



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday 10 October 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Visitors.....	1
Visitors.....	1
Announcements .....	1
Legislative Assembly Photographs.....	1
Bills .....	1
City of Sydney Amendment Bill 2023 .....	1
Returned.....	1
Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023 .....	1
Returned.....	1
Members .....	1
Ministry.....	1
Representation of Ministers In the Legislative Council .....	1
Bills.....	2
Appropriation Bill 2023.....	2
Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023.....	2
Treasury and Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.....	2
City of Sydney Amendment Bill 2023 .....	2
Assent .....	2
Governor .....	2
Administration of the Government.....	2
Senate.....	2
Senate Vacancy.....	2
Ministerial Statements .....	2
Israel-Hamas Conflict.....	2
Question Time .....	3
Israel-Palestine Protests .....	3
Public School Mobile Phone Ban.....	4
Israel-Palestine Protests .....	5
Teacher Support.....	6
Inner West Bus Services.....	7
Vaping.....	7
Israel-Palestine Protests .....	8
TAFE NSW .....	8
Israel-Palestine Protests .....	9
Region 10 Bus Services .....	10
Israel-Palestine Protests .....	11
Moore Park Car Parking .....	12
Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management .....	13
Work Health and Safety.....	13
Documents .....	14

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Register of Disclosures .....	14
Law Enforcement Conduct Commission.....	14
Reports.....	14
NSW Crime Commission .....	15
Reports.....	15
Committees .....	15
Standing Orders and Procedure Committee .....	15
Reports.....	15
Legislation Review Committee .....	15
Reports.....	15
Public Accounts Committee .....	15
Inquiry.....	15
Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation .....	15
Extension of Reporting Date .....	15
Petitions .....	15
Petitions Received .....	15
Responses to Petitions .....	16
Business of the House.....	16
Business Lapsed.....	16
Bills.....	16
Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023 .....	16
First Reading.....	16
Second Reading Speech.....	16
State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023.....	22
Second Reading Debate.....	22
Third Reading .....	26
Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023 .....	26
Second Reading Debate.....	26
Third Reading .....	35
Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2023 .....	35
Second Reading Debate.....	35
Public Interest Debate.....	38
Public School Mobile Phone Ban .....	38
Bills.....	43
Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023 .....	43
First Reading.....	43
Second Reading Speech.....	43
Motor Dealers and Repairers Amendment Bill 2023 .....	45
Second Reading Speech.....	45
Community Recognition Statements .....	48
Newcastle Yowies .....	48
Gavin Dykes .....	48

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Al Amanah College .....	49
Yerranderie Town .....	49
Emerald Hills Ravens .....	49
Berowra District Mixed Probus Club .....	49
Antoine Kazzi, OAM .....	49
Guyra Spudettes .....	50
Norwest Christian College Soiree '23 .....	50
Wakehurst Electorate Higher School Certificate Students .....	50
Newcastle Knights Women .....	50
Canoelands Orchard Centenary .....	51
Heathcote Electorate Higher School Certificate Students .....	51
Mount George Billy Cart Derby and Spring Fair .....	51
James Luskan .....	51
Kiama Blowhole Tennis Club .....	51
Zen Tea Lounge Foundation .....	52
Tribute to Louise Santos .....	52
Lilly Coombes .....	52
Goulburn Lilac City Festival .....	52
Our Lady Mercy Place Harris Park .....	52
Ashley Sargeson .....	53
EndTrachoma Project .....	53
Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment .....	53
Opera In the Barn .....	53
GyMEA Combined Probus Club .....	54
Coastie Carnie Fair Day .....	54
Elsie's Retreat Project .....	54
Vietnamese Women's Association .....	54
Private Members' Statements .....	55
CathWest Innovation College .....	55
State Budget and Badgerys Creek Electorate .....	55
Liverpool Electorate Sports Infrastructure .....	56
Oberon Wind Farm .....	57
Illawarra Surf Life Saving Clubs .....	58
Kiama Electorate Roads .....	58
Western Sydney Aerotropolis .....	60
Israel-Hamas Conflict .....	60
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice .....	61
Coffs Harbour Health Campus .....	62
Pink Silks Perpetual Trust .....	62
East Hills Electorate Bus Services .....	63
Hornsby Rugby Club .....	63
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice .....	65

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Orange Electorate Rail Services .....	65
State Budget and Camden Electorate .....	66
State Budget and Upper Hunter Electorate.....	67
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.....	68
Waste Incineration .....	69
Annangrove Road .....	70
Bills .....	71
Paintball Amendment Bill 2023 .....	71
Returned.....	71
Written Community Recognition Statements .....	71
Dandelion Support Network .....	71
Cronulla Polar Bears.....	72
Peter Williams .....	72
Sarah Dimech.....	72
We Care Connect.....	72
North Construction and Building.....	72
St Gabriel's School, Castle Hill, First Art Show.....	73
Northholm Grammar, Leadership Investiture.....	73
Hills Kellyville Rotary, Garden Competition, 2023 .....	73
Warilla Florist and Classy Baskets .....	73
Warilla Lake South Gorillas U18's .....	74
Gabi White.....	74
Newcastle City Australian Football Club .....	74
Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service .....	74
Coming Together for Austin Wood's Brighter Future .....	74
Honouring Barton Mawer: A Local Legend In the Fast Lane .....	74
Remembering Bryce Fairley: A Legacy of Service and Compassion .....	75
St Anthony's Mercy Day Awards – Kindergarten .....	75
St Anthony's Mercy Day Awards – Year One.....	75
St Anthony's Mercy Day Awards – Year Two .....	75
Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise .....	76
Faye Savage .....	76
Barry Schuberg .....	76
Festival of Choral Music .....	76
Circle Paints.....	77
Small Business Month – Naturally Ready Studio .....	77
Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club.....	77
Maddison Barber .....	77
Amanda Brooks .....	77
Wharf St. Distillery.....	78
Bill Oddie Retirement.....	78
Bush Whackers Barber .....	78

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Koori Mail's Giant Love Heart Mural Marks End of Recovery Journey .....	78
Kyran Van Dam .....	78
Isabelle Welch .....	79
Sophie McCallum .....	79
Children's Festival Organisation – 25th Anniversary .....	79
Oatley West Community Festival .....	79
The Reconnect Project – Annette Mayne .....	80
Debadatta Paul .....	80
Sydney Society of Model Engineers Inc. ....	80
Condolences – Smith Family Armidale .....	80
Dobson's Distillery, Kentucky .....	80
Armidale Ex Services Club Win Perfect Plate Award .....	81
Lorna Webb .....	81
Merv Tobin .....	81
Vivability Bathurst .....	81
Tweed Heads Croquet Club .....	81
Marie Knight .....	81
RNSH Nurses Awarded 2023 Excellence In Nursing Awards .....	82
Savoir Faire Farewells Mosman .....	82
North Sydney Local Health District Go4Fun .....	82
Gundagai Pen Museum .....	82
30 Years of Service .....	83
Jugiong Polocrosse .....	83
Deputy Mayor Councillor Daniel Han .....	83
Plaque Unveiling for Anna Lao AM .....	83
Election of Esther Kim As President of the Korean Society of Sydney .....	83
Carl Upton's Amazing Machines .....	84
Clancy Tomlinson Year 12 Student Awarded for Excellence .....	84
Vale Ian Ellis .....	84
Woollahra Council .....	84
Dr Vinh Binh Lieu .....	85
Chullora Public School – Operation Art Competition 2023 .....	85
IWAA Multicultural Peace Walk .....	85
Goulburn Regional Art Gallery .....	85
Mrs Oldbucks Pantry .....	86
PepperGreen Estate .....	86
Poolwerx Dubbo .....	86
Dubbo Eventing and Showjumping Association .....	86
Madison Casley Mudgee Scout Group .....	86
Northern Beaches Council .....	87
Masada College Pink Stumps Day .....	87
Computer Pals for Seniors Turramurra .....	87

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Ethan Thompson Named Group 3 Rugby League Player of the Year.....	87
Chloe Saunders Debut Season for NRLW.....	88
Macksville District Hospital Official Opens Community Garden.....	88
Sydney Roosters NRLW.....	88
Good360 .....	88
Jones and Smith Distillery .....	88
Country Women's Association (CWA) Co- Working Space Canowindra .....	89
Tractor Trek for Prostate Cancer Foundation .....	89
Finley Menshed .....	89
John Beer - Deniliquin.....	89
Gary Grayson.....	89
Graze N Cakes Avalon – Sandy and Viet Dang .....	90
Bashful Bees – Mandy Parker and Sonya Link .....	90
Mitch Geddes.....	90
BAPS .....	90
City of Parramatta Art Society Art Awards 2023.....	90
Asbestos and Dust Disease Research Institute Donation.....	91
Grace Chinese Christian Church Op Shop at Padstow Opens.....	91
Lebanese Film Festival .....	91
Brisbane Water Rotary Club.....	91
Umina Beach Men's Bowling Club .....	91
Grandma Moses .....	92
First National Coast and Country Real Estate Kiama.....	92
Samuel Hall .....	92
Daisy Pring .....	92
Ladies Like to Lunch .....	93
Liverpool Meals on Wheels AGM .....	93
Uncle Troy Davis.....	93
Pat and Ted Celebrate 70 Years of Marriage.....	93
CWA Casino and Casino Golf Club – Charity Golf Fundraiser.....	93
Hope Endean – 2023 Australian Commercial Radio Awards Finalist .....	93
Mindaribba Warriors and Sistas .....	94
St Bede's Year 12 Graduating Class, 2023 .....	94
Michelle Whiting.....	94
University 2 Wins NNA Opens Netball Grand Final .....	94
Embracing the Green Bin - Lake Macquarie Leading Drive for Food Waste Reduction .....	95
Macquarie College Movie Magic .....	95
Lori-Ann McKinnon – 2023 Koori Curriculum Educator of the Year.....	95
Hastings Valley Fine Arts Open Art Prize 2023 .....	95
Koala Hospital's 50th Anniversary .....	95
Fiftieth Wagga Lake Run and Ride .....	96
Harry Francis .....	96



## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Humphrey the Bidgee School Therapy Dog.....	96
Baulkham Hills Netball Presentation.....	96
Western Sydney University (Kingswood) Solar Team .....	97
The Jannali High School's Student Leadership Team .....	97
Port Hacking High School's Student Leadership Team.....	97
Menai High School's Student Leadership Team.....	97

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 10 October 2023**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper)** took the chair at 12:00.

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

## *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Ryde, student leaders from St Kevin's Catholic Primary in Eastwood and Ryde Public School. I also welcome guests of the member for Northern Tablelands, students and a teacher from Bingara Central School. I acknowledge and extend a very warm welcome to my guests from the Toronto Macquarie Ladies Probus Club.

## *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

## *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

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

### **HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I set down consideration of the amendments as an order of the day for a later hour.

## *Members*

### **MINISTRY**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that on 28 September 2023 His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor accepted the resignation of the Hon. Prudence Ann Car, MP, as Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. I also inform the House that on 28 September 2023 His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor appointed the Hon. Steven James Robert Whan, MP, as a member of the Executive Council and as Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education.

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House of the following changes in representation of Legislative Council Ministers in the Assembly:

The Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education representing the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces representing the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement

*Bills***APPROPRIATION BILL 2023****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2023****TREASURY AND REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023****CITY OF SYDNEY AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Lieutenant-Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.

*Senate***SENATE VACANCY**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor notifying of a vacancy in the representation of the State of New South Wales in the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia caused by the resignation of Senator the Hon. Marise Payne on 30 September 2023.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That:

- (1) The House meet in the Legislative Council for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Hon. Marise Payne.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to fix a time and place for the joint sitting.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Ministerial Statements***ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:06):** The New South Wales Government clearly and unequivocally condemns the acts of violence and hatred conducted by members of Hamas on citizens of Israel. This is an abhorrent attack on Israeli citizens. It is indiscriminate, with civilians being targeted, killed and murdered and many being taken hostage. The position of the Government could not be clearer, nor that of many of the people of the State of New South Wales: We stand with the people of Israel and the Jewish community in New South Wales. It is important to note that many of those people have family members or loved ones who have been indiscriminately killed or kidnapped and taken into Gaza in the past 48 hours.

I express my deepest sadness and grief for those impacted by this attack. These actions are abhorrent, and we in New South Wales reject and denounce them. This attack was extraordinary and reprehensible. It has shocked most of the world and rightly been condemned by much of the world. Of course, we are working closely with the Australian Government to support those from New South Wales who may have been impacted. New South Wales is a strong and connected society. We respect the different backgrounds and cultures that make us stronger. We are proud to be one of the most successful multicultural States on the planet. Our people come from across the globe, with one in three of us born overseas and one in four of us speaking a language other than English at home. I want to be clear: There is nothing to celebrate in the killing of innocent people, the firing of rockets at civilians, or the taking of hostages. Last night the Opera House was lit at the request of the Jewish community, specifically to show solidarity with the Jewish community here in New South Wales. Members of the Jewish community should be able to feel safe and secure in their own city, State and country.

The Jewish community has every right to get together in solemnity to commemorate what has happened in Israel. The scenes last night, where epithets were thrown at the Jewish community by protesters, were nothing short of horrific. That is the opposite of what we want in Australia and in New South Wales—a harmonious, dynamic and multicultural society. Many of them have longstanding family and friend connections with Israel. I want the Jewish community in New South Wales to know that my Government and the vast majority of people in this State stand with them today and are horrified by the scenes not just in the Middle East but also on the

forecourt of the Opera House last night. To celebrate what has happened in the Middle East in the past 48 hours is abhorrent.

As we learn more about the impacts of this Hamas attack on Israel and its humanitarian consequences, we need to keep rejecting hate and violence, and all those who perpetrate it. Each of us must play our part in making sure that violence, hatred and antisemitism has no place in our society or our community. We can and must live in a society that respects everyone's culture and background. We must also make New South Wales a place where, when we see barbarism on this scale, we call it out for what it is—a disgusting and deplorable attack on innocent civilians. The House stands with the Jewish people in New South Wales.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:10):** I join the Premier in unequivocally condemning the attack on innocent civilians in Israel over the weekend. The Opposition stands with the Government in condemning this barbaric episode in history. There will be, in this Chamber and across New South Wales, conflicting views on Middle Eastern politics. Some will understand the aspirations of Palestinian people for their own State and their own economic and other wellbeing. But some—indeed, probably all of us—will understand Israel's desire for security, a people who were almost exterminated from the face of the planet in World War II and a country that has faced an existential threat for its 75 years of existence from one or more of its neighbours from time to time. It is completely understandable that Israel would want to defend itself, and we acknowledge, respect and uphold the right to defend itself. Israel is not perfect; it is far from perfect. But it is a rare example of a liberal democracy in the Middle East.

What we saw on the weekend was an infringement of human rights on an unbelievable scale and of an unbelievable type. This was a matter of humanity versus depravity. What ordinary person could think it was proper to kidnap ordinary citizens, to rape them, to break their bones and to parade nude bodies and spit on them elsewhere? What normal person could think that was acceptable? No matter what a person thinks of Middle Eastern politics and no matter their view on the Israeli-Arab conflict, there can never be any excuse for this sort of barbarity. We are so lucky in this country that people are not dragged off the street or taken to be killed, tortured or maimed, but part of that success depends on our mutual respect and tolerance as a multicultural society. We are the greatest multicultural society on earth, and that success depends on respecting different perspectives. Of course, we can have respectful debates, but it is incumbent on all of us to promote harmony and cohesion. That is incumbent on every member in the Chamber and everyone in the New South Wales community.

Our Jewish community is entitled to circulate, like any community, in safety and with the protection of the State and all of us. We have a responsibility to promote cohesion and we have a responsibility to respect different perspectives on international politics. But none of us should pull punches when we call out hate speech. What we have seen in the past 48 hours, whether it is on the forecourt of the Opera House or the streets of our suburbs, is simply unacceptable. We have to call out that behaviour whenever we see it, whether it is antisemitism or any other sort of hate speech. All our thoughts and prayers are with innocent civilians right across the Middle East. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to those who have been murdered in the Middle East, and to their friends, their family and the Jewish diaspora here. The Opposition stands in solidarity with all citizens of Israel who have been the subject of these heinous crimes.

**The SPEAKER (12:14):** As Speaker, on behalf of the House, I offer condolences to those who have lost loved ones in this conflict and I offer support to affected communities here in New South Wales. I ask members to stand as a mark of respect.

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

*Question Time*

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Last night an email was sent to our Jewish community that said, "NSW Police and CSG are urging the community not to attend the Sydney Opera House precinct" and "The events tonight may pose a risk to the safety of community members." What conversations did the Minister or her office have with the NSW Police Force prior to last night's protest?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:17):** I thank the member for his question. I was in contact with the police and the acting commissioner on Sunday and yesterday. I was kept abreast of the events as they unfolded last night. The Government is gravely concerned about the horrific attack by Hamas on Israel, and those who have been kidnapped. We will continue to work to ensure that we support those communities right across the State that are devastated by these events.

We are monitoring the situation closely to learn if any New South Wales citizens who are currently in the Middle East are affected. The NSW Police Force has engaged with community groups as it monitors the situation here and overseas. I know that the Jewish community has an excellent relationship with the New South Wales police and that the police have been in constant contact with the community over the past few days.

The number one priority for our Police Force is to keep our community safe, and I am pleased to say they did that last night. The police are not here to make political judgement calls about who should have the right to protest. They are here to keep our community safe at events like those last night, and again I am pleased to say they did just that. Police have advised me that operational commanders last night judged that the best option for police was to control and manage the crowd movements through the CBD. Their main aim was to prevent the risk of conflict and violence.

