage and selflessness of Donna Anthony, the Wauchope Rural Fire Service captain who was appropriately dubbed the 2023 NSW Mid North Coast Volunteer of the Year. Donna is a hero of our hometown, bringing 14 years of dedicated experience in the RFS. Appointed captain just before the 2019 bushfires, Donna rose to the occasion and fearlessly confronted Australia's worst bushfire season. Between battling ferocious blazes and captaincy duties, Donna volunteers time to community and education. Hosting an outreach program, Donna teaches residents how to best prepare their properties and organises the brigade to assist with burns; or works among local schools, taking trucks and equipment to create an interactive learning experience for children. From internal dedication to supporting brigade training, district training and responding to events, there is no doubt the brilliant Donna deserved the prestigious award among the 30,000 individuals considered for the top gong. I congratulate Donna and thank her for all she does in the name of service in protecting the community, especially as the bushfire season progresses. As I said, she is not just the volunteer of the year but a hero for a lifetime.

#### **TRIBUTE TO JOHN DEVITT, AM**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:52):** Recently Granville lost a local swimming legend. John Devitt, AM, was born on 4 February 1937 in Granville, just 250 metres away from Granville pool. Educated at Holy Family Primary School and Parramatta Marist High School, John excelled both academically and in swimming. His swimming career included gold medals in the 4 x 200 metres freestyle relay at the 1956 Olympics and the 100 metres freestyle at the 1960 Olympics. He set world records, dominated Australian freestyle swimming and earned accolades at the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games. John also served as an Olympic ambassador, supporting Sydney's 2000 bid and managing the Australian team at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. For his outstanding contributions to swimming and the Olympic movement, John Devitt was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame and the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. He was recognised with the Order of Australia and the Australian Sports Medal. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Wendy, and their family as we celebrate the life of a true Australian hero.

#### **CHARLOTTE RIMMER**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:53):** I recognise local legend Charlotte Rimmer, who is stepping down as president of the Manly Business Chamber. I had the privilege of working with Charlotte over the past couple of years, and she was an absolute powerhouse and a rock for Manly during the COVID pandemic and the challenge it placed on a number of businesses in Manly. Charlotte has been an executive member of the Manly Business Chamber since 2019 and an outstanding president since 2020. I have enjoyed working alongside Charlotte and she will be greatly missed. Her contribution to the local Manly economy has been profound. She has been an absolute powerhouse for our community and did an outstanding job of being a wonderful advocate for the businesses of Manly and the people of Manly. She will be sorely missed as the president of the Manly Business Chamber.



**SARAH MINOL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (14:54):** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to a remarkable educator from our community, Sarah Minol, who has been honoured with the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching at the recent Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence evening. The prestigious recognition is a testament to Sarah's unwavering commitment to her profession and the school community. As a dedicated teacher at Wyndham College, Sarah has been instrumental in shaping the lives of countless students, including my daughter, through her teaching of HT, creative and performing arts, and dance. Sarah's passion for nurturing creativity and self-expression is evident in her enthusiasm for engaging her students. As the epicentre of the North West Growth Area, my electorate boasts one of the biggest youth populations in the State. Sarah's dedication to providing a world-class education to our young minds is essential in shaping tomorrow's leaders, innovators and problem-solvers. I am fortunate and proud to represent a community with outstanding educators like Sarah Minol. I again congratulate Sarah. May her dedication to excellence continue to shape the future.

**AUNTY FAY CARROLL MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (14:55):** I bring to the attention of the House the opening of the Aunty Fay Carroll Memorial Library at Glebe Public School. Aunty Fay was a proud Wiradjuri-Ngunnawal woman who made an enormous contribution to education in New South Wales as Aboriginal Education Officer at Glebe High School and later as Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer. Aunty Fay worked tirelessly to further continuing cultural education, and the memorial library is a fitting part of that legacy. I thank everyone involved in this project, including Bryce Walker, Paula Callen, Kyol Blakeney, Ronelle Ryan, the Glebe Jarjums, Luke Carroll, Rilee Clarke, Uncle Graham and all of the staff at Glebe Public School.

**GOOD360 AUSTRALIA**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:56):** It was great to visit the Good360 Australia Re-Distribution Centre, Smithfield, on Thursday 7 August 2023 to present a \$26,000 Community Building Partnership grant for the electorate of Prospect. Good360 is a charity supporting thousands of Australians by redistributing consumer goods like clothes, toys and furniture that retailers are unable to sell. Their operations support over 3,700 not-for-profits and schools, and contribute over \$142 million of essentials to disaster affected communities. Good360 provided over \$10 million of essentials to our Prospect community alone. Good360 diverts millions of unsold consumer products away from landfill and rehomes these to Aussies in need, reducing the environmental impact of commercial operations. Good360 anticipates increased demand for services amid the cost-of-living crisis. To help Good360 continue catering to community needs, I urge everyone to get behind the EveryOne Day fundraising campaign on 12 October. EveryOne Day invites communities, schools, not-for-profits and retailers to help raise funds for such a worthy cause.

**THE HILLS ANNUAL CHARITY GALA BALL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (14:57):** The Hills Annual Charity Gala Ball is a wonderful event held at Biviano's Restaurant in Dural. I was delighted to attend the ball, which was attended by about 250 generous community members. The community is forever grateful to Biviano's Raj Kumar, Mag Hosney and Hannah Webb for their support for the community. I also thank Dr Jim Taggart, OAM, who was the master of ceremonies for the evening. The running of an event involves a large amount of organisation skills, many sleepless nights and probably a thousand phone calls. I express appreciation, gratitude and a heartfelt thankyou to Biviano's for running the event. The running of the event demonstrates a deep connection and compassion to help our community, and I thank them very much. The charity for the night was the Positive Vibes Foundation. With great programs such as Paw Visits, Women's Shed and Young Healthy Minds, Positive Vibes is one of the most important charities in our community. The funds raised after expenses totalled an amazing and fantastic \$30,000. The amount raised was more than from any other previous ball. I am exceptionally proud to be the member representing a wonderful and generous community. I thank everyone who contributed to the wonderful charity ball.

**SOUTH WEST SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:58):** Over the past few months the South West Sydney Academy of Sport [SWSAS] has been celebrating its athletes achievements with a series of civic receptions in each of the partner councils. SWSAS was formed in 1997 and provides local training and development opportunities for talented young athletes, coaches and sport administrators from the south-west. The academy has been recognised as being a leader in quality sports program delivery, providing an important pathway for the many talented athletes in my region. For 26 years SWSAS has been enthusiastically supported by local sporting organisations, MPs and the member councils of Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly alike. SWSAS has young athletes from across 12 sports. Netball in particular is a success story for the institute, having 21 athletes from SWSAS now playing in the NSW Premier League. This year the academy saw its 5,000th athlete

come through with volleyballer Sibelle Hassan. I congratulate CEO Gerry Knights, the staff, board and athletes on their role in promoting and developing our stars of tomorrow.

#### JUDY EVANS

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (14:59):** Today I recognise a local volunteer, Judy Evans, who has devoted most of her life to Abbotsford 12ft Sailing Club. I am told Judy has been with the club since she was four years old. She grew up in Five Dock and has been an active sailor ever since. Her history with the club spans decades. She became the first female club secretary in 1984; has been a life member since 1989, recognising her contributions to the club; and has been club president for several periods, starting in 1989 and later in 2011. Judy has contributed greatly to the sport of sailing in New South Wales through her training for the junior class. Established with her late husband, Karl Evans, Judy was a driving force in training the juniors. Over the past 10 years she has been the main coach at Abbotsford, as well as teaching the next generation of coaches, all of which she has done as a selfless volunteer. I recognise Judy and thank her for all that she does in our community.

#### SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:00):** I congratulate Surf Life Saving Central Coast, which has been awarded the prestigious award of Branch of the Year 2022-23 at the Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence. In the 2022-23 season, Surf Life Saving Central Coast had over 8,000 active members, completed 604 rescues and undertook 42,600 preventative actions. There are 15 clubs across the coast that provide beach and water safety from September to April each year. With such a great result, it is no wonder it has won the Surf Life Saving NSW Branch of the Year for six of the past 10 years. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating Surf Life Saving Central Coast on their efforts to keep our community safe.

#### DIANE RUSSELL

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:01):** I recognise the work of Hawkesbury resident and Hope4u Foundation director and founder Diane Russell. For people aged between 15 and 24 suicide is the leading cause of death. Diving deeper, statistics also show that 3,144 Australians died from suicide in 2021, a figure higher than the year before. Sadly, Diane was impacted by that statistic when she lost her son Jason to suicide in 2015 and then her son Aaron to suicide in 2021. The Hope4u Foundation strives to reduce statistics by offering free 24/7 prevention, intervention and support for those experiencing suicide, firsthand and second-hand. In light of R U OK? Day, World Suicide Prevention Day and the upcoming Mental Health Month, I acknowledge the work of Diane. Motivated by her own experiences, she is also the driving force behind Hope Haven, a support centre nestled amongst the sunflowers in Hawkesbury. If you ask me, the location is apt. Sunflowers are known to symbolise unwavering faith and constant direction towards the light. I dare say Hawkesbury would agree that we have our very own sunflower in Diane.

#### FOSTER AND KINSHIP WEEK

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:02):** Today in the New South Wales Parliament I sincerely thank all foster and kinship carers in New South Wales. This week is Foster and Kinship Care Week and is a celebration of the important contribution foster and kinship carers make to the lives of children, young people and families across local communities in our State. Foster and kinship carers play a crucial role for approximately 15,000 children and young people within the child protection system. As a teacher I was fully aware and deeply appreciative of so many families in our local community who had taken on the role of foster or kinship carer for children other than their own, providing a safe place of love and support for children at risk in their own homes. I thank all those families who open the doors of their homes and extend support to young people by providing a safe, supportive, stable and generous home. For many of these children, this extends to a safe, supportive, stable and generous home for life—something that many of them had not known before placement in their new homes. From the bottom of my heart, I say thank you.

#### NORTHERN SUBURBS ULTIMATE CLUB

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:03):** There is something special happening in Ryde. It has always been a place of great sporting activation and participation. But it is the rise of Ultimate, or ultimate frisbee, that has taken my interest. Over the next three weeks, led ably by its president, Joe Tharion, the Northern Suburbs Ultimate Club will run a series of skills and participation activities for local people across the northern districts. Ryde is home to Macquarie University. We have seen a huge number of new, young, smart and active people participating in sport, some for the first time, because of the great program Joe and his team are running. On Monday I had the pleasure to participate in the first session, learning the rules and some of the basic throws and catches. Over the next couple of weeks, I hope there will be more activation in this great sport in Ryde. We are building more and more facilities to try to keep pace with the demand, but I think we will have to go even further because Ultimate is growing quickly.

**BOATSHED WORONORA**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:04):** There are a few iconic venues and places to see in the Heathcote electorate. Any Woronora resident will say that the Boatshed Woronora must be on that list. Located on Loftus Creek, just off the Wonny River, the boatshed has become an incredibly popular spot for both residents and visitors alike. Flooding of the Wonny River in recent years has resulted in the boatshed's closure multiple times, but I am pleased that its doors have been opened again for a while now. The boatshed caters for a variety of people and events. There is the cafe for those wanting to sample wonderful food and drinks, there is canoe and kayak hire for those wanting to explore the Wonny River, and there is a function area and also a two-storey apartment for paint and sip events. I can attest that the meals are delicious and the view is so peaceful. I encourage anyone who has never been to Boatshed Woronora to do so.

*Bills***CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Private Members' Statements***BUILDING SUBCONTRACTORS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (15:05):** I think we all agree everyone should be paid for the work they have done. My question is why does this not apply in New South Wales? More and more small businesses across the State are being impacted by record level insolvencies that are crippling the building and construction sector and keeping hardworking tradies, and their families, awake at night. Our subcontractors, thousands of whom live in the Lane Cove electorate, run family businesses that employ a large percentage of the State's apprentices, tradespeople and support staff. These small businesses play a crucial role in keeping the economy afloat, and the lack of national security of payment laws is significantly impacting New South Wales families every day.

Current industry practice often sees undercapitalised builders taking progress payments from our subcontractors to prop up poor business decisions and flawed business models to bankroll their next job, rather than making this payment a priority. This can cause huge issues should a builder run into financial difficulty with nothing left in their account. The flow-on effects impact thousands of Australian workers if subcontractors are not paid for the work they do. Some of these businesses have resorted to taking out personal loans or even selling the family home to keep their businesses afloat, a practice that will take years for them to trade out of, provided everything goes their way. How can we continue to expect subcontractors, who make up the majority of the construction industry workforce, to sustain the burdens that are continually placed upon them, so that larger builders can take on more projects and in turn, more risk?

Last year the Albanese Government committed to implementing all 86 recommendations of the 2017 Murray review. A key recommendation of this report was the urgent implementation of cascading statutory trusts through either Federal- or State-led legislative change. Cascading statutory trusts would ensure that stage payments made to the builder are held in a trust and, therefore, everyone in the contractual chain gets paid promptly. While this solution sounds simple, nothing has been done and no further commitment has been made to small businesses across the nation. Therefore, I am calling on the Government to act and review payment protection laws for subcontractors in New South Wales. If it does not act, I will ask this Parliament to introduce laws that give our tradies and subcontractors a fair go. They are struggling to make ends meet and, with the current cost-of-living pressures, how can we honestly expect subcontractors to suffer simply because government is afraid this reform will disrupt cashflow across the building sector? This argument, quite frankly, is just not good enough.

I put my support behind the National Electrical and Communications Association representing the nation's subcontractors, especially the electrical trades. I urge the Minns Government to consider security of payment reform and implement the Murray review recommendations in full. Our small businesses deserve better. They are the backbone of the State's economy, and we should never take them for granted. We need to use this legislation to inspire change across the construction sector. We have allowed bad habits and poor business models to creep in, and we need to stabilise confidence by supporting small and medium businesses, protect existing jobs and attract a skilled workforce that is well equipped to take on the challenges faced by this industry.

We must give our trades men and women the respect they deserve. They must be paid for the work that they do and not be expected to be the banks for other larger business. We must put a stop to economic hardship

for thousands of Australian business owners and their families. I urge the Minns Labor Government to find a permanent solution to a completely immoral problem.

### PROSPECT RESERVOIR

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:09):** As the member for Prospect, I emphasise the importance of the Parliament's commitment to opening the Prospect Reservoir for aquatic community recreation. I commend the Minns Labor Government for fast-tracking a feasibility study and engaging community perspective to reopen the Prospect Reservoir. I thank the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, Minister for Water, the Department of Planning and Environment and Blacktown City Council for their work collaborating with stakeholders to drive this important project.

The Prospect Reservoir was Australia's first earthfill embankment dam. As one of three plant sources, the Prospect Reservoir has been integral to Sydney's water supply since 1889, offering surplus water storage. The Prospect Reservoir is an underused resource. Its vast oasis offers swimming and recreational space drastically needed for residents and families in Western Sydney. Other dams, like Chifley Dam near Bathurst and Brogo Dam on the South Coast, are used for both water supply and recreation. It is time to see the same dual function implemented at the Prospect Reservoir.

Western Sydney is constantly expanding. As our community grows, so does demand for recreation. Currently in the west only four designated safe spots cater for recreational outdoor swimming, including Lake Parramatta, Dawn Fraser Baths, Cabarita Park beach and Chiswick Baths. Most of those are a trek for Western Sydney families and communities. Even designated pools cannot keep pace with our need for recreational water space—for example, in Blacktown there is currently one pool for every 77,000 residents. We need to explore new ways to exercise, relax and connect at the Prospect Reservoir. COVID lockdowns were a wake-up call. Communities in the eastern suburbs were fortunate to access beaches and baths within a five-kilometre radius, but most people in the west had no options. For Western Sydney families, getting to the beach still means expensive tolls and hours in a car or on public transport. Opening the Prospect Reservoir would be a game changer for our community.

Heatwaves are on the horizon and, as Sydney's biggest inland pool, the Prospect Reservoir could bring much-needed relief. Heatwaves are a significant hazard. They are responsible for more deaths than any other natural hazard and increase pressure on emergency services—for example, hospitals across New South Wales experienced a 14 per cent increase in admissions during the 2011 and 2019 heatwaves. It is imperative that we provide safe and accessible space to keep residents cool.

The senior urban planner for JOC Consulting, Samuel Austin, warned that Western Sydney could become the hottest place on earth. Economic development and fast-growing populations led to higher concentrations of buildings and man-made surfaces, which absorb and retain heat. The effect of global warming is compounded when an urban heat island is created and results in more long hot days. By 2036 two-thirds of Sydney's population growth is projected for Western Sydney, leaving an estimated 3.5 million residents exposed to extreme heat. We need to plan ahead and create a refuge from that heat.

Western Sydney is home to many diverse migrant communities from countries with limited water interaction. Australia's culture of aquatic leisure can create barriers because many communities have less access to vital water safety skills. As a result, those people are at greater risk of drowning. Between 2011 and 2022, 57 per cent of all drownings were people from migrant backgrounds. In Western Sydney 28 per cent of drowning deaths occurred 50 kilometres away from the person's home. The Royal Life Saving Society correlates that people are going to unfamiliar locations, unaware of changing conditions, and are inadvertently putting themselves at greater risk. Opening the Prospect Reservoir will provide a known swimming and recreation area that can be managed to keep our community safe.

I urge my colleagues in the Chamber, particularly members who represent Western Sydney, to share this study with their communities. Community insights will help chart our path forward as we balance popular leisure opportunities with protecting Sydney's water supply and the area's cultural and environmental values. The feasibility study closes on 30 September 2023. I encourage our communities to have their say. Once again, I commend the Minns Labor Government for its efforts to optimise this marvellous resource to give Western Sydney an accessible place to keep cool and enjoy some of Australia's favourite pastimes.

### YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:14):** I recognise my 2023 Strathfield youth advisory board, which is a remarkable group of young students, with two representatives from each high school in my electorate nominated by the schools. It is a two-way thing—they advise me about issues impacting young people in the local area, State and country and, in return, we try to give them something of value. We bring them into Parliament, show them

how politics works and provide them with a certain amount of training and development. The last activity that we did for the 2023 youth advisory board was to show the students how to campaign and be great community advocates. We based it on the amazing community campaign to save Canterbury ice rink, which was a gold standard community campaign that yielded wonderful results.

After providing the youth advisory board members and about 100 high school students from my area with that training, we asked them, "If you were to do your own campaign, what would you do?" They all said, "We want to do the Voice. We want to do an under-18s campaign for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament." We thought that was wonderful. At the core of the campaign, as they designed it, was the proposition that, "We're under 18 and we can't vote yet, but we can still have a voice, an impact and an influence on the future of the country."

The core of the campaign was about talking to parents, grandparents, friends and family and influencing them to vote a certain way. That is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the voices of young people at a practical level are important for conveying accurate and truthful information, particularly amongst migrant and multicultural communities where the parents' and grandparents' English may not be good and so they rely on their children to tell them what is going on. There is a practical element to the campaign. Secondly, it shows that young people are engaged in issues. It shows that they are passionate about politics, reconciliation, Indigenous issues and the future of the country. It tells people "Let's not be negative about our young people and think that they are disengaged." Thirdly, referendums are rare. The last referendum was about the republic almost 25 years ago in 1999, when I was still a young man.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** You still are.

**Mr JASON LI:** I still am young, thank you. The last referendum was 25 years ago. They do not come around a lot. What better opportunity to activate and inspire our young people to get involved in politics and engage in the future of the country than a referendum campaign. What have this group of wonderful young people done? They have produced campaign materials and they have tweaked the Yes23 campaign to make it more colourful, simplify the language and make it more suitable for under-18s. They have produced brochures, discussion guides, Q&As, social media accounts and a wonderful website. They want the campaign to go national.

We launched the campaign on Sunday at Burwood, and it was terrific. I thank our two spokespeople, Rosanna Cartwright and Venkat Mallema. Other guest speakers included Karen Mundine from Yes23 and Federal member for Reid Sally Sitou. I thank Joanna Bitar and Karma Saheb and her team for their guidance and support and everything that they have put into the campaign. With all the misinformation and negativity around the referendum, I hope that our young people can play a positive role and bring some optimism, compassion and hope to this issue, as we imagine the future of our nation and our people.

#### AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S CONTENT SUMMIT

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:19):** The Coffs Coast is renowned for hosting events of national and global significance, and I can proudly say that the inaugural Australian Children's Content Summit is another to add to this impressive list. The summit brought together 260 delegates from across Australia and the world, representing the children's and family entertainment industry for a range of high-level activities such as speaker sessions, workshops, roundtables, pitching and business discussions, and industry networking.

Among the high-profile attendees were BBC Children's UK Senior Head of Commissioning Sarah Muller, celebrated children's entertainer Emma Memma, Sticky Pictures CEO Donna Andrews, and Screen Producers Australia CEO Matt Deaner, as well as representatives from major companies like Netflix, Sony, CBC and Disney, to name a few. The Australian Children's Television Foundation CEO Jenny Buckland, Head of Screen NSW Kyas Hepworth, and ABC's Head of Children's Content Libbie Doherty were also able to lend their considerable support to the summit and its ambitions. Delegates were drawn from television, film, streaming and content platforms, digital, radio, games, licensing, publishing, the educational sectors, screen bodies, screen guilds, government organisations and government funding agencies.

The Australian Children's Content Summit was presented by SLR Productions, with principal partner the Australian Children's Television Foundation. The major government partner was Screen Australia and supported by Screen NSW and the Department of Regional NSW. The summit aimed to promote dialogue, build relationships, drive innovation and encourage the growth of the vibrant children's and family entertainment and media sector. The summit also stressed the importance of content tailored for young audiences.

Held from 29 August to 31 August at Coffs Harbour's Pacific Bay Resort, the summit was a homegrown initiative. It was proposed, organised and presented by SLR Productions CEO, Australian Children's Content Summit founder and Coffs Harbour local Suzanne Ryan, who is also a producer of international children's content. Suzanne is an extraordinary, dynamic individual, whose hard work and passion meant the Australian Children's

Content Summit was able to take centre stage and grab headlines around the world. What is more, the summit also gave delegates a taste of the very best of our region, including our famed attractions and the culture and traditions of the Gumbaynggirr nation.

The Screen NSW opening night included the launch of the Australian Children's Content Exhibition at Coffs Harbour's iconic National Cartoon Gallery @The Bunker, with displays from so many of our favourite works. I was honoured to speak at the opening of the summit, as was my colleague Kevin Anderson, shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage. My Federal colleagues Pat Conaghan and Senator Perin Davey were also present to lend their support. However, as successful as the summit has been, unfortunately, ominous storm clouds are gathering on the horizon.

The New South Wales Labor Government has announced a devastating setback for the New South Wales screen industry, confirming that important screen programs such as the Made in NSW fund will be all but axed in Tuesday's State budget. The Made in NSW fund is the New South Wales program for domestic high-end television and features funding that helps attract footloose offshore productions to film in New South Wales. Made in NSW was a \$175 million fund over five years to attract projects that are not location-reliant—footloose, as they say in the industry. Deadline Hollywood, a global industry publication, reported that:

Plans to ax several screen funding programs ... are "hard to comprehend" and will be a "disaster" for the country's film and TV industry ...

CEO of Screen Producers Australia Matt Deaner told Deadline:

This cut is a disaster for screen practitioners both here in NSW and beyond. It shows disappointing short-term thinking about the value of the screen industry.

While other States are actively opening doors for screen industry growth, NSW is slamming them shut. NSW cannot afford to be complacent and send such a strongly negative signal to the world as it is doing with these cuts.

Those are strong words. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the New South Wales screen industry generates more than \$3 billion in total income every year. For every dollar invested through the Made in NSW fund, there is a return of \$20—and it creates thousands of jobs. Screen is also a foundational part of the State's creative industries, playing a key role in the sector's stability for employment across a range of related cultural employment in theatre, set and costume design and music composition. All of those related industries will experience significant related setbacks, as will other parts of the economy that benefit from the screen industries.

The New South Wales Government has also announced a cut to the Destination NSW budget, which means that the NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund has been added to the long list of regional-based funds that have been axed by this Government. It may also mean that, despite the organiser living and working in regional New South Wales, the Australian Children's Content Summit may be forced by this short-sighted Labor Government to relocate to Queensland. I say to the Labor Government: You might talk a big game when it comes to supporting our creative industries, but all you have done so far is walk away.

## WHITEHEADS LAGOON

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:24):** Adjacent to the former Myuna Bay Sports and Recreation Centre, just off the shores of Lake Macquarie, is a body of water called Whiteheads Lagoon. The calm waters of Whiteheads Lagoon, protected from prevailing winds by trees and vegetation and of an ideal size and orientation, make it a water skier's dream. In the 40 years prior to 2019, Whiteheads Lagoon was home to the mighty Myuna Bay Tournament Waterski Club, of which I am sure members have heard. The origins of Myuna Bay Tournament Waterski Club go back to the 1980s when a group of four local families recognised how ideal Whiteheads Lagoon was for waterskiing and arranged an agreement with the sports and recreation centre for a six-month trial of waterskiing on Whiteheads Lagoon.

Working with the centre, arrangements were made to allow the club to access the lagoon, alternating with scheduled times for canoeing and sailing by camp visitors. From its early beginnings, the waterski club went from strength to strength. The club funded and installed infrastructure—initially just a slalom course and soon after a ski jump. As time went on, more infrastructure was funded, built and subsequently upgraded through the hard work of club members. By the time the sport and recreation centre was closed suddenly in 2019, the club had three high-quality jetties, a boat ramp, a boat shed and a ski jump on the site. Over the 40 years the club was based out of Myuna Bay, it trained a number of Australian world champion water skiers. Myuna skiers have won five gold medals at world junior championships and have collectively won 175 national age-division titles. The club strongly believes that the training conditions available at Whiteheads Lagoon have contributed to this success.

During the years that the club was based at Myuna Bay, it also hosted a number of national and international events, including the national championships in 1985 and 1999; the Oz Ski tournaments in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2000; and the Aussie-Kiwi Junior Challenge in 2015, 2017 and, partially, in 2019. On 27 March 2019 I attended

the sport and recreation centre for the opening of the 2019 Aussie-Kiwi challenge. Little did I or the waterskiing community know what was about to occur two days later. On the second day of the 2019 Aussie-Kiwi challenge, club organisers were contacted by the Office of Sport and were advised that all participants and visitors had to evacuate the site by 6.00 p.m. that evening and that the competition was over. There was no regard for the event organisers and competitors who had travelled from far and wide to attend. This, of course, was in response to a report raising concern about the stability of the ash dam wall at Eraring Power Station.

I will not rehash the troubling events around the closure of Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre today. There has been much discussion on that topic in this House, along with adverse findings by the Public Works Committee in 2021 about the transparency, communication and consultation around the centre's closure. When Myuna Bay centre was shut, not only was the Aussie-Kiwi challenge cancelled but the club lost access to Whiteheads Lagoon altogether. Unfortunately, boats cannot access the lagoon via the water, and while the club has, on many occasions, sought permission to cross the sport and recreation centre site to access the lagoon, access has been repeatedly refused. A development application has now been lodged to demolish the old sport and rec centre, including plans to demolish jetties, ski jump, boat ramps and the boathouse built by the Myuna Bay club. I have written to the Minister requesting that the waterskiing infrastructure be maintained. This has been denied, although the club has been offered the opportunity to remove their own infrastructure.

The bureaucratic roadblocks continually being put up stopping waterski access to Whiteheads Lagoon astounds and frustrates me and the community. It is impossible to see how occasional use of the lagoon in daytime poses any risk to the waterski club members. New South Wales has very few waterskiing sites that can compare to Whiteheads Lagoon. It is a natural tournament and training venue of international standard. I accept that the old Myuna Bay sport and rec centre has been decommissioned and will not be reopened. I thank the Government for its commitment to the new centre at Morisset, and I look forward to seeing further progress on that project in the future. Minister Kamper and his office have been constructive and consultative in relation to the project. I ask the Government to continue in this spirit of cooperation to support the sport of waterskiing in New South Wales, to maintain the waterski infrastructure in Whiteheads Lagoon and to work with me to find a solution to facilitate waterski access to the lagoon as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker, and I thank members for their indulgence.

#### ASSUMPTION DAY

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (15:29):** Today I speak on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Assumption Day, celebrated mainly around 15 August, holds significance in numerous countries across Europe, South America and the Middle East. Many of my constituents come from diverse backgrounds and enthusiastically celebrate the day. It commemorates the belief that after Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, passed away, her body was "assumed" into heaven, reuniting with her soul instead of undergoing the usual process of physical decay upon death. Within the Christian faith, the Virgin Mary stands as a profoundly revered figure, serving as both the bedrock and framework of belief. That veneration emanates from the conviction that she holds the position of the Mother of Christ, who is not only the divine Son of God but also intricately united with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The day is recognised as a public holiday in various nations, including Austria, Belgium, Chile, Croatia, France, parts of Germany, Guatemala, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland. Additionally, it is celebrated in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States even though it is not a designated public holiday. Festivities include vibrant processions, performances, pageants and fireworks, each region adding its own unique touch to the celebrations. Known by multiple names such as Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, and Feast of the Assumption, the holiday has been observed since the fourth century.

In 1950 Pope Pius XII officially declared the Assumption of Mary as a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. According to Catholic doctrine the Virgin Mary "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory". I had the honour of partaking in significant Christian events alongside constituents from the Cabramatta electorate, engaging with various parishes. On 13 August I had the delightful opportunity to join the holy mass at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Trinity in Wentworthville commemorating the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Many of my constituents often visit that church. The day featured a procession in the churchyard and an engaging program encompassing traditional Armenian music, cuisine and folk dances.

Continuing that enriching experience, on 14 August I attended the Feast of St Mary's Assumption to Heaven at the St Mary's Assumption Chaldean Parish in Fairfield Heights. The event was led by His Grace Mar Amel Nona, Archbishop of the St Thomas the Apostle Chaldean and Assyrian Catholic Diocese of Australia and New Zealand. The occasion involved a profound procession of St Mary's statue both within and outside the church, drawing the participation of a large congregation. The festivities concluded with a delightful traditional Chaldean

dinner. Further diversifying my perspective, on 20 August I engaged in the same celebration at St Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church, located in Mount Pritchard. Immersing myself in the Orthodox liturgy and witnessing the statue procession led by a scout band, I observed the unity and enthusiasm among the hundreds of parishioners present. The event provided not only spiritual enrichment but also entertainment through food stalls, games and rides for attendees of all ages.

As someone with a Catholic background, witnessing the congruences and distinctions in the celebration of the occasion across the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Antiochian Orthodox Church was very interesting. Despite the minor variations in how the occasion is observed, the shared reverence for the Virgin Mary underscored the unity among those different Christian traditions. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the three churches, their bishops and priests, and organising committees and volunteers for their dedicated efforts in making August a meaningful and successful month for my Christian constituents. The collaborative celebration truly highlighted the appreciation and respect for the Virgin Mary as a cornerstone of the Christian faith.

### **BAWLEY POINT, KIOLOA AND TERMEIL COMMUNITY MICROGRID**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:33):** I inform the House of an exciting project in the South Coast electorate: the Bawley Point, Kioloa and Termeil community microgrid. It is the first of its kind in New South Wales. I take members back approximately 3½ years to November 2019 when the South Coast community experienced the horror of the Currowan bushfire. After the fire, in February 2020, the community came together, with smoke still hanging in the air and charcoal and ash covering the ground, to discuss how they could be resilient in the face of the next natural disaster. One of the key issues facing small villages like Bawley Point and Kioloa is that they have one road in and one road out. Even at the best of times, their power infrastructure is extremely vulnerable and fails on a regular basis.

As a local resident who experienced the devastating bushfires that summer, I know firsthand the impact of being left without electricity. Being without electricity means no telecommunication, but for Bawley Point, Kioloa and other small villages on the South Coast it has far greater consequences. These townships rely solely on tank water, so when they have no power they are unable to pump water out of their taps. I cannot explain to the House how terrifying it is when, in the middle of a natural disaster such as a bushfire, the power suddenly goes out and all means of telecommunication are lost. The RFS loses communication with its teams, and fire trucks cannot fill up with water from the local RFS shed. In the middle of the emergency, they must run to get a generator from a private resident to provide power to the RFS shed so that they can talk to their teams and pump water. I cannot explain how terrifying that is.

After that terrible summer, the community came together and, obviously, our number one concern was that when we lose power we also lose communications and water. So what to do? We turned to a microgrid. Microgrids are not a new technology, but as locally generated renewable power has increased microgrids have become a valuable and viable way for modern grids to better harness power where it is made and to distribute it locally. I was proud to chair the Bawley Point microgrid committee, working with other community members and Endeavour Energy to ensure the smooth rollout of this project. Every member of the community had input and directed how the microgrid would roll out from day one. The project was truly co-designed by the community and will serve as a blueprint for other communities, empowering them to embrace renewable energy and attain self-sufficiency during times of crisis.

This microgrid will serve the community by providing a reliable, independent energy resource that reduces our dependence on centralised grids and minimises the risk of power outages during extreme weather events. By integrating solar panels and battery storage, we have harnessed the region's natural resources to generate clean energy for local consumption. This project is an example of what we can achieve when we work together. It will revolutionise our approach to energy generation and distribution, paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient future. The microgrid linking Bawley Point, Kioloa and Termeil is the first of its kind in New South Wales and I look forward to working with other villages across the South Coast to bring more microgrids online. We are not only investing in a cleaner and more secure energy future but also setting a precedent for responsible development and environmental stewardship. Let us lead by example to show that, even in the face of complex challenges, innovation and collaboration can pave the way to a brighter and more resilient tomorrow.

### **VARROA MITE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (15:38):** Beehives in the Macleay Valley are sitting on death row. Imagine hundreds of apiaries lined up, one by one, on the property of a beekeeper who is trying to earn an honest keep, only to be sentenced with an euthanasia notice and two decades of life's work gone in a blink. This is the bleak reality for beekeepers in the Macleay Valley—mothers, fathers, married, single. They are humble people—sixth generation beekeepers—who find themselves in limbo, with no reprieve in sight. They are the victims of



varroa mite, and they are victims of a system that is failing to support them in unprecedented times. On 16 August the unimaginable happened: A silent invader was detected and began its widespread devastation on the Kempsey region, changing the lives of many battlers in the agricultural industry. Red and purple zones were created, hives and equipment were locked down and confusion, heartache and uncertainty dawned.

Denille Banham, co-owner of Costa Honey and a Collombatti resident, has lost over 700 hives. From our conversations on the ground, I know she is grappling with coming to terms with the profound loss to her business. Taking to social media, Denille voiced her pain. She said:

Every day the bills keep rolling in with little to no income to pay them. All this infrastructure here at our home, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth, all custom built and made for beekeeping and processing honey.

Similarly, Denille emphasised her concerns with our local mid North Coast media as well as the ABC and other statewide publications. Her frustration rippled through *The Guardian* article entitled "'They're like family': honeybees and businesses destroyed as varroa mite spreads in NSW". She said:

It's taken 23 years of blood, sweat and tears to get to this point. They're like family to us, our bees. How can someone come back from this?

It is a question that many of our beekeepers are asking. How can they come back from this? The financial burden is yet another hardship, compounded by years of natural disasters and the pandemic. More than 30,000 hives have been destroyed since the mite was first detected 14 months ago, and more than 260 properties are listed as having an infestation. Those eradication zones now cover 2 per cent of New South Wales' landmass. As part of a multi-pronged approach from all levels of government and industry experts, reimbursements were announced to alleviate those pressures that are hitting our hardworking beekeepers.

A payment of \$550 will be handed out for each recreational hive that is destroyed in the red zone, \$200 will be handed out to those who wish to keep their hive-ware and \$200 will be handed out for each single-nucleus hive that is euthanised. However, that alleviation is a temporary bandaid. It will quell the sting today, but it will not ease what will happen three years down the line. For three years those honey producers cannot set up hives again; they cannot turn a profit and thus afford to feed their families and pay their bills and mortgage. That is a new cost-of-living crunch on top of an already dire cost-of-living crisis. Let us not forget that that equipment is barred from use or transportation for the next three years.

Dianne Nolan has been a commercial beekeeper in Kempsey since 1988. For six generations her family business has flourished, including for her son, Matthew, who adopted the trade in the past decade. Dianne came to my office, visibly distressed and rightfully angry. This is prime production and pollination time, but their business is at a standstill. Dianne questions the future and longevity of the business. That was reflected in *The Land* article entitled "Family's honey legacy in limbo", which recounted the beekeeping history of the Nolan and Huxley family, dating back to the 1970s. In that article Matthew voiced his fear for the existence of our beekeepers' invaluable skill set. He said:

I told someone the other day, that after 35 years as an apprentice beekeeper, my occupation has changed now, as the red zone forced a change to: I was a beekeeper.

I ask the House to consider the profound effects the varroa mite will have on our agricultural producers years down the track. These people have dedicated their livelihoods to beekeeping. Through their work, they have made certain that Australia is rich in honey, and they have helped to keep afloat our almond, blueberry and various other industries that rely on bee pollination. We cannot turn our backs on them when they need us most. We cannot eradicate their trade. We must protect them, as we must protect our honeybee population. Now, more than ever, government support is crucial. Policies and initiatives that provide funding for bee research and support for beekeepers are essential. Financial assistance for beekeepers who are affected by varroa mite infestations can make a significant difference to their ability to combat the threat. We must end this limbo for our beekeepers. We must protect our pollinators.

#### *Bills*

### **EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

#### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Private Members' Statements***RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE SPORTING FACILITIES**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:43):** I recently congratulated the rugby league teams in the Riverstone electorate on their success this year. Today I am pleased to announce that success has carried over to our soccer teams. All of the soccer clubs in my electorate had teams make it to the grand final, with six out of the seven clubs seeing one or more teams taking out premierships. While I take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate all of those teams for their immense success this season, I also speak about the desperate need for more sporting infrastructure in Riverstone. In the 2021 census, Riverstone recorded the highest number of children aged between five and 14—a whopping 17,605. That number has grown exponentially in the past few years. Simply put, Riverstone has become home to the most youth in the State.

That pipeline is set to continue for years to come, with the area topping the State for first home buyers last quarter and recording the most births in the State. I have previously spoken about the importance of sport, specifically team sport, for children and the community. The host of benefits it brings is immense for nurturing interpersonal and social skills, while also providing a platform to build communities and create lasting friendships. However, if our children do not have the facilities to harbour those crucial interactions, how can we expect them to reap the rewards? As more houses are built, and with unit towers rising, Riverstone's population is growing rapidly. But critical infrastructure, such as sporting facilities, is being left behind. The numbers and statistics do not lie. Those opposite sat in government for 12 years knowing Riverstone's population would increase. Indeed, they actively encouraged the growth by continually releasing residential developments. Yet they did not plan for, much less implement, the infrastructure needed to support the population growth.

Riverstone now has seven soccer clubs, some with over 800 registered players. They are bursting at the seams trying to take in even more players, but they are at saturation point. In newer parts of the electorate—the growth areas that are home to the highest influx of young families—green space is non-existent, and they suffer from an acute lack of sporting fields. A failure to plan holistically for growth areas was the hallmark of the former Liberal-Nationals Government. It underfunded schools for the youth of Riverstone, forgot the youth of Riverstone in transport matters and ignored the need for sporting infrastructure for the children of Riverstone. In short, those opposite failed the youth of Riverstone and their families.

I have heard from many constituents who were forced to move to clubs beyond our electorate because local clubs could not accommodate new players. While the lack of fields results in over-filled clubs, the facilities that are currently held are also in need of revamping. The Riverstone Schofields Junior Soccer Club, which is the oldest soccer club in the electorate, still uses the same change room facilities that were there when I played as a youth. I cannot stress enough the importance of team sport in our community. It benefits our youth, and clubs serve at the very heart of community-building.

When young families arrive to set up home in Riverstone, soccer, cricket, netball, footy and other sporting clubs facilitate integration into the community. For our children, their time on the field is not just about the sport played but also about the lessons learnt. Communication development, sharing responsibilities, winning, losing, patience and resilience are all skills that can be gained on the field and, most importantly, transferred to various aspects of life. I am immensely proud of the soccer clubs within the Riverstone electorate. They have demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication, bringing home numerous trophies and accolades. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of those teams for their remarkable success this season. However, while I recognise their sporting achievements, we should also recognise the critical issue at hand: the poor state of Riverstone's sporting infrastructure.

The statistics are clear: Riverstone has a rapidly growing youth population. We must provide adequate facilities for children to engage in team sport. The Minns Government has already acted on matters that the previous Government failed on. From new schools to a new hospital, the Labor Government is working towards implementing the infrastructure needed to facilitate growth in north-west Sydney in a considered and planned fashion. While schools and hospitals are critical elements already being addressed, I will work with my ministerial colleagues to ensure attention is given to other matters of importance, like sporting infrastructure. The young people of Riverstone should have access to adequate sporting facilities and clubs, just like any other child in the State. Working on matters pertaining to the youth of Riverstone was one of the main reasons I joined this place. They are our future, and we must give them the same foundations for success that we had.

**HOUSING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:49):** I bring to light the hardship that many home owners are now facing due to dodgy development. In my electorate, numerous residents bought apartments off the plan. When they found their apartments advertised for sale on developer's websites, they looked

fantastic, with clean lines and schmick finishing. They were close to the city and contained everything a home owner would want. The properties were part of very impressive looking developments, which had been the recipients of architectural awards and accolades that promoted them as some of the best medium-density residential complexes as determined by many major industry organisations. To the uninitiated, these industry awards provide a sense of confidence in what a potential home owner is buying. It is only when residents have discovered major endemic building defects that they have cause to look at the awards and the industry bodies who gave them out.

Awards from a leading industry body give consumers the impression that someone with expertise and authority has ticked their property off as a solid and high-quality product. Years later, when these same consumers come to my office, having reached their wits' end dealing with building defects, they tell me that these industry award practices are in reality a highly dubious marketing method, utilised by what are essentially lobby groups for developers. Buying a house is not a simple, throwaway retail spend like buying a salad bowl. People spend their life's savings on a deposit and then sign their next 30 years away on a mortgage. They deserve to have a high level of confidence in the property they are buying, regardless of whether that house is on a 400-square-metre block of turf, or in a 40-unit, multi-dwelling complex.

Residents deserve to know that they will have a safe, secure and reliable place they can call home, that they can build a life in or raise a family in, and that brings them more comfort than stress. When this simple Aussie dream fails them—as many Sydneysiders are now experiencing amongst the explosion of new buildings over the past decade—buyers deserve to know that dodgy developers and corner-cutting construction companies will be held accountable. Substandard developers who hide from liability by creating and dissolving phoenix corporations must be held to account. Similarly, we must clamp down on developers who undersell the value of their project for the purposes of determining the bond or building warranty. These practices leave buyers in the lurch, sneakily shifting the true cost of shoddy work onto strata bodies and residents. It is simply not fair.

What other industry would allow such confidence schemes to flourish without pursuing a company's directors for fraud or damages? That is the scope of injustice that this Government has been left to correct. I know that nothing will undo the harm that dodgy buildings have caused. I know that many are still at risk because of the inadequate systems of protection that this Government inherited from members opposite. Adequate protections should have been a priority for the last Government, yet there are residents in my community who find themselves in protracted battles against development spot fires. That is why this Labor Government is taking a proactive approach. I am pleased that my honourable colleague the Minister for Building is listening to and understands the tidal wave of concern dampening the industry. We are engaging in a dynamic review of building regulation and will create a new building Act to overhaul the regulation of building practices in New South Wales. Our approach is in stark contrast to the reactionary approach that my community is accustomed to.

While we are developing better safeguards for when things go wrong, it is eminently clear that we must also build better from day one. This Government will be more proactive in strengthening regulation to target shady building developers that are serial offenders in building bad developments. It is inexcusable to allow developers with a track record of constructing bad developments to simply pack up shop and start business elsewhere. I am pleased to see the proposed decennial liability insurance scheme enter into public consultation. Home owners are tired of the constant and expensive battles to repair their homes and ensure their own security. Our Government's proposal will enliven the uptake of that insurance, which offers 10 years of protection on a strict liability basis for major defects in new residential buildings. Confidence and security in one's home is a central value for this Labor Government. In less than six months, we have already done more for home owners than those opposite in their 12 years of neglect. We are getting on with what we care about: building a better New South Wales for all residents.