The police did not approve a march. The process for approving protests, meetings or marches—known as form 1—generally takes about a week to complete. There was no form 1 for this event. There was just a spontaneous gathering of a large number of people. After the horrific events in Israel on the weekend, police were closely monitoring the situation and became aware through intelligence and through social media that large numbers could be expected to gather in the city. They needed to manage a highly volatile crowd, and again I say last night they did that successfully.

### **PUBLIC SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE BAN**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:20):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the mobile phone ban in all public schools will support both student learning and student wellbeing?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:20):** I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. Last year the then New South Wales Opposition committed to bring in a ban ensuring that New South Wales students are not distracted by mobile phones in schools. I am proud to say that, as of yesterday, that commitment has come into effect in New South Wales public schools. That means that for more than 780,000 public school students across 2,209 New South Wales public schools, phones must be turned off and put out of sight during the school day. I acknowledge students in the gallery today. I am sorry about that change. I do not see any phones out. We have two teachers who are extremely happy.

The Department of Education offers schools several options for managing the implementation of the phone bans. Number one is that phones are turned off and put away, typically kept in a school bag. That is how a lot of independent and Catholic schools have been managing the school phone ban for many years. The second option is that phones can be kept in lockers for the whole school day if schools have lockers on site, or locked in a phone pouch at some schools where there is a persistent niggling group of school students who just cannot put their mobile phones down—like many members on the Opposition front bench—and then collected at the front office.

We have been working with the school communities, the local communities and parent groups to get ready for this change. I have been met with a constant barrage of complaints from school students right across New South Wales about this proposed change and the implementation of the ban, but fortunately they do not get to vote until they turn 18, in which case the ban will no longer apply to them. I give them my word. Dany Elachi from the Heads Up Alliance says that parents navigating this technological change is uncharted waters in the digital age, and I think that is true.

Children, in particular, are being met with technological innovations that previous generations have had no access to, and we simply do not know the long-term effects of persistent exposure to modern technology. Michael Carr-Gregg, a respected child psychologist, said that kids returning to school after two years of disrupted learning due to COVID are struggling to engage and come back to the classroom. Clearly, access to mobile phones would make the return to school even more difficult. I know a lot of adults who find it difficult to concentrate, several of whom are on my front bench, during periods of intense concentration. [*Extension of time*]

Why would we expect children to be any different? These changes will make a massive difference to school communities and, most importantly, there will be a level playing field for independent schools, public schools and other institutions in New South Wales that had already progressed a ban on mobile phones in schools. Condell Park High School, the Deputy Premier reminds me, is an example of a school that has not had mobile phones inside its four walls for a long time, and the principal says—

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Funny about that.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, that is right.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** And about 70 per cent of other schools.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** So you are happy for the schools to make up their mind or you think it should be a universal ban?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie will come to order. She will not be baited by the Premier.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That is what we are seeing from the New South Wales Opposition. Those opposite want to bring back phones in schools, for students in particular.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** No.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Presumably that's the tenor of your intervention. We think this is in the interests of students and children in New South Wales. We think having a level playing field for schools across the State will make a major difference. We acknowledge that technological change is a major threat, particularly for young children as they try to navigate these emerging trends. We want kids concentrating on teachers in the classroom so we can lift test scores and results and educational outcomes for the next generation of young Australians.

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:24):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Premier has said that it was "intolerable" that members of the Jewish community were unable to celebrate and commemorate the lighting of the Sydney Opera House. Will the Minister apologise to the Jewish community for failing to stop a march and not letting the community hold a vigil at the Opera House last night?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:25):** This is not a question about letting a protest go ahead. This is purely about dealing with the situation that police were confronted with in the best way to avoid conflict and ensure public safety. It is not about condoning, supporting or facilitating.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The job of police is to keep our community safe.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Operation Mealing was established to investigate the incident last night. CCTV footage has been obtained, and police will examine closely any evidence of offences that were committed and they will take appropriate action. I suggest that anybody with information should report it to their local police or to Crime Stoppers. People in New South Wales should feel free to go about their business without fear. That is why police need to manage the risk of violence and conflict.

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

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We will continue to work across—

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

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** My point of order goes to relevance. The Minister owes our Jewish community an apology and needs to explain why their safety was not guaranteed.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Vaucluse will resume her seat. I was very happy to hear her point of order but she will not lecture the Minister. I call the member for Vaucluse to order for the first time. If she wants to take a point of order, she will do so without embellishment. There is no point of order. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We will continue to work across all communities.

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The member for Vaucluse asked whether the Minister would apologise for what happened last night, and she has not come close to the question of an apology.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order. The Minister will address the question directly.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** She is.

**The SPEAKER:** It is not up to the Leader of the House to rule on the point of order; I am ruling on it. The Minister will be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The police were managing the situation to maximise the safety of all concerned. The NSW Police Force recognises and supports the rights of individuals and groups to free speech and peaceful assembly. However, the first priority for the NSW Police Force is always the safety of the wider community. I encourage any person or group who has been the target of a hate crime or other incident to report this to the NSW Police Force.

#### TEACHER SUPPORT

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:29):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is supporting teachers and maintaining safe learning environments for students?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:29):** I certainly can. I thank the member for Mount Druitt for this important question. The House knows that there is no more important job for this Labor Government than improving the educational outcomes of every child across New South Wales. Of course, we came to government when educational outcomes were in decline. Even the latest NAPLAN results proved that we have so much work to do and the challenges we are facing. Of course, in order to improve learning outcomes we are doing a range of things, as the House knows, including what the Premier spoke about: increasing concentration in classrooms by banning mobile phones across the board.

But I will speak about something we are doing that is vital to giving students and teachers the safe and supportive environment that they need to learn and teach in. Sadly, when in government, those opposite—the Liberals and Nationals—attempted to undermine this. They foisted an unworkable behaviour policy upon principals in our schools. They left principals in our 2,200 schools powerless to deal with persistent misbehaviour, which is, unfortunately, a reality in some classrooms within every school.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I have heard from principals, and I would hazard a guess that there are many members of the House who have heard principals talk, while in tears, about the powerlessness of the previous policy. They told stories of principals and teachers who had been assaulted and felt helpless. When in opposition and upon becoming the Minister, I heard straightaway and very clearly that it was a disaster. That is why this Government has listened. We have actioned; we have acted straightaway. We are overhauling the failed behaviour policy of those opposite. Last month the policy went out to school leaders for final feedback. It is now about to go back to schools for familiarisation and will be in effect from day one, term 1, of 2024.

This new policy will empower principals to provide safe classrooms. One would think that would be a basic thing that a government would be able to help principals with. It will give schools the tools they need to manage student behaviour. It will address the disruptive behaviour that is impacting on the learning of other students in the classroom. At the same time, it will ensure that we support students with complex learning needs. That is a very delicate balance, but we believe we have struck the right balance by listening to the people who are educating our children. We need to trust our educational leaders and our principals. We must have safe schools, safe workplaces for our teachers and safe classrooms. [*Extension of time*]

Let me say from the outset that no-one—no teacher, no principal, no deputy principal—wants to suspend students, but the reality is that we must have safe schools. Under the proposed changes, we are reintroducing continued and persistent disobedience and/or disruptive behaviour as grounds for suspension. That is a sensible reintroduction, which was led by educators and principals along with the Government. They tried to tell the previous Government, but it simply would not listen. We are making sure there is more flexibility for principals, including by removing the need for principals to seek approval from the department in certain circumstances and by making sure the policies and procedures are easy to understand for teachers, parents and, of course, students.

The student behaviour policy has been reduced from six pages to two pages. The 36 student behaviour procedures have been halved. We have spoken ad nauseam in this House and in the public arena about how much admin overload is on teachers in our classrooms, which we are working to address. We will make sure that through this policy we support students with complex needs, which is a growing issue for our teachers. There will be clearer guidance for our educators in terms of the range of supports available to manage complex student behaviour, but I stress again that we must trust principals, who are our experts in leading schools. They must be empowered to keep their classrooms safe for themselves, their teachers and the children who need to be learning in our classrooms. Simply put, the former Government's policy did not do that. We have listened and we are very hopeful that the new policy will provide safe classrooms for our children.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Balmain, I recognise that we are joined by the Mayor of Northern Beaches and chair of Women and Children First domestic violence shelter, Sue Heins. Welcome, Sue. I call the member for Balmain.

### INNER WEST BUS SERVICES

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:35):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister please update the House on what she is doing to ensure good local bus services for the people of the inner west?

*[Interruption]*

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:35):** I thank the member for Balmain for her question and for her commitment to her community on the need for reliable public transport services and, in particular, bus services. I have had multiple conversations with the member and, indeed, with many members on both sides of the House about the failures that were left by the former Government and about the need for our local communities to be connected to one another, to services, to schools and to the things that they need each and every day. People rely on public transport services. I have said many times before that we were left with a mess by the former Government. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the privatisation of our bus services. When we came to office, the community was experiencing record service cancellations across Greater Sydney and, of course, in Sydney's inner west.

In fact, region 6 was one of the first regions to be privatised, and we saw the results of that. In fact, we had a situation where there was a two-tier workforce in place: Bus drivers driving the exact same route, driving out of the exact same bus depot, were on different rates of pay and conditions. That is completely unacceptable, and it is one of the reasons we have lost so many people from this essential profession. We have lost our essential bus drivers because of the privatisation of bus services by those opposite. They took our public transport services and sold them to the lowest bidder. They put prices before passengers, and again and again we saw the impacts of that.

We inherited a situation in which there were 500 bus driver vacancies. We have taken a range of measures to address these issues, including in the inner west. One measure is the implementation of our Bus Industry Taskforce. The first set of urgent recommendations I received from that Bus Industry Taskforce dealt with the bus driver shortage. We have removed red tape, made it faster and cheaper to become a bus driver and launched a campaign to recruit more people to this essential profession. We have seen some green shoots: Each and every week we have seen more than 100 bus drivers in training, and that is a good thing. I also recognise a range of election commitments that we have made in the member's electorate, including restoring some of the routes and services that were removed under the former Government's privatisation. We will continue to work with the community, the member for Balmain and members across this Chamber to deliver the essential public transport services that our communities rely on.

### VAPING

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:38):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to crack down on the sale of illegal vapes and how it will increase support for young people in New South Wales who are addicted to vaping?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:38):** I thank the member for Auburn for a very insightful question and for her advocacy for her local electorate, particularly in relation to health services and infrastructure. I address this question as not only the Minister for Health but also, to be frank, a parent of a teenage boy. All of us at the moment—particularly many of us with children still at school—have huge concerns about the take-up of vaping across the community. I have spoken to parents. I have spoken to teachers. I have spoken to grandparents, neighbours, friends and family members. I know many members have had this issue raised with them frequently. I will outline our response, but I will also say that this will not be the last time we invest in this. It will not be the last time that we discuss and debate this issue in the Parliament. It is an emerging health issue that I and many across the political divide have significant concerns about.

As a part of the budget, we have allocated \$6.8 million, and \$4.3 million will go towards doubling our enforcement measures and doubling the number of inspectors out there. I will talk about other substances in a minute, but more than 90 per cent of vapes contain nicotine and they are not being sold through appropriate retail outlets at the moment. In some cases, they are sold metres from the school gate. We are also putting \$2.5 million



into a targeted campaign for young people, designed to try to help them get off this addiction. This is a serious health concern. We know that the short-term effects on young people's lungs and development is significant. What we do not know yet is the long-term harm being done. I am very concerned that this could be an issue like tobacco was 60 years or 70 years ago, which has had significant long-term impacts on individuals, communities and health systems.

What is in vapes is very different to what they are labelled as containing. They are labelled with all manner of attractive names and colours, but studies that have dug deeper have found that many of them contain weedkiller, nail polish remover and other very serious chemicals that are particularly harmful to young people's development. *[Extension of time]*

We need to get in front of this. That is what this investment is designed to do. It will not be the last time we invest in this space. We are working closely with the Commonwealth, but what I never like to do or see in this place, regardless of where people sit, is a passing of the buck from one end of government to another when a serious issue impacts here and now on the lives of young people. I do not think any members have not had people from their community, particularly parents, raise concerns with them about this. I say to the young people in the Chamber that this is not a playful product. This is not a product that is harmless. In fact, it carries serious harm. The short-term effects on the respiratory system we know. The long-term effects we do not know. I make no apology for cracking down on this.

We will continue to make investments in this space because we need to. We will continue to focus targeted prevention and help campaigns on young people through our iCanQuit program because we need to. As community leaders, all of us have a role to play. The New South Wales Government will continue to work with retailers, pharmacists and the Commonwealth Government to make sure we get in front and stay in front of this looming health crisis. This is very important to me. I know it is very important to many of us not just as political leaders but as parents. We will continue to update the House on this important issue and the reforms going forward.

#### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (12:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In a previous answer the Minister said that she had been in constant contact with the NSW Police Force before last night's protest. Did she ask the Police Force to stop the mob moving from Town Hall to the Opera House?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:44):** I have answered this question. However, I will say that the NSW Police Force has said itself that the best option for police was to manage the rally. As everyone here should know, as Minister I have zero role in operational policing decisions and, quite frankly, nor should I.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Those decisions are for police commanders on the ground. Their priority yesterday was to control and to manage a large, volatile crowd and to prevent conflict, violence and breaches of the peace. I say it again: They were successful in doing that.

#### TAFE NSW

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:45):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Minns Labor Government in rebuilding TAFE and the training sector to address critical skills shortages in New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** I am pleased to welcome the Minister.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:46):** Thanks, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for her question, and I particularly thank her for asking me my first question in this place since 1 December 2010. What a surprise it is to be back here again.

*[A Government member interjected.]*

It is. It is several parliamentary careers ago for many.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** A year ago, when I was a constituent in the National Party held electorate of Monaro, I did often hear the National Party talking about TAFE. I quote from its website:

TAFE campuses are the beating hearts of our country communities and provide essential access to the education and training people need to enter the workforce or score their next promotion.

Imagine how surprised I was a week or so ago to read this in the incoming Minister's brief:

TAFE NSW budget was re-baselined in 2021 following a review by consultants. New forward estimates were established with a significant funding reduction, further reductions in the out years and heroic commercial revenue assumptions.

When we came to government, we found that members opposite had set up a situation where forward estimates for TAFE declined in dollar terms every out year. In other words, there was a nearly \$200 million shortfall in the available TAFE funding.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** Very clearly, without the intervention of this Labor Government, the cuts to TAFE would have resulted in campus closures, job losses and questions around safety of teachers and students. The Government has stepped in to rescue TAFE with funding. We now have a budget which has a—

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** The Coalition's record in TAFE and the uncertainty over the out years is the reason we have seen more than 65 per cent of the teaching workforce in TAFE either casual or temporary.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** People simply cannot plan for their futures and our TAFE cannot plan for its future because of the uncertainty that those opposite put in place. That is why the Government has stepped in and has fixed the hole in the budget left by the Opposition and why we are looking forward to working with the Commonwealth on finalising a new five-year national skills agreement. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** More Opposition members will soon be on calls to order. The member for Port Macquarie will come to order.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I hear the interjections from the Opposition. It is really important to highlight that we are very close to finalising a new five-year national skills agreement with the Commonwealth, which Opposition members did not want to do. They extended the old agreement by a year and they walked away from negotiations with the Commonwealth over the new five-year agreement. This is really important, because finally in Australia we now have two governments that are of the same view on the importance of TAFE. We have two Labor governments that both agree that at least 70 per cent of the skills' budget should be delivered by TAFE. We have two Labor governments that agree on the importance of apprenticeships and trainees.

We have seen from this Government an immediate commitment of \$93.5 million to directly hire an additional 1,000 apprentices and trainees in government agencies and a commitment to three manufacturing centres of excellence. Of course the Federal Government in its *Working Future* white paper has also highlighted its commitment to centres of excellence around Australia. Overall, the Government's budget is investing \$3.1 billion in skills training. That is the TAFE money, which is over \$2 billion in recurrent funding; the \$93.5 million for the 1,000 apprenticeships; and the \$18.5 million for TAFE NSW to implement digital transformation. Because, as I have heard in just a week, the former Government had let the TAFE systems run so far down that teachers are spending way too much of their time trying to input data into ancient systems. Those sorts of things need to improve to make sure that we can deliver training where it is needed and to ensure that we have people coming up with the skills to make sure New South Wales prospers for the long term.

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:51):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. On radio this morning, when asked about last night's protest action, the Attorney General said, "I think all people should stay at home for their own safety. The streets are unsafe." The Premier says he disagrees with these comments. Does the Minister agree with the Premier or the Attorney General, or does the Minister have a third position?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:52):** Firstly, I welcome back the member for Bathurst. I hope he has recovered. I thank him very much for his question. I understand that the Attorney General made some comments in this morning's media prior to being briefed on the situation. What we saw last night was the police doing what they do best: keeping the community safe. And they do a fantastic job at it.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Because of the actions of the NSW Police Force, I can confirm that there were no injuries to members of the public or, indeed, to the police.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The question clearly was: Does the Minister agree with the Premier or the Attorney General, or does she have a third opinion on the comments of the Attorney General?

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The police have stated that the community is free to go about their business without fear and the New South Wales police will provide support where needed.

### REGION 10 BUS SERVICES

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:53):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on what actions have been taken by the Minns Labor Government to address the reliability of bus services in region 10?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:54):** I thank the member for Heathcote, who has been a tireless advocate for her community, raising the problems of bus services that they and, indeed, the communities across region 10 have been experiencing because of the problems that we inherited from the former Government. As I have said many times in this place, we inherited a complete mess across public transport. Some of those failures of the former Government were apparent on day one. For example, overseas-made trains that do not fit the tracks—we knew about that on day one.

Some of the issues, however, have taken a while to show their faces: for example, the maintenance backlog on our train network. Some of those unpleasant surprises were buried deep in the Department of Transport. That is what we saw with region 10. The decision that those opposite put in motion before the election has come back to hurt communities. The former Government decided to privatise our local bus services to the lowest bidder. Our Bus Industry Taskforce found that those opposite ripped out more than \$375 million in operational savings in that process. But they did not return any of that to the community, particularly for the growth needed for bus services in the growing communities of western and south-western Sydney. They chose price over passengers every time. Since March we have seen a number of contract transitions to new operators, including in region 10.

On 22 December last year the former Government awarded a contract to a newly formed joint venture called U-Go Mobility, which transitioned into operating that service on 1 July. It was an entity with absolutely no local experience. But those opposite awarded it a contract over a locally operated, long-term family business. The new operator had more experience, to be frank, on the streets of Singapore than on the streets of Sutherland. And it showed, because within three weeks of the operation—the start of third term, actually—it became clear that the operator had not secured the drivers that it needed to deliver the service that it was contracted to provide.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Oatley to order for the third time. I will not hesitate to have him removed from the Chamber.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In the days that followed I was advised that U-Go Mobility, the company that you had contracted to provide that essential service to the community, had failed to engage with its workforce and union delegates, and imposed—

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister was pointing across the table at members of the Opposition. She should be directing her comments to you, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will direct her contribution through the Speaker. It is not appropriate to address members of the Opposition. I remind the member for Oatley that he is on three calls to order. I will not tolerate that sort of interjection again.

**Ms Maryanne Stuart:** I seek an extension of time for further information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant the Minister an additional two minutes.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Not only did the company fail to engage with its workforce but we also know that it failed to pay some of its drivers for shifts that they worked. No wonder we lost those essential bus drivers delivering that essential service. That is why I directed the Secretary of Transport—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked to update the House on action taken to address reliability of bus services in region 10. Why did she do nothing for three months after the Government was elected?

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In the minute I have left, let us be very clear on the actions we had to take to fix the mess those opposite created. The Secretary of Transport wrote to U-Go Mobility to show cause.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Its response was insufficient, and we directed the department to exercise its step-in rights under the contract to stabilise those services.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** A special team from within Transport for NSW worked around the clock to fix those problems and to ensure that services were delivered. We made sure that workers were paid, we carved out services so that kids were not left on the side of the road, we appointed bus marshals and additional communications. As a result, complaints have dropped by 92 per cent and cancellations dropped to 1 per cent. That is the kind of intervention that we were required to make because of the mess the Opposition left us. We will continue to work with communities to ensure that they have the public transport services that they need and deserve.

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:59):** My question is directed to the Attorney General. The Attorney General has carriage of the Summary Offences Act, which includes public assemblies. Why, then, by his own admission this morning on breakfast radio, was he "not really across" what happened at the Opera House last night?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (13:01):** The question proceeds on a misunderstanding of how the Summary Offences Act is administered. It might be my responsibility as Attorney General in relation to the allocation of Acts, but it is administered by the police. Police make operational decisions on the ground, as the member knows.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The events of the past 48 hours in Israel are horrifying. The murder of civilians, kidnappings and the taking of hostages is horrific and deeply distressing for the many members of our community who have friends and family in Israel. There is a large contingent of Jewish people in my electorate and they have been great friends for many years. There is a school, Mount Sinai College, and a synagogue. From time to time I have the pleasure of joining with the member for Heffron, the member for Coogee and the Federal member for Kingsford Smith at events across the Jewish calendar to celebrate life with those terrific people. The events of last night at the Opera House were shocking and appalling. The New South Wales Government stands with the Jewish and Israeli community of New South Wales. Our heart goes out to the people of Israel, Israelis abroad and all Jewish people.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Attorney General can give a private member's statement when he gets the opportunity. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. Under Standing Order 249A, I direct the member for Wahroonga to remove himself from the Chamber until the end of question time. That is not how a point of order is taken.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Wahroonga left the Chamber at 13:01.]*

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance to the actual question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister was absolutely directly relevant with his very first words. He passed the test.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Celebrations of violence, vilification and intimidation are not acceptable in our community in the immediate aftermath of such horrors. On the comments I made this morning, I had not been briefed on the operations of police in relation to the Opera House protests, nor any discussions they may have had

or advice they may have given. Police decisions are operational decisions that do not involve the Attorney General, as the member and his team know. At the end of the interview I clarified that people who want to gather quietly in communities to reflect, mourn and pray should be able to do that. The Jewish community in Sydney will want to do that and they have every right to do that, wherever, whenever and in whatever numbers they want, and I trust the police will keep them safe.

### MOORE PARK CAR PARKING

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (13:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring that more people have access to parking for major sporting events at Moore Park?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (13:03):** I thank the member for Camden for her question. She is an energetic, fun-loving, excellent representative for her community. I am afraid to say that the wowsers on the other side of the House are back in the news; they are back on.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 72. Using offensive words in this place is not acceptable.

**The SPEAKER:** In the common vernacular it is not considered an offensive word—certainly not by me.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Let us say the boring ones on the other side of the House. Earlier this year we began work to overturn the concert cap to once again bring entertainment back into the entertainment precinct. I am happy to say we are working constructively to get the cap overturned. I should have known that the Opposition would have left more booby traps behind. It was probably the member for Wahroonga. The former Government legislated to remove parking at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] precinct, without ensuring alternatives would be in place. That will disproportionately affect the many fans who still need to drive to the SCG and Allianz Stadium to enjoy an event.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Who wrote this, Kamper? Come on, who wrote this?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Definitely not you.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It affects young families, elderly people with accessibility needs and people from Western Sydney and regional New South Wales—the country folk, it affects them too. Venues NSW estimates that removing that parking will cost the local economy \$30 million in revenue per year. Planning approval was provided only in July 2022, yet somehow Venues NSW was expected to build a multi-level car park and village in 18 months. That is how good the programming and planning was. I am happy to say once again that we are cleaning up the mess of the former Government, working with the fantastic Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to unlock this valuable asset and ensure that on-grass parking is maintained until an alternative is delivered. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This will ensure that our venues are accessible to everyone. I am happy to inform the House that Sir Paul McCartney has heard the message.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** In a matter of days he will be at Allianz Stadium performing his greatest hits, as well as some peculiar songs members may not have heard. He has turned one of his classics into an ode to the member for Wahroonga: Help! I Need More Listeners. He has been thrown out of the Chamber so we will not benefit from that one. There is more. I hear Paul will dedicate a song to the former Treasurer: All You Need is Love—and Another \$7 Billion for the Black Hole. Finally, to serenade the Leader of the Opposition, Paul has chosen quite an apt song: The Long and Winding Boardwalk. If for some reason members do not like Paul, I have good news: Robbie Williams will also be touring. Robbie not only knows how to put on a show but also loves his Greek Australians. If he is loving Big Ange instead, *Let me Entertain You*. Let's unlock our venues and bring entertainment back into the entertainment precinct.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order so that we can hear the next question. The member for Oatley will come to order.

## KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services, in his capacity representing the Minister for the Environment. The Kosciuszko National Park continues to suffer destruction because of feral horse populations, particularly in areas in my electorate. What action is the Government taking to protect the natural heritage of this treasured national park?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:09):** I thank the member for his question and for his longstanding interest in the health and protection of Kosciuszko National Park. Kosciuszko is New South Wales' only alpine national park and protects our only alpine ecosystems. Kosciuszko is also one of the top 10 most visited parks in New South Wales. Unfortunately, many of the animals and plants that call Kosciuszko home are critically endangered, due in part to the number of wild horses in the park.

Under the existing legislation and the wild horse heritage management plan passed by the previous Government, the government of the day has a responsibility to reduce the number of wild horses in the park to 3,000. This is a bipartisan concern. Recently, the Leader of the National Party commented on the issue, saying:

We support the culling at a manageable level of brumbies ...We will work with government on that. We actually had a plan in place to cull to a certain number. There was never a plan to protect brumbies, it was to cull to a certain level and we still support that.

Members may be aware that a count was done in late 2022, which estimated that there were between approximately 14,000 and 23,000 wild horses in the park. Even if the actual number is at the lower end, that is too many. Animals and plants such as the broad-toothed rat, the northern corroboree frog and the galaxias fish are at risk of extinction. It is never pleasant to talk about putting down an animal, but in this case we need to be honest about the challenge. Aerial shooting of invasive animals is already allowed across New South Wales. Wild pigs, deer and foxes, for example, are all able to be shot aerially, on both public and private land. I am advised that, over the past three years, more than 272,000 invasive and feral animals have been removed from the State, the vast majority through aerial shooting.

I also note that traditionally members on both sides of the House have agreed on the need to control feral and invasive animals on both public and private land. Ask any farmer and they will explain the problems invasive animals can cause. Ask any conservationist. It is not a partisan issue. Under the current approach, I am advised that the legislated target of 3,000 wild horses by 2027 will not be met. The Minister for the Environment announced in early August that the Government was considering allowing aerial shooting of wild horses in Kosciuszko. A draft amendment to the plan was put on public exhibition until 11 September, and over 10,000 submissions were received. I am advised that there will be a count done later this month to ensure that wild horse numbers are updated. [*Extension of time*]

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, at the request of the Minister, has also met with a range of stakeholders to hear their views about count methodology. I can also update the member that, in line with normal seasonal practice, Kosciuszko National Park opened fully to the public over the October long weekend. As is usual, some parts of the park are closed off during the winter months. Normal wild horse control occurred over the winter, in line with the current legal plan. Routine culling of other invasive animals was also done over the winter months.

I understand that there have been some reports that when the park opened some visitors saw horse carcasses. However, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has assured the Minister that no carcasses were left within 50 metres of waterways, or near picnic grounds or other visitor areas. The Minister will soon be in a position to make a final decision on the proposed amendment to allow aerial shooting in the park. The Minister has asked me to convey her thanks to the member for Wagga Wagga and to my colleague the member for Monaro for their interest in this matter and their support and constructive engagement on this important issue.

## WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (13:14):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister please inform the House how the Government is ensuring safe and healthy workplaces for the people of New South Wales?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:14):** I thank the hardworking member for Fairfield. I know that he has an interest in this issue and cares a lot about work health and safety. October is National Safe Work Month. It is an opportunity for us to remind ourselves that every workplace should be safe in every sense, and that every single worker deserves to return home safely at the end of the day. The theme for National Safe Work Month this year is "For Everyone's Safety, Work Safely". The theme is meant to encourage all of us to prioritise safety in the workplace and do everything possible to prevent work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses.

I am proud to update the House on what the Minns Government is doing to support safe work. It is significant and historic that this Government has a dedicated Minister for Work Health and Safety. The previous Government thought that safe work was red tape and that it was a brand.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** That's rubbish.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** It is not rubbish. I can give members opposite a litany of all the terrible things they did and allowed to happen. We are talking about people's lives. I can assure members that the Minns Government does not think that people's lives and safety are red tape. I congratulate and thank the Premier for putting work health and safety at the heart of government and for the work he and all of us on this side of the House are doing. Workplace health and safety has never been more important than it is today. Last year in New South Wales 40 people lost their lives at work. That is 40 people who did not return home to their families, loved ones and friends. In addition, 4,753 people were injured and there were 7,472 workplace incidents. By any criteria, that is far too many.

This past weekend, members would have seen my statement putting on notice food delivery platforms that do not comply with training and personal protective equipment requirements for delivery riders. This comes as SafeWork fined a food delivery company for failing to train more than 1,000 riders. Sadly, members opposite did too little for too long. They allowed the fate of workers to be left in the hands of tech algorithms, rather than leading change to improve social and economic prosperity. The Minns Government will have a lot more to say about its plans for the gig economy in coming months. [*Extension of time*]

One of my first acts as Minister for Work Health and Safety was to launch a 12-month campaign of surprise inspections by SafeWork inspectors on building sites. That is because falls from heights are the number one cause of traumatic fatalities in the New South Wales building and construction industry. Falls from two metres to four metres are happening, and young people are dying. The Minns Government also took the strongest possible steps to stamp out the abuse and assault of retail workers by creating new offences in the Crimes Act. Companies that breach our health and safety laws will be faced with increased fines.

Today also marks World Mental Health Day, and the Minister for Mental Health and I have put out a statement. The Minns Government is encouraging workplaces in New South Wales to minimise and prevent psychological harm at work. This week we are launching a new initiative: the Workplace Wellbeing Assessment digital tool, which can help businesses improve their understanding and management of workplace mental health. Recently, together with a number of universities and a number of stakeholders, I attended the launch of Design for Care by officials from icare, which examines how workplace organisational design can improve mental wellness. SafeWork is also developing a new psychosocial strategy, which I hope will be finalised next month and will underpin the existing psychosocial hazards code of practice at work.

Despite the gains made by workers and their unions 168 years ago with the eight-hour working day, many of us spend more than one-third of our day at work. If, during that time, the workplace environment has unmanaged risks, including high workloads, exposure to trauma, stress or bullying, work can have a significant impact on the rest of our lives. Workplaces that proactively and positively address psychosocial risks and other factors affecting mental health find it easier to attract and retain great workers, and their businesses are more likely to thrive.

#### *Documents*

### REGISTER OF DISCLOSURES

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with clause 21 of the Constitution (Disclosure by Members) Regulation 1983, I table the Register of Disclosures by Members of the Legislative Assembly as at 30 June 2023, Ordinary Returns, Volumes 1 and 2. I order that the document be printed.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

#### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 132 and section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Potosi*, dated September 2023, received 25 September 2023.
- (2) Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Review of a sample of NSW Police Force strip search records 2021-2022*, dated September 2023, received 25 September 2023.

I order that the reports be printed.

**NSW CRIME COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010, I announce receipt of the Assumed Identities Report of the NSW Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023, received out of session on 29 September 2023 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Mr GREG PIPER:** As Chair: I table the report of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled *Citizen's Right of Reply – City of Newcastle*, Report No. 1/58, dated October 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 5/58*, dated 10 October 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE****Inquiry**

**Mr JASON LI:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into accountability measures for decision-making for the delivery of major infrastructure, contracting of public services and/or the privatisation of public assets in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROTECTING LOCAL WATER UTILITIES FROM  
PRIVATISATION****Extension of Reporting Date**

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

- (1) The reporting date of the Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation, as set out in the resolution of the House of 3 August 2023 appointing the committee, be extended from 30 November 2023 to 29 March 2024.
- (2) That a message be sent to the Legislative Council conveying the terms of this resolution agreed to by the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Resilient Homes Program**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to urgently revise its flood mapping data to include property significantly affected by the 2022 floods and urgently provide the estimated initial funding of \$1.5 billion for the Resilient Homes Program to deliver flood recovery assistance, received from **Ms Tamara Smith**.

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

**Conversion Therapy Legislation**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to honour its election promises regarding conversion therapy legislation and ensure that it is not modelled on the Victorian legislation or on the



Member for Sydney's Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023; that detailed definitions of banned conversion practices are provided; that religious freedom is protected; that individuals are not prevented from voluntarily seeking medical or other assistance or guidance through prayer; and that any legislation clearly differentiates coercive practices and religious interventions, is drafted with involvement of religious and community stakeholders and is referred to a parliamentary select committee for review, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Houston Mitchell Drive and Pacific Highway Intersection—lodged 22 August 2023 (Mrs Leslie Williams)

The Hon. Kate Washington—Road Crimes—lodged 22 August 2023 (Ms Liesl Tesch)

The Hon. Kate Washington—Transgender People and Birth Certificates—lodged 22 August 2023 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Penny Sharpe—Public Native Forest Logging—lodged 22 August 2023 (Ms Tamara Smith)

*Business of the House*

### BUSINESS LAPSED

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), general business notices of motion (general notices) Nos 270 to 420 have lapsed.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

### *Bills*

### JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023

#### First Reading

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

#### Second Reading Speech

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:32):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. This bill will introduce several miscellaneous amendments to address developments in case law, close gaps, provide clarity and updates where needed, and support operational improvements. Regularly reviewing and updating legislation is an important mechanism to ensure that laws remain fit for purpose and keep pace with developments in the community and the legal system. Miscellaneous bills are a sensible and practical way to introduce amendments to multiple Acts in order to achieve this. Miscellaneous bills are not the same as statute law bills, which progress as part of the statute law revision program and make only minor amendments to the statute book, including the removal of typographical errors and the repeal of redundant provisions. More significant amendments can and do progress in miscellaneous bills where appropriate and required.

The amendments that will be introduced by this bill include amendments to the Bail Act 2013 to address case law developments and resolve an operational issue relating to accompaniment requirements; an amendment to the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to remove the requirement for the Children's Guardian to be under the age of 65 years; an amendment to the Fines Act 1996 to allow the completion of certain activities to be treated as payment of a penalty notice, which is being introduced as part of a pre-court diversion scheme for personal drug use and small-quantity drug possession offences; an amendment to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to remove a sunset clause and thereby continue the ability for non-urgent warrant applications to be made by email; and amendments to implement the recommendations of the statutory review of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002. The bill also clarifies regulation-making powers across 10 Acts to provide more specificity in the enabling regulation-making provisions.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Bail Act 2013. Item [2] of schedule 1 amends section 22B (1) (b) of the Bail Act to clarify that "the decision" referred to in that provision is "a decision

to grant or dispense with bail". Section 22B of the Bail Act requires bail to be refused following conviction and prior to sentencing, where the offender will be sentenced to imprisonment to be served by full-time detention, unless special or exceptional circumstances can be established to justify "the decision". Currently section 22B does not specify that for detention applications "the decision" referred to is a decision to grant or dispense with bail. The bill will remedy this drafting anomaly by inserting the words "a decision to grant bail or dispense with bail" into section 22B (1) (b). This amendment reflects the original intent of the section and adopts the approach taken by the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal in *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Van Gestel* [2022] NSWCCA 171. It will clarify the legislative text and ensure consistent application of the law.