### OXFORD STREET CYCLEWAY

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:54):** Despite the challenges and setbacks from lockouts, lockdowns, Westfield shopping malls and fast-moving through traffic, Oxford Street remains a popular retail, food and beverage, and night-time destination—certainly one of my favourites. I welcome plans to build a separated cycleway along Oxford Street as an opportunity to reinvigorate the precinct and make it even more attractive, and as a catalyst for further beautification works. Cycling has significant benefits. It is an economical, healthy, clean and green way to travel. Cycling helps maintain fitness and reduce lifestyle-associated conditions like heart disease, diabetes and stroke, and it can reduce the need to spend money on gym memberships and exercise classes. Cycling is good for the planet. It does not emit pollution or greenhouse gases or need to be powered by fossil fuels.

When people who can cycle do so, more road and public transport space will be freed up for those who cannot cycle. More people can be moved on bikes, and in less space, than in cars. While there are great personal and societal benefits, many people are too afraid to cycle in the city because they are forced to share the road with

fast-moving vehicle traffic. However, if cycling infrastructure is provided and people feel safe to ride, they will travel by bike if they can. In the past 15 years cycling rates in the City of Sydney have increased sixfold following the construction of 25 kilometres of separated cycleways, 60 kilometres of shared paths and 40 kilometres of other cycling infrastructure. But city cycling will not reach its full potential unless there is a connected network of safe bike lanes so that people are confident to ride the full length of their journey.

Oxford Street is a missing link in the regional bicycle network. Oxford Street is a particularly hostile place for bicycles, accommodating mixed vehicles with multiple bus services and heavy through traffic, and is regularly congested during peak periods. The lack of alternative safe bicycle routes between the city and heavily populated eastern areas, including Woollahra, Bondi Junction, Bondi, Queens Park and Waverley, make Oxford Street the City of Sydney's busiest bike route, with over 2,000 bike trips per day. It is also where the most bike accidents occur in the local government area. Bike lanes are planned for Oxford Street, with approval granted for lanes west of Taylor Square and detailed design underway for lanes east of Taylor Square. Those cycleways are essential to Sydney's bicycle network, but they will also provide new opportunities for Oxford Street.

The bicycle lanes will help slow traffic on Oxford Street, making it less attractive as a thoroughfare to access other areas. Slower and less vehicle traffic will improve the urban environment, with less noise and air pollution making the street more favourable for strolling and footpath dining. The bike lanes provide an opportunity to beautify Oxford Street with footpath widening and landscaping. Bike riders are more likely to support businesses, because it is easier to park a bike than it is to park a car. There is growing global evidence from cities like New York and London that bicycle lanes are good for businesses as they make streets more attractive to visit. Benefits for local businesses and residents are well known, but change is difficult.

I understand some business operators and locals around the eastern part of the cycleway are concerned about how the lanes will impact the street. Those concerns were exacerbated by a slow consultation process that coincided with the caretaker period, leaving many in the area with inadequate information and feeling unheard. I acknowledge the great work of Woollahra councillor, Harriet Price, who has worked tirelessly to engage with residents and businesses during that period and since. She recently joined me and representatives from the transport Minister's office and Transport for NSW to talk about the need for future beautification work around Oxford Street.

Matters that still need to be addressed include access to local streets from Oxford Street, access to bus stops and ways to minimise disruption during construction. There are concerns about parking loss; however, I understand it is being kept to minimum and only affects the southern side which has fewer businesses. I welcome the transport Minister's commitment to improve consultation with the local community, and I understand Transport for NSW has doorknocked homes and businesses in the precinct. We need to take the community on this journey and ensure that they are informed and that their concerns are addressed.

WorldPride reminded us how vibrant Oxford Street can be when it is not plagued by fast through traffic. The Oxford Street cycleway is needed to reduce the number of cars in Oxford Street and the number of people catching buses. It will reduce congestion and make the street permanently safer, quieter, more vibrant and beautiful, and a better place to visit for longer. I look forward to continuing to work with the City of Sydney, Woollahra Municipal Council and the New South Wales Government to deliver this project, which will ensure that Oxford Street is safe for cyclists and an attractive, vibrant high street for future generations.

#### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (15:59):** Today I speak in support of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The pandemic brought to life many disparities that exist within our society. My electorate of Bankstown, a diverse and vibrant community, found itself unfairly targeted and stigmatised as a risk to public health. We were spoken about but not listened to. We were voiceless, overcoming challenges through collective resistance. First Nations voices have been historically silenced and their rights disregarded. For too long our Indigenous brothers and sisters have carried the burden of injustice, enduring the consequences of a history marked by colonisation and dispossession. It is time for us to listen, to learn and to act.

On Friday night at the Western Sydney University Bankstown campus, I had the privilege to attend the launch of the Canterbury-Bankstown Yes campaign. The community heard from local MPs and Ministers Tony Burke, Jason Clare and Linda Burney, as well as Senator Fatima Payman, Indigenous leader Uncle Noel Pearson, Brad Chilcott and our local Elders Uncle John, Aunty Jennifer and Uncle Harry. In a heartfelt call for unity, Sheikh Shady Alsuleiman, President of the Australian National Imams Council, announced his organisation's backing and support for First Nations people.

The message is clear: The future is here and now. History has taught us the devastating consequences of exclusion and ignorance, never more evident than in the dark chapter of South African apartheid. The systematic exclusion, marginalisation and segregation of individuals based on their race not only perpetuated injustices but also hindered the progress of unity of a nation. It is imperative that we learn from those historical injustices and take proactive steps to rectify past mistakes and build a more inclusive future. In a democracy the truest measure of success is not solely in the exercise of power but in the ability to create an inclusive and accepting society where every voice is valued and every voice is heard.

Granting First Nations people a Voice to Parliament is not only an act of justice but a testament to the strength and resilience of a democracy that aspires to be fair, compassionate and representative of all Australian citizens. Indigenous Australians have fought tirelessly for recognition, equality and the restoration of their rights. Their presence precedes the Constitution yet there is no constitutional inclusion for them. That needs to change if we are to build a unified Australia. We have before us this opportunity to grow as a nation, both in inclusivity and respect. When we listen, we are the better for it.

It is high time that we acknowledge the rightful place of Aboriginal people in our democratic institutions and provide them with an influential voice that can shape policy decisions affecting their communities. For all the fear campaigns, this is a consultative body. How could one argue that Aboriginal people were not here before 1770? The fear campaign sends people off on the wrong track. The proposed Voice to Parliament is a consultative body chosen by Indigenous people to inform the elected Parliament on ways to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. Listening is the essence of good public policy. In our ever-evolving world, where cultures intertwine and boundaries blur, it is crucial that we do not lose sight of those who possess invaluable wisdom and skills passed down through generations.

Australia is a nation renowned for its diverse tapestry of cultures. It has been enriched by the contributions of Indigenous people for time immemorial. Their profound understanding of place ought to be heard. The story of modern Australia did not start in 1788 but 65,000 years ago; another thing happened in 1788 and the story continues to evolve every single day. The story of Australia is only strengthened when the story of everyone is told and everyone owns a part of it. Our First Nations people deserve to have their voice heard. We have got to recognise them in the Constitution but must also recognise their wisdom.

I am proud of our diverse community. We are no strangers to rallying around to support one another. So many people turned up to the Yes campaign launch. When you have been on the outside, you know what it is like. I hope that when 14 October comes, people in my community and Australia make the decision to stand up and be the better nation I know we can be. I hope that they do not listen to the fear or the scare campaign and that we can prove to be the people that we are. Let us not wake up on 15 October and think to ourselves, "Oh my God, I thought we were better than this." We are a nation built on the strength and value of all—on every single person's story. It is a small, simple request: a consultative body and recognition in the Constitution.

### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES FUNDING

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:04):** Regional communities are very special places. They are special places for the people who live in them, for the scenery that surrounds them, for the stories they hold and for the opportunities they provide those who chose to make a life in regional New South Wales. The reason those of us representing regional New South Wales are so passionate about our communities is because we know how special they are. We know that despite periods of drought and flooding, fire seasons and the tyranny of distance, our regional communities will persevere. We are strong because we have to be, tough because the landscape requires us to be, and resilient because we have grown up to be that way.

We can survive almost anything that nature throws at us and bounce right back. But regional communities cannot survive if the funds dry up. Whether it is private or government funding, there is a significant negative impact on our communities when it no longer exists. We have seen the devastating impacts of bank closures on older residents in our smaller towns and villages. We have seen what happens when big employers like the abattoirs, steelworks or car manufacturers leave town. It sends regional communities backwards, and it is incumbent on governments to ensure that our regions' economies are resilient. Governments can be effective in regional New South Wales and work to make our regional communities resilient, self-sustaining and assured of their future. That is what the former Coalition Government was laser focused on and that is why communities like Tamworth and Gunnedah have experienced a sustained period of growth over the past 12 years.

There is confidence in our business community. There are jobs for our people, regardless of their profession, and there is a future in sight. That does not happen by accident but because we make it happen. When we look at over a decade of investment in the Tamworth electorate, we begin to see why my community is succeeding. If we add up all the funding from the programs that looked like they were going to be cut over the

past 10 years, it comes to nearly \$190 million. That funding came from the former Government's \$3.3 billion Regional Growth Fund.

Regional growth and economic development. Members will hear me say those words over and over again because it is so important to regional New South Wales. When we invest in regional growth and economic development, regional communities thrive. When we invest, we look after each other. That is what the former Government's Regional Growth Fund did. It invested in regional growth and economic development. The Regional Job Creation Fund invested in our businesses, allowing them to grow and to employ more apprentices. The Regional Sport Infrastructure Fund built stage one of the Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence, which attracts to Tamworth the best athletes from across the north-west. Resources for Regions has invested in fantastic projects like the Gunnedah Koala Sanctuary, the new Quirindi pool or the Gunnedah Airport, helping those communities grow and prosper. The Stronger Country Communities Fund has invested an incredible \$20 million into 65 community projects across the Tamworth electorate since its inception in 2017.

Those funds have driven our community forward towards a better future, with better facilities, greater livability and more opportunities for employment for our young people. That is why I am deeply concerned about the upcoming budget. I am deeply concerned about the future of regional New South Wales. I am deeply concerned that those opportunities for regional New South Wales will be ripped away to fund other priorities in the major metropolitan areas of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. I am telling the Government that we cannot afford that. I urge the Government to retain funding for regional New South Wales, to continue its regional growth and economic development.

### **SOLDIERS BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (16:08):** Recently I was able to renew my membership of Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club and do my online testing ready for the new season, which kicks off in a couple of weeks' time. Soldiers Beach surf club is in a beautiful location. I recommend a visit to Soldiers Beach to all members who might be looking for somewhere to get away and have a bit of a break. It is not far from the Norah Head Lighthouse and is lovely to visit. The beach has some great natural features and a fantastic restaurant at the surf club, called Dunes, with some of the most magnificent, uninterrupted views across the ocean and the Soldiers Beach break.

Soldiers Beach surf club was particularly renowned for its pioneering of inflatable rescue boats [IRBs], which has been incorporated into the club's logo. It was one of the first clubs to adopt and push the use of inflatable rescue boats with Surf Life Saving. Some former members of the club took an IRB from Victoria across the Bass Strait to Tasmania to show the durability of the craft, which have become a mainstay of our beaches, not just on the Central Coast and in New South Wales but across Australia. They have been overtaken a little bit now by jet skis, which are obviously more nimble in the waves, but the IRB is an iconic craft on Australian beaches.

Soldiers Beach is patrolled on weekends by volunteers and through the week by the council lifeguards. Over 150,000 members of the public, including beachgoers, swimmers, boardriders and fishers, visit our beach every summer season. It is a very busy place. The population swells, particularly over the Christmas break when the Norah Head caravan park is at full capacity. People from many electorates, particularly in Western Sydney, come to the Central Coast and stay at Norah Head to visit our beautiful beach. We have a shrinking number of patrolling members, unfortunately. Although, over the past two seasons the club executive has worked particularly hard to grow that number.

I encourage anyone who loves the water and loves the beach to join their local surf club—even if it is not people's favourite thing, it will become their favourite thing. Even if, like me these days, people cannot grab a tube or a board and go out and do a rescue, they can be involved in first aid or radio operation. Experienced people who can use a defibrillator or train other members can fulfil important roles. Last year we had a very busy season with only seven patrol teams for full-day patrols. There were 6,000 preventative rescues, 80 full-on rescues, with 4,900 hours of volunteer patrols. Everyone worked really hard. We are looking with great optimism to the new season with an open day on Sunday 17 September from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

Our nipper numbers are growing. The club has been particularly insightful by dropping the fees for our young nippers. This year it is only \$50 for a nipper, which is a reduction from previous seasons. A parent and a nipper can join and we encourage all parents to do their Bronze Medallion or become involved in officiating so that when our young people go to surf carnivals we have the required number of officials. We are looking forward to a great season. I hope I will have time to get on to the beach. I probably will not do 100 per cent of my patrolling hours this year, but certainly over the Christmas break I will be looking for the member for Monaro and his wife visiting the Central Coast—

**Mr Steve Whan:** Splashing around.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** —coming for a splash. The former member for Fairfield is there quite often. Anyone else who wants to be there, come and say hello on patrol at Soldiers Beach. I encourage everyone, not just at Soldiers, but right across our coastal areas, to join their local surf club, become a volunteer and do something positive for the community.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS AND TEAMS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:13):** In my electorate of North Shore we have a strong sporting ethos. When we speak about our local sporting organisations, we are not just talking about teams and clubs; we are talking about vibrant communities that enrich our lives in countless ways. Whether it is netball, rugby, Aussie Rules, swimming, soccer, rugby league, basketball, rowing or sailing and so many other sports, our local community is always there and always involved. Unfortunately, I do not have enough time to talk about the achievements of every single sporting club and team across my electorate, but I will highlight a few of the outstanding sporting successes that have been achieved recently.

One of the most anticipated events in rugby union in Sydney is the annual Shute Shield. This year Norths battled against Randwick in the Shute Shield grand final at Leichhardt Oval. In true Norths style, the colours of black and red filled the oval. I particularly acknowledge the seasoned fans who filled a large section of the hill to witness the game. We were lucky enough to be able to watch the boys live at Leichhardt Oval and the atmosphere was simply electric. While the boys played a thrilling game, they were unfortunately unable to come home with the win, handing Randwick the shield for the first time in 20 years with the scoreboard finished at 17-15. I must say it was an admirable rally in the second half when Norths dominated.

I acknowledge Mosman Rugby Club, which many would know is a Mosman institution. Each year they host a Ladies Day at Rawson Oval to raise funds for the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. This year was just as spectacular as it has been in past years. With an Amalfi Coast theme and a Chargrill Charlie van onsite, which is always my highlight, it kept us well fed. It was a great day raising those much-needed funds for the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. Well done, boys, and to the Mosman Rugby Club for all your efforts in hosting another fantastic Ladies Day. Although I did not do as well on the field this year, I look forward to joining you all again next year.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the Sydney Swans Australian Football League Women's [AFLW] team, who claimed their first ever victory over the GWS Giants in a thrilling match for the season opener here in Sydney at North Sydney Oval, winning 51-46. In a massive show of support, my local community turned out in droves to cheer the Swannies on. The entire hill was covered in red and white and there were lots of cheers of support, particularly as they won the day. It was an incredibly exciting day to be part of. I acknowledge two of my former colleagues who joined me there on the day: Gabrielle Upton, the former member for Vacluse and a former sport Minister, and Stuart Ayres, the former member for Penrith and a former sport Minister. We had a great time—Stuart a little less so when the Giants lost, but Gabrielle and I particularly enjoyed it.

On the back of the incredible Matildas results in the recent FIFA Women's World Cup, the Sydney Swans AFLW are also inspiring our young women and girls and it is truly great to see. I look forward to cementing North Sydney Oval as the home of women's sport here in Sydney, and I hope that the Sydney Swans will look at making it a permanent home ground for the AFLW. I heard some whispers that even the GWS Giants are looking at making it part of their home ground as well. With netball being a game that is close to my heart, I recognise the Mosman Netball Club and all of our fantastic girls and young women who have taken the courts across Sydney by storm. In particular, I acknowledge and congratulate Steph Maxwell. Steph was awarded the Pat Clarke Service Award at the end of season celebrations at Northern Suburbs Netball Association. That award was incredibly well deserved. I know how much the Mosman Netball Club values Steph as part of the team.

While our seasonal winter sports have come to an end, it will not be long before our summer entertainers are out in force playing cricket—I know that members of the Mosman Cricket Club are picking up their kits this weekend—or down at Balmoral Nippers where we will be taking on water safety and looking at caring for people on the beach—which the member for Wyong will be excited to hear about in the light of his recent speech; my daughter is now in her second year of nippers—or people who are taking on the waters of Sydney Harbour in our local sailing clubs. Our local sporting clubs and organisations are not just places where games are played. They are places where memories are made, friendships are forged, and dreams take flight.

I acknowledge and congratulate all our local sporting clubs and teams. I hope that they all know that our community stands behind them. We are cheering them on with unwavering support and boundless enthusiasm. It is so good to see that, after a number of years of our seasons being truncated and participation being limited, we are back bigger and better than ever. Best of luck to our summer teams for the season ahead and may our winter

teams have a great rest before they come back next year. Good luck, bring home victory, play well, and, most importantly, enjoy yourselves.

### HOMELESSNESS

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro) (16:18):** A few weeks ago the body of a man was found on the banks of the Murray River at Wodonga. He was of no fixed abode, another homeless man living rough in a tent in the bush on the Victorian side of the river. No doubt for a few there might be a shrug of the shoulders about a homeless man dying alone in his tent, but every homeless person has a backstory. Many have family who wish they could work out how to do more to help their loved one survive. This homeless man was born in the same month I was. Like me, he went to public schools and got a good education. He was intelligent and a very skilled golfer. He had similar opportunities but quite different outcomes in life. Sometime in his twenties this man had a traumatic experience; he was stabbed in the chest. After that it was clear that some of the mental health issues had become a lot worse. Alcohol played a large part and over time he spent more and more time living rough.

The homeless man whose body was found a few weeks ago was my brother-in-law Scott McLean, more commonly known as Harry. Despite his rough living, Harry was switched on. He was always up on current events in the nation and the world. He paid attention to politics and he quietly kept an eye on what a lot of the family were up to. As the years went on, he clearly became more uncomfortable interacting with people who were not living in his world. He sometimes came to family gatherings but he was less and less comfortable with them. Harry's sisters—my wife, Cherie, and Melody—would go and find him when they visited. They often could not find him at first but they let other people living rough know that they were looking for him and Harry would miraculously turn up.

To a lot of the people living rough like Harry, he was very well known. He was well liked and seemed to spend a lot of time looking after others. There were more than 200 comments on social media after his death, many thanking him for his kindness or help, and they are a testament to the sorts of relationships he had in that community, in the wider Albury community and with people who came across him as he was growing up. At one stage, Harry owned his own home, but he was generous to people in similar situations and eventually he needed to sell it and went back to living rough.

It is really hard to know how much of Harry's life was circumstance and how much was choice. There is no doubt his happy place was near the river. He lived in various spots in the bush along the Murray. He loved fishing and he loved the bush. When he was a kid he became known as Harry after Harry Butler who, to those of us my age, was known for his television show where he would poke around the Australian bush. Harry had a few run-ins with the police and the courts, but as far as I know they were fairly low level and I suspect many were influenced by alcohol. Despite that, Harry was more honest and certainly less interested in material and financial gain than many others are.

How can we help people like Harry? What can we do to help families know the best way to support a person like that? One time Harry was asked by the courts to attend drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, but there were no places available so he could not go. He was offered public housing and he stayed there for a while, but he found that he was sharing a block of units with people who had possibly more problems than he had—mental health and other problems—and he found that was not helping him move forward with his life. He wanted to be out in the community more. Sometimes he would reappear back at his parents' place, but unfortunately at the time he died he could not come back into New South Wales because there was a warrant out for his arrest. The family spent a long time looking for him. Harry's sister Melody was particularly concerned for over a year. She has asked me to thank Detective Mike Smith from the Albury police who worked tirelessly trying to help locate Scott, or Harry. We also thank extended family and friends and the wider community for their assistance in looking.

Harry's case highlights frustrating problems with some of the cross-border issues. He was on the Victorian side of the border; the New South Wales police could not go there. When his body was identified, Harry's mother was not told it had been identified because the Victorian police did not have a contact phone number and they had not informed the New South Wales police. Yes, Harry was a homeless man but he was also loved by his two sisters, Melody and Cherie, and his mum, Leonie. As I said, Melody had been searching for many months. He was a lovable larrikin, and he will be remembered as that. My electorate also has a lot of homeless people, and so I also want to know what more we can do to help people like Harry stay connected with their families and stay alive.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:24):** History is made by those who break the rules. For decades, from the winning of women's suffrage to the abolition of slavery, sustained and organised civil disobedience has



been the driving force behind progressive change. All around the world, mass movements taking nonviolent direct action have pushed those in power to act in the interests of the people. I recognise that in this country for so long First Nations communities have been at the forefront of these movements—the Wave Hill walk-off, the Freedom Ride, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and the Black Lives Matter movement. Over-policing and over-criminalisation have shamefully made this country's First Nations people the most incarcerated people in the world, but they have not deterred black activists from risking harsh penalties time and again to fight for justice.

From workers' rights to land rights and ongoing struggles for First Nations and racial justice, protest is the lifeblood of every successful and powerful social justice, environmental, civil rights and human rights campaign in this country and around the world. It is not only in our past; it is our present and how we guarantee our future. That is why I was so pleased to speak recently as part of an incredible meeting at Redfern Town Hall, hosted by Rising Tide and building towards a massive community action in Newcastle—the people's blockade of the largest coal port in the world—and offer my and The Greens' support for this blockade.

With the climate crisis upon us, our communities are no longer willing to accept whatever small, incremental changes the government of the day is willing to toss their way. Instead they are taking their disappointment, anger, anxiety and desperation over years of climate inaction from successive governments on both sides of politics and taking to the streets in larger numbers than ever before. Groups such as Disrupt Burrup Hub, Rising Tide and Extinction Rebellion are putting their bodies on the line to bring attention to the worsening climate crisis and the shockwaves it is already sending through our communities. But, rather than being listened to, they are having the book thrown at them, and their actions are criticised, condemned and criminalised by many.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis is already wreaking havoc across the globe. While the Federal environment Minister, Tanya Plibersek, continues to approve new coalmines and the State Labor Government is making moves to throw public money at Eraring to keep it open and refusing to take the sensible step of banning gas connections in new homes, our regional neighbours are bracing themselves for tides that creep ever higher. In just a few short years, their homes and communities—the lands they have lived on and cared for for generations—could all be underwater. Closer to home, in the Torres Strait and the Pacific Ocean, communities are already facing the unacceptable reality of the climate crisis. At the Rising Tide climate justice speaking tour at the town hall meeting in Redfern, we heard from Uniting Church minister Reverend Moni Taumoepeau, who told us the horrifyingly tragic story of what is happening in his homeland, Tonga, where they are having to dig up and retrieve remains from sacred coastal burial grounds to prevent their ancestors from being washed into the sea. That is an unspeakable disgrace.

But, rather than governments turning their attention to the immediate, large-scale climate action that would protect these communities from the full extent of climate devastation, they are instead resourcing the policing and punishment of those who are struggling to warn us of and protect us from the worst to come. That the undemocratic, unfair anti-protest laws ushered in by the last Coalition Government are still here after nearly six months of a Labor government beggars belief. In this State, climate activists are being hit with enormous fines, non-association orders and up to two years in prison for non-violent efforts to keep climate at the top of the political agenda. The Greens are demanding an immediate repeal of the anti-protest laws and the introduction of a human rights Act to protect people's right to protest and to freedom of expression, assembly and association. We in this place collectively have the power to steer us in the right direction, away from the path to climate devastation. We must heed the calls of people taking this action.

The Greens are committed to seeing anti-protest laws overturned in this State because we know that we need to hear the voice of the community to make the Parliament act. The Greens thank those bravely taking action for the climate and other long-overdue progressive change. As my Federal Greens colleague Adam Bandt said recently, law is often complex, but the morality is simple. I say to those activists: The Greens hear you, we see you, and we will continue to back your actions on the streets and on the ocean. We will see you at the next climate action and at the people's blockade in Newcastle.

### **KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:29):** In the lead-up to the March election, I made it clear that protecting koalas and their habitat was a statewide policy priority for me. Like so many in the community, I am disturbed by the evidence showing that koalas are on track for extinction. I am disappointed and frustrated that the previous New South Wales Government had for so many years failed to listen to experts and scientists and take the steps necessary to protect this much-loved Australian icon. The koala wars of 2019 and 2020 were a particularly disgraceful chapter as the Liberal-Nationals Coalition nearly split over sensible measures to protect koala habitat on private land. Even more disappointing was that after the horrendous Black Summer fires that wrought an enormous ecological toll, including on koala populations, the New South Wales Government ignored expert advice commissioned by the Natural Resources Commission and instead continued to log and degrade public native forests.

Since my election I have received a significant amount of correspondence from my own constituents about the need to protect koalas and their habitat and, in particular, the importance of stopping industrial logging in public native forests. People in Wakehurst care a great deal about the natural environment. They care about it locally, as evidenced by the steadfast and widespread opposition to the clearing of over 45 football fields of native vegetation in a bushfire zone for the proposed residential development at Lizard Rock. They care about how we look after our shared natural heritage across the State. The recent World Wildlife Fund [WWF] Trees Scorecard delivered a shameful last place for New South Wales out of all Australian jurisdictions. For the first time, the WWF Trees Scorecard provided a snapshot of how State, Territory and Federal governments are performing in tree protection. The scorecard assesses each jurisdiction's performance in ending both native forest logging and land clearing, as these are the main drivers of forest loss. New South Wales and Queensland sit at the bottom of the leaderboard, both with a score of "very poor".

It is in this context that many, including me, are looking to the new Labor Government for leadership in turning around our State's record on biodiversity conservation. NSW Labor's promise to establish the Great Koala National Park is historic and has broad community support. I also look forward to seeing the broader agenda for reforming the land management and biodiversity conservation framework across both public and private land. However, in the months since the election, I have been very concerned by reports from residents and groups on the ground that, in anticipation of the creation of the Great Koala National Park, Forestry Corporation is accelerating logging in a last-ditch attempt to exploit forests in the region while it can.

I was grateful to be able to visit Coffs Harbour earlier this month with WWF Australia and Federal Independent member for Mackellar Dr Sophie Scamps to get a better understanding of the impacts of native forest logging and the opportunities for sustainable timber production in the future. I was shocked and disappointed to see the degradation and devastation that industrial native forest logging leaves behind. The decision this week by the Government to stop logging of public native forests in high-value koala hubs in the proposed Great Koala National Park is a logical and very welcome step. However, these hubs cover only 5 per cent of the Great Koala National Park assessment area, which is a relatively small footprint.

I call on the Government to implement further interim protections ahead of the full establishment of the Great Koala National Park. My understanding is that koala hubs are based on records of koala sightings rather than habitat features. We also need a habitat-based protection layer that protects koala feed tree species as soon as possible. The forests in the Kalang Headwaters, in particular Oakes State Forest where logging operations are progressing, are sensitive areas with exceptional values and should be protected as a priority.

New South Wales must transition to a sustainable plantation-based sector that supports jobs in regional New South Wales. We must ensure that the timber products we all rely on in construction and other sectors of our economy can be produced sustainably. Right now, logging of our public native forests is loss making. A report by the Blueprint Institute published last April reached the clear conclusion that there is no economic case for continued logging of native forests on the North Coast of New South Wales. Modelling in the report found that ending native forest logging in 2023-24 and instead utilising the land for carbon sequestration and tourism will deliver a net benefit valued at \$45 million.

Protecting public land from the destructive activities of a publicly owned corporation to achieve a public interest outcome should be a core business for any government. I will continue to call on the New South Wales Government to follow Western Australia and Victoria and end public native forest logging so that the people of our State and future generations can enjoy the many benefits of protecting and restoring our native forests—for koalas and healthy ecosystems, for carbon storage, for recreation and tourism to name a few, but also for good economic management.

## NURSES AND MIDWIVES

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:33):** I truly believe that every day is an important day to celebrate the fantastic work that our nurses and midwives do in our communities across New South Wales—a view, I am sure, that is shared by everyone in this Chamber. As frontline workers, they do an incredible job and are vital to the wellbeing of people across the State. In every corner of our State, nurses and midwives play a pivotal role in providing care, compassion and unwavering support to people from all walks of life. They are the backbone of our health system, and their resilience over the past few years has been nothing short of remarkable.

During the pandemic our frontline workers, particularly our healthcare staff, were vital for the welfare and health of the people of New South Wales. Day in and day out they worked tirelessly for many years in gruelling pandemic conditions, combatting the outbreaks that occurred in our State and ensuring that those most in need were given the best care. We owe a significant debt of gratitude to our nurses and midwives for their services to our community and our great State. It is important that we recognise the important role they play in our society.

Our nurses and midwives work hard for our community, so it is just as important that we provide them with world-class facilities to ensure that they can succeed.

The previous Coalition Government was proud of its record investment—over \$740 million—in St George Hospital after many years of neglect. The transformation has turned a previously underfunded hospital into the shining gem of our local community, complete with world-class facilities. The doctors, nurses, midwives and staff have witnessed the record investment since 2011 with several significant upgrades taking place, including a new emergency department, an acute services building, upgrades to operating theatres and a brand-new \$11.5 million birthing suite refurbishment. I truly believe St George Hospital is now one of the best hospitals in the State. That hospital allows nurses to work in the best possible environment, providing them with all the tools they need to perform to the highest possible standard.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Coalition are big supporters of our healthcare workers and, during our time in government, we announced the largest workforce boost in the nation's history in the 2022-23 budget, with a \$4.5 billion investment over four years for 10,148 full-time equivalent staff. We also encouraged aspiring nurses and midwives to succeed in their careers through NSW Health's Enrolled Nurse Scholarships, the Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship Program and the Aboriginal nursing and midwifery scholarships. We wanted more people to choose a rewarding career as a nurse or midwife, and during our time in government, they did. More than 9,340 nurses and midwives joined the NSW Health workforce between mid-2012 and mid-2022, forming part of an overall 25.2 per cent increase in the NSW Health workforce during our time in government, which made a big difference in the health and wellbeing of our communities. NSW Health has the largest health system in the country and employs more than 53,000 nurses and midwives, which is more than ever before.

The physical surroundings in which people spend their working lives can be an important source of job satisfaction, productivity and wellbeing, especially for our health staff. Under the Coalition Government we delivered more than 180 health infrastructure projects across New South Wales, which ensured that our health staff worked in the highest quality facilities available. Not only did we invest in our nurses and midwives' places of work but we also worked to ensure that we protected them and their safety. Under the previous Government, we announced a \$69.7 million hospital security package that saw health and security assistants embedded 24/7 in eight critical mental health facilities, whilst also improving the Police, Ambulance, Clinical, Early Response program. On every level our Government provided measures and support to our nurses and midwives to ensure that they had what they needed to continue their vital work. From bustling hospitals in the heart of Sydney to the remote communities in regional and rural New South Wales, the work of nurses and midwives should not, and will not, go unnoticed. I personally thank all nurses and midwives for their continued dedication and amazing contributions to our society. I congratulate them on all their efforts, as well as everything they have achieved over the past few years.

#### STATE BUDGET AND RYDE ELECTORATE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:38):** The budget is a significant opportunity for a government to map out its priorities for the State and the local community. Many in my community know about my love of Ryde—I wear it on my shoulder every day. It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to urge the Parliament and new Government to ensure that my community receives the investments and support that it needs and, frankly, deserves. Members not familiar with Ryde may be interested to know that it is a dynamic and fast-growing community, increasingly feeling the pinch from the pressures associated with living in a global city and the omnipresence of the high and rapidly rising cost of living. The budget is an opportunity to tackle those issues.

It gives me great pleasure to advocate in this place for better health, education, infrastructure, open space, domestic violence and accessibility programs to help ensure that Ryde remains the very best place to live, work and raise a family. Over the past couple of terms, Ryde was the beneficiary of unprecedented levels of investment in new school infrastructure. We have seen some musings from the Government in recent days about a new school in Melrose Park, but we are yet to see any detail with respect to the actual site. It is the same story for the promised K-12 Macquarie Park school, where I note that the Government has disavowed a previously identified location. It is the Government's prerogative to make a change, but if it intends to abandon the location of the previously promised school then it must budget accordingly. In order to reduce the delays associated with the location change, the required funding must be nominated now.

There is also an opportunity in health to allocate an additional \$150 million to Ryde hospital for MRI, mental health and other much-needed facilities. That was discussed by representatives of the Government before the election and would be welcomed strongly by me as the local MP. I note that this would be in addition to the already allocated \$479 million that was funded under the previous Liberal Government for the wholesale rebuild, turning the hospital in which I was born into a modern and vibrant facility that will serve our local community.

There is also work to be done by this Government to widen Victoria Road. Before the election I was successful in securing a modest sum to finalise a business case for the project. Whilst it is an important first step, there remains much to do that will impact my electorate as well as those of the member for Parramatta, the member for Lane Cove, the member for Drummoyne and the member for Balmain, to name a few. This expansion will help reduce traffic congestion, improve commuting times and enhance overall road safety. It would be a legacy piece for the Government—a demonstration of clear future vision. Inaction, on the other hand, would likely see it emerge only as a vision in the rear-view mirror.

It links closely to the success of the Regional and Local Roads Repair Program. When I was the Mayor of Ryde, I was successful in securing over \$3 million to repair over 65 local roads damaged by rain, floods and other weather events. But there is much more to do. The rollover of this program would be a game changer for Ryde and simply must be included in the budget. This Government must also honour the \$600,000 funding commitment that I secured before the election for the Northern Centre in West Ryde. Operating its SafeT program, it has helped hundreds of local women not just escape family and domestic violence but also stay away. I understand that this Government has only committed \$40,000 to date, which is less than 7 per cent of that funding. We cannot do enough to tackle this crisis, and I do not feel that this view can be overstated. I ask the Government to please fund the SafeT program and help my community tackle this terrible scourge.

We can also do more with respect to cost of living by restoring many of the voucher programs and initiatives that were so successful, particularly throughout COVID. We have spoken about Active Kids, First Lap and Creative Kids in this place, giving kids an opportunity to be involved in sport, creativity and many life skills, such as swimming, which is so important for those living in Australia. That was a commitment of the Government before the election, and very eloquently put by the Premier. Yet we have heard in recent times that those projects are due to be cut. There is time. The budget is not until next week, and I urge for them to be continued.

I also call on the Parliament to work with the City of Ryde council on its acquisition of the TG Millner playing fields. There are few premier fields like it in Sydney, and seeing their protection would be a game changer not just for the Ryde community but also for sporting communities around Sydney. The council is an able and willing partner and would look to work with the Government constructively. Finally, I have read in recent days that the Government has plans to cut the popular Park'nPay program. As somebody who previously worked in disability, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of accessibility with respect to mobility in transport and parking. This is a dynamic and innovative app. It was a great success of the previous Government and should not be at risk. I urge the Government not to go backwards, to put Ryde first and to make sure those projects are adequately funded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 16:44 until  
Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **NAIDOC CELEBRATIONS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I rise today to reflect on the splendid National NAIDOC Week celebrations that took place throughout the Electorate and across NSW in July. It was an honour to be a part of these momentous events, which provided a platform to appreciate and commemorate the history and culture of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. During that week, I had the pleasure of attending The National Indigenous Art Fair where I had an engaging conversation with Uncle Wes Marne, a distinguished author. His wisdom and insights left a lasting impression. I had the privilege of attending the flag raising ceremony in Wingecarribee, where we joined together to raise the flag in recognition of our Indigenous elders. The ceremony was followed by the opening of the NAIDOC Exhibition "For Our Elders" at The Atrium gallery inside the Civic Centre. This exhibition celebrated the talent of our local First Nations artists and provided an opportunity to showcase their remarkable works. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organisations who worked tirelessly to make these events a resounding success. Their dedication and commitment ensured that the NAIDOC Week celebrations were an unforgettable experience, fostering unity, understanding, and appreciation.

#### **VIETNAM VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATION**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I rise today to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973. Bargo Sports Club hosted a poignant ceremony, which I attended along with Wollondilly Councillor, Suzy Brandstater. Our speeches emphasised the sacrifices made by our Vietnam veterans. Members from Bargo Men's Shed and Buxton RFS also joined the ceremony that included a didgeridoo performance and a wreath laying to honor those we lost. Councillor Brandstater reminded us that Vietnam veterans

faced not just physical challenges but an emotional toll, which changed many lives forever. This inaugural Vietnam Veterans Day event at Bargo Sports Club underlines the importance of honoring our veterans in their local community. A parallel ceremony took place at Picton Memorial Park, attended by Mayor of Wollondilly, Matt Gould. In total, around 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1972, leading to the loss of 521 lives and wounding more than 3,000. This day allows us to remember and honor these courageous individuals and their significant contributions to our nation's history.

#### **JIM MCGILVRAY**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the loss of Jim McGilvray, a dedicated member of the Picton-Thirlmere-Bargo RSL Sub Branch. For over half a century, Jim has been a beloved husband to Louise, sharing 51 wonderful years of marriage. A loving father to Scott and Kellie, he has been a pillar of support and a guiding light for his family. Jim's unwavering commitment to his community and the values he held dear have left an indelible mark on those around him. A friend to many, he was known for his generosity, kindness, and warm spirit. His involvement in the RSL Sub Branch and his efforts to support his fellow veterans will not be forgotten. In loving memory, Jim's legacy will continue to inspire and resonate within the hearts of his family, friends, and the wider Picton-Thirlmere-Bargo community. Though he has left us, his presence will always be felt, and the memories shared will be cherished forever. Our deepest condolences go out to Louise, Scott, Kellie, and all who were fortunate enough to have known Jim. May he rest in peace.

#### **UNLOCK CAMDEN**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On Saturday 2nd September I had the privilege to attend the Unlock Camden event at Alan Barker Art Gallery, Camden Library and Camden Town Farm, all located on John St in the heart of Camden. Unlock Camden showcases the vibrant and rich history of Camden to all those who wish to see it. We were very lucky to have Auntie Glenda Chalker open the event with a welcome to country, reminding us of all the rich Indigenous History of the land which began long before Camden's contemporary history began. Unlock Camden showcases the heritage of the town through its numerous exhibitions on show. These include Vintage Cars and Fire Trucks, Local Music, and local art displays. I would like to particularly make mention to the Camden Museums brilliant collection of historic objects, photographs, and archives from the local area as well as the addition of Camden Town Farm to this year's exhibit. The organisers of Unlock Camden did a fantastic job of putting this event on for the community.

#### **WINTERFEST**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—Winter is a lovely time of year to visit Camden. The brisk evenings and clear air make for a lovely experience, reminiscent of a more traditional idea of the cold season. It is to embrace these times that Camden Council created the festival known as Winterfest involving food trucks, rides, and ice skating. I was lucky enough to try out the festivities at the Mayoral launch of the event where guests were treated to an outstanding ice-skating display. We then had the opportunity to get out on the ice ourselves. Winterfest had been a mainstay in the Camden calendar until COVID, and last year's event was damaged by the floods – so it was excellent to see Camden shining in the crisp evening air. Congratulations to Camden Council and all those who were a part of the organisation of this great event. I cannot wait to get onto the ice again next year!

#### **SCULPTURES IN THE VALLEY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Sculpture in the Valley 2023 which was a great success. I acknowledge Mr Nick Minogue, President of Arts in the Valley, Vice President Gudula Dornseifer, Treasurer Chris Green, Secretary Caroline Minogue, Stuart McCreery Sculpture Director, David Ball, Curator, for all of their hard work and dedication along with the Judges Janet Laurence and Michael Snape. I also acknowledge and thank the many volunteers across the Kangaroo Valley community who had planned and coordinated the logistics for many months, supervised indoor and outdoor sculpture galleries, directed visitor parking and even installed generators to assist the smooth running of the event. It wouldn't have been possible without them! I was honoured to visit Wilburra Estate on Saturday 9th September 2023 as part of the event which was a tremendous and very picturesque setting. From the Sculpture in the Valley Committee, I also acknowledge: Commercial Manager Kathy Harrington, Production Julie Ward, Infrastructure Stephen Wilson, Communications Howard Sacre and Lisa Anthony, Catering Kerri Carlton, Traffic and Logistics Ken Novich, Volunteer Coordination Elizabeth Clark. Sculpture in the Valley is also supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

#### **ST JOHN AMBULANCE KIAMA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises St John Ambulance NSW. The Kiama Combined Division covers local Kiama events such as the seasonal netball

competition, the New Years' Eve festivities, community events, car shows and street fairs, Kiama Show, Albion Park Show and Berry Show. It's involved in the Berry Celtic Festival and the Shellharbour LGA like triathlons and the Southern Youth and Families Awards Night. Melissa Williamson is the Officer in Charge of Kiama Combined Division and has volunteered with St John for 28 years. Recently the Kiama Combined Division received a \$1786 grant from the government which it is using for a radio base station that will help boost their radio signals when they cover events that span a wide distance such as the Red Cross Fun Run. St John Ambulance came to Australia in 1883, and there are 70 divisions in NSW. Kiama Combined Division began in December 1980. Once a week on Wednesday night the Kiama Division trains at the Kiama SES Hall from 7pm-9pm. If you are interested in first aid and helping our community, consider joining St John Ambulance.

#### **STEEL CITY STRINGS ILLAWARRA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Steel City Strings Illawarra's Chamber Orchestra. On Sunday 27th August 2023, I was extremely pleased to attend the "BAROQUE HORIZONS" performance at the Nowra School of Arts directed by Baroque specialist Bridget Crouch (violin/viola) which showcased engaging, theatrical works with broad audience appeal, arranged to reflect music of the Baroque era. The performance was spellbinding and outstanding. Preparation for the performance includes master classes for Steel City Strings players to extend their Baroque repertoire and skills. The program features Adrian Davis, soloist in the Telemann viola concerto in G major. The program also includes the Bach Double Violin Concerto and works by Biber, Handel, Duerte, Farina and Merula. I also acknowledge in the Orchestra: Monique Ziegelaar, Samantha Boston, Jacob Antonio, Kate Malone, Alexandra Denning, Clinton Lau, Monique Mezzatesta, Janine Jackson, Rita Woodhouse, Karella Mitchell, Catherine Barnett, Ethan Ireland and Ariana Odermatt. I once again acknowledge everybody involved in this fantastic production and congratulate Steel City Strings Illawarra's Chamber Orchestra for their ongoing contribution, hard work and dedication.

#### **GYMAROO COACHING**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise today to congratulate Tyla Humphrey, Tylah Roach and Asha Clarke. These three young women are recipients of a scholarship that allows them to study at a gymnastics school in Denmark in an International Coach Exchange Program the school has with the PCYC NSW. Each year, 40 places are made available to students from all over the world to study in the program. This is the first time three coaches from Taree have been selected to attend in the same year. It's not easy to get accepted. Applications have to be made and curriculum vitae's forwarded. The PCYC and the Danish school go through the applications, although the decision ultimately lies with the school. Congratulations girls, I wish you all the best on your 12 month exchange. I can't wait to see the new gymnastic and leadership skills you bring back home to the Gymaroos.

#### **KYLE POLIDANO**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise today to congratulate Kyle Polidano on winning bronze at WorldSkills Australian National Championships 2023 under the Electrical Installation category. Kyle lives in Marlee, attends TAFE at Port Macquarie studying electrotechnology, and works at MCS Electrical in Taree. The National Championships is Australia's biggest vocational education and excellence competition. Over three days at Skills Show Australia, selected regional competitors were flown to Melbourne from around the country to showcase and benchmark their skills on the national stage competing against their industry peers from around the country. The competitors had tasks to complete over the three days, working on both a domestic and a commercial installation. They were also required to do fault finding, and a speed challenge. Congratulations Kyle, what an achievement it is to be recognised as one of the best electrical apprentices in Australia! I wish you all the best with your studies.

#### **MANNING RIVER ORCHID SOCIETY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I rise today to recognise the vibrant event that is the Spring Orchid Show, organised by the Manning River Orchid Society. The two-day annual Spring Orchid Show featured over 170 exhibits, showcasing a wide range of orchids, from native to exotic varieties. In addition to the displays, the event offered plant sales and potting demonstrations, providing valuable insights into orchid care and cultivation. I commend the Manning River Orchid Society for their commitment to promoting the love of orchids and horticulture within our community.