Items [3] to [5] of schedule 1 will also amend the Bail Act 2013 to permit the court to impose an accompaniment requirement as a pre-release requirement. A pre-release requirement is a condition that must be complied with before an accused person is released to bail. Section 29 of the Bail Act as currently drafted does not allow a court to impose an accompaniment requirement as a pre-release requirement. This means that courts are curtailed from properly imposing this type of pre-release requirement even when it is necessary to meet a bail concern.

In *WR v Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW)* [2023] NSWCCA 38, the Court of Criminal Appeal held that, to the extent that an accompaniment requirement imposes an obligation on an accused, it is a conduct requirement and cannot be imposed as a pre-release requirement. The distinction is that, whereas a pre-release requirement must be complied with before an accused person is released on bail, a conduct requirement does not have to be complied with before an accused person is released on bail. This means that, where an accompaniment requirement is imposed as a conduct requirement, an accused person could technically be released on bail directly into breach of the accompaniment requirement if it is not immediately complied with.

Amending the Bail Act 2013 to make accompaniment requirements available as pre-release requirements will ensure the validity and intended effect of conditions that courts seek to make by allowing a court to order that a person will not be able to enter bail or leave custody until the nominated person is present. It also provides clarity for Corrective Services NSW and other law enforcement agencies about when an accused person can be released on bail in compliance with their court-ordered conditions.

The bill will introduce a new section 28A into the Bail Act, which will define an "accompaniment requirement" as a bail condition requiring that the accused person be released into the care or company of another specified person or class of person when released on bail. Reference to a "class of persons" has been included to ensure that an accused person may be accompanied, where appropriate, by a person such as an NDIS worker or employee of Youth Justice in circumstances where the specific identity of the accompanying person may not be known in advance.

Existing requirements of the Bail Act for the assessment of bail concerns and the limits on imposing bail conditions will continue to apply. This means that a bail authority may only impose a pre-release accompaniment requirement if it is satisfied that the requirements in section 20A (2) of the Bail Act are met, including that the condition is, one, reasonably necessary to address a bail concern; two, no more onerous than necessary to address the bail concern in relation to which it is imposed; and three, reasonably practicable for the accused person to comply with. Item [1] of schedule 1 to the bill makes a consequential amendment.

I turn now to schedule 2 to the bill, which makes amendments to the Children's Guardian Act 2019. Item [1] of schedule 2 to the bill will remove the requirement in the Children's Guardian Act for the Children's Guardian to be under the age of 65 years. This provision is inconsistent with age discrimination provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and therefore has no operative effect. The repeal of the age requirement will ensure consistency with the New South Wales anti-discrimination law and governing legislation for other statutory officers in New South Wales who are not subject to a statutory age limit. The amendment is drafted to apply retrospectively to current and future holders of this office. However, because the provision being repealed is inoperative, this does not represent a change in the substance of the law.

Schedule 3 to the bill will introduce new section 23B into the Fines Act 1996 to allow the completion of certain activities to be treated as a payment of a penalty notice. These activities will be prescribed by regulation. This amendment will provide the Commissioner of Fines Administration with greater flexibility in administering and finalising fines and provide new pathways for penalty notice recipients to access approved interventions designed to address their offending, motivated by the prospect of having their fine treated as paid if they do so.

The Work and Development Order scheme already allows for some penalty notice recipients, after commencement of the fine enforcement process, to undertake community work or other approved activities in lieu of payment. However, unlike the Work and Development Order scheme, under new section 23B of the Fines Act, the fine recipient will need to undertake a prescribed activity prior to the fine being enforced.

New section 23B will allow penalty notice recipients to access support to address their behaviour and provide that, if they complete a prescribed activity, their fine will be treated as though it has been paid in full.

As with penalty notice recipients who pay the full amount of a fine, those who complete a prescribed activity will not be liable to any further proceedings for the alleged offence. This provision will be used to facilitate the pre-court drug diversion scheme. This scheme will allow police to issue up to two criminal infringement notices, being fines of \$400, for personal drug use and possession offences involving small quantities of prohibited drugs. New section 23B will be used to prescribe a new targeted alcohol and other drug health intervention provided by a specialist service provider. The recipient of a criminal infringement notice will then have the option to either pay the fine or participate in the intervention, the completion of which will finalise the fine as if it has been paid.

Work on this scheme has been underway for some time and the scheme is supported by the NSW Police Force and NSW Health. The scheme is intended to improve health outcomes, including for First Nations people, whilst also reducing the number of matters in our courts and letting police and our justice system focus on serious drug offences, like the supply and manufacture of prohibited drugs. Police will also retain the discretion to proceed with a matter to court. The scheme can largely be enacted within existing frameworks, but this amendment to the Fines Act is an important change that will enable fines to be treated as paid upon the completion of a tailored drug and alcohol intervention.

Schedule 4 to the bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to remove the sunset clause at section 60A (9). I will subsequently refer to the Act as LEPR. Section 60A of LEPR allows non-urgent warrant applications to be made by email. The provision was introduced in 2021 to address issues arising from the requirement under LEPR for warrants to be applied for in person, when COVID-19 restrictions were in place at the time. Section 60A contains a sunset clause that will have the effect that it is automatically repealed on 9 December 2023 if the sunset clause is not removed or amended.

Email warrant applications were initially introduced as a 12-month pilot, with a sunset period of two years to enable email warrant applications to continue while the pilot was assessed. The Department of Communities and Justice has assessed the email warrant application pilot and recommended that the sunset provision be repealed so that email warrant applications may continue. The assessment by the Department of Communities and Justice included consultation with the key stakeholders involved in warrant applications: the NSW Police Force and Local Court registries. These stakeholders advised that the email warrant process was operating well and was more efficient and cost effective than in-person warrant applications, and is therefore the preferred method of application. Importantly, the introduction of email warrant applications has not impacted the rights of persons subject to a warrant application because all existing safeguards in LEPR apply equally to applications made by email. This bill will make the email warrant application process permanent to modernise the search warrant process and ensure that key stakeholders continue to benefit from the process.

The bill also makes several amendments to the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 to implement recommendations made by the statutory review of the Act. The statutory review recommended that the preventative detention scheme in part 2A of the Act should be extended for a further three years. The statutory review noted the conclusion of the previous statutory review of the Act in 2018—that it would be premature to repeal part 2A before the investigative detention powers in part 2AA of the Act had been operationally tested. These powers have not, as yet, been operationally tested. Repealing part 2A would also be inconsistent with the national legislative framework for using preventative detention as a tool to prevent and respond to terrorism.

The statutory review also noted that the NSW Police Force continues to advise that preventative detention orders remain a valuable counterterrorism disruption mechanism in the context of an imminent terrorist attack. Accordingly, it is appropriate for preventative detention orders to continue to be available for use in the event of a terrorist incident in New South Wales. The amendment at item [7] of schedule 5 to the bill achieves this by amending the sunset provision in section 26ZS of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act so that the operation of part 2A of the Act can continue for a further three years.

The amendments to the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act proposed by the bill also implement two recommendations of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission that were endorsed and recommended by the statutory review of the Act. The amendments at items [1] to [6] of schedule 5 to the bill will ensure that a person detained on a preventative detention order in a correctional centre or a youth justice detention centre, in accordance with an arrangement under section 26X of the Act, will be notified of their right and given the opportunity to contact the NSW Ombudsman to make a complaint about their treatment while held in such a facility.

Schedule 6 to the bill makes amendments across 10 Acts to clarify regulation-making powers under those Acts. These amendments have been recommended by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and are largely technical in nature. The amendments are being introduced to provide greater specificity in enabling regulation-making

provisions. Following consultation with stakeholders, some small changes are also being made to some regulation-making powers to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and reflect current practice. The amendments do not reflect substantive changes to any existing policy or practice and do not introduce substantive changes to existing legislation or regulations; they simply provide the Parliament with clearer language around what the regulation-making powers provide for.

I turn now to the specifics of these amendments. Sub-schedule 6.1 amends the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 to insert an express regulation-making power for the making of parole orders, including conditions imposed on a parole order, at the time of sentencing in criminal proceedings in the Children's Court. Where the Children's Court makes a parole order, section 11 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Regulation 2021 currently requires that consultation occurs before treatment or residence conditions are imposed under that order. Section 12 (1) of the regulation also currently requires that parole orders must be in the approved form. Currently, section 51 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act contains a general regulation-making power, but the Act lacks an express regulation-making power in relation to parole orders and conditions imposed on parole orders. The amendment in this bill will insert an explicit power, putting beyond doubt the power of the Children's Court to impose conditions and make parole orders at the time of sentence, which will support the existing clause 11 and subclause 12 (1) in the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Regulation 2021.

Sub-schedule 6.2 makes necessary consequential amendments to the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Regulation 2021. Sub-schedule 6.3 of the bill amends the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 to provide an express power for the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice to issue guidelines about how complaints must be dealt with in youth detention facilities. Clause 57 of the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015 currently allows the secretary to issue guidelines as to how complaints and applications for the review of complaint decisions are to be dealt with. This regulation is made under regulation-making powers relating to the management and administration of detention centres, and complaint procedures, contained in sections 32A (a) and (n) of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987, respectively.

The bill will remove clause 57 of the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015 and instead insert an equivalent provision into the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 under the proposed section 32AA to ensure there is a clear statutory authority in the Act rather than in a regulation for the secretary to issue procedures for dealing with complaints and applications for the review of decisions on complaints. Sub-schedule 6.4 makes consequential amendments to the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015. Sub-schedule 6.5 makes amendments to the Civil Procedure Act 2005 to enable the continuation of current practice for civil procedure in New South Wales.

Clause 16 of the Civil Procedure Regulation 2017 sets out that certain domestic and personal violence proceedings are excluded from certain provisions of parts 3 to 9 of the Civil Procedure Act. This clause was originally inserted into the Civil Procedure Regulation 2012 by an amending regulation, relying on the power at section 4 (4) (a) of Civil Procedure Act that enables regulations to be made. This amendment provides more specificity for the regulations to be made and the regulations already made under section 4 (4) of the Civil Procedure Act.

Item [3] of sub-schedule 6.5 to the bill also makes amendments relating to fees in section 18 of the Civil Procedure Act. The amendments include introducing an express regulation-making power to issue fees for functions exercised by the marshal in admiralty in addition to the sheriff. The new section 18 (1) (e) will provide that fees are payable for the exercise and attempted exercise of functions by both the sheriff and the marshal in admiralty, consistent with current practice. The jurisdiction in admiralty is conferred on the Supreme Court of New South Wales, which appoints a marshal under the Commonwealth Admiralty Rules 1988 to serve and execute arrest warrants. This enables the marshal to retain safe custody of, and to preserve, a ship or property under arrest pending the outcome of litigation before the court.

Item [3] of sub-schedule 6.5 to the bill will also make explicit the power to make regulations in relation to fees for administrative services provided by a registrar or other officer of the court, as well as the fees payable for other services in connection with civil proceedings. For example, a registrar may charge fees for providing an administrative service such as fixing typographical errors in documents or when there are administrative expenses to process refunds in response to a court user's error. Consistent with current practice provided for under the Civil Procedure Regulation, the amendment will also extend the regulation-making power to include attempts to provide these services, such as where service is attempted by post and returned to the court.

Finally, item [3] will clarify that the power to make regulations in relation to fees includes the persons to whom the fees are payable, the time at which the fees are due and the person liable to pay them, consistent with current practice. Item [2] makes a consequential amendment. Item [4] of sub-schedule 6.5 to the bill clarifies the regulation-making power for registrars of a court and the sheriff to waive, postpone or remit fees, and impose

conditions on the waiver, postponement or remission of fees. This amendment includes a definition of a registrar in relation to the Supreme Court to clarify current practice.

Item [5] of sub-schedule 6.5 to the bill transfers from the regulations to the Civil Procedure Act the registrar's power to deduct 2.5 per cent of any amount received by way of interest or dividends on deposited funds paid into court and provides for the payment of that amount into the Consolidated Fund. The amendment clarifies that, with respect to the Supreme Court, this power is limited to the principal registrar or any registrar nominated by the principal registrar of the Supreme Court, consistent with the current practice of how this power is exercised.

In providing for the distribution of money to group members in a representative proceeding, section 178 of the Civil Procedure Act 2005 provides that the Supreme Court may constitute and administer a fund consisting of the money to be distributed. Item [6] is a consequential amendment that inserts a note explaining that the requirement to deduct 2.5 per cent of funds received as interest or dividends also applies to funds constituted under section 178. Item [7] makes a consequential amendment.

Sub-schedule 6.6 makes a consequential amendment to the Civil Procedure Regulation 2017. Sub-schedule 6.7 to the bill amends the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000 to provide that a person is appropriately qualified to carry out a forensic procedure if the Commissioner of Police authorises the person in writing to carry out the forensic procedure. Under section 3 (1) of the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000, a person is appropriately qualified to carry out a forensic procedure if they have suitable professional qualifications or experience to carry out the procedure, or if they are qualified under the regulations to carry out the procedure.

Clause 5 of the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Regulation 2014 currently states that a person is qualified to carry out a forensic procedure if authorised in writing to do so by the Commissioner of Police. This amendment will embed the existing power of the Commissioner of Police to authorise persons to carry out forensic procedures in the definition of the term "appropriately qualified" under the Act rather than relying on the regulation. The bill also makes a consequential amendment to the regulation in sub-schedule 6.8.

Sub-schedule 6.9 [1] to [4] to the bill address an inconsistency between the membership of the High Risk Offenders Assessment Committee set out in section 24AB (2) of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, the regulation-making power in section 24AB (3) to provide for the constitution and procedure of the assessment committee, and the power in section 24AD (1A) for a sub-committee to be formed to exercise the assessment committee's functions under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017.

Clause 4 of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2018 currently limits the assessment committee's membership when it exercises functions under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 to representatives of key agencies, such as the Department of Communities and Justice, Corrective Services NSW, the NSW Police Force, and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. When exercising these functions the assessment committee considers highly sensitive material, some of which is provided by other agencies and jurisdictions. Accordingly, clause 4 limits the membership of the assessment committee for the purposes of its functions under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 to ensure that such material is only accessed by representatives of agencies who hold appropriate security clearances.

Although subsection (3) of section 24AB of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 states that the regulations may provide for the assessment committee's constitution, subsection (2) provides for its membership to consist of specific persons. In addition, section 24AD (1A) provides that a subcommittee may exercise the assessment committee's functions under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017. Accordingly, the amendments address the inconsistency between these sections by providing for a subcommittee of the assessment committee, known as the terrorism subcommittee, to exercise the assessment committee's functions under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017, and providing for the regulations to prescribe its composition.

These amendments will not change current practice. All matters under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act [THRO Act] will continue to be considered only by representatives of the Department of Communities and Justice, Corrective Services NSW, the NSW Police Force and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. These members will constitute the assessment committee's terrorism subcommittee and only the terrorism subcommittee will exercise the assessment committee's functions under the THRO Act. Items [1] and [2] of sub-schedule 6.10 to the bill make consequential amendments to clause 4 of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2018 arising from the amendments in sub-schedule 6.9.

The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 in sub-schedule 6.11 to the bill will enable the continuation of current practice in areas of criminal procedure in New South Wales. Item [1] of sub-schedule 6.11 makes clear that the power to make regulations with respect to fees extends to persons to whom the fees are payable, the time at which they are due and the person liable to pay them. Item [2] of sub-schedule 6.11 inserts an explicit power for the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 to provide for a registrar and the sheriff to waive,

postpone or remit fees, and impose conditions on the waiver, postponement or remission of fees. This amendment also provides that this function is limited to the principal registrar or another nominated registrar in relation to the Supreme Court, which confirms the current practice.

Item [3] of sub-schedule 6.11 confirms that the operation of an intervention program can be limited to a specified part of the State by order of the Attorney General. Currently, section 347 (4) of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 provides that the operation of such an intervention program can be limited either in terms of time or location by the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017. Clause 33 (2) of that regulation declares specific locations at which an intervention program, such as circle sentencing, can occur and also allows the Attorney General to declare additional locations. This amendment ensures that the Attorney General's power to make orders for the location of intervention programs is drawn from the relevant Act rather than the regulation. The amendments do not change any of the specific locations where intervention programs, including circle sentencing, can occur.

Sub-schedule 6.12 makes consequential amendments to the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 and an amendment of a savings nature to ensure the continued validity of existing circle sentencing locations. Sub-schedule 6.13 to the bill will amend the Dormant Funds Act 1942 to clarify that the general regulation-making power in section 19 of the Act allows the regulations to provide for the fees and charges that may be imposed under the Act. A dormant fund is property that has been set aside for a charitable or public purpose, controlled by trustees, where the Commissioner of Dormant Funds has determined that the fund is no longer being, or is no longer capable of being, used for the purposes for which it was intended.

The amendment proposed at sub-schedule 6.13 to the bill clarifies that the regulations may specifically provide for a fee for the formulation of a proposal for a dormant fund, as described in section 11 of the Act and currently provided for in clause 5 of the regulations. The existing clause 5 of the regulations is intended to reflect that the development of a proposal for a dormant fund requires work and expenditure on behalf of the commissioner, and a fee is therefore appropriate for this work. This amendment will not make any changes to current practice or procedure.