#### **PATRICIA EGAN**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Patricia 'Trish' Egan, a dedicated and passionate table tennis player, on winning gold, silver and bronze medals in both national and international championships. Living in North Narrabeen, Trish is a member of the Pittwater Uniting Table Tennis Club at Warriewood, where she has developed her skills and demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship. Trish made her competitive table tennis debut

only a year ago in Perth, where she made an impressive mark by securing a Silver and three Bronze medals in women's and mixed doubles events at the Australian Masters Championships. In August, Trish returned home after much success competing overseas. Trish reached the quarter finals of the European Table Tennis Championships in Norway. This achievement is even more impressive considering the event attracted some 200 players from 40 different countries. The following week, Trish took home a singles Gold medal and doubles Silver medal at the European Master Games in Finland. Trish's next big competition is in Canberra in October, where she will represent NSW in the National Table Tennis Championships. I wish Trish the best of luck and thank her for inspiring our community.

#### **MELISSA GOUGH**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Melissa 'Mel' Gough on receiving her National Medal following 21 years distinguished service as a volunteer firefighter. Mel joined the Ingleside Rural Fire Brigade on 23 January 2002. She's attended many incident calls - motor vehicle accidents, bush fires, structure fires and storm related incident calls. Mel has put her life on the line in front line bush fire deployments over two decades. Most recently, as a Deputy Captain, Mel attended the 2019/2020 bush fires deploying to fires at Martinville, Gaspers Mountain, Green Wattle Creek and Queanbeyan. Melissa has been a Deputy Captain and Personnel Officer and regularly participates in duty crews, brigade training, meetings and participates in crewing the districts "Flyer" Melissa also assists the brigade with fundraising events and community safety. Like most volunteer firefighters, there are no doubt stories of Mel's heroic contributions which will go untold. Mel, your contributions are recognised, and I thank you for them. As well as her rural fire service, Mel's public service includes as a dressage judge and as president of the Warringah Dressage Association. Quite frankly, Mel's service represents the best qualities of residents in our community. Mel, thank you.

#### **COURTENAY POBJE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recognise a wonderful small business in Newport, Coco Cherie Hair, a salon that caters to clients who are neurodivergent or struggling with mental health issues. Coco Cherie provides a relaxing experience for those who may feel overwhelmed by the lights and noises that are common at traditional hair dressing salons. After struggling with burnout, chronic fatigue and bad anxiety attacks in 2020, founder, Courtenay Pobje, discovered she had ADHD and autism. Driven by a desire to continue doing what she loves, Courtenay decided to create a safe space for her to work and where other girls like her could feel comfortable. Courtenay founded Coco Cherie in April 2022, just over a year later, the salon is attracting a growing clientele. Beyond serving the neurodivergent community, Coco Cherie is a place for anyone seeking a gentler touch, a slower pace and a quieter atmosphere. Courtenay is happy to cater to the needs of each of her clients, from mirrorless appointments to welcoming dogs. Courtenay believes that everyone deserves to feel beautiful, and her salon exemplifies this philosophy. I thank Courtenay for her work making our community a more compassionate place.

#### **KALAIVIZHA 2023 WENTWORTHVILLE TAMIL STUDY CENTRE**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 9 September 2023 I was honoured to attend the Kalaivizha celebration hosted Wentworthville Tamil Study Centre at Bowman Hall in Blacktown. Kalaivizha, now in its 35th year, is a testament to the rich Tamil culture and tradition. This annual festival serves as a platform for the talented students of the center to showcase their skills in various art forms, from language and music to dance and literature. The Wentworthville Tamil Study Centre has played a pivotal role in preserving Tamil culture and educating young Australians. It has grown to become one of NSW's largest language schools. This celebration was not only a showcase of talent but also a testament to the dedication of the staff, students, volunteers, and parents in preserving and sharing Tamil culture with all Australians. I extend my congratulations to all involved in organising this year's Kalaivizha festival and for us offering us a delightful and entertaining afternoon immersed in the beauty of Tamil culture. Thank you also to Mr Jegan Kirupatharan, President, Mr Kumaran Jeyapalan, Liaison Coordinator and the team at Wentworthville Tamil Study Centre for the kind invitation to attend.

#### **AFRICULTURES 2023**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 9 September 2023 I was delighted to attend the 2023 Africultures festival at Cathy Freeman Park at Sydney Olympic Park. The Africultures Festival is a celebration of African cultures and is now in its 15th year. It unites diverse African communities in Sydney and showcases African heritage through cultural performances, workshops, cuisine, and market stalls, fostering cross-cultural understanding within our community. It regularly draws over 20,000 attendees. This year's festival promises had over 70 stalls, several musical performances, and a diverse range of African foods and fashion. From small businesses to a rich array of cuisines, it offered a taste of Africa in Australia. The festival celebrates the diversity of African culture, food, and talent, offering a unique experience that immerses us in the beauty of Africa and

exemplifies the power of cultural diversity. I commend the passionate volunteers behind this event and in particular to Ms Fatma Isir for the kind invitation to be part of the Official Ceremony.

#### **GRANVILLE AND DISTRICTS SOCCER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION'S GRAND FINALS 2023**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 9 September 2023 I was delighted to attend Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association's [GDSFA] Division 1 Grand Final and Cottam Cup Grand Final at Melita Stadium, marking the culmination of their 2023 football season. GDSFA is Australia's oldest Soccer Football Association, founded in 1900 by Frederick Barlow, introducing the game into local schools. It quickly expanded to cover Western Sydney and even stretched out to Lithgow. Granville's legacy has produced numerous Socceroos, Olyroos, and Matildas. Today they cover Cumberland Council and Parramatta City Council, including my electorate. The recent grand finals were an occasion to showcase new upgraded lights which were made possible through a NSW Government Community Building Partnerships grant of \$75,000 supported by my colleague, Lynda Voltz MP, State Member for Auburn. Thank you to Ms Rosanna Lentini, General Manager and the entire Board of GDSFA for the kind invitation to attend.

#### **SISTER MARY SHANAHAN RSCJ OAM**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I acknowledge Sister Mary Shanahan RSCJ OAM, who was awarded the honour of Croce Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice by Pope Francis for her distinguished services to the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Sydney and Australia. A graduate of Kincoppal-Rose Bay in my electorate of Vaucluse, I had the pleasure of hearing about this high honour during my recent meeting with Kincoppal Parents. Sister Shanahan has served as a leader and mentor to young people in the Society of the Sacred Heart, at Kincoppal-Rose Bay and at Sancta Sophia College for decades, having served the Kincoppal Community in many positions, including as a board member. Sister Shanahan has also been awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the Queens Birthday Honours List 2019 For service to tertiary education, and as a mentor of young students. I thank her for her service to our community.

#### **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE HILLS DISTRICT 12TH ANNUAL SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The 12th Annual Public Speaking Competition for local High School students was held on 9 September at the Glenhaven Community Centre. Forty students from local schools participated. The competition included a junior section for years 8 and 9 and a senior section for years 10 and 11 students. The Junior topic was – "Digital Technology is developing at a rapid rate – How are these advancements impacting the youth of today?" and the Senior topic was "In what ways does accessible education empower women and contribute to breaking down barriers of discrimination?" It was great to see many schools taking part. I recognize students from, OLMC, Gilroy College, Kellyville High, Northholm Grammar, William Clarke College, Pacific Hills Christian School, Northmead Creative High and Marian Catholic College. I take the opportunity to extend recognition for the continuing service of the Soroptimist International of the Hills District. The word Soroptimist comes from the Latin words soror meaning "sister" and optima meaning "best", and loosely translates as "best for women. I recognise Cathy Tracey and Jacqui McLachlan the entire Soroptimist team and the competition judges for conducting a wonderful speaking competition.

#### **KELLYVILLE KOLTS FOOTBALL PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Congratulations to the Kellyville Kolts Football Club on another great season. The Kolts are one of the largest clubs with over two thousand four hundred members. The club has over one hundred and twenty-one teams. The Kolts presentation day was held at Bernie Mullane Reserve on Saturday, 9 September 2023. It was wonderful to speak to the players, discuss football and to see the smiles on the young players faces as they received trophies. Over one thousand six hundred trophies were handed out. The club arranged jumping castles, rides, food stalls a barbeque for the players to enjoy. There was a firework display provided by which was enjoyed by families and the wider community. The Kolts President, Bob Harrold and the entire Kolts Committee are all volunteers who give back to the community. Thank you to all volunteers, coaches, managers who give up so much time to allow children to play football.

#### **ROUSE HILL TOWN STREET PARADE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Hills Shire Council has held the Orange Blossom Festival for over half a Century. This year the Orange Blossom Festival Street parade was back. The street parade was held at the Rouse Hill Town Centre. The Hills community were out in full force lining all streets to cheer on the parade. The parade included many great parade attractions including, Flower Squad Trio; Stilt Flowers Duo; Golden Kangaroo Marching Band; PAW Patrol; The Stage Door Performing Arts; Sydney Hills Garden Chinese Folk Art Dancers; Rural Fire Services Trucks; Crestwood School of Dance; Castle Hill RSL Band and much more. The award-winning town crier, Graham Keating returned to entertain the crowd. Graham, some may recall, was the



town crier at Old Sydney Town. Once the parade was finished the stage entertainment commenced with performance of the PAW Patrol Live Show, Sydney iDance Studio, Tiny Toes Ballet and much more. I recognise and thank very much the events team at the Hills Shire Council for arranging a wonderful fun day for the community.

#### **CHRISTOPHER DAVIS AM**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—The late Mr Christopher Davis AM, formerly of Turramurra was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to water management at this year's Australia Day Honours List. Christopher passed away last year. He valued and championed sustainable water management both in Australia as well as internationally. He was Chief Executive of the Australian Water Association for 14 years and was an inspirational, passionate and outstanding leader relationally and executively. He was active in community education, water reform, diversity of options and sustainability. He oversaw the transformation of water resources during the Millennium drought, the worst drought we have had. He was admired by all who knew him. He was also on the founding committee of WaterAid Australia, serving on the Board as Treasurer. He helped create fundraising campaigns to provide funding to Papua New Guinea for WaterAid's first project. Christopher was also a tireless advocate and raised awareness of Parkinson's disease and served as the President of Parkinson's New South Wales. I pass on my condolences to Christopher's family and congratulate him for his outstanding contribution to Australia.

#### **ROGER ALLAN FOY OAM**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—The Australia Day 2023 Honours List is an important part of our national holiday that recognises and celebrates people who have had a significant impact on the local, national and international level. This year 1,047 people were recognised. One of these people was the late Roger Allan Foy OAM of South Turramurra who received the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the automotive history. Unfortunately, Mr Foy passed away in April of this year. He was 93 years old. His Order of Australia Medal was nominated by "The Friends of Fagan Park", Galston. He was an engineer at BMC Australia and member of the Austin Motor Vehicle Club of NSW. He was an Honorary Life Member of the Veteran Car Club and apart of Friends of Fagan Park. He tested and modified vehicles to suit Australian road conditions and particularly for the "Freeway" car. He Co-authored "Building Cars in Australia" produced by the BMC-Leyland Australian Heritage Group. I pass on my condolences to Roger's family and recognise what an excellent achievement it was to be given the Medal of the Order of Australia.

#### **EMERITUS PROFESSOR PETER HAYDEN CURSON**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—Each year, the Australia Day 2023 Honours List recognises and celebrates people who have had a significant impact on the local, national and international level. Those who are recognised have demonstrated outstanding qualities and made exceptional contributions to their community and our nation. In my own electorate of Wahroonga, Emeritus Professor Peter Hayden Curson of Pymble OAM was awarded an Honorary Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to tertiary education. He is a Professor of Population and Security at University of Sydney. Professor Curson is a medical geographer, having attained degrees from the Universities of Auckland and Tasmania. His background is in population studies, demography, geography and public health. He is a Former Head of the School of Earth Sciences and Dean of the Division of Environmental and Life Sciences at Macquarie University; and a former Director of Macquarie University's Health Studies Program. He has authored many books and media articles in Australia and New Zealand. He has a particular understanding of epidemic crises and community responses to pandemics. I congratulate Professor Curson on his recognition in this year's Australia Day Honours List.

#### **MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION SCHOFIELDS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Attending the joyous celebration of Onam, the festival of flowers and abundance organised by the Malayalee Association Schofields was a great privilege. Onam holds a special place in the hearts of Malayalee's worldwide. It is a time of immense significance, as it commemorates the homecoming of the legendary King Mahabali. The festival stretches over ten days and is marked by a rich array of cultural performances, delicious feasts, and picturesque pookalam floral decorations. The Malayalee Association Schofields has flourished and grown rapidly, becoming a shining example of unity in diversity. Seeing so many families coming together with their children to connect with their roots and preserve and promote their timeless traditions was heart-warming. Onam transcends the boundaries of religion, caste, and creed, bringing together people from all walks of life. It symbolises the spirit of togetherness, and I was fortunate to be a part of during their rituals. The highlight, of course, was the delicious Onam Sadhya feast which also served as a reminder of their rich culinary and cultural heritage. Thank you to the Malayalee Association Schofields for their unwavering dedication to our shared identity and commitment to promoting unity and harmony within our community.

**MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION OF QUAKERS HILL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the Malayalee Association of Quakers Hill for organising such a vibrant Ponnonam- full of food, fun and festivities to celebrate the homecoming of legendary King Mahabali. The event truly exemplified Onam's spirit and this community's dedication to preserving and promoting its rich cultural heritage. The colourful and lively atmosphere at Ponnonam was a testament to the hard work and commitment by the Association. It was a kaleidoscope of traditions, bringing together people from various backgrounds to celebrate the unity and diversity that Onam represents. Families, including children dressed in traditional attire and actively participated in the festivities, further highlighted the event's vibrancy. This reinforced the continuity of cultural traditions and fostered a sense of belonging and unity among generations. The celebrations showcased the Malayalee community's cultural richness and opened doors for others to appreciate and participate in these wonderful traditions. Events like these enrich the local area and our society more broadly. I look forward to witnessing the continued growth and prosperity of the Malayalee Association of Quakers Hill and the enduring spirit of Onam in the years to come.

**THE PONDS HIGH SCHOOL BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I am thrilled to commend the incredible efforts of Miss Elliott and The Ponds HS Social Justice team for their outstanding Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser. This event supports of the Cancer Council and has a remarkable 30-year history of contributing to cancer research, prevention, and support programs. This initiative truly showcases the power of community and compassion. During recess, the team's pancakes and hashbrowns were in such high demand that they sold out rapidly, and at lunchtime, bacon and egg sandwiches were made available for sale. The result of their hard work and dedication is clear, as the team raised an impressive \$952. This generous contribution reinforces the importance of grassroots efforts in our community to support crucial causes like cancer research and patient support. The TPHS Social Justice Team has demonstrated that we can make a real difference when we come together for a noble cause. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Miss Elliott and the team for their exceptional work and dedication to this vital cause.

**SIENNA BOURKE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Sienna Bourke, from Shell Cove, who travelled to the International Dragon Boat Federation World Nations Championships in Pattaya, Thailand in August 2023. Earlier in 2023, Sienna was selected as a member of the New South Wales Junior Dragon Boat Squad that competed at the Australian Championships in Albury Wodonga. This is a remarkable achievement as Sienna is currently in Year 12, completing her high school studies at St Joseph's Catholic High School Albion Park. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Sienna and wish her well at the upcoming Dragon Boat Championships.

**ALEISHA MCGARRY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Aleisha McGarry, from Shellharbour, who competed at the ANC Australian Tenpin Bowling Championships as a part of the NSW Presidents Shield (Junior) team as well as an individual at the Australian Junior Masters in July 2023. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Aleisha and congratulate you on representing NSW and qualifying for the stepladder finals at the Junior Masters Competition.

**BROOKLYN MCWILLIAMS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Brooklyn McWilliams, from Flinders Public School, for representing her school at the NSW Cross Country Championships on Friday 21 July 2023 at Sydney Motor Sports Park in Eastern Creek and the National Cross-Country Championships in Canberra on 26 and 27 August, 2023. Brooklyn achieved amazing results at the NSW Cross Country Championships in Eastern Creek where she was awarded Gold in her age group. She then represented NSWPSA at the National Cross-Country Championships in Canberra, taking away from her first Nationals with 1st in the Under 10 Girls, 1st in the Under 10 Girls 2-kilometre teams event and 1st in the Under 10 Girls 5 x 1-kilometre relay. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Brooklyn and wish her well in her future sporting endeavours.

**VALE COLIN ELKINGTON**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the passing of Colin Elkington, who has left an incredible mark on the Albury and border farming and business community. Mr Elkington, founder of Elk's Hunting and Fishing in Albury, passed away on August 17, aged 69, after a long health battle. Colin first purchased the Albury business in 1994 and approached the task with characteristic energy and capacity. Over a number of

years, he transformed Elk's Hunting and Fishing into a national icon, defying the odds and challenges of uncertainty. He also took pride in supplying hay to farmers in need. Beyond his business acumen, Colin's generosity shone, always willing to lend a hand. Many benefited from his friendship, sponsorships, and assistance. These attributes are a testament to his compassionate soul, instilled in him by his father Bert. I extend my condolences to Colin's wife Jane, children Jason, Justin, Bec, Tamara and Hayley their families and 14 grandchildren. Vale Colin Elkington.

#### **LOCAL BUSINESS BRIE CORPORATE FINALIST TELSTRA BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to a local business in Albury, BRIE Corporation, which has secured two nominations in this year's Telstra Business Awards. Brie Corporation is a family-owned business that has redefined the idea and nature of corporate uniforms. They specialise in designing and producing custom and stock service uniforms for different organisations across Australia, from construction to healthcare. Founder Rebecca O'Brien has nearly two decades of experience in the industry with a background in Fashion Design and is finding success with her design approach. The award categories are: Finalist Rebecca O'Brien - Outstanding Business Leader - sponsored by Telstra; and Finalist in Outstanding Business in Manufacturing - sponsored by Leading Edge DC. Well done Rebecca and the team at BRIE Corporation as you thrive and inspire in the business realm - may your success long continue.

#### **MORWARID FAIZ**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to recognise Ms Morwarid Faiz, who is a resident of my electorate, for his recent scholarship in the Blacktown City Council's 2023 Tertiary Scholarship Awards. Ms Faiz, was recently awarded with a \$1,500 Scholarship to assist with his Bachelor of Communication in Social and Political Sciences and Bachelor of Law at the University of Technology Sydney. The annual program hosted by Blacktown City Council, awards the outstanding academic performance of university students who have completed at least one year of study at a recognised institution. Education is integral to our development and I congratulate Ms Faiz on this much deserved recognition.

#### **NORTH EPPING MENS SHED**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—Earlier this month I was fortunate to be able to attend the inaugural function of the newly constructed North Epping Men's Shed in my electorate. We had a full tour of the new shed, a Q&A committee session, finished with a delicious BBQ spread. I want to congratulate especially Brian Bailey, Shaun Garvey, and the entire committee for their amazing work and perseverance in getting this project off the ground through years of hard graft. I am delighted that my government was able to assist the Men's Shed through grant funding, through the Community Building Partnership, and infrastructure funding for shovel-ready projects. My office has had the privilege of working with Shaun and Brian since 2019, when I first became the Member for Epping. I know that the effort they and other committee members have gone through together has forged true bonds of mateship. Now that the Men's Shed is open, they are offering a space for community and fellowship to all in the Epping area. I know they will build on the foundations they have laid to continue making this Men's Shed an even bigger success. Congratulations again to Brian, Shaun, and all those involved.

#### **LETS GO GREEK FESTIVAL 2023**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the 'Let's Go Greek' Festival at Parramatta this past weekend, and I must say, I had a wonderful time. The Let's Go Greek Festival celebrates cultural diversity and Greek heritage in a family-friendly way, attracting 30,000 to 35,000 festival goers each year. I was joined by my wife Adla and my two kids, James and Sammy, who all thoroughly enjoyed the event. There was so much on offer, including live music, carnival rides, stalls and a range of delicious Greek treats, such as loukemadeas, lamb souvlaki and Greek coffee. It was wonderful to see so many people out and about, enjoying themselves whilst supporting local businesses. Multiculturalism is the cornerstone of our great state, and events like the 'Let's Go Greek' Festival help to showcase aspects of Greek culture to the wider community. I would like to thank Kos Dimitriou, President of the Hellenic Orthodox Community of Parramatta, as well as the entire committee behind the Let's Go Greek Festival for hosting another successful event. I look forward to attending again next year!

#### **GEZEL BARDOSSI ON THE VOICE AUSTRALIA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate an exceptionally talented young constituent in my community, Gezel Bardossi. Gezel is a student at St Raphael's Catholic Primary School in South Hurstville, and recently made it through the blind auditions on The Voice Australia. What a fantastic achievement! Despite being only 12 years of age, Gezel has proven that she has what it takes to make it on the big stage. As the youngest contestant on The Voice, she has certainly captured the attention of not only locals, but the entire nation.

Specialising in a smooth blend of rock and blues, Gezel has wowed not only the crowds, but the judges, with Rita Ora stepping up to be her mentor. It's always fantastic to see the younger generation pursuing their musical goals. There is truly no shortage of musical talent in the local area, and this is something I am so proud of. I look forward to watching Gezel's journey closely on The Voice. The entire community is cheering you on Gezel – go well and best of luck!

#### **LEANNA NGUYEN NSW DAME MARIE BASHIR PEACE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate a fantastic young leader and role model in my community, Le-anna Nguyen, who recently received a NSW Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award. Promoted by the National Council of Women New South Wales, the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards acknowledge young women across the state for their contributions to schools and communities. These young women are truly outstanding role models, making a significant impact to social justice in their respective schools and communities, whilst inspiring others to do the same. Le-Anna is currently a student in year 12 at Beverly Hills Girls High School, and has shown dedication not only to her studies, but also care and commitment to her fellow students by fostering harmonious relationships within her school community. The Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award is not just a recognition of Le-Anna's past achievements, but a testament to her potential as a future leader. I would like to congratulate Le-Anna on her remarkable achievements and well-deserved success. I am entirely confident that your future endeavours will be filled with even-great success.

#### **CONCORDIA CLUB 140 YEARS OF COMMUNITY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Happy birthday to the Concordia Club of Tempe celebrating the 140th anniversary of its establishment in 2023. Concordia Club is a hub for German Australians and provides a much-needed sense of home and community for anyone who visits. Originally located in Stanmore the Club moved to their current premises in Tempe twenty years ago. Famous for their delicious pork-knuckle the menu covers a wide range of German cuisine and many imported beers. The Summer Hill electorate is home to many cultures with almost 40 per cent of people being born overseas. Places like the Concordia Club are vital to maintaining links to culture and heritage from around the world. They provide an opportunity to share and celebrate culture with young and old. The Club is bringing back its very popular Oktoberfest celebrations on Sundays in October this year so make sure you don't miss out on this great event. Congratulations Concordia Club and happy birthday!