Sub-schedule 6.14 to the bill amends the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to provide a specific regulation-making power in relation to needle exchange programs. Clause 37 of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Regulation 2021 provides exemptions from some provisions of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act to facilitate participation in a needle exchange program. This applies to needle exchange programs published on the Ministry of Health website. The bill will amend the existing regulation-making power in the Act under which a person can be exempt from the application of certain provisions of the Act to refer specifically to the needle exchange program and to a person or class of persons involved in the program who are approved by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health. This will confirm and clarify the existing practice for exclusions in relation to the needle exchange program.

Sub-schedule 6.15 to the bill will amend the NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009 to clarify that the regulation-making power in sections 111 and 128 allows the setting of fees by the NSW Trustee, in accordance with the regulations. This will ensure continuity of existing business practices by the NSW Trustee in charging fees for the services it provides to the community. Sub-schedule 6.16 [1] to the bill amends the definition of "offender information" in section 57 of the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017. This amendment will clarify the scope of the Attorney General's power in section 58 of the Act to require a person to provide to the Attorney General offender information of a kind prescribed by the regulations.

The current definition of "offender information" in section 57 captures "any document, report or other information that relates to the behaviour, beliefs, financial circumstances, or physical or mental condition, of an eligible offender". Key offender information that is prescribed by clause 7 of the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2018 for the purposes of section 58 of the Act includes documents about an offender's education and work history, and the offender's correspondence to associates or family members. This can be important to assessing the offender's risk of committing a serious terrorism offence. While such documents may contain information about an offender's behaviour, beliefs, financial circumstances, or physical or mental condition, the amendment to the definition of "offender information" in section 57 of the Act will explicitly provide for the regulation-making power in section 58 of the Act to capture all documents from which such information may be inferred, to ensure they can be produced to assist the assessment of the offender's risk, regardless of whether they expressly relate to those characteristics.

Items [2] and [3] of sub-schedule 6.16 to the bill clarify the power in section 59B of the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act to make regulations about the appointment of qualified persons as independent third parties who may make submissions to the Supreme Court about terrorism intelligence. The amendment in item [2] provides that the regulations may provide that a person is a qualified person to be appointed as an independent third party only if the Supreme Court is satisfied that they meet key requirements for the appointment. The amendment in item [3] provides that the regulations may impose duties on persons who are appointed as

independent third parties. These amendments enable the regulations to provide for a person to be qualified to be appointed as an independent third party if the Supreme Court is satisfied they meet key requirements and to impose duties on an independent third party relating to the exercise of their functions. In conclusion, this bill is an important part of the Government's ongoing work in regularly reviewing and updating legislation to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 13 September 2023.**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:10):** The State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023 introduces three minor changes to part 2 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. Firstly, it will alter the nature of the advice from the ICNSW board to be sought by a Minister about a proposed direction to the board from advice on whether complying with the direction would not be in the best interest of ICNSW to advice on whether complying with the direction would not promote the objectives of ICNSW. Secondly, the bill will insert three principal objectives for ICNSW. Thirdly, the bill will insert a provision to clarify that the Treasurer or, under delegation, the Secretary of NSW Treasury may give ICNSW a written direction requiring ICNSW to provide specified information within a specified period relating to the activities of ICNSW. Commenting on this provision, I simply note that there is no apparent history of icare ever refusing to supply either the Treasurer or the Treasury secretary with relevant information.

The other measures in the bill were included in the State Insurance and Care Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 that stalled in the Legislative Council after the then Labor Opposition sought to amend that bill to inappropriately impose government procurement rules, including social policy provisions on the Nominal Insurer, which holds funds derived for premiums paid by businesses for workers compensation. I note that the feigned urgency by Labor about this issue in 2022 is no longer in evidence now, with no sign of those procurement provisions in this bill.

This is the second one-page bill that the Government has introduced to make minor changes to icare's governance while claiming it is engaging in major reform. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government was driving reform based on the McDougall review recommendations, although some of its legislation to give effect to those recommendations was blocked by Labor. Further, the bill makes none of the comparable changes to the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] that were also recommended by the McDougall review. Is this because the Minister for Finance's ongoing conflict of interest on insurance matters has frozen any action on reforming SIRA? I commend the Opposition's position on the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:12):** I support the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023. The bill aims to improve the governance of Insurance and Care NSW, known as icare. This is done by setting out clear objectives to assist the icare board and executives to navigate overlapping statutory functions and to provide clear direction. The first amendment confirms that icare must ensure that the insurance and care schemes it administers remain affordable for the people it serves. It aims to guarantee the effectiveness and viability of icare schemes through managing resources and finances in a way that ensures their longevity. To ensure that the schemes remain financially stable, it must generate enough income through levies, premiums, contributions and investments to cover the costs and obligations associated with these schemes. The costs of these insurance and care schemes should not be unreasonable to the community. The levies and contributions used to fund these schemes should be fair and based on efficient delivery of service.

The bill proposes amendments to the treatment and care services provided through icare's personal injury insurance and care schemes. The amendments highlight that the focus of icare should be on funding treatment and care services for individuals who have sustained personal injuries that are covered by their insurance and care schemes. It emphasises that these treatments aim to assist injured individuals to return safely to work and to other activities in the community. The bill references the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998, outlining that the system should provide prompt treatment for injured workers, effective and timely management of injuries and rehabilitation services when needed with the goal of getting people safely back to work as quick as possible. The Motor Accidents Injuries Act of 2017 sets out objects for that Act, which encompass encouraging early and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation to maximise recovery from injuries.

The amendments emphasise the system-wide objectives for workers compensation and the statutory objects for motor accident compensation, together with icare's other personal injury insurance and care schemes. The proposed objectives make it apparent that icare should be focused on achieving those system-wide objectives

through its business operations. At the same time, it should not detract from or mitigate icare's statutory obligations to the other schemes that it is responsible for, such as the Home Building Compensation Fund, which icare also supports.

The bill proposes further amendments to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability in the conduct of icare operations. This emphasises what is expected of a public financial corporation providing required insurance to our community. Icare is responsible for insurance and care schemes with billions of dollars in assets that are held in trust for the community. These schemes enable people in the community to seek the vital help and protections that they need. The bill aims to assure the community that icare will conduct its operations and schemes effectively and safely, without the risk of monetary strain, and that icare will act in the best interest of the people who use its insurance and care schemes for the foreseeable future.

The bill empowers the responsible Minister to provide written directives to the board of icare if they believe it is necessary for the public interest. This safeguard will ensure that the Government can intervene if necessary. The Act will require the Minister to consult the board of icare before issuing any directives. This is an improvement on the current legislation, which requires the Minister to seek advice from the board on its opinion whether complying with the directive would not be in the best interest of icare. This ensures that the Minister and the board can agree on a directive that is in the best interest of the community whilst still enabling icare to perform its principal objectives. Providing support to people with illnesses and injuries, assisting them through the challenges of day-to-day life or creating a safety net for those who are building or renovating their homes should be the standard for icare. The bill ensures that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:18):** I support the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023. Reforming icare is a commitment of the Minns Labor Government. Earlier this year the Government legislated to ensure that the icare board was more representative of diverse perspectives. The bill is the next step along that path. The objective of the Minns Labor Government is to improve the governance of icare so that it is best positioned to serve its one and only stakeholder, the people of New South Wales. One thing is clear: The system as it stands needs reform. It is difficult to navigate, and it is not sympathetic to injured workers. We have all heard harrowing stories and experiences of injured workers' dealings with icare.

The bill builds on the Government's work by establishing clear statutory objectives for the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, which underpins the functions and operations of icare. In its current form the Act outlines broad functions for icare as a service provider and describes the functions that it is legally authorised to perform to fulfil its role as the State's workplace injury insurance provider. But, astonishingly, the current Act provides no statement of objectives or overarching principles to guide what needs to be achieved when exercising those functions. The new statutory objectives, which must be regarded, will guide icare operations from general business operations through to the board and its executive.

The bill focuses on three key objectives that hold icare to account for the people of New South Wales. The first objective is that icare must maintain the affordability of insurance and the efficiency and viability of all schemes it administers. This is important for premium payers, taxpayers and the State finances, and is also in the interests of workers to have a viable insurance scheme. The second objective focuses particularly on the treatment and care services funded by icare through its personal injury insurance and care schemes to get people back to work and back into the community. Injured workers in New South Wales deserve the best opportunity to live fulfilling lives despite their injuries. The third objective is to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability in the conduct of its operations. The objective brings icare in line with what is expected of a financial corporation, especially a public one providing mandatory insurance across our State.

The bill includes improvements to ministerial oversight of icare. Firstly, it improves the ability of the Minister to give ministerial directions to icare. Currently, the board may respond to a ministerial direction, but it is totally independent of addressing the Government's key objectives and can decide to focus on its own. Board members are appointed with—one could say—no skin in the game. They have not invested their own financial resources and therefore they have care of, but no financial responsibility or social accountability to, injured workers as long as they satisfy their legal fiduciary responsibilities as directors. The amendment will change that so that the board can no longer decline a ministerial direction if it is in accordance with the new statutory objectives.

The bill also improves Treasury oversight of icare. Specifically, the Treasurer may request financial information from icare and receive it within a reasonable time frame. It is an appropriate amendment, given icare's finances affect the financial position of the State. The new objectives and increased oversight are needed because of icare's unique functions and governance arrangements, and, importantly, to meet the expectations of the community around how it should conduct its operations. Icare manages insurance and care schemes with billions of dollars in assets held on trust for the people of New South Wales. At the end of the 2022-23 financial year, that included \$20.4 billion for the Nominal Insurer and around \$9.2 billion for the Lifetime Care and Support



Authority Fund. Furthermore, more than 330,000 employers are insured by the Nominal Insurer, providing cover for over three million employees.

All icare's schemes provide vital protections for the community, supporting people with injuries through challenging life events and providing a backstop to protect the people of New South Wales. The community therefore deserves assurance that icare is conducting its operations in the best interests of the State as much as possible. The Minns Labor Government was elected on a platform to reform icare so that it better serves the people of New South Wales, injured workers and premium payers, and we are delivering. I congratulate the Minister, Sophie Cotsis, on her continued commitment that New South Wales have the best State insurance system in the country. She has worked tirelessly to deliver the recommendations of the McDougall report. I knew the Minister prior to her entering Parliament, and over the past couple of decades—we are both young at heart—she has been passionate about helping injured workers.

I also acknowledge the work of Unions NSW and all the various unions; the Injured Workers Campaign Network, which has advocated for reform to icare over the past 10 years; and business and industry groups, including Business NSW, which have been calling for years for icare to have clear statutory objectives. The bill is the next step in fulfilling the Government's election commitments and our mandate to strengthen the regulatory oversight and governance of the State's workers compensation and care insurance schemes and therefore their financial sustainability for the longer term. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:25):** In reply: The State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (ICNSW Governance) Bill 2023 amends the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the legislation that establishes icare and that sets out broad functions for icare that describe the activities that icare is legally authorised to perform. But the legislation says nothing about the objectives that icare should achieve. The bill addresses that oversight. It provides clear objectives for icare that will help the board and the icare executive focus the organisation on its original purpose.

Providing services for injured workers is a core function for icare. The bill confirms that important role and makes it clear that icare should promote early and appropriate treatment for people with injuries. The treatment and care should optimise opportunities for injured people to return to work and other activities in the community. But it is important to remember that icare does more than administer workers compensation insurance; it provides support for people with serious injuries from motor vehicle accidents and it provides services for injured people on behalf of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority. More than 1,700 people are receiving treatment and long-term care under that scheme. The bill makes clear that the objective of icare is to provide appropriate treatment and care for those people. The board of icare should have that objective in mind when it is determining icare policies and overseeing the work of the icare executive.

The services provided by icare are, to a large extent, funded by insurance levies on employers and motorists. Those funds are used to provide important protections for the community, but they are a cost that we all have to meet. It is important that the costs are kept at a level that reflects the real cost of providing support and returning people to work and their community. The bill confirms that icare has the objective of maintaining affordable insurance and making sure that the schemes it administers are efficient and viable. The icare board and executive have a responsibility to manage workers compensation so that levies on employers remain affordable. They also have a responsibility to ensure that scheme assets are sufficient and managed effectively over the longer term to provide employees with access to their full range of statutory benefits. Services provided to employers and employees must be efficient and ensure that scheme administration costs are minimised. The focus on affordable insurance and on financial viability applies more broadly than workers compensation. It is also relevant to other schemes serviced by icare. It is relevant to the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme, to the schemes that support workers who suffer dust diseases and to people who have serious sporting injuries.

The third objective for icare in the bill is to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability in the conduct of its operations. The objective reflects what is expected of a public financial corporation providing mandatory insurance across our community. Icare manages insurance and care schemes with billions of dollars in assets that are held on trust for our community. The community needs assurance that icare is protecting those community assets and being transparent about how it is conducting its operations. The board, the executive and the whole organisation must be accountable to the community. The statutory objectives in the bill will not impede icare. They will not negate or detract from the objectives of the various schemes that icare is responsible for managing. The objectives will not hinder or replace the statutory functions that icare has under the legislation establishing those schemes.

The bill also includes a sensible adjustment to the arrangements that apply if the responsible Minister determines that a direction should be issued to the icare board. The Act currently requires that, before issuing a direction, the Minister must request the board to advise whether, in its opinion, complying with the direction

would not be in the best interests of icare. The bill provides instead that the Minister ask for advice on how ministerial direction will impact on the board's ability to achieve the principal objectives for icare. This is a better approach. A non-elected, non-representative board is not in a position to determine what is in the public interest. That role is for government.

The amendment to the Act does not alter the other requirements regarding a ministerial direction. The Minister must be satisfied that issuing a direction is in the public interest and must publish a notice in the gazette setting out the reasons why a direction was given and why it is in the public interest. The bill includes a new provision at section 12A of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. This section authorises the Treasurer to direct icare to provide specified information about the activities of icare within a specified period. The Treasurer can delegate this authority to the Secretary of Treasury. This change addresses a gap in the current arrangements, where the Treasurer has no direct authority to require information.

The bill provides an improved governance framework for icare. The Government has already acted to restructure the icare board by including nominees of employee and employer organisations. The bill takes a further step in improving the performance of icare. It sets out clear objectives for the icare board and the whole organisation. The McDougall review recommended that statutory objectives for icare be included in the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 to provide direction and encourage accountability. The Government has acted on that recommendation. Reforming icare and ensuring that workers compensation insurance is operating effectively is an ongoing journey. The bill is one step in that process. I anticipate that further legislation will be needed and I am working with my colleagues on proposals to bring it to the Parliament.

I acknowledge the member for Hornsby for his 30-second speech and his care for this area. I can be criticised—and I am happy to be criticised—but in his 30-second contribution the member said that last year Labor members did not support the icare bill in the upper House. We absolutely did. It is because of the Labor Party and the current Treasurer that we were able to force the former Government to appoint Justice McDougall to undertake a thorough review of icare. He found that terrible things were happening: There was no accountability and it was a Liberal mates club set up by the former Government. Injured people were languishing on workers compensation. There was a dribble of consultants and board directors. The former CEO was handing out work to family members. He should have acknowledged that.

I am happy to be criticised. I am here to be criticised. If I can take that criticism and improve icare for the people of New South Wales, I will do that. I am happy to listen to those opposite. I am listening and we are working with everybody, because these issues have to be resolved. There are people languishing on the workers compensation system because those opposite did not care about helping people to return to work. Last year in the upper House Labor put forward a number of amendments which those opposite when in government did not support. They did not support the changes to the composition of the board. They did not want an employer and an employee representative on the board, because they did not want to be held accountable. And it is not their money; it is the money of small business people. Those changes were to ensure that injured workers are looked after and protected, and that they are at the centre of the scheme. That is what the Minns Government promised the people of New South Wales and that is what it is doing.

I do not care if I am criticised about the volume of documents I bring to this place, because the Government is doing this work in a considered and systematic way. Recently I attended a Business NSW function and launched its report about fixing workers compensation. The room was full of business representatives from the big end, the middle end, the chambers of commerce and the unions, together on the stage, creating a platform between the workers and the employers, because we want to see people return to work. That is the Government's commitment to the people of New South Wales. The 30-second speech that was made by the Opposition is an example of how much those opposite care about this issue.

I acknowledge the contribution of my excellent colleague the member for Mount Druitt. I know how passionate he is about the workers compensation system. We have had many discussions and he has advocated strongly on issues from the local campaign committee. He represents a very important area in Western Sydney. He wants to see better law reform and I am listening to what he is saying. I also acknowledge the member for Blacktown and the role that he played when he was assistant secretary of the Australian Workers Union and represented many injured workers, particularly those in areas where a high number of workers are now contracting silicosis. This is asbestos mark 2.

Mr Temporary Speaker, in your former role in opposition you looked after this area and saw young people who had contracted silicosis, and I know you are very passionate about this. I acknowledge that the former Government did some things, after pressure. There is a lot more that we have to do. I hope that those opposite will work with the Government on this. This affects people across the State and the nation. I acknowledge the member for Blacktown for his contribution. I also acknowledge the Injured Workers Campaign Network, the leadership of the work health and safety committee of Unions NSW, the business community, community leaders and the

many people who are passionate about this area. I thank them for their support of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCE EVIDENCE) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 20 September 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:37):** Sexual offences against children are amongst the most heinous of crimes. The impact on their victims is often lifelong and very profound. The impact on victims is something that I have observed in my 27 years of professional legal practice and it is something that is unforgettable. Child sex offences rob children of their belief that they can trust people in authority and dramatically adversely impacts their mental wellbeing and opportunities in life. On Friday I met with two adults who were victims of child sexual assault. One of them informed me of how difficult the legal process was as an adult making an historical child sex offence complaint. Child sex abuse also destroys family relationships, as parents can suffer guilt about the damage done to their children, whom they wanted to protect. Children can correspondingly blame their parents, even if not the perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Children should be protected, and when they cannot be protected before the event, as unfortunately they cannot always be, perpetrators must be prosecuted. Importantly, if a child is the complainant, they should not be retraumatised by the process of prosecution. That is why, as part of its ongoing commitment to the protection of child victims of abuse, the former Coalition Government introduced the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program in 2016, an innovative program of the then Government that aimed to protect child victims of abuse from suffering further abuse in the court process. It was a nation-leading program that made a fundamental change to the way in which children gave evidence in cases involving sexual offences against them, by making it easier for children to give evidence and assisting them in giving accurate evidence so that their abusers could be brought to justice.

The former Coalition Government piloted and tested this program to ensure that it was fit for purpose. It commenced in 2016 in two locations, in Sydney at the Downing Centre District Court and in Newcastle at the Newcastle District Court, as well as in the south-west metropolitan, central metropolitan and parts of the northern police districts. As part of its architecture, the pilot was independently assessed by the University of New South Wales. The assessment gave the former Government confidence that the program was a good step forward for children, and also made sure it would work well—which it did. The University of New South Wales found that the program received strong support from participants, reduced stress for children, and resulted in a better quality of evidence from child witnesses. The program is also consistent with recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In its 2017 report, the royal commission made recommendations about the importance of prerecording witness evidence and using intermediaries in child sexual offence prosecutions. This legislation continues to do exactly that.

Following its successful endorsements, in 2018 the former Coalition Government invested more than \$28 million to make the program permanent in its initial locations. The Coalition also committed in February 2023 to invest \$64.3 million over four years to roll out an expanded program from 1 July this year to every District Court and police district in New South Wales. It is important that every child victim in New South Wales be given access to this program to ensure the process of giving evidence about child sexual abuse involves as little trauma as possible. It is of some relief that the Minns Labor Government is finally catching up with this commitment. Protecting children is of the utmost importance, so it is a pleasure to see that the Government has finally turned its attention to this legislation and the successful work of the Coalition within the criminal justice system.

The bill makes two significant reforms. The first changes the current legislation's presumption in favour of children under 16 giving evidence via a prerecorded evidence hearing. Under the changes in the bill, all child complainants and prosecution witnesses aged under 18, or who were aged under 18 at the time the accused was committed for trial, will give evidence via a prerecorded hearing, unless the court makes an order to the contrary. This helps to ensure that the proceedings of the court are not a source of further trauma to a child. The second reform is the continuation of children's champions, who will henceforth be called witness intermediaries. A

witness intermediary is an expert who has a background in social work, psychology, teaching, occupational therapy or speech pathology who is appointed by the court for a child under the age of 18 to assist the witness during the prerecording of their evidence, and to facilitate communication of questions put to the witness and answers given by the witness in reply.

These changes build on the very successful program introduced by the former Coalition Government, which protects children who have been caught in the terrible trauma of child abuse. It is a good program, and it is important that it has become a permanent part of our criminal justice system in New South Wales. As I said, the Coalition announced in February 2023 that it would extend the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program to every District Court and police district in New South Wales, making a promise of \$64.3 million over four years to fund the expansion of the program.

Unfortunately, the first Minns Labor Government budget that was recently delivered abolished the Coalition's detailed statements of funding for programs, so it is impossible to tell whether Labor's budget includes a \$64.3 million funding commitment to match the Coalition's promise. The Attorney General's second reading speech was silent on the matter, and I invite the Attorney General to confirm the commitment of funds, or it will be assumed by the public that the program will not be funded to the degree previously promised by the Coalition. I otherwise commend the current Government for introducing legislation promised by the Coalition earlier this year, and indicate that the Opposition will support the bill.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:45):** I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. The bill expands the availability of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries to child complainants and child prosecution witnesses in prescribed sexual offence matters heard at any District Court location across the State. Sex crimes against children are some of the vilest, if not the vilest, crimes that a human being can commit. The longstanding trauma and impacts on victim-survivors cannot be overstated. They are devastating and often last a lifetime. The impact extends beyond the victim-survivor to touch family and friends. No amount of counselling and medication can take away the pain, scars and post-traumatic stress for victims of child sexual abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that the State ensures that the pursuit of justice for such trauma is, in itself, as non-traumatic as possible.

Child victim-survivors are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society, and we have a responsibility to ensure they have the opportunity to give prerecorded evidence in a convenient location, without geography inhibiting the process. It takes unfathomable courage for kids to come forward and testify to what happened to them. The pain of facing perpetrators and being forced to relive their horrific experiences can cause further damage to them. The bill's reforms will help to minimise that damage and ensure that victim-survivor testimony is as widely available across our court system as possible.

The Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program aims to do this through the use of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries. We have seen the positive impacts of the program through its limited use in certain jurisdictions, and the bill will ensure it is rolled out throughout New South Wales. By expanding the use of witness intermediaries and prerecorded evidence hearings, it will allow for victim-survivors' voices to be heard and their testimony presented while minimising their harmful exposure to perpetrators and eliminating the need for repeated testimony—for example, in subsequent appeals.

The bill was preceded by extensive consultation with participants in the program and legal authorities to ensure it is an addition to our legal system that will be both more effective and more humane than the current approach. I have friends and members of my community who have had their childhood innocence cut short and their adult lives filled with trauma due to the heinous acts of family members, supposed trusted family friends, those in positions of authority in the community, and/or strangers. Their lives have been deeply affected by vile crimes, and their ability to achieve justice has been hindered due to existing barriers in our justice system. A trial is a deeply confronting and challenging experience at the best of times, but minimising victim-survivors' exposure to their abusers and limiting the time that they have to recount their experiences can drastically reduce the harm incurred.

I acknowledge and thank the Milthorpe family, including Rose and Pippa Milthorpe, for their courage and advocacy. Their "Justice Shouldn't Hurt" campaign was instrumental in the expansion of this program, and they should be very proud of their efforts as our Government seeks to roll the program out across all of New South Wales. The program began as a pilot for three years, subject to formal evaluation. In April 2019 the program transitioned from a pilot to an established program at the Sydney Downing Centre and Newcastle District Court and, by extension, to the corresponding child abuse unit locations. The importance and effectiveness of witness intermediaries can be seen by their natural development without legislative impetus within police investigation. The bill provides for the natural next step to include them in the evidence process. I note that witness intermediaries replacing children's champions will better reflect their role as an independent court officer who supports the child. With today's bill, we make our justice system stronger and fairer. We act to protect some of

our society's most vulnerable and minimise harm to them whilst preserving due process and the effective functioning of our just system. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:50):** I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. This is a day that many have been looking forward to and working towards—particularly a family in my community who have been through so much. When Michelle and Brent Milthorpe came into my office in 2022, I could not have foreseen the journey that this legislative reform would take. Today I hope to see the necessary reforms—a commitment made by the Attorney General and Premier in the previous Government—become law, be written into the statute books and become effective not just in cities but throughout the State of New South Wales. After hearing the Milthorpe family's story of betrayal of trust, trauma, and outmoded evidence rules and procedures, how could it be otherwise? Rose and Pippa Milthorpe were seven and 11 years of age when they took the stand in the trial of the man accused of sexually abusing them. It was a remarkably painful and difficult process. As the former Attorney General said, "Re-traumatising a complainant does not advance justice."

Earlier this year the former Government announced an investment of \$64.3 million over four years to expand the pilot Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program from July 1 to every District Court in the State. Then Premier Dominic Perrottet said he was compelled to make the change after hearing what Pippa and Rose endured as they navigated the justice system. He said:

As soon as I heard about it—importantly, that there was already a solution there, that we were actually running these programs in two locations in New South Wales—as soon as I read it, I thought we're going to fix this and we're going to roll it out so that no other child ever has to go through what Pippa and Rose went through.

The Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program, which commenced on 31 March 2016 as a three-year pilot in the Sydney Downing Centre and Newcastle District Court, took us in a new direction to reduce trauma and stress experienced by child complainants and child prosecution witnesses in proceedings for a sexual offence. An evaluation of the pilot program by the University of New South Wales found that the program had strong acceptance and the measures introduced were working both in the sense of supporting children as witnesses and in achieving quality evidence as a result. The Milthorpe family, when they were ready to speak of their experiences, saw the value in taking the pilot program statewide. It became the objective of their ePetition to Parliament, lodged in September 2022.

Although the reforms may appear to be administrative in nature, their implementation has required legislation. That brings me to the objectives and wording of the bill. The bill tackles the issues with a resetting of how children's evidence may be provided. While these steps should help with the stress, trauma and difficulty of introducing children's evidence, we should never forget that these reforms are fundamentally about equity. Children have been missing out. Their voices within court and the legal system have struggled to be heard, with all their strength, meaning and experience. Today we are making the system fairer for children who have already suffered enough before the legal processes begin.

Working from the successful pilot scheme, the two principal reforms before us are to establish an appropriate system for taking and using prerecorded evidence and to provide for the appointment by the District Court of witness intermediaries, with the role of facilitating communication. Subdivision 2 provides that evidence of a witness in proceedings to which this division applies must follow the process established by section 294I. That process enables the taking of prerecorded evidence, which must be done before a judge but in the absence of the jury. The bill changes the existing presumption for evidence from children and replaces it to the effect that child complainants and prosecution witnesses under the age of 18, or who were under 18 when the accused was committed for trial, will provide their evidence by means of prerecorded hearing, unless an order to the contrary is made by the court. Evidence can be tested through cross-examination and the prerecorded hearing will be played before the jury in the trial. New section 294I (4) states:

- (4) A witness who gives evidence at a pre-recorded evidence hearing must not, unless the witness otherwise chooses, be present in the Court, or be visible or audible to the Court by audio visual link, while the Court is viewing or hearing a recording made—

The primary factors to be considered by the court in deciding whether to make an order for a prerecorded evidence hearing "are the wishes and circumstances of the witness". That is a clear statement of intent. The second pillar of the reform is the establishment of the role of witness intermediary. New section 294L states that the job of the witness intermediary is to:

- (a) communicate to the Court whether the witness can understand questions put to the witness, and  
(b) explain to the Court and the person asking questions the best way a witness can be asked questions the witness can understand.

Importantly, the witness intermediary for a witness must perform these tasks impartially, to facilitate communication of and with the witness, so that the witness may give their best evidence. A couple of other points are worthy of note. The impact of delay or simply the passing of time is acknowledged in new section 294H. It states:

A pre-recorded evidence hearing must be held—

- (a) as soon as practicable after the date listed for the accused person's first appearance in the Court in the proceedings, but
- (b) not before the prosecution has made the pre-trial disclosure required by section 141.

It has also been acknowledged that people in regional areas should not be discriminated against by missing out on the benefits and equity provided by the new processes. The first object of the bill is:

- (a) to allow a child who is a complainant or prosecution witness in proceedings for a prescribed sexual offence in the District Court, wherever sitting, to give evidence in a pre-recorded evidence hearing ...

That is the bill's intention, and we must follow through with delivery right across the State in every District Court. I recognise that in his second reading speech the Attorney General said the bill will commence upon proclamation. I recognise the time that is required for the practical elements of the bill, but I hope they will be introduced in a timely manner so those practical benefits will be there for children across the State as soon as possible. Let us not forget that these important reforms and the campaign for change began in regional New South Wales.

As we look ahead, it is essential the Government ensures that these processes, once embedded in legislation, are evaluated regularly to remain in line with best trauma-informed practice. New section 294S provides that the Minister must review this division as soon as possible after the period of three years after the commencement of the Act, with a report on the outcome of the review tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of three years. In an ongoing sense, the Government must continue to seek out and rely on clinical and academic research and the development of understanding that underpins these reforms. Input from those with lived experience will always be essential. I have made representations to the Attorney General to take the policy to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General so that these reforms can become nationally available. The message must also go out that these improved processes exist in New South Wales for children's evidence and, indeed, for more equitable participation and access to justice. [*Extension of time*]

I appreciate the Chamber's support. I conclude by personally acknowledging the Attorney General of this Government and thanking him for bringing the bill before the House. This is powerful change because it will have a positive impact. We cannot remove the traumas that these children go through, but we can better support them, and this bill does that. I also thank the previous Attorney General and the former Premier, Dominic Perrottet, who championed this to make sure that this change came through.

In particular, I acknowledge and thank Michelle, Brent, Pip, Rose and Maggie. They have been through so much. Again, we will never reverse the trauma that they have been through, but their advocacy has had a positive impact today in these reforms. I also express my appreciation to Nina Funnell from news.com.au, who, as a journalist, took this message forward, supported the Milthorpes and was a powerful part of the advocacy. These are important reforms. I acknowledge, with appreciation, the collegial efforts across the House in honouring and now implementing that commitment. I support the bill.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:00):** I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. I commend the Attorney General for his work in this space. The aim of the bill is to expand the availability of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries to child complainants and child prosecution witnesses in prescribed sexual offence matters heard at any District Court in New South Wales. As a result, the bill not only strengthens the criminal justice response to child sexual abuse, but also reduces the trauma for children and young people who provide evidence in child sexual offence matters.

I acknowledge that providing evidence in sexual offence matters can be stressful and traumatic at any age. However, children and young people are particularly vulnerable. First introduced in 2016, the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program conducted at Sydney Downing Centre and Newcastle District Court has been crucial in changing the way young complainants and witnesses provide evidence. The program did that through two measures. First, eligible children can give the whole of their evidence, including cross- and re-examination, in prerecorded evidence hearings. Second, witness intermediaries are available to assist with the communication needs of children who are complainants and prosecution witnesses. Those measures support such children to provide their best evidence while prioritising mental wellbeing.

An evaluation of the pilot conducted by the University of New South Wales supports exactly that. Researchers found widespread support for the implementation of witness intermediaries and prerecorded evidence hearings. Key stakeholders—including prosecution and defence lawyers, parents and the children alike—

indicated that implementing these measures lessens the stress for child witnesses at court. Furthermore, lawyers associated the program with resulting in better evidence. With respect to the role of witness intermediaries at court, police were quoted as stating that the best thing about witness intermediaries is the confidence they provide to children during court proceedings.

Expanding the program statewide to every District Court location and police district in New South Wales demonstrates the New South Wales Government's commitment to protecting our most vulnerable people. In the Fairfield local government area alone, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research recorded 170 incidents of sexual offences towards persons under 18 in 2022. While witness intermediaries became available in all police districts from 1 July 2023, young people in my electorate have no access to this program in District Court locations nearby. The bill changes that, ensuring accessibility at all District Court locations in New South Wales.

Overall, this House has the opportunity to make the criminal justice process easier for children, reduce their trauma and improve the quality of evidence provided. I note that, ultimately, better quality evidence is likely to result in better outcomes in prosecution for child sexual offending. Young people are not only the future of this State; they are the now. They must be protected and supported. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:04):** As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. Firstly, I thank the Attorney General, the Hon. Michael Daley, MP, for his work in preparing the bill and his collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including members of the District Court of New South Wales, the NSW Police Force, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the Public Defenders Office, the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association and the Aboriginal Legal Service.

Importantly, the bill supports victim-survivors of child sexual abuse to give the most accurate evidence before a court. The bravery of victim-survivors in reporting instances of abuse is essential to protect our communities from the heinous crime of child sexual abuse. As child sexual offences are frequently committed in a closed, private environment, often with the child as the sole witness, only that child witness can give evidence. A study by Dr Christine Eastwood, *The experiences of child complainants of sexual abuse in the criminal justice system*, found that some 56 per cent of children who sought justice for sexual assault offences through our criminal justice system in New South Wales would not report again due to the experiences that they endured during that process. We must improve the experience of victims in criminal proceedings.

The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023, which I will refer to as "the bill" from now on, aims to reduce the stress and trauma experienced by child complainants and child prosecution witnesses in child sexual offence proceedings. The bill amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to expand availability of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries to prescribed child sexual offence matters heard before any District Court in New South Wales. By facilitating a statewide expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program, which I will call "the program" from now on, the Minns Labor Government is taking a meaningful step to improve child complainant experiences and ensure the most reliable evidence is adduced to deliver wholly fair and just outcomes in the court process.

The program reduces stress and trauma experienced by children and young people who are victim-survivors and prosecution witnesses in sexual offence cases. Governed by part 29 of schedule 2 to the Criminal Procedure Act and part 10 of the Criminal Procedure Regulation, the program levels criminal justice processes for children with two special measures: firstly, by enabling child complainants and prosecution witnesses to give evidence, including cross-examination and re-examination, in prerecorded evidence hearings; and, secondly, by providing witness intermediaries to assist with communication needs during court and police interviews.

In 2016, the program began a three-year pilot scheme in the Sydney Downing Centre and Newcastle District Court, with witness intermediaries available in the Central Metropolitan, South West Metropolitan and Hunter child abuse units. The University of New South Wales evaluated the program, considering its ability to lessen the stress and duration of court proceedings for child witnesses without unfairly impacting a defendant's right to a fair trial. The program was supported widely, finding that special measures reduced stress and resulted in better quality evidence before the court. The bill will expand the program to include every New South Wales District Court and police district. References to a "pilot scheme" will be removed, making the program a permanent measure in our court system in New South Wales.

Prerecorded evidence hearings are a core component of the program. They involve taking and recording a child's evidence, including cross-examination and re-examination. Part of a trial, hearings occur before a judge and the parties to the proceedings with no jury present. The recorded interview with the child—and any additional oral evidence in chief, cross-examination and re-examination that occur at the prerecorded evidence hearing—is played before the jury at the actual trial. Currently governed by schedule 2, part 29, these relevant provisions will

be carried with some amendments to facilitate effective expansion throughout the court system of New South Wales.