#### **MARRICKVILLE FC INCLUSIVITY IN SPORTS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—In the wake of the Matilda's stunning performance in the World Cup, it is important to acknowledge and thank the local clubs that form the backbone of football in Australia. One such club in my Summer Hill electorate is Marrickville FC, the Red Devils. Established in 1946 the club boasts over two thousand registered members, with teams competing in the Canterbury and District Soccer Football Association. Marrickville FC is taking big steps to encourage people of all genders, ages and abilities to get involved with the world game, offering programs for women aged 16 and up, shorter form walking only competitions, and an all-abilities team for kids who might struggle in other teams. It is through inclusion, compassion, and reinforcement that we can build up our local sporting teams, and Marrickville FC is certainly leading the field in that regard. It is only through the efforts of many dedicated people that sporting clubs can be successful. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Club President Mr Bill Drossos and Managing Director Miss Georgie Kokokiris, all the leadership team and the many committed volunteers who are the heart of the club. Marrickville FC truly is more than a club; it's a football family.

#### **UNITING THOMAS ROSEBY LODGE STREET LIBRARY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Well done to the Uniting Thomas Roseby Lodge who are celebrating the grand opening of their new Street Library on Thursday 21 September. Thomas Roseby Lodge is located in the heart of my Summer Hill electorate in vibrant Marrickville and has 41 residents. It is vitally important for residents in aged care to remain connected to people and interests that give meaning and purpose to their lives. This Street Library is just such an opportunity – a chance to share their love of books and to involve and establish connections between themselves and their neighbours. Street libraries have grown in popularity in recent years as they are simple yet wonderful ways we can all enjoy reading, share with our neighbours and support community connection. I encourage everyone to bring along a book and share in the joy of reading across generations. Congratulations Thomas Roseby Lodge.

#### **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.

### **BARRIER TRUTH CELEBRATES 125 YEARS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—This week Broken Hills' local newspaper celebrates 125 years of publication. The Barrier truth was established in early 1898 starting as a one-page newsletter printed by Thomas Nicholls in Adelaide. Later that year it became an 8-page newspaper printed locally in Broken Hill. In July 1899 the newspaper changed ownership to the Barrier District Australasian Labour Federation and was published by William Arthur Jones. Predominantly publishing local news and general labour news in 1902 a women's section, sporting news and the racing results were added to the weekly publication. In 1908 the Barrier Truth changed its name to the Barrier Daily Truth and moved from weekly production to daily. Congratulations to all past and present owners, journalists and staff who have contributed to the paper's success and longevity.

### **FOSTER CARERS RICHARD AND CHRISTINE THOMAS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—During Foster Care Week 2023, I'd like to acknowledge this Broken Hill couple who have fostered more than 60 children in the Far West of my electorate. Richard and Christine describe themselves as ordinary people who have taken children into their home for emergency, temporary and permanent care for more than 20 years. At times there have been 6 children under their roof, benefitting from a safe, stable, and caring environment. In addition, their contribution to Broken Hill's community events and sporting facilities have been associated with the children that they have in their care. Richard and Christine's calm pragmatic approach to raising children is to be admired and we are very blessed to have them in our community.

### **TREVOR BARRY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Broken Hill amateur astronomer Trevor Barry has once again been recognised for his extraordinary efforts for his research of Saturn. Trevor is the 2023 recipient of the Walter H. Haas Observers Award for excellence in observing the Solar System. Nominated by his peers, Trevor has become the second-ever Australian to receive this prestigious award for his many years of interest in and contributions to observational planetary astronomy. The Walter H Haas Observers Award was established in 1985 and is named after the founder of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers and is presented to amateur astronomers who have demonstrated expertise far beyond their level. Congratulations Trevor for being globally recognised for your world class research and findings on Saturn. What an incredible achievement.

### **POSITIVE VIBES FOUNDATION**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—I wish to recognise the Positive Vibes Foundation which was formed in 2014 by a psychiatrist working in Castle Hill. The charity was driven by the need to eliminate the stigma around mental health, which at the time was preventing many from seeking treatment. While the stigma has lessened somewhat today, conversations around mental health are still vital in helping more people within the community to live healthier lives. Positive Vibes has four core programs – The Hills Women's Shed, Paw Visits, the Young Healthy Minds Forum and Community Engagement. which are funded through sponsorship and donations. Just recently they were the charity of choice for the annual Hills Charity Ball held at Bivianos Restaurant Dural. Over 200 people came together on the night to support this incredible foundation, and over \$31,000 was raised to help them continue their programs in The Hills Shire. Thank you to Bivianos for your support of this organisation. Thank you to The Hills previous Mayor Dr Michelle Byrne who is the Chair of the foundation and thank you to the volunteers who run these incredible programs which help to make deeper connections and increase the conversation around mental wellbeing.

### **2023 HUNTER BUSINESS AWARD UPPER HUNTER WINNERS**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to congratulate Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry on its latest success at the Hunter Business Awards held in Newcastle on August 25. For the third year in a row, Muswellbrook Chamber won the Outstanding Local Chamber Award automatically qualifying for the Business NSW State Awards in Sydney later this year. I also acknowledge Business Singleton on being a finalist for the Outstanding Local Chamber title. Congratulations Sue George and the team at Singleton Neighbourhood Centre on being crowned the Outstanding Community Organisation Award. Singleton's Morgan Engineering was highly commended for Excellence in Large Business. Aussie Ark, Barrington Tops has the

Outstanding Employee with Operations Manager, Dean Reid, collecting the trophy to advance to the State Business Awards. Aussie Ark was highly commended for Excellence in Small Business and Business Leader of the Year with Managing Director Tim Faulkner among the finalists. In closing, I acknowledge the Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator, which ensures coal from Upper Hunter mines moves from load points to either the Port of Newcastle or power stations. HVCCC was named the Employer of Choice, for firms of over 21 employees.

### **MAITLAND HUNTER RUGBY PREMIERS 2023**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—It may have been done the hard way but Maitland prevailed in the match of the year that counts to be crowned Hunter Rugby Premiers for 2023. The Blacks went into the play-offs as minor premiers only to then endure a rollercoaster ride of emotions to achieve their season objective. The major semi-final against second-placed Merewether saw Maitland defeated 23-22. The Blacks returned to Newcastle's Number 2 Sportsground the following weekend for the preliminary final to eliminate Wanderers in another breathtaking clash, 38-37. After two close encounters Maitland made no mistakes on Grand Final day – emphatically claiming the Premiers Trophy with 33-26 victory over Merewether. Saturday August 26 marked the breaking of a 24-year premiership drought for the Marcellin Park-based club – and the first major regional sporting trophy of the 2023 season for a team based in the Upper Hunter Electorate. Congratulations to Maitland's Nick Davidson on being named player of the match and awarded the John Hipwell Medal. To Blacks president Pat Howard, coach Luke Cunningham and captain Sam Callow – well done on a history making season which also included adding the Hawthorne Cup to the trophy room for the first time.

### **SCONE GROUP 21 HUNTER VALLEY RUGBY LEAGUE PREMIERS 2023**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Scone continues to be the Hunter Valley Group 21 Rugby League Premiers after defeating Greta Branxton in this year's first grade grand final. The Thoroughbreds finished the regular season in third place and then fought their way to the season decider. Scone outclassed Muswellbrook in the minor semi-final 54-8, then ended Denman's season 32-18 in the preliminary final. Greta Branxton had home ground advantage and as minor premiers started as favourites for grand final day played before an estimated crowd of 2,500 spectators at Greta Central Oval. The Colts led 18-12 at half-time but the Thoroughbreds were not to be denied the 2023 title defeating their hosts, 30-28. Congratulation to Scone captain-coach Adam Clydesdale on the Thoroughbreds fourth straight premiership in five years. Greta Branxton are this season's Reserve Grade premiers after defeating Aberdeen, 22-6. Singleton headed back up the New England Highway with two trophies – the Under-18 premiership after an 8-6 win over Scone and the Ladies League Tag crown when the Greyhounds again beat the Thoroughbreds with a 10-8 result in their grand final.

### **GREENACRE EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Sunday 27th August, the Greenacre Eagles Football Club 12/13 ladies played their 2023 grand final at Padstow Park. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to these inspiring young ladies for fearlessly embracing the challenge of the 2023 grand final and emerging victorious as the champions. Greenacre Eagles Football Club is a family-orientated soccer club located at Allum Park, in Greenacre. It is pleasing to see that the ambition, passion, and dedication from these young ladies throughout the 2023 soccer season, has led to a grand final win. This is a fantastic achievement for all players in the Greenacre Eagles Football Club and particularly the 12/13 ladies whose dedication, hard work, and teamwork have paid off. I would like to acknowledge and praise the dedicated and supportive team, coach, Ahmed El-Fawal, managers, Radwan Dannawi and Ibrahim Hafda, and all the volunteers for their work through the soccer season, and for leading these ladies to the championship. It takes many hours of training and skills development to achieve a grand final victory. Congratulations again to the Greenacre Eagles Football Club 12/13 ladies on their well-deserved grand final win!

### **HOUSE OF WELCOME WORK AND WELCOME PROGRAM**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I was pleased to learn that the community organisation, House of Welcome, received a grant from Bankstown Sports Club to assist with a refugee assistance program in my electorate. The House of Welcome opened in Sydney's southwest in 2001 as a project of the NSW Ecumenical Council and the Anglican, Catholic, and Uniting churches, and refugee organisations. Now through a program grant from Bankstown Sports Club, they can extend their Work and Welcome program to my electorate. The Work and Welcome program is designed to connect refugees and people seeking asylum with businesses and educational institutions to create a more inclusive workforce. Through this program, they can tap into a diverse, motivated pool of candidates with a range of skills, experience, and knowledge. Through the ten-week program refugees and people seeking asylum will have the opportunity of receiving paid placement in local organisations, and educational institutional facilities. This will not only increase their knowledge and skills but will assist them

in establishing significant connections and advancing their careers. I am pleased to have this service in my community and wish House of Welcome all the best with this program.

#### **BANKSTOWN SPORTS STARS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am pleased to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club 16/17 Ladies Division 1 on their triumphant victory in the grand final. The dedication and passion that these talented young women from my electorate pour into their pursuits is truly awe-inspiring. Their unwavering commitment and wholehearted effort are truly commendable. Bankstown Sports FC is a family-owned football club that was founded in 1959 and has operated successfully for the benefit of the community. The club provides opportunities for personal growth, self-confidence, and resilience while developing a greater understanding of health, fitness, and physical, and mental strength. It is a club where players form lasting friendships. Bankstown Sports FC believes that placing players or teams in a grade appropriate to their skill levels, plays an important role in achieving this success. They are an extremely proud and ambitious Football Club that wholeheartedly supported by many volunteers, members, and their families. Once again, I would like to congratulate the Bankstown Sports Star Football 16/17 Ladies Division 1 on their win, and I am pleased to have such incredible sport club within my electorate.

#### **TERRIGAL UNITING CHURCH REPAIR CAFE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I recently attended the Repair Cafe at Terrigal Uniting Church and wish to congratulate the Church and organisers for implementing a great community initiative and opportunity for social connection. Held on the last Saturday of each month, the Repair Cafe is an all-age free meeting place that's all about repairing things (together). Visitors bring their broken items from home and together with the specialists they start making their repairs. At the Terrigal Repair Café if you have nothing to repair, you can always lend a hand with someone else's repair job or enjoy some delicious wood-fired pizza and barista coffee whilst getting inspired at the reading table – by leafing through books on repairs and DIY. Repair areas include jewellery, sewing or knitting, woodwork or furniture, tool/knife sharpening, bike repairs, balls inflated, battery operated items and small mechanical items. It was great to catch up with volunteers Leslie and Bob, the latter being a whiz at knife sharpening which is one of the many repairs that can be done. This initiative is a great way to keep objects out of landfill and a chance to learn new skills, reduce waste and foster community connection.

#### **CELEBRATION OF VISION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the 'Celebration of Vision' event where Mingara Recreation Club hosted 15 clubs and many other local community groups who do amazing work to support the Central Coast Community. The event is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and recognise our local heroes and community groups who give so much to our community. I would like to acknowledge and thank Mingara Recreation Club for not only hosting the event but for their ongoing funding and support for a wide range of groups within our community including being long-term supporters of Surf Life Saving Central Coast. On the evening, Mingara funded and gifted each club with two brand new Infront Surf Craft nipper boards. These boards will be hitting the water very shortly as our Nippers head back to the beach as the summer approaches. Congratulations to all our SLSC on receiving these fantastic boards. Thank you to the Mingara Recreation Club for your continued generosity and support for our local volunteer organisations and congratulations again to our volunteer groups, it was great to hear your stories on the night and to recognise your contribution.

#### **PAUL LEMMON TERRIGAL SLSC**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Australian and World records have been broken at the 2023 Australian Pool Rescue Championships held at the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre recently. I would like to congratulate my constituent Paul Lemmon from the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club for setting two new world records at this event. Breaking the 55-59 Men's 200m Obstacle Race world record, which was broken only two months ago after being held for ten years followed up by another world record for the 200m Super Lifesaver Masters 55-60 Male. At his local Branch Championships, a couple of weeks ago, Paul realised he was not that far off the current world record so he stepped up his training to see what he could achieve. Its great to see Pauls hard work and commitment cumulating in such great results. For Paul though it's not just about the records and the medals, he is also a great club member and gives back to his club and sport by helping the youth in the club with their skills. Congratulations Paul on your achievements, commitment and for helping keep our beaches and community safe.

#### **COALITION FOR CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CONFERENCE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In August 2023, I attended the Coalition for Conservation [C4C] International Climate Conference at Taronga Zoo, joining my Liberals & Nationals parliamentary colleagues from

across Australia. C4C is a prominent environmental organisation in Australian centre-right politics seeking to foster collaboration with members of parliament, think tanks, business and industry, both here and abroad. C4C was founded by Cristina Talacko and is chaired by Larry Anthony, a former Federal Minister in the Howard Government. I acknowledge the many speakers and panellists that presented, including President of COP26 Sir Alok Sharma, NSW Opposition Leader Mark Speakman and NSW Shadow Minister for Environment Kellie Sloane, as well several Federal and State parliamentarians. The Davidson electorate community expects local representatives that support environmental conservation and emissions reduction. As the Member for Davidson I look forward to advancing this ongoing and important cause.

### **UNSW HEALTH PRECINCTS VISIT**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In August 2023 I had made a visit to the University of New South Wales [UNSW] Health and Innovation Precinct with the Shadow Minister for Medical Research Robyn Preston and parliamentary colleague Chris Rath. We met with Scientia Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health, Scientia Professor Vlado Perkovic, Professor Sean Emery, Dr Zoe Terpening, Dr Shafagh Waters and Dr Kristina Walton. Their passion for the work they do everyday is inspirational and uplifting. We discussed the strategic priorities of UNSW, and major projects and priorities of the medical and health faculty and toured the Molecular and Integrative Cystic Fibrosis Research Laboratory and Lowy Cancer Research Centre. As a past employee of The George Institute for Global Health that is affiliated with UNSW, I know firsthand the importance of investing in science, innovation, health and medical research. I look forward to working with UNSW and all universities and medical research institutes about how the NSW Liberals & Nationals can help assist and collaborate further. This will be of great benefit to the people of NSW and the Davidson electorate.

### **22ND ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 11 September 2023, I joined United States Consul-General Christine Elder and volunteers at Our Big Kitchen in Bondi to commemorate and remember the 9/11 terror attacks. We also took the time to recognise and thank our first responders and frontline workers. On that day in 2001, we Australians were heading to bed. We woke up to the news about the horror and shock that the Twin Towers had been destroyed, the Pentagon damaged, and a fourth plane downed by their heroic passengers in Pennsylvania. 2977 people died, including 10 Australians and countless people were injured. Whilst baking cookies isn't comparable to what our first responders and frontline workers face, it is important that we acknowledge their work that keeps us safe and reassure us at times of need. I acknowledge and my parliamentary colleague Jacqui Munro and mentor Philip Ruddock AO for attending. I acknowledge Rabbi Dovid Slavin and Laya Slavin for hosting and acknowledge their charity Our Big Kitchen for 18 years has been distributing over 250,000 meals to thousands of Sydney residents every year. 11 September 2001 is a day we must never forget.

### **COMMUNITY AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIGITAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The social isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic was difficult enough—how much worse would it have been if we hadn't been able to make use of digital tools to stay connected? Unfortunately, more some people in the community, particularly our seniors, a lack of technological know-how meant the isolation was compounded. The amazing team at the Place, Charlestown's community centre, have been working with interested Charlestown locals to try and remedy that. Since November 2022, local community members and high school students have been training to become "Digital Mentors". Equipped with skills learnt during this training, eighty-four people—twenty-four members of the general public and sixty local high school students—have gone on to support people over fifty in the community or within their own families in building important digital literacy skills. In total, the Place-trained Mentors invested 133 hours of their time training and supporting 82 community members. They celebrated with an awards night recently to acknowledge this positive work. It is great to see the success of such a wonderful program. Congratulations to all the Mentors and thank you once again to the Place.

### **ED TONKS AND HISTORY ILLUMINATED**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—History Illuminated is an annual week-long festival celebrating all things history across Lake Macquarie. The 2023 edition ran from Friday 1 September to Sunday 10 September. Now in its sixth year, the festival is going from strength to strength. Amongst the forty-four events planned for the festival was a two hour cruise between Swansea and Catherine Hill Bay aboard CoastXP's 10.8 metre eco-tourism rigid inflatable boat "Atmos". This was the first time a maritime cruise has been part of the History Illuminated festival, but by all accounts it won't be the last! It was local historian and Charlestown resident Ed Tonks who used that incredible ocean backdrop to share his extensive knowledge of all things Lake Macquarie with the twenty people aboard. His commentary included information on shipwrecks, collieries,



bushfires, a jetty, a railway, and a mine camp, and I'm sure his stories brought the past to life for the lucky tourists. Every community has more than its share of interesting stories, including Lake Macquarie—and I want to thank Ed for helping to share these interesting stories.

#### DAFFODIL DAY

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Thursday 31 August marked the thirty-seventh Daffodil Day, and I dropped in to see local volunteers at Westfield Kotara as they worked to raise funds for cancer research on behalf of Cancer Council NSW. There was wonderful support from shoppers who flocked to the bright daffodil display. Due to investment in cancer research, amazing advances have been made in cancer prevention, screening, early detection and treatment – helping to increase survival rates from 51 per cent in the late 1980s to around 70 per cent today. It is thanks to fundraisers like these that so many of these advances have occurred. Cancer Council staff members Ali Cooke, Sue Russell and Dani Foster, Daffodil Centre researcher Chelsea Carle, and Evaluation Lead Erica James were on the stall in Kotara, supported by volunteers. Lauren Kempe from NBN News and the Hit Network were roving the centre to bring shoppers to the stall. I want to thank Ali, Sue, Dani, Chelsea, Erica and the volunteers for being so welcoming and working so hard, and all those who stopped by. This is such an important cause.

#### INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was an honour to attend the Indian Independence Day Commemoration, hosted by the Consul General of India, Mr Manish Gupta, and Mrs Nimeesha Gupta, on Tuesday 15th August 2023. This Indian Independence Day commemorated the 76th Anniversary of Independence from British Colonial rule. It recognised the birth of a free and democratic nation, now regarded as the world's greatest democracy. After hundreds of years of colonial oppression, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, raised the Indian flag over the Red Fort in Delhi for the first time. Together with the Indian community in Western Sydney, we remembered the grace and sacrifice of the people of India to achieve freedom. Contributing wonderful music, food, film, language and culture, the Indian-Australian community is part of Western Sydney's bright future. I am proud to represent our diverse Indian community in Prospect, including Tamils, Gujarati, Sikhs, the Telugu and Malayalee communities amongst others, who all exemplify the generosity, innovation, and pluralism that Indian is renown for. Thank you to Consul General Mr Manish Gupta, his wife Nimeesha and our passionate Indian-Australian community for continued efforts to showcase India's rich history and culture.

#### 2023 NRL KEN THORNETT MEDAL AWARDS EVENING

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was fantastic to attend the Parramatta Eels 2023 Ken Thornett Medal Awards on Tuesday, 29th August 2023. The prestigious Ken Thornett Medal is awarded annually to the Parramatta Eels NRL Player of the Year, in memory of the legendary late Eels fullback. The Awards evening recognises players from the Eels' NRL, NRLW, NSW Cup and Jersey Flegg sides, as well as the Club Person of the year, representative honours and debuting and departing players. Congratulations to the Parramatta Eels Captain, Clint Gutherson on winning the prestigious 2023 Ken Thornett Medal at this year's awards ceremony. "Gutho" is a very deserving recipient who plays his heart out at every game and leads our players with pride and dignity. I also congratulate all the players who received awards recognising their achievements at our Club this year. Thank you to all the Parramatta Eels players, the CEO Jim Sarantinos, Chairman Sean McElduff, The Board, and staff for your dedicated efforts this year to support the Club and Parra fans. We are lucky and proud to support a team of players who bring their best efforts, sportsmanship, and footy to the field.

#### PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY PAKISTAN AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was an honour to attend the Pakistan Independence Day Commemoration, hosted by the Pakistan Australia Association, on Monday 14th August 2023. Pakistan Independence Day commemorates Pakistan's independence from British Colonial rule in 1974. Following a movement to safeguard the community's political, social and religious autonomy, Pakistan became a sovereign nation-state. This year celebrated the 76th Anniversary of this momentous occasion. Together with the Pakistani community in Western Sydney, we remembered the sacrifices made by the people of Pakistan and their loved ones to achieve freedom. Through their courage and resilience, our Pakistani community have had the opportunity to re-establish their vibrant culture in Western Sydney. The Pakistan Australia Association is a non-political, non-religious organisation voluntarily serving the Pakistani-Australian community since 2003. Volunteers support the Pakistani-Australian community to establish themselves by creating opportunities for connection, providing free legal and financial advice, removing barriers and celebrating individual successes. Thank you to Pakistan Australia Association President, Ejaz Khan, the dedicated volunteers and members of our Pakistani community for your ongoing efforts to showcase Pakistan's rich history and culture. I look forward to continuing to support your organisation and our Pakistani-Australian community.