Under current legislation there is a presumption in favour of children under 16 giving evidence via a prerecorded hearing. However, young people aged 16 or 17 may do so only via court order. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill inserts a new section 294G (1) into the Criminal Procedure Act, providing that all child complainants and prosecution witnesses who are under the age of 18 are to give evidence via a prerecorded hearing. This safeguards the inherent vulnerability of young people and the subjective misconceptions they may face when giving evidence before a jury or a judge-alone trial. Schedule 1 [2] will insert new section 294E into the Act to extend the definition of a "witness" to include a complainant or prosecution witness who was under 18 when the accused person was committed for trial or sentence. This protects a young person from becoming ineligible to give evidence via prerecorded hearings simply because they turned 18 in the period between committal and the prerecorded evidence hearing.

Schedule 1 [2] will insert new sections 294G (1) and (2) into the Criminal Procedure Act, enabling the court to make a contrary order in the interests of justice, requiring evidence to be given conventionally. The bill alters the prescribed primary factors that the court must consider when making such an order to only be the wishes and circumstances of the child. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill inserts a number of new sections, including new section 294E. This gives "audio visual link", or AVL, the same meaning as in the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998. New section 294I (1) (b) entitles a child witness to give evidence via audiovisual link. This provision provides sufficient flexibility to address individual needs of cases and enables prerecorded hearings to occur in a timely manner across the State, including in regional areas.

A single model of conducting prerecorded evidence hearings could not suffice for each and every matter. These frameworks are key to enable a child to give evidence remotely from outside the court, in a remote witness room at the court or via closed-circuit television facilities. Without audiovisual link evidence, resource constraints could cause significant delays. Evidence hearings should be held as early as possible to preserve the memories of the child and enable children to complete their evidence as part of the criminal justice process at an early age.

Fairness under the law is of utmost importance in the criminal justice system in New South Wales. The bill contains safeguards to ensure an accused person can participate in proceedings without detriment, including the insertion of new section 294I (5) requiring that an accused person be able to see and hear the witness giving evidence by audiovisual link. The accused person must be able to communicate with their legal practitioner if appearing from separate locations via audiovisual link. New section 294N (1) (c) provides that if the witness intermediary appears via audiovisual link, the witness, court and legal practitioners must be able to see and hear them.

Witness intermediaries operate under the program to facilitate communication with child complainants and prosecution witnesses. They are independent officers of the court with a duty to impartially facilitate communication to support the witness to give their best evidence. It is imperative that witness intermediaries remain impartial to ensure fair provision of justice. The bill proposes a change in terminology, replacing the old term of "child champion" with "witness intermediary" to better reflect the neutrality of the role. Schedule 1 [2] inserts new section 294L (1), clarifying the function of witness intermediaries. Witness intermediaries communicate whether witnesses can understand questions and explain to the court ways to pose questions to ensure they are understood. They are not empowered to act as advocates or support persons. [*Extension of time*]

Witness intermediaries are accredited professionals, including speech pathologists, social workers, psychologists, teachers and occupational therapists. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill will insert section 294M (6) (a) into the Criminal Procedure Act to alter existing provisions preventing a person who has assisted a witness in a professional capacity from being appointed a witness intermediary. The new provision will not prevent a court from appointing such person as a witness intermediary if it is in the interests of justice.

Additionally, schedule 1 [2] to the bill inserts new section 294I (7) into the Criminal Procedure Act. This provides that a judicial officer presiding over the prerecorded evidence hearing can differ to the judge who presides over the remainder of the trial. Whilst it is preferable to maintain continuity of the judicial officer, some instances require a timelier hearing to support the child to give evidence as a priority. Witness evidence is recorded during the prerecorded hearing and played before the judge presiding over the balance of the trial, thus there will be no significant disadvantage posed by a change in judicial officer. They will hear and factor in all of the witness' evidence into the overall outcome of the trial.

Pippa and Rose Milthorpe are victim-survivors. They were the driving force behind the expansion of this program, bravely sharing their stories and advocating for victim-survivors. Their story is harrowing and an example of depravity, but it is also an example of the hope, strength and bravery of victim-survivors. At the ages of five and eight, Rose and Pippa experienced abuse at the hands of a family friend. During the police investigation



and the court proceedings, numerous incidents exacerbated the stress and trauma of providing evidence. During the court hearings, the family even found itself in the presence of the alleged offender in the court foyer and were forced to relocate to Sydney for five weeks. Pippa recounted feeling "taunted" as she was asked by defence counsel what she considered trick questions that were wrong no matter which way she answered.

Children face inherent vulnerability giving evidence in word against word cases. The NSW Law Reform Commission has identified a number of juror misconceptions about how children react to sexual abuse and their ability to give truthful evidence, including that abuse results in physical evidence; victims should resist, cry for help or try to escape; and that delayed complaints and inconsistent reports are evidence of a child lying. It is widely recognised that the dynamics underlying child sexual abuse and victim responses are more complicated, and that disclosures, if made, are rarely linear. This bill will provide the framework needed to ensure children's evidence can be fairly presented and evaluated, despite barriers due to age, trauma, understanding or memory.

The impact of sexual abuse on child victims is potent, affecting children and stretching into adulthood. It can cause fear, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, increased risk of substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm, suicide, and a subconscious attraction to re-victimisation by abusive partners due to a distorted view of relationships. Accessing justice through criminal proceedings should support victims to begin rebuilding their lives faster, rather than aggravating traumas they have already experienced. For many victim-survivors, whether they feel justice was achieved is not merely a verdict before a court of law. It involves how they were treated by the criminal justice system in New South Wales, whether information and support were given to make their decisions and whether their decisions were respected.

Child victims of sexual abuse are forced to endure so much. It is important that our courts are equipped to balance the vulnerability and lack of understanding inherent with a child's age, whilst giving them agency and consideration to voice their evidence. The statewide expansion proposed by the bill will see the recommendations implemented from the 2017 criminal justice report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It will deliver legislative frameworks to allow prerecording of witness evidence access to witness intermediaries across the State. We must act to ensure that children who have endured unimaginable crimes do not suffer further under our criminal justice system. This program was proven to support child victims throughout its pilot scheme and will maintain the integrity of criminal proceedings. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:20):** I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. As a mother, I cannot begin to imagine how difficult it is for a child or young person and their family to give evidence in a court of law. The object of the bill is to amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to allow a child who is a complainant or prosecution witness in proceedings for a prescribed sexual offence in the District Court to give evidence in a prerecorded evidence hearing in the absence of the jury, if any, and to provide for the appointment by the District Court of a witness intermediary whose role it is to facilitate the communication of, and with, a witness if the witness is less than 16 years of age, or is 16 or more years of age and the court is satisfied the witness has difficulty communicating.

The Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program began as a three-year pilot program at the Sydney Downing Centre and Newcastle district courts in 2016 and was subject to formal evaluation. The 2018 evaluation found strong support for expanding the program across New South Wales. However, it also identified barriers to this expansion, particularly relating to resources and geographical challenges. To address these challenges, there have been other reforms to strengthen the criminal justice response to child sexual abuse and enhance protections for vulnerable witnesses. These include reforms in 2018 to strengthen child sexual abuse laws, which included new offences of failing to report child abuse to police and failing to reduce or remove the risk of child abuse in organisational situations; reforms in 2018 to improve the experience of victims and vulnerable witnesses in the criminal justice system, including enabling a record of a vulnerable witness' original evidence to be admitted in a retrial or subsequent trial for a sexual offence so they do not have to give evidence again; and reforms in 2020 to facilitate greater admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence, with a particular focus on greater admissibility of tendency evidence in criminal proceedings for child sexual offences.

The bill, and the statewide expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program, reflects the importance that the New South Wales Government places on improving complainant experiences and reducing trauma for children who provide evidence in child sexual offence matters. A core component of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program is the use of witness intermediaries to assist with a police interview for witnesses in child sexual offence matters who are under 18 years of age. Witness intermediaries became available in all police districts from 1 July 2023. Before then, witness intermediaries were only available in the Central Metropolitan, South West Metropolitan and Hunter child abuse units.

The use of witness intermediaries at the police investigative stage is not governed by legislation, and statewide expansion occurred without needing legislative amendment. However, legislative amendment is

necessary to expand the use of witness intermediaries and prerecorded evidence hearings to all District Court locations in New South Wales. It was essential that the New South Wales Government took the time to get the drafting of the legislation right. Rushing the statewide rollout of the program and the drafting of the necessary legislation could have led to unintended consequences for not only the justice system but also victim-survivors of child sexual abuse.

The bill, and the expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program across the State, is a significant and meaningful step towards improving complainant experiences and supporting child complainants and witnesses in child sexual offence proceedings. The development of the bill has been informed by a range of processes. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse considered the prerecording of evidence and the use of witness intermediaries in its 2017 criminal justice report. The royal commission noted that many submissions expressed support for the prerecording of a witness's evidence and that there was widespread support for the use of intermediaries at both the investigative and trial stages. It also recommended full prerecording of the complainant's evidence, including cross-examination, and witness intermediary schemes for the police interview and trial stage.

The Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program was also subject to a process evaluation in 2017 and a final evaluation in 2018. This evaluation was based on data from multiple sources, including surveys with children and their families who have participated in the program. The evaluation found widespread support for the use of witness intermediaries and prerecorded evidence hearings, as well as strong support for expanding the program to additional locations. The statewide expansion of the program also followed the advocacy of the Milthorpe family, including Rose and Pippa Milthorpe, who are both victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and who fronted the Justice Shouldn't Hurt campaign in 2022. This campaign called for the program to be available across New South Wales on a permanent basis. I thank the Milthorpe family for their ongoing advocacy.

In developing the bill, the Department of Communities and Justice undertook confidential consultation with participants in the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program to test potential issues with those agencies that are involved in the day-to-day operation of the program and will play a key role in the implementation of the bill. Program participants have also been consulted to help identify any technical legal issues with the drafting of the legislation and avoid any unintended consequences for the legal system.

The reforms proposed by the bill include amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 and the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017 to facilitate expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program to all District Court locations in New South Wales; to move the current provisions governing the program from a schedule into the body of the Criminal Procedure Act; to remove the current distinction between child complainants and prosecution witnesses who are under 16 and those who are aged 16 to 18 so that all children under 18, or who were 18 when the accused was committed for trial or sentence, are entitled to give evidence via a prerecorded evidence hearing; to expressly permit participants in the prerecorded evidence hearing to appear via audiovisual link, and expressly allow the judge who presides over the prerecorded evidence hearing and the judge who presides over the balance of the trial to be different; to replace references to "children's champion" in favour of "witness intermediary"; and to amend the role of the witness intermediary to better reflect current practice and the training provided to witness intermediaries.

Other aspects of the bill pertaining to witness intermediaries are consistent with the current legislation governing the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program. For example, the bill retains the current presumption that a witness intermediary will be appointed by the court where the child witness is under 16 years of age. It also retains the current discretion of the court to appoint a witness intermediary for a child witness who is 16 or more years of age, if the court is satisfied that the witness has difficulty communicating. This two-tiered approach reflects the fact that the need for communication assistance is more likely to arise for children under 16 due to their young age. Consistent with the current legislation, a court is not required to appoint a witness intermediary in certain circumstances. This includes where it is unnecessary or inappropriate to appoint a witness intermediary or not otherwise in the interests of justice to appoint a witness intermediary. The bill contains other general provisions that are consistent with the current legislation governing the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program. *[Extension of time]*

For example, a warning must be given to the jury where evidence is given by way of a prerecorded evidence hearing or where a witness intermediary is used. The bill clarifies the relationship between new division 1A of part 5 in chapter 6 of the Criminal Procedure Act and other provisions in the Act. The division is additional to existing provisions concerning the giving of evidence, rights of the accused and powers of the court. It does not affect those except as provided by the division, regulations or rules of court.

Statewide expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program will alter the procedure and practice relating to sexual offence matters and the way evidence is provided by child complainants and prosecution witnesses. What was once a novel approach that applied only in certain District Court locations in New South

Wales will become the standard practice for any sexual offence proceedings involving children, wherever the District Court is sitting. I congratulate the Attorney General on his work on the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:31):** No child should ever experience sexual violence. I contribute to the second reading debate on the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023. Who really understands the re-traumatising effect when victims of crime share a personal story over and over again within the bureaucratic process? That is men and women, particularly those escaping domestic violence, but children are on another level when it comes to the ability to communicate. The bill is a very important step forward in using the technology of 2023. I thank the people involved from the Newcastle court and the Downing Centre for making the system work so well that it is now being rolled out across New South Wales.

The bill will expand the availability of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries to child complainants and prosecution witnesses in sexual offence matters heard at any District Court location. As such, the bill will expand measures available under the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program to complainants in any location across New South Wales. Currently in place at Sydney Downing Centre District Court and Newcastle District Court, the critical program will extend across New South Wales. The bill draws on comprehensive evidence drawn from the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program, a novel approach in Australia established in 2016 as a pilot program that combined prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries. Further, extensive evidence has shown the important role of a witness intermediary in reducing stress and re-traumatisation for children, allowing witnesses to give their best and most reliable evidence—a vital aspect of ensuring comprehensive investigation and prosecutions of child sexual offending.

Witness intermediaries who are present for prerecorded evidence hearings at the police interview and at court take into consideration the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of child complainants, ensuring that all parties are adequately served during the process without undue stress or trauma. This program has been shown to be effective in assisting child complainants and prosecution witnesses across New South Wales to give their best and most reliable evidence, facilitating adequate communication with the witness, which is a critical role. The District Court, wherever sitting, will be required to appoint a witness intermediary in a prescribed sexual offence proceeding if the witness is under 16, which is a significant step forward.

Further, the bill will require the judge who presides over the prerecorded evidence hearing and the judge who presides over the balance of the trial to be different, providing greater flexibility and enabling prerecorded evidence hearings to occur. Drawing on a strong evidence base, the program has been found to help reduce the stress of the investigation and prosecution process for child witnesses and help children to give better quality of evidence. Among other aspects, this bill will amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986, ensuring that all participants in prerecorded evidence hearings can participate via audiovisual evidence hearings across New South Wales District Court locations while enabling hearings to occur in a timely manner. I hope the amendments help expedite cases through the clogged-up court system in New South Wales.

In establishing this bill, the New South Wales Government is recommitting to the utmost importance of improving complainant experiences and reducing trauma for kids who provide evidence in child sexual offence matters. It cannot be questioned that reducing stress and trauma experienced by children who experience sexual violence is of the most urgent priority, protecting our vulnerable who have already experienced significant trauma. In closing, I thank all the people who worked on the pilots in the Downing Centre and in Newcastle. I thank everyone involved with the drafting of this legislation. No child should ever experience sexual violence. I commend the Attorney General for bringing the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:35):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate, particularly the member for Wairoa, the member for Parramatta, the member for Albury, the member for Fairfield, the member for Prospect, the member for South Coast and the member for Gosford. The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence) Bill 2023 will expand the availability of prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries to child complainants and prosecution witnesses in all sexual offence cases across New South Wales. It also makes amendments to enhance the operation of these special measures and to ensure that they are available across the State.

The bill, and the expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program across the State, is a significant and meaningful step towards improving complainant experiences and supporting child complainants and witnesses in child sexual offence proceedings. I thank members representing the electorates of Wairoa, Parramatta, Albury, Fairfield, Prospect, South Coast and Gosford for their contributions to debate on the bill. I particularly thank members for their recognition of the experiences of victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and their bravery in taking part in the criminal justice system, as well as the experiences and advocacy of the Milthorpe family, including Rose and Pippa Milthorpe.

I briefly address some matters raised during debate on this bill. The member for Wahoonga noted that in February 2023 the Coalition announced funding of \$64.3 million over four years to enable expansion of the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program to all police districts and District Court locations in New South Wales. The member asked me to confirm that commitment of funds. I confirm that this commitment has been continued under the Minns Labor Government. This funding is in addition to the current costs of the program.

The member for Albury noted that the bill is to commence by proclamation and expressed a wish for this to occur as soon as possible. Commencement of the bill by proclamation will provide participant agencies in the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program with time to implement these measures across the State. The New South Wales Government will work with agencies and the District Court of New South Wales to settle a commencement date. The member for Albury noted the requirement for a statutory review three years after commencement of the bill as well as the need for the Government to consider clinical and academic research and draw on the input of those with lived experience. The statutory review will consider a broad range of matters in determining whether the terms of the legislation are appropriate for securing its policy objectives.

In conclusion, the bill reflects the importance that the New South Wales Government places on improving complainant experiences and reducing trauma for children who provide evidence in child sexual offence matters. It will ensure that prerecorded evidence hearings and witness intermediaries are available for child complainants and prosecution witnesses in all sexual offence cases in New South Wales, wherever the District Court is sitting. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 20 September 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahoonga) (16:39):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2023. I indicate that the Liberals and The Nationals will support the bill. The Coalition was a reforming government that left a robust regulatory framework for enhancing health and safety in New South Wales workplaces. The consistent downward trajectory in work deaths and injuries demonstrates that New South Wales is on the right path. Everyone has the right to be safe at work and come home at the end of the day. The goal should always be to reach zero deaths and injuries in the workplace, and we know there is more to do to realise this. The Liberals and The Nationals will always work constructively with stakeholders and with all parties in this Parliament to achieve that goal. We therefore welcome the implementation of further amendments to the national model law that arise from the Boland review.