**GLORIA STADEN 33 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CRESCENT HEAD COUNTRY CLUB**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Service with a smile. Gloria Staden is the oldest member of the Crescent Head Country Club but has never let age stand in the way of creating interpersonal connections and a homely atmosphere. I rise today to acknowledge the 33 years of dedicated work that is not slowing down anytime soon – even at the age of 92. Gloria moved to Crescent Head in 1980 and began working a decade later. During this time, Gloria worked in administration, reception, the TAB, and now as head of Monday Bingo. It is the latter job that invokes a sense of pride in the community, as well as visitors to the lovely coastal town – noting a Melbournian couple has gone on record to attend bingo because of Gloria. Staying dedicated to a job for over three decades highlights passion and integrity. Gloria is a prime example of what our regional residents are like and their commitment to the community. This is an exemplary achievement, and there is no doubt we look forward to Gloria calling out 'lucky 7' each Monday. Well done, Gloria!

**CRESCENT HEAD SURF CLUB ROWS FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Crescent Head Surf Club has rowed to new distances, raising awareness in the small coastal village rows for mental fitness. Participants daringly took on the rowing machines at the facility for a 24-hour stint to call attention to an important issue. From kids as young as nine years old to mature participants over 75, they each took turns rowing for an entire day, raising vital funds for the mental health organisation 'Gotcha 4 Life.' The success of the day resulting in 40 rowers contributing and over \$1000 raised. Gotch 4 Life focuses on promoting mental fitness and resilience, particularly among young men. Its aim to create a supportive community flourished within the Crescent Head community, where our local heroes bravely engaged in the challenge. I commend Crescent Head Surf Club for its commitment to uniting the community and creating a safe, inclusive environment. This fundraising showcases the length our local leaders will go to in breaking down the barriers and stigma surrounding mental health. Well done on your contribution to raise funds for these organisations, as well as highlight the important of early intervention for anyone struggling with mental health.

**LOCALS SHINE AT SOUTH WEST ROCKS SCULPTURES IN THE GOAL**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, commending the organisers of Sculpture in the Goal at South West Rocks for their incredible event that provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the rich art and cultural background of the Macleay Valley region. The South West Rocks sculpture in the goal is an annual exhibition that showcases the artistic talents of both local and visiting artists. Its set within the historic backdrop of the South West Rocks Trial Bay Goal, this event brings together a diverse range of talent to the area. This year, our local artists really stepped up to deliver breathtaking pieces. Indrani Smith took out the Youth Award, while Jane MacDonald received a highly commended recognition for her exceptional artwork 'Mothering in the Deep.' These talented artists have contributed to the vibrant art scene in the Macleay Valley, highlighting individual unique perspectives of our community. So today, I applaud all involved from the talent creators to the organizers who contribute to the success of this annual event. Their vision has truly enriched the cultural landscape of our Oxley electorate. Well done!

**SCHOOL LEADERS MORNING TEA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Tuesday 5 September, it was a privilege to welcome student leaders from schools across the Willoughby electorate to the Parliament of NSW. The students were school captains and vice-captains from a range of public and independent schools in Willoughby. Elected by their class peers, these student leaders are highly esteemed in their respective schools for their maturity and leadership qualities. It was wonderful to see such an impressive and talented group of students. Their dedication to serving their school communities is a credit to these fine young Australians, their teachers and their parents. I was proud to present them with a certificate in recognition of their leadership and service. It was a real honour for me to introduce our local school leaders to the parliament where our state leaders serve, and I hope that all members of this place can be a worthy example for them to follow. I wish each of these school leaders well in their future studies and endeavours. Our future is certainly in safe hands.

**NORTH SHORE BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economies and on Wednesday 30 August, I was delighted to attend the annual North Shore Local Business Awards night for 2023 at the Kirribilli Club. The winners and finalists included an array of small businesses from cafes, salons, bakeries and butchers, to travel agents, real estate agents, vet hospitals and medical imaging clinics. Each of the award-winning businesses were commended for providing quality products and superior services to Willoughby and the greater North Shore area. Our small business owners are incredibly enterprising, talented, hardworking and resourceful individuals who sacrifice long hours each day to serve our community. It was immensely gratifying for me to see their excellence recognised on the awards night. I congratulate all the nominees and

winners whose efforts were duly rewarded. I was proud of the fact that so many of these small businesses were from my electorate of Willoughby and they once again attest to the enterprising spirit of Willoughby locals.

### LEGACY WEEK

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was proud to support Legacy Week from 27 August to 2 September where ordinary Australians rally to support the wonderful work of Legacy Australia. In 2023, Legacy Australia marks 100 years of supporting the families of our veterans who have lost their life or their health as a result of their service. It is a most worthy cause which was founded on a promise made from one digger to another – "to look after the missus and the kids". Inspired by this promise, Legacy has provided a century of care to war widows and their families in the form of financial assistance, medical support and companionship. I know from a close family friend, the man who introduced my parents, what wonderful work Legacy does. He had lost his father at a young age in the service of our nation. So naturally, I am very grateful to Legacy and encourage everyone to lend their support now and always.

### HEALTHY MINDS CHALLENGE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Minmi and Waratah West Public Schools were two of four worthy Finalists in the Healthy Minds Challenge Showcase, funded by the NSW Office of Regional Youth, on September 6, 2023 at Club Macquarie, Argenton. This year 15 schools participated in the Challenge. The students designed lesson plans for teachers and made videos about child and adolescent mental health and supporting well-being which could be used for self-support of learning for their peers. Students responded to questions like: What is mental health and wellness? What are some of the illnesses that affect our mental health? What does mental illness look like? Who can be affected by mental illness? What can we do for our mental health? How can we get help? Bradley Dunn, CEO of Lake Macquarie Suicide Prevention Network in Elmore Vale, one of the largest organisations of its kind in Australia and serving Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, is looking to expand the initiative across the Newcastle region. Congratulations to the dedicated students from Minmi and Waratah West Public Schools who have most certainly enhanced communication about these important social issues.

### RACHEL GARNER

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Rachel Garner, Vice-President of Waratah Public School P&C, was named joint Member of the Year at the NSW P&C Federation Annual Conference on August 26, 2023. Rachel's strong leadership has improved many aspects of P&C operations at the school, including taking control of P&C finance, taxation and insurance issues. She is dedicated to inclusion - to children and families, ensuring that they get the best school experience possible. During the pandemic, Rachel introduced online ordering and digital payments for the P&C to run the uniform shop and canteen. During this unprecedented time, she and the P&C provided information for families to help navigate the Covid situation, links to support services, promoted local businesses and even provided cooking lessons and colouring sheets via the Facebook page for parents during lockdown to ensure no one felt isolated and alone. Rachel successfully re-opened the closed canteen, found an excellent manager and great volunteer network for it to provide a healthy menu for everyone. Rachel is there for the students, not the accolades, and is dedicated to fair and equal access to all children. Congratulations, Rachel, on your well-deserved award.

### GAYNOR REEVES OAM

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Gaynor Reeves is a worthy recipient of the Jean Arnot Recognition Award, recognising remarkable women 90 years and over who have served women in their communities. Gaynor Reeves' came to Newcastle as a teacher, then lectured in Education at University of Newcastle. She was a founding member of the Applied Linguistic Association of Australia, Australian Federation of University Women in Newcastle, the first Secretary and President of the Branch, and Chairman of the French Syllabus and HSC French Examination Committees. Gaynor was invited to China to lecture in Academic English, became NSW President, National Fellowship Convenor and Assessor of AFUW Fellowships, Member Emerita of Graduate Women NSW and Director of the Language Laboratory and University of Newcastle Language Centre. Gaynor Reeves' community activities include working with migrants, German Saturday School, Alliance Francaise, English programmes for Pechiney Aluminium and Garuda pilots, French programs for BHP metallurgists, chairperson of Lunch with a Writer, Newcastle Cathedral Outreach to the Community and the Decorative Fine Arts Society. Gaynor retired in 1996 and was awarded an OAM in 2021 for her outstanding community service and service to women. Your achievements are an inspiration to us all!

### ROYAL REHAB WALL OF FAME

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I recently had the privilege of attending Royal Rehab's Brain Injury Wall of Fame Ceremony, a deeply moving event where I heard the remarkable stories of individuals who showed incredible strength in tough times. Inducted into the hall of fame were the following individuals, who each have

remarkable recovery stories to share: Rob Spiteri; Naomi Deck; Richard Poole; Lynda Robarbs; Victoria Miller; Carlos Alves. Their stories underline the importance of determination and the support of family and friends. They all have a shared message of resilience, reminding us never to give up and the significance of staying strong when life gets tough. These stories of bravery show the indomitable spirit of humanity. I am confident their stories from before and after their respective incidents, and their rehabilitation journeys will serve as inspiration to many who find themselves needing the services of Royal Rehab. To Tony Staveley AM and the board, and the executive team led by Matthew Mackay, I say thank you for the important work you do in our community, and again wish our new hall of fame ambassadors every success in their new roles.

### **TWT BIRTHDAY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—The Weekly Times [TWT] local newspaper, a cherished part of the community for over a century, is celebrating its remarkable 102nd year. Since its inception in 1921, TWT has been a reliable source of news, connecting residents of Ryde and surrounding areas. Its longevity speaks volumes about its enduring commitment to providing valuable information to the community. Over the decades, TWT has documented the region's history, from significant events to heartwarming stories of local heroes. Through its pages, it has showcased the vibrant culture and diverse voices of Sydney's neighbourhoods. The newspaper has witnessed the transformation of Sydney, from a small city to a bustling metropolis. Its reporters have tirelessly covered stories that have shaped the lives of countless residents, making it a trusted companion in households for generations. As TWT enters its 102nd year, it remains dedicated to its mission of informing, inspiring, and uniting the community. Its legacy of journalistic excellence and community engagement continues to shine brightly, ensuring that the Weekly Times remains an integral part of Sydney's fabric for generations to come. Cheers to a century of storytelling, and here's to many more years of serving the community!

### **BREAST CANCER SCREENING CLINIC**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Mr Speaker, The opening of the new Breast Cancer Screening Clinic in North Ryde marks a significant milestone in providing accessible healthcare for women in the area. This vital facility, part of the North Ryde BreastScreen NSW service, offers a convenient option for nearly 5,000 local women to undergo life-saving breast cancer screenings closer to home. In just 20 minutes, a mammogram can be completed, making it one of the quickest and most essential health checks a woman can have. Early detection of breast cancer greatly increases the chances of successful treatment. Therefore, I strongly encourage women aged 50 to 74 to schedule a mammogram every two years. The best part is that this service is entirely free, removing any financial barriers to accessing crucial healthcare. Those 20 minutes could truly make a life-saving difference, so don't hesitate to book your next appointment at the North Ryde BreastScreen Clinic. It's a small investment in your health that can have a monumental impact. Secure your appointment now at [www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au) and take that important step towards a healthier future.

### **HOUSE OF WELCOME**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise the work of House of Welcome. House of Welcome is based in South Granville and provides essential support across greater Sydney to refugees and people seeking asylum. They deliver outstanding advocacy for the rights of people seeking asylum, campaigning to change the laws and policies which keep people in situations of disadvantage and exclusion from society. The casework team helps some of the most vulnerable in our community - many of whom don't qualify for government assistance - to access housing, healthcare and other essential services. They offer transitional housing and wrap-around support to vulnerable clients as they seek settlement, and provide employment pathways for refugees and people seeking asylum, through their Work and Welcome Program, as well as through the in-house social enterprise which offers catering for events all across Sydney. I acknowledge the work of Miriam Pellicano, Ben Taylor, Marie Tupaea, Andreina Lugo, Kaydee Jakosalem, Sayed Musavie, and intern Kate Lee, along with all the staff and volunteers at the House of Welcome, and their significant contributions supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, and our entire community.

### **LYNDALL PEYCHERS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—There is a champion swimmer amongst locals in Meadow Flat. 10-year-old Lyndall Peychers is proving to be one of the fastest backstroke swimmers for her age in Australia. Peychers represented New South Wales at the School Sport Australia Swimming Championships at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. She came away with a pair of silver medals in the girls 10 years 50 metre and 100m backstroke finals. She also beat her personal best times in each hit. Lyndall had her school, Meadow Flat Public School, cheering her one from the classroom watching the livestream. Her dedication to the sport has been admirable training four nights a week in the lead up to the national competition. Having only been competing for four years Lyndall is already shining as a rising star to watch in the pool.

**ANGUS AND MICHELLE PRYSE JONES**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Blayney local's Angus and Michelle Pryse Jones are celebrating 100 years in business at Hill and Crofts CRT. The farming supply store began in 1923 by the Hill and Croft family and has served the agricultural community of Blayney ever since providing farm supplies and the latest innovations to make farming easier. Angus moved from manager to owner of the store almost 25 years ago brining his wife Michelle and two kids along for the ride. They are now the owners for the centenary celebrations and have thanked the community for their support. The family has become well known in the area with Michelle elected to Blayney Shire Council, the children growing up in the area and Angus at the store supporting many community events like Blayney Show. It is only with passionate go-getter locals like Angus and Michelle that we see communities advance and grow. Thank you for your commitment to Blayney.

**JAKIYA WHITFIELD**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Rugby 7's star and emerging talent in rugby league, Jakiya Whitfield has been named as a player in the Women's Prime Minister's XIII squad. The 20-player squad consists of a wide variety of talented players who have been selected with a view of giving young stars such as Whitfield a crack at representing their country against PNG at Port Moresby. Whitfield is no stranger to the green and gold having already been on the World Rugby Sevens circuit since 2019. Her talent was evident joining the team as a young gun only months after completing high school. Moving to rugby league she recently signed with the West Tigers for the season as winger. Whitfield has shown her worth with multiple tries scored already and currently sits second on the all-time NRLW list for single game run metres. Congratulations Jakiya on your sporting achievements thus far, you are doing your hometown of Bathurst and the nation proud.

**JAYDEN DELBRIDGE**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—I would like to acknowledge Jayden Delbridge from Wadalba and founder of UrVoice Australia delivered his first TEDx talk in August at TEDx Croydon Youth. Jayden spoke about How Schools can Contribute to a Teenager's Becoming and he feels strong that the education system needs to invest more time educating people on wellbeing. Jayden is a passionate advocate and a member of multiple advisory panels including the NSW Youth Advisory Council and as a recent graduate he has seen first-hand how the current educational system impacts students feeling the burden and disempowered to speak up. The fight will continue from Jayden to build an environment where young people feel supported and empowered to voice wellbeing concerns along with their current academic education.

**FIBREFEST**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—This year's FibreFest by Knitters Guild NSW was held on the Central Coast for the first time at Wyong Racecourse, where knitters and crochets across NSW gather each year. The venue had 45 stallholders from NSW, Queensland and Victoria selling high quality yarns, wools, cottons, and other product. The event included an inspiring fashion parade, huge raffles and competitions, live music, food stalls and homemade goodies and demonstrations by other NSW craft guilds sharing their expertise. There was a great chance for all knitters and crochets to present a show and tell to show off their latest projects to everyone who attended on the day. Local business Fibre Arts Shed from Jiliby presented a stall with their mill spun yarn, including the very popular High Fae Yarn and Daintree River which is the newest colourway in their Chromacity Collection.

**JOPUKA 50TH PRODUCTION**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Jopuka Productions are excited to announce their 50th production Very Happy Children with Bright and Wonderful Futures directed by Joshua Maxwell who wrote the play and assistant director Tahlia Rose. The organisation reached this milestone in incredible time presenting quality shows from young artist and development of emerging artists aged 12-26 years old. I have attended many of Jopuka's productions, watching endless entertainment, interesting storylines and amazing talent performed on stage. Jopuka was established in 2016 and now stands tall as one of Australia's foremost youth theatre groups, boasting over 50 productions with 20 of those being original commissioned works. The 50th production draws inspiration from the 2018/2019 Climate Strike Movement and set against the dramatic backdrop of Australia's 2020 Black Summer bushfires, Very Happy Children with Bright and Wonderful Futures weaves art with activism. The narrative follows Izzy, brilliantly portrayed by Milo Power, as she finds herself trapped between a media storm and a literal fire storm, having

unintentionally become the face of a youth protest movement. The play delves deep into the challenges faced by contemporary youth and their aspirations and fears for the future.

### **URANQUINTY WATER TOWER**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—The Uranquinty Water Tower has had a spectacular mural installed. The mural demonstrates the Riverina's military tradition and pays tribute Australia's first Aboriginal military aviator, Kamilaroi man Mr Len Waters. This was the culmination of two years of work by the Uranquinty Progress Association and the community and was brought to life by Wagga Wagga artist Mr Damien Mitchell. WO Waters trained at No 5 Service Flying Training School RAAF at Uranquinty and served in 95 missions with 78 Squadron in the South Pacific in a P-40 Kittyhawk. Len's daughter Julia Waters was able to attend the opening ceremony, pay tribute to the mural and said about her father: "He always looked to the sky and always knew that once he went there, he would never want to walk on the land again". I would like to thank the Uranquinty Progress Association leadership involved in this project, President Deb Bewick, Vice President Christine Stewart, Project Historian Jenny Lewington and Aunty Lorraine Tye for connecting the association with the Waters family. I would also like to thank the sponsors of the mural.

### **AMAZON MOOREBANK VISIT**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On Monday 4 September 2023 I had the opportunity to tour the Amazon Moorebank fulfillment centre with Shadow Minister for Jobs, Industry, Innovation, Science, and Technology, Mark Coure MP. Officially known as "BWU1/3", nearly a quarter of employees at this site reside in my electorate of Holsworthy, and many more in South-West Sydney. The logistics from picking, packing, loading, and delivery was a sight to behold – we even had the opportunity to pack an order! The Amazon Moorebank site is also home to the "Print on Demand" facility, their only one in the Southern Hemisphere. It allows authors and publishers to print paperback books with a click of a button, where they can publish up to 10,000 books a day. South-West Sydney and Holsworthy act as the backbone to our economy, and this visit embodied the crucial role they play in driving growth, innovation, and prosperity for our region.

### **WATTLE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable student leadership team at Wattle Grove Public School 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 leadership team for the year 2023, comprising of Oliver Glas, Abby Freeman, Charlie Christensen, Annabel Fisk, James Blair, Ella Hoca, Kaitlyn Paull, Ryder McAuliffe, Aiden Solagna, Caleb Gutugutuwai, Marcus Menendez, and Alexis Wilczynska. 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 Wattle Grove Public's motto "Courtesy, Courage, Loyalty". I extend my warmest wishes to these student leaders.

### **WILLIAM MURRAY**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise William Murray of the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts in Illawong, who marked three decades of dedicated volunteer service as a leader for the scout group this past June. Affectionately known as "The Ghost," William has consistently strived to infuse scouting with both enjoyment and educational value for the youngsters and teenagers involved, earning him immense respect within the Shire community. Bill has excelled as a cub scout leader for numerous years, endearing himself as a cherished member of the group. In recognition of William's remarkable 30-year service milestone, the scout hall in Illawong has fittingly been christened "Ghost Hall." I extend my heartfelt congratulations to William for the unwavering commitment he has devoted to the scouting mission within the Shire. I am confident that, under his continued leadership, the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts will only prosper and flourish for many more years to come.

### **AUNTY DAWN FIELD**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Aunty Dawn Field is a highly respected Indigenous leader. She has lived in the Maitland area for over 22 years, contributing to the cultural knowledge of the Maitland community. Aunty Dawn works as the Aboriginal Education Officer at Francis Greenway High School in Woodberry. Her work supports Aboriginal students, their families, and the school teachers. Aunty Dawn has previously held a similar role at Woodberry Public School, building relationships between the school and Aboriginal families, particularly those who have become disengaged from the greater school community. This involves Aunty Dawn assisting individual students and their families with

social, cultural, financial, and physical support and practically linking these individuals to services and local resources. Aunty Dawn is a member of the Stolen Generation and works each day to achieve equity and reconciliation in our community. Aunty Dawn is a founding member of the Red Belly Blacks, a community engagement group for indigenous community members in Woodberry. I would like to acknowledge Aunty Dawn's contribution to the Maitland region and thank her for her tireless work with young people, Elders, teachers, and carers. I thank Aunty Dawn for her generosity in sharing her knowledge and experience with us all.

### **MINEWORKERS MEMORIAL DAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—On Sunday I was honoured to attend the 26th Annual Memorial Day Service hosted by the MEU Northern Mining and NSW Energy District. The service was held at the Jim Comerford Memorial Wall in Cessnock, a solemn place that serves as a visible reminder of the inherent dangers of working in the mining industry. The wall lists the names of the 1800 miners who have lost their lives in Hunter Valley Mines. The youngest name on the wall is nine-year-old William France, killed at Pacific Colliery and the eldest is 80-year-old William Howes, killed at Abermain Colliery. I am thankful that no names have been added to the wall this last year. I was honoured to be joined by my state colleagues, The Hon. Yasmin Catley, Clayton Barr MP, The Hon. Mark Buttigieg, and The Hon. John Graham. Federal members Meryl Swanson, Sharon Claydon, Pat Conroy and Dan Repacholi. As well as local mayors and councillors Stephanie Fisher, Jay Suvaal and Sue Moore. I wish to acknowledge all the families whose loved ones did not come home from work, and I thank the MEU for holding these annual services to commemorate their loss.

### **BRONWYN CHAMBERLAIN**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Bronwyn Chamberlain, a Lawyer at Bennett Law in Maitland, is passionate about helping individuals who are caught up in our court system. Many of the people Bronwyn supports are struggling with intergenerational poverty, are routinely welfare dependent, have experienced domestic violence, and may have mental health, drug or alcohol issues. Bronwyn is passionate about assisting those in our community who most need support during the court process. As an office manager for Legal Aid Newcastle for 20 years, Bronwyn learned what skills and resources were needed to provide the most assistance. Bronwyn then completed her law degree at the age of 55 with the single intention to help those who are slipping through the gaps. In her pro bono work Bronwyn assists with sourcing psychiatric reports, offers training for community service workers on court processes, conducts legal seminars, provides advocacy support and pre-sentence intervention. I acknowledge Bronwyn for her drive and commitment to enable meaningful change for so many in our community.

### **LOCAL CRICKETERS IMPRESS AT NATIONAL TITLES**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of local Indoor Cricket players, Rohan Guest, Sam Frazier and Will Marshall from Inverell, along with Mitch Duddy and Kahn Johnson from Glen Innes who were selected to play at the National Titles held at Ipswich recently. They formed part of the NSW Country Blues team, competing in the under 18's side, playing against teams from New South Wales Metro, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. I congratulate each of the players on their performance, with their NSW Country Blues team coming in 6th overall. A special mention also of Mitch Duddy, who was named the player of the tournament. I commend each of the players on their hard work in their preparation and practice leading up to these Titles and their commitment to the sport.

### **2023 NSW COUNTRY GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of Armidale City Gymnastics Club for hosting the Gymnastics NSW Country Championships 2023, held at the New England Movement Centre, Armidale. I congratulate Armidale City Gymnastic Club, Coach Wally O'Hara, Carol O'Hara and all on the volunteer committee on a successful day, which I was fortunate to attend. I make special mention of Iona Stanton from Walcha for being named the NSW Masters Country Champion. Iona earned this title following her wins of 4 golds and 1 silver medal at the Championships. I commend the Armidale City Gymnastics Club and Gymnastics NSW for once again holding this event, which saw more than 40 Clubs and 850 athletes showcasing their skills and hard work in six different gym sports. The community of Armidale thanks you.

### **MOREE WATER SKI CLUB**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the Moree Water Ski Club for hosting Round 4 of the Australian Formular Powerboat Grand Prix held at Moree recently. I congratulate Club President Stuart Gall, Vice President Guy Brabrook, Events Coordinator David Berger and THE other club members for working tirelessly behind the scenes to stage this event. Special thanks to the major sponsors: Coates

Hire Moree, Tyrepower Moree, Moree Lions Club and the local Rural Fire Service, whose valuable support greatly assisted in the success of this event. I commend all involved in bringing the Grand Prix to Moree, hosting and preparing for the Grand Prix. The time and effort put into the Grand Prix is appreciated by the entire community.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE PIRATES CLUB MID NORTH COAST RUGBY UNION PREMIERS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I am excited to inform the House that the Mid North Coast Rugby Union Northern Division Premiers for 2023 are the Port Macquarie Pirates. A hard-fought win was secured by our Port Macquarie Pirates Rugby Union Club on Saturday, 26th August against Minor Premiers, the Coffs Harbour Snappers narrowly defeating them in a nail-biting finish 24 points to 17. The win breaks a nine-year drought for the Pirates, defeated last year in the Grand Final by the Hastings Valley Vikings. Described as their best performance of the season, the away side grinded it out against the top-of-the-table Snappers to clench victory in Coffs Harbour and the illustrious Premiership Shield, silencing the critics and proving themselves yet again as team to be rivalled. Standout players were Jamieson Williams and Kaes Besseling, scoring four penalty goals off the boot of Sam Begbie. Player of the Match went to Jamieson Williams whose skilful techniques exhausted his opponents throughout the Grand Final. Coach Cameron Gray praised his team for defeating the Minor Premiers and putting aside their Grand Final defeat from the previous season. I congratulate the Pirates on their sensational win.

#### **KENDALL BLUES HASTINGS LEAGUE 2023 PREMIERSHIP**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to the Kendall Blues Rugby League Football Club for taking out the Hastings League 2023 Premiership on Saturday, 26th August 2023. The best of the best in the Hastings League battled it out on Grand Final day to compete for the prestigious Bain Cup. Huge crowds packed out the Kendall Showgrounds to cheer on their favourite team all the way to the try line. The Bain Cup is seen as a valued tradition in the rugby league world, with a lead up of hype for players and locals alike who passionately follow their local team each year. Taking home a sensational win was the Kendall Blues who crashed through the defence of the Beechwood Shamrocks to score a resounding victory, 34 points to 10. Prior to Grand Final day the Blues claimed the Bun Hayward Minor Premiership Cup, demonstrating the team's dominance throughout the competition. I commend Blues Alex Pearce for securing the Catherine Mary/Nifty Nev Dornan Memorial Player of the Grand Final. I also single out Blues Luke White, Taylor Eggins, Kane Cafe and Kade Rousell for crossing over the try line. The Mighty Kendall Blues 2023 Premiers – congratulations!

#### **CHILDRENS BOOK OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to acknowledge aspiring Port Macquarie author Hayley Lawrence, who is certainly making her mark in the world of Australian literature. To date, Hayley has published four books for the young adult genre and I am thrilled to announce that her first book, 'The Other Side of Tomorrow' has been shortlisted by the Children's Book Council of Australia [CBCA], for Book of the Year in 2023, in the older readers category. Another of Hayley's novels, 'Inside the Tiger' was listed by the CBCA as one of the notable books for 2019. The CBCA judges have openly praised Hayley's writing, saying that she handles the intense emotions of her stories 'deftly and without artifice.' Having five daughters herself, keeps Hayley's writing real and relevant with issues that they face daily. Being successful in the older reader's children's category is particularly challenging - engaging the youth of today, motivating them to pick up a book and capturing their attention over social media is indeed a challenging task. With an insatiable desire to write, I congratulate Hayley on her achievements so far and on the completion of her fifth novel which will be launched next year!

#### **PETER KAYE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of Peter Kaye AM who has recently marked 40 years of service as Local Controller and Unit Commander of the Ashfield Leichhardt SES. During his tenure Peter drove the establishment of the Unit in five locations, working to ensure SES members had appropriate premises for training and operations. Peter also chaired a string of consultation committees on local issues and has played a key role in community functions such as citizenship ceremonies, Australia Day celebrations, official openings and taskforces. In recognition of his contributions, Peter was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2014 and Ashfield Council's Australia Day Citizen of the Year in the same year. Thank you Peter for your many years of service to the community.

#### **APIA LEICHHARDT FC**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the APIA Leichhardt FC who recently became the first club in NSW to win the premiership trophy for both the Women's and Men's top tier competitions in the same season. This incredible milestone is part of a long history of record-making by APIA Leichhardt FC, who since 1954 have been a bastion of football and community for Leichhardt and surrounding areas. Congratulations to the APIA Women's team who last week won the inaugural Sapphire Cup and to the



APIA Men's team for their win in the National Premier Leagues competition in August, and for becoming finalists in the Waratah Cup. Thank you to all the APIA club players, executive, staff, volunteers and supporters who help make community sport as special as it is.

#### **BEVERLEY EARNSHAW**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to celebrate and recognise lifelong volunteer, Ms Beverley Earnshaw, who has been giving up her time and energy to volunteer at the Kogarah Historical Society for more than 45 years. As President for over 12 years, Ms Earnshaw has presided over many events including Open Days, the 40th Anniversary of the Opening of the Museum and a Celebration of William Carss sesquicentenary. Ms Earnshaw is a regular speaker at Society meetings and plays a major role in giving talks to groups that visit Carss Cottage Museum. Beverley also takes the lead in changing exhibitions in the Museum, identifying, copying and writing the text for display items. Remarkably, Beverley has written nine books on the aspects of Kogarah history, plus a set of six children's books all based on true stories. The fact that Beverley does all this on a voluntary basis exemplifies her unwavering commitment and dedication to the society. As a life Member of the society, Beverley is truly an inspiration to us all, continuously giving up her time to educate the next generation. I would like to thank Ms Earnshaw for the wonderful work she does to promote and celebrate Kogarah's rich history.

#### **MARIE BRIDGES**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge prolific volunteer, Ms Marie Bridges who has been volunteering with the Kogarah Storehouse for more than 5 years. The Kogarah Storehouse is a community based benevolent institution that strives to advance the needs of the St George community by providing relevant, tangible help and support. Ms Bridges as volunteer coordinator is primarily responsible for organising and assigning volunteers to appropriate events. The fact that Marie's team of volunteers keep coming back exemplifies the wonderful and inclusive environment she has fostered. An example of Marie's excellent leadership skills was seen through her sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Risking her health and wellbeing, Ms Bridges continued to provide free parcels of food for families and individuals who were struggling to make ends meet. Without the help of Ms Bridges and her team of volunteers, many people and families in our community would go hungry. I want to sincerely thank Ms Bridges for the wonderful work she does to serve the needs of our local community, for which we are all extremely grateful.

#### **SUBHASH AND AJITA RUGHANI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and recognise prolific volunteers, Mr and Mrs Rughani who together have been volunteering with Advanced Diversity Services for almost 10 years. Both Subhash and Ajita are very successful professionals who love spending their retirement days, selflessly giving back to the community together. Mr and Mrs Rughani volunteer as English teachers at Advanced Diversity on Monday mornings in their multicultural classes. They have also co-facilitated intercultural English classes with the elderly Chinese and Nepalese communities since 2018. The fact that they continued to run classes online during the COVID-19 pandemic, is a testament to Mr and Mrs Rughani's dedication and commitment to helping others. Subhash has also been a member of Advanced Diversity's Men's Wellbeing group since its inception in 2015. As a leader of the group Mr Rughani organises a series of events aimed at representing and promoting the health and wellbeing of multicultural men in our local community. I want to sincerely thank Subhash and Ajita for the wonderful work they do to improve English literacy and promote cultural diversity in multilingual communities.

#### **PHIL ROBERTS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I rise to congratulate Phil Roberts on his retirement following a remarkable 33 years serving Mount Sinai College. During his time as Principal, Phil fostered stability by attracting and retaining exceptional staff who worked with him to develop the school's unique culture based on active learning and strong Jewish values. Mount Sinai's ability to embrace modernity while preserving cherished traditions is a testament to Phil's commitment as a school and community leader who skilfully leveraged technological and neuroscientific advancements to the benefit of decades of students, including my own sons. Although he is retiring, Phil's indefatigable dedication to the community is evident in his continued enthusiasm to support the school community and ensure a smooth transition for their new principal, noting that the majority of the school's masterplan has been realised under his watch and Mount Sinai College has achieved record enrolments. Congratulations and farewell, Phil Roberts. You touched the lives of hundreds of families—including mine—and have certainly created a lasting legacy at Mount Sinai.

### **OLLIE AND CARTER CLEAN UP AT SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I congratulate Ollie and Carter McGee on their outstanding achievement at the 2023 School Sport Australia Swimming Championships in late August. Not only were they selected to represent their school but were part of the NSW team competing at the national competition. Both Ollie, ten, and Carter, twelve, swam incredibly well with Carter winning silver in the one-hundred metre butterfly, bronze in the two-hundred metre individual medley, and gold in the NSW freestyle and NSW medley relays. Ollie won gold in the fifty metre backstroke, silver in the fifty metre butterfly and one-hundred metre freestyle, bronze in the fifty metre freestyle, and gold in the NSW freestyle and NSW medley relays. I am sure like many in this place we can agree this is an incredible effort on behalf these boys to swim an array of distances and strokes and place. Ollie and Carter, I know that your family, friends, and school community are incredibly proud of your amazing efforts. Once again congratulations Ollie and Carter, you are true champions in every sense of the word.

### **VALE MAJOR JACK SKIPPER MC**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of a much-loved Mosman local Major Jack Harold Skipper MC. Born in Perth in 1930 Jack graduated from Royal Military College Duntroon in 1951 and served in the Korean war with 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, where he was made a Major at the age of just twenty-eight, and was awarded the Military Cross for leadership and gallantry in presence of the enemy. He was made commanding officer of Australia's first commando unit stationed at Georges Heights in 1959 after marrying Lynette Jacobs, a Mosman local. After he retired from the armed forces Jack had a number of senior roles with companies such as Philips and Jantzen was also involved in the learn-to-swim programs at the Balmoral Baths in the 1970's. Jack leaves behind his beloved wife Lynette, children Mark and Juliet, and eleven grandchildren and great grandchildren, and my thoughts go out to his family and friends at this sad time. In a eulogy given by Allan Miles OAM he said of Jack, "Jack Skipper MC. Go to your rest. Your duty is done." Vale Major Skipper.

### **CITY OF ORANGE BRASS BAND**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the efforts of and contribution to the community of the City of Orange Brass Band. For the second year in a row, the band has taken out the open section of the NSW Band Championships, often competing against larger bands or those from cities with a much larger population than Orange. But winning in this competition and the local City of Orange Eisteddfod is just a small part of the activities of the group. The band marches and plays at several significant events held in the city of Orange throughout the year. This includes during the warmer months, free concerts in Cook Park where they play in the rotunda to entertain the people of Orange. The band has a proud history of nurturing musicians young and old who wish to take up an instrument and perform in a band. For just a small nominal fee, anyone in Orange can have access to tuition and are provided with an instrument. As they progress, once again for a small nominal fee they are able to have access to their own instrument.

### **DEREK JOHNS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise the contribution to the city of Orange by musician Derek Johns. For almost 40 years, Mr Johns has generously contributed his time to be an important part of commemoration ceremonies held in Orange. Whether it is for the annual Anzac Day services, Remembrance Day or Vietnam Veterans Day, Mr Johns has played an important and moving role in the ceremonies which are held in such a high esteem in our community. Whether it is Reveille, or the haunting sounds of the Last Post, often in front of hushed crowds of thousands, Mr Johns lifts the bugle to his lips and delivers with a flawless rendition every time. He has become an important part of every ceremony held throughout the year, after the baton was handed to him by his friend, teacher and mentor the late Harry Sloggett who often had young Derek beside him at these ceremonies safe in the knowledge he would one day take over this important task. Indeed the instrument used by Mr Johns today at our ceremonies to remember the fallen is same one used for many decades.

### **MARISA AND ALDO BELMONTE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker I would like to congratulate Marisa and Aldo Belmonte of Orange on an amazing business achievement. Mr and Mrs Belmonte have just celebrated 40 years of their labour of love, the Orange Tenpin Bowl, which was built by the couple from scratch, before opening its doors in September 1983. Way back in the early 80s, when the cinema provided just about the only opportunity for entertainment during the wet, cold Orange winters, the Belmontes were inspired by a friend's offhand remark about wishing they could go tenpin bowling. Family owned and operated, the bowl has enjoyed the support of the community with some of the original competition leagues still running today. It also provides an opportunity for serious competition through leagues and tournaments, or social outings for families and friends. The centre caters

for school sport, people with special needs and helps out with fundraising and charity events. In fact, the Belmonte's son Jason has taken advantage of his opportunistic upbringing at the bowl and is now one of the world's best professional tenpin bowlers. I congratulate the Belmonte family on an amazing achievement and wish them well for the next 40 years.

### DANDELION SUPPORT NETWORK

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the team at the Dandelion Support Network based in Taren Point, for their ongoing commitment to families across our community. Established in 2011, the Dandelion Support Network is a not-for-profit organisation that has supported over 14,000 families across Greater Sydney and the Illawarra. The organisation works with over 200 hospitals across the state to ensure that families in need have access to essential nursery items. I was pleased to join the Dandelion Support Network on 9 September for the annual fundraiser. I make special mention of Katrina Lonergan, who was so committed to raising the \$20,000 for this important organisation that she fractured her heel preparing the event. Of course, none of this is possible without the dedication of the Dandelion Support Network team. I acknowledge the board consisting of Kathryn Brennan, Craig Berger, Michael Barker, Dominique Brown, Tracy Edwards and Amanda Treharne, along with the wonderful staff, namely Gabrielle Humphreys, Brenda Lavender, Saskia Duncan, Kaylene Pring, Katrina Lonergan and Danielle Ruming for their ongoing efforts. I commend the Dandelion Support Network for their support of vulnerable families across New South Wales.

### PONTIFEX JEWELLERS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the outstanding team at Pontifex Jewellers in Sylvania, on winning Jewellery Store of the Year category at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards 2023. This family-owned small business has built an outstanding reputation in our community for offering excellent customer service and the finest jewellery since it opened in 1983. For over 40 years, the dedicated team at Pontifex Jewellers have offered an extensive range of custom jewellery pieces, repair services as well as assisting clients to find their bespoke piece of jewellery. Ray is retiring after 64 years in the industry, leaving the business in the very capable hands of his daughter Rebecca who will continue to operate the business online until the team find a new location in the Shire. I acknowledge the exceptional team at Pontifex Jewellers. I recognise Ray and Evalyn Pontifex, as well as Rebecca, Yvette, Brad, Bella Julie, Sharyn, Mary and Carla. Small businesses like Pontifex Jewellers are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. I congratulate the entire Pontifex Jewellers family on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### COADY STONE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I want to celebrate the exceptional talent of an Orchard Hills resident, young Coady Stone. This year, based on his remarkable prowess on the hockey field, Coady was handpicked to represent our state, donning the NSW jersey at the Hockey Australia U18 National Championships. This event took place at the esteemed Tasmanian Hockey Centre in Hobart. Coady's selection wasn't merely fortuitous. His consistent and stellar performances with Sydney East during the recent NSW Championships, where the team secured a commendable 6th position, caught the attention of selectors and sports enthusiasts alike. Such achievements not only exemplify Coady's dedication to his sport but also inspire young sportsmen and sportswomen in our community to chase their dreams with perseverance and determination. On behalf of our community, I express immense pride in Coady's achievements and look forward with eager anticipation to many more accolades in his promising hockey journey. May Coady Stone serve as a shining example for all young aspirants in our region.

### GLENMORE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I'd like to commend and celebrate the proactive and forward-thinking approach of Glenmore Park High School. This year, its students demonstrated their commitment to harnessing creativity and amplifying youthful voices by participating in 'The Riff: Youth Theatre Festival'. This distinctive festival is more than just a platform; it's an avenue to empower our young minds to articulate, delve deep into local identities, and engage critically with global issues. By embracing this initiative, Glenmore Park High School has not just offered its students a chance to showcase their talents, but also played an instrumental role in nurturing the next generation of Western Sydney's performing artists and creative thinkers. As the students of Glenmore Park High School took to the stage, they not only represented their school but also the dreams, aspirations, and concerns of their generation. It's heartening to see educational institutions realising the importance of creative expression and integrating it into their curriculum. I applaud Glenmore Park High School for this commendable endeavour and for always striving for excellence in holistic student development.

**JEANNIE BAKER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I want to celebrate the artistic brilliance and environmental commitment of the award-winning children's book author and illustrator, Ms. Jeannie Baker. This year, Penrith Regional Gallery was graced with her latest exhibition, 'Jeannie Baker: Desert Jungle'. Not just an exhibition in isolation, it was launched in tandem with her book, also titled 'Desert Jungle'. Jeannie's evocative works have always been a testament to her fervent passion for nature. However, what sets this exhibition and her recent book apart is the poignant message woven through: the transformation of fear into wonder. It's an invitation to us all, especially the younger generation, to view our natural world with awe, curiosity, and respect rather than apprehension. Our community is privileged to have hosted her vision, and we look forward to celebrating more of Jeannie's endeavours in the years to come.

**CHILDRENS TUMOUR FOUNDATION**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I wish to recognise the Children's Tumour Foundation. The Foundation is a national charity and peak body for Neurofibromatosis, known as NF. I recently visited this wonderful organisation located in the Drummoyne electorate. I met hardworking CEO Leanne Dib who is supported by a passionate team in Ruth Lindsay, Meredith Fannelli, Renee Anschau, Donna-Jayne Samofal and Michelle Olofsson. NF is a set of three complex genetic conditions that cause tumours to form on nerve cells throughout the body and affects more than 10,000 people in Australia. All three forms of NF are classified as 'rare diseases.' A child is born with NF in Australia every 3 days and half of those with NF have no family history of the condition. I would like to sincerely thank the Children's Tumor Foundation for its important work in supporting those living with NF and their families and in raising awareness nationally for this rare disease. I look forward to working together to support the work of the Children's Tumour Foundation in advancing research and empowering those in their journey with NF. I sincerely wish them all the very best.

**CONCORD GARDEN CLUB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—In August I joined members and supporters at the Massey Park Golf Club to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Concord Garden Club. Established on the 25th of August 1953, Concord Garden Club has proudly supported our community for 70 years. Concord Garden Club illustrates the importance of community values and connections, and it has enabled locals to create long-lasting friendships through shared interests. Over the years, the Club has received many awards and accolades. In 2017, the Club and its members were announced as the joint City of Canada Bay Arts and Culture Citizens of the Year. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and community effort of volunteers for time dedicated to Garden shows and time fostering a love for gardening. I would like to acknowledge President Maureen Ward and the dedicated and hardworking Committee for its tireless efforts. I would like to sincerely congratulate Concord Garden Club on the special occasion of its 70th Anniversary. I wish all members all the very best.

**COPTIC NEW YEAR**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise to the Coptic community, congregation, clergy, and all who are celebrating the Feast of Nayrouz. I send my warmest wishes for a blessed and happy Coptic New Year. Copts honour the service and sacrifice of martyrs at this significant time. Australia has a large and thriving Coptic diaspora, and celebrations like Nayrouz highlight the importance of preserving cultural and religious traditions. On 13 September, I attended a Nayrouz celebration organised by the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Egypt. I would like to sincerely thank the Diocese and the Board of Trustees for the kind invitation. It was an honour to meet His Grace Bishop Daniel, Church leaders and dignitaries. It was wonderful to join the Coptic community for this special event.

**PROSOLAR AUSTRALIA**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I give thanks to a local business in my electorate, ProSolar Australia for their generous donation of a 6.63kW solar system to Fletcher Street Cottage. Fletcher Street Cottage, located in the Byron Shire, provides invaluable support to thousands of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including hot meals, showers, laundry and individual case management support. Fletcher Street Cottage achieve all of this currently without any government funding. ProSolar's donation will provide Fletcher Street Cottage with 10,500kWh of low-cost clean, solar power per year, significantly reducing the organisation's running costs and carbon footprint. I commend Ben Pietzsch and the whole team at ProSolar for their generous support of this vital community service.

**JOEL TAYLOR**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the extraordinary achievements of Lennox Head local and Australian Para Surfing Champion, Joel Taylor. A talented bodyboarder from a young age, Joel competed in his first Australian Championships at the age of 12. Winning an Australian Title was his dream. In 2001 at the age of 21 Joel's life changed forever when he suffered a severe back injury in a surfing accident at Hawaii's Banzai Pipeline that left him in a wheelchair. Joel lost his love of the ocean and didn't get back in the water for 20 years. Becoming a father to two sons inspired him to get back in the water just over 12 months ago. He wanted to show them that anything was possible with determination and effort. Last month, Joel won the Australian Title he had dreamed about as a young Grom, taking out the prone division of the Australian Para Surfing Titles in Port Macquarie. Joel is an inspiration to everyone, and I wish him the best as he heads off to compete in the ISA World Championships at Huntington Beach, California in November.

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