Of course, under the Coalition, New South Wales wasted no time and was well ahead of other jurisdictions in implementing many of the review's recommendations for reform to the model law. It should be noted that uniformity of law throughout Australia is an incredibly desirable outcome. The Coalition also supports commonsense improvements to enhance worker safety in the gig economy and to deal with the challenges of growing cases of silicosis in the workforce. The former Liberal-Nationals Government delivered a robust response on these issues and left a strong legacy that we expect the current Government to build upon. The bill inserts into the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 amendments made to the national model work health and safety [WHS] law as well as several unrelated miscellaneous amendments.

I will make some brief observations on a few of the amendments in the bill. I turn firstly to the proposed silicosis worker register. There has been a significant increase in silicosis cases in recent years. In 2022-23 there have been 65 cases and nine deaths notified to NSW Health to date, with most of these linked to the manufactured stone industry. The Liberal-Nationals Government's acknowledgement of the issue of silicosis and the need to manage the emerging cases and prevent the risk of new exposures led to reforms, which we made. It is clear that working with engineered stone may expose workers to the risk of silicosis and other silica-related diseases. In 2020 the Coalition Government released the NSW Dust Strategy to respond to this deadly threat, and it was a high priority for SafeWork. The Coalition established a register of diagnosed silicosis cases through the Dust Disease Register and made silicosis a notifiable disease.

Further, the Coalition introduced a ban on uncontrolled dry cutting of manufactured stone and put a strong focus on compliance operations and boosting education and awareness in the industry and among workers on the threat of silicosis and how to mitigate its risk. We acknowledge the proposed register of silicosis workers is an election commitment of the Labor Government, and we will not stand in its way. We do note there is currently very little detail on how the register will be designed, its scope or how it will operate in practice. It has all been left to regulation. We do know it will be a register of silica workers to facilitate the tracking of the health and safety of those workers. Clause 273B of the bill requires that the information on the register must not be publicly available and only released to SafeWork, icare or others as determined by regulation.

The threshold of exposure required to be captured by the register or the industries that will be included are unclear. For instance, will workers in the tunnelling industry be included? We will closely scrutinise the regulation-making process that establishes the register. It must be carefully designed and consulted upon, and must not impose an unreasonable regulatory or compliance burden on businesses. Whilst the intention of the register is to protect health, it must ensure that privacy is protected, avoid mission creep and make sure that access to information is strictly confined to the required health purposes only. Secondly, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has long recognised the need to improve safety for workers in the gig economy. In the years since the gig economy took off, several delivery workers have died in road accidents and many more have been injured. This is too many. The aim should be zero.

When in government, the Opposition established the food delivery rider industry taskforce, which charted a clear plan and path forward to improve safety in the food delivery industry. The Coalition introduced the regulation that required mandatory induction training for food delivery drivers and the wearing of hi-vis personal protection equipment. The Opposition will support the reasonable amendment in the bill, which is in keeping with the original intention of our reform and which enhances the capacity to enforce it. The amendment to the regulation clarifies that a police officer is an authorised officer for offences under the clause. The regulation already requires a delivery rider to make their training verification record available on request by an inspector or police officer.

The amendment gives the power for a police officer to issue a penalty notice if the record is not made available or the rider does not use or wear the mandatory high-vis personal protective equipment. Police are better placed than SafeWork inspectors to enforce this on the ground. This will provide better outcomes and enhance rider safety. The Opposition agrees with the Minister's remark that this is not about politics. We are one on the need for zero tolerance and strong compliance action on this issue. The impact on the families and friends of those who have died is heartbreaking, and we must do what we can to prevent further tragedies.

I now turn briefly to the national model law amendments. The Liberals and The Nationals are committed to the process to harmonise work health and safety laws nationally. Since 2008, New South Wales has been a party to the intergovernmental agreement for a harmonised national framework for work health and safety. As the Boland review noted, the national WHS model law process is working well. When in government, the Opposition adopted the national model law in 2011 and expedited the legislating of many of the Boland review's recommendations for reform in 2020. National harmony of law in this area allows New South Wales construction, engineering and other companies to have seamless operational policies between States and Territories, which is not possible when the laws are different throughout the Commonwealth.

The bill implements a few of the outstanding amendments to the model law, including some that were only recently released, and ensures alignment between the model law and the New South Wales Act. The Opposition thanks the stakeholders who were consulted on in relation to the bill and acknowledges the extensive consultation that has occurred at the national level on the national model law changes. The Opposition will not stand in the way of sensible improvements to our work health and safety laws. I acknowledge the extensive work performed by the member for Willoughby, the relevant shadow Minister, who is on leave from Parliament today.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:47):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2023. The bill aims to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to impose changes to the national model Work Health and Safety Act in relation to the powers and responsibilities of inspectors; the liability of corporations for the actions of officers, agents or employees; penalty amounts; prohibited asbestos notices; provisions for a register of workers exposed to silica dust; and for related purposes. In July 2023 Safe Work Australia published further amendments to the model work health laws, reflecting some of the remaining recommendations from the 2018 review of the model Work Health and Safety Act.

The Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2023 aims to clarify the details surrounding a category 1 gross negligence or reckless conduct offence. This is an offence committed when a person who owes a work health and safety duty behaves recklessly or is grossly negligent, exposing a person to risk of serious injury, illness or death. This technical amendment provides clarification that is lacking in the current legislation between the current officer's duty under section 27 of the Act and the offence under section 31 of the Act. While there have

always been penalties for a breach of the duty by an officer or a person conducting a business or undertaking, known as PCBU, this amendment makes it clear that an officer may commit a category 1 offence.

The bill proposes an increase to the maximum penalties in line with the equivalent increases in the model Act and regulations to achieve consistency among the jurisdictions that have adopted the model work health and safety laws. This includes, in the case of a category 1 offence committed by a PCBU or an officer of the PCBU, an increase in the maximum penalty from \$798,383 to \$2,168,029 and an increase in the maximum imprisonment from five years to 10 years. In the case of a category 1 offence committed by body corporates, the maximum penalty will increase from \$3,992,492 to \$10,424,983. For a category 1 offence committed by an individual, the maximum penalty will increase from \$399,479 to \$1,041,992. Penalties are one of the most efficient ways to deter unlawful behaviour. These increases aim to send a strong message that those who place workers' lives at risk will be held accountable for their actions.

The bill aims to enable the consolidation of actions related to relevant offences by corporate bodies acting as PCBUs in order to assign responsibility of these actions to the corporation. These provisions are derived from the model Act, which has been adjusted to align with New South Wales law. The bill aims to allow the assessment of actions carried out by company officers, agents or employees when determining if an offence has been committed. This is known as imputation. Integrating imputation into the Work Health and Safety Act will address public expectations that companies should be held accountable to fulfilling their work, health and safety obligations, and they will be prosecuted if they fail to do so.

The bill will introduce new authority granting the work, health and safety regulator the ability to order the removal of illegally installed asbestos. These amendments will empower the work health and safety regulator to ensure the permanent removal of prohibited asbestos from workplaces by granting the work health and safety regulator compliance powers to issue prohibited asbestos notices instructing a party to take specific actions regarding asbestos or asbestos-containing materials at the workplace.

The bill makes various amendments to the Act that aim to clarify existing laws, eliminate outdated requirements and enhance efficiency. The first of these miscellaneous amendments specifies that SafeWork inspectors must possess a reasonable belief that there has been a breach of the law before utilising their compliance powers. They cannot be directed by their supervisors to take any action unless there is a genuine belief that there has been a breach of the law.

The bill makes an amendment to the Work Health and Safety Regulation, mandating that food delivery riders must undergo mandatory safety training and must provide evidence of this training if requested by an authorised person. It requires that food delivery riders use or wear high-visibility personal protective equipment whilst making a delivery. These amendments empower the NSW Police Force to issue penalty notices to delivery riders when a breach of these laws has taken place. These amendments help to strengthen the laws to ensure the safety of employees undertaking their duties. Further, these amendments are clear in the message that officers and PCBUs will be held responsible for knowingly placing their employee in an unsafe work environment. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:54):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2023. The bill introduces a number of amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and to the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017. The majority of the amendments allow for increased penalties in relation to breaches of the Work Health and Safety Act and provide for the concept of imputation to apply to the conduct of a company regarding a breach of the Work Health and Safety Act. The Greens support these amendments.

The Greens similarly support the empowerment of the work health and safety regulator to direct the removal of illegally installed asbestos and of SafeWork NSW to establish a silica worker register and require persons conducting a business or undertaking to act in accordance with the regulations. The Greens support and recognise the work of the Minns Labor Government and the Minister for Work Health and Safety, who is in the Chamber, to ensure that everybody has the right to safety in their workplace. It is imperative that members in this place take all necessary steps to mitigate, if not eliminate, the risk of asbestosis, silicosis and all other workplace illnesses. Overall, the bill is a step in the right direction towards achieving this objective. While we recognise that at this time it will just establish a register, we note the commitment of the Minister to ensure everything is done to eliminate these dangerous diseases for workers. We hope to see further action taken at both a State and national level to address these ongoing issues.

Many years ago I joined with the late Bernie Banton and members of the New South Wales branch of the CFMEU to storm the headquarters of James Hardie at Circular Quay. We were there to take action by occupying the foyer and highlighting the ongoing outrageous behaviour of James Hardie in profiting from the deaths and the devastation that impacted the lives of many workers in this State and indeed around the world. We have much

more work to do when it comes to silicosis and other workplace illnesses. We need to address the ongoing damage and harm that is inflicted on people in their workplaces.

We see from the high levels of media coverage around the dangers of these kinds of workplaces that it is often migrant workers who are impacted by dangerous substances. They are people who do not have English as their first language and are less likely to be aware of the risks. That is definitely the case when it comes to asbestosis where, long after people who speak English as their first language knew the risks, a lot of migrant communities were not aware of the safety risks involved with asbestos removal. There is so much more we need to do in this place to address that. I note the commitment of the Minister, the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government to take action to protect workers.

Unfortunately, The Greens have serious concerns about the amendments in the bill in relation to section 243 of the Act, which currently allows SafeWork inspectors and other designated officials to issue a penalty notice to food delivery drivers who are not wearing hi-vis personal protective equipment [PPE]. The bill will extend powers that are currently and appropriately available to SafeWork inspectors to New South Wales police officers and empower them to enforce compliance. That is a baffling overreach of police powers. It is concerning to us that a bill that is seeking to give some workers more protection would give other workers more police oversight instead of more protection.

We already know that food delivery riders and drivers are a vulnerable cohort of workers who are shamefully often left exposed in the current work health and safety framework. This year alone two food delivery riders have died on the job in New South Wales, taking the total number of deaths since 2018 to eight individuals. The convenience of having food and other packages delivered should not come at a cost of horrific and preventable deaths like this, nor should those deaths be allowed by companies seeking to profit by not paying their workers adequately or appropriately.

Safety measures at work and PPE are absolutely critical and important. But The Greens know that more policing will not make food delivery riders any safer. All it will do is create further stress and pressure for that section of our workforce, which is already struggling under significant cost-of-living and housing pressures, to ride even faster and more dangerously to try to make ends meet. We know that food delivery riders are predominantly young migrant workers or people of colour for whom the gig economy is a place of last resort to earn money. Food delivery workers currently have no paid sick leave, no automatic superannuation contributions and no guaranteed access to workers compensation insurance, meaning they face significant financial disadvantage—if not financial ruin—if they have to take any time off due to illness or injury.

In most cases food delivery riders have to provide their own bicycles and pay for their own expenses while earning a paltry wage that is barely enough to scrape by on. According to a survey published by the McKell Institute in April this year, 57 per cent of food delivery workers earn less than the minimum wage. The same survey revealed that 81 per cent of food delivery riders rely on food delivery work to pay bills and survive. People do not choose to ride dangerously or without PPE because they want to risk their lives; they do it because they feel they have absolutely no choice. They ride unsafely on footpaths or speed in dangerous circumstances on busy Sydney streets because they have no other way to earn their money to pay their rent, feed their family, buy medicine or pay their bills.

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

*Public Interest Debate*

**PUBLIC SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE BAN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports the banning of mobile phones in New South Wales public schools.
- (2) Acknowledges the overwhelming support of teachers and parents for this policy.
- (3) Notes that providing productive classrooms that are free of distraction is crucial for improving educational outcomes for students.

I again state in this House—not only as the member for Campbelltown but also as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning—that this is yet another instalment from a government that is putting public education and the interests of our students first. I commend the education Minister and Deputy Premier, Prue Car, as well as the Premier and all other colleagues, for following through on what we said we would do before the election. We are doing it now. Why? Because it is the right thing to do. We want our students and our children not to be distracted in the classroom. We want to make sure that provisions are in place for them to get the best

education they can without any kind of interference. At the end of the day, that is precisely what this public interest debate is about.

The banning of mobile phones in schools is absolutely common sense. There is no bigger cause of distraction in our classrooms. We received that feedback in opposition and we are now debating it to ensure that the Parliament accepts it. I trust that members opposite understand it. They should, because the former Minister, the Hon. Rob Stokes, in good faith and with goodwill put a process in place to investigate it. Why? Because it was an issue. Why was it an issue? Because students were being distracted in classrooms. How do we know that? Because parents, students and principals were telling us. Many schools around New South Wales have already implemented this program. In reality, the time that students spend in classrooms away from their phones or their iPads or any of those other technological devices provides teachers with every capacity to do their job, and that is to teach our students.

It is only right that the Parliament and the Government implement changes to ensure that phones are prohibited and children are not distracted. When they are not distracted by anything else—whether it is TikTok, Facebook, Instagram or anything like that—they are focusing on their education. We on this side of the House know that, when students and children have the best opportunity to receive the best education they can, that is exactly what they get. They get the best education they not only deserve but need. Why do they need it? Because it sets the pillars for their future—their future careers, livelihoods and income. Every student deserves it. I noticed today during question time that the Premier noted the ban to the students in the gallery. But the reality is he was right when he said, "You're going to know by the time you're 18 that this mattered." They may not realise it now, but we realise in this Parliament and as a government that we are putting provisions in place to provide them with the best opportunity that they need and deserve.

There is also growing evidence linking social media use to anxiety and depression in young people, particularly young women. There is an astounding plethora and array of evidence that substantiates the Government's position. I refer to the inquiry commissioned by the former Minister Rob Stokes. The reason for it was the former Government knew it was the right thing to do. I note the comments of the member for Hawkesbury that this is some sort of communist regime. Well, the former Government commissioned that inquiry, and we did not oppose it in opposition. We have actually taken a proactive step in government and are doing what we had said we would do when we were in opposition. The inquiry was led by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg. It found a list of risks of harm that had been exacerbated by the use of mobile phones in schools. In terms of distraction, it stated:

The consensus across all audiences—educators, parents and students—was that mobile devices are often a distraction in the classroom. For teachers, they were perceived to be a source of frustration, with considerable teaching time lost to enforcing (or attempting to enforce) mobile device rules.

In terms of educational outcomes, the inquiry found that mobiles were potentially reducing the quality of education. It cited a study by the London School of Economics that revealed "where mobile use in school was prohibited, test scores of 16-year-olds increased by over 5 per cent". During the term of the last Government, the educational standards of our students plummeted. Why did they plummet? Because the Parliament and the former Government did not provide the provisions to ensure that there were restrictions in place to reduce distractions in classrooms. At the end of the day, every parent—and I am a parent too—wants to make sure that their kids are focused on the things that need to be focused on. And there are not too many more important things they should be focused on than getting a good education when they are in a classroom. I thank the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:08):** Before I get into the substance of the motion, I note the member of Campbelltown's comments about what is important. It is a concern that, following a weekend where the world has been shocked by violence and terrorism, where there have been protests on the forecourt of the Opera House and where communities have been told to stay at home because it is not safe for them, this is the public interest debate. There was an opportunity to come together as a Parliament and stand united to abhor the violence that is occurring and to make a profound statement on behalf of the people of New South Wales that we stand in solidarity with the people who are affected by those crimes.

There are those pressing concerns and we have a government with tin ears not to recognise that. Instead, we are having the same debate we had in this Chamber four months ago on 10 May. We could be talking about cost-of-living issues that are confronting our communities and families every day, but the member for Campbelltown has brought this public interest debate before the House. I do not blame the member for Campbelltown. We recognise that he is making sure that he is front and centre because he should be on the front bench, as should the member for Cessnock.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** And me too.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** And the member for Blue Mountains. It is really important that they have this opportunity. The Premier's office has said no, rather than talking about these important issues, let us rehash a



debate that we had only four months ago. Let us go into the substance of the debate. Last year when I was having conversations with school principals, I recognised that there is nuance around the issue and that some will be supportive of the ban. I recognise the Government's policy. But let us not forget that there is nuance around it. In fact, on 8 October an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* recognised that as well. In particular it referred to the Black Dog Institute, and stated:

A blanket ban on mobile phones in NSW public schools will be rolled out from Monday, but the nation's peak mental health research organisation has raised concern about the decision, saying there is a lack of scientific evidence for the looming crackdown.

'The evidence around the effects of banning phones at schools on academic outcomes is probably more mixed than the Government would like to admit,' said Associate Professor Aliza Werner-Seidler, head of population research at the institute.

The evidence around the effects is more mixed than the Government would like to admit. This is the peak mental health research organisation. Furthermore, Associate Professor O'Dea, a National Health and Medical Research Council Medical Research Future Fund investigator, said it was difficult to draw conclusions from scientific evaluations of mobile phone bans on teenagers abroad and ultimately demonstrated little benefit. O'Dea goes on to say:

We would encourage a formal evaluation of the New South Wales ban looking at the short-term and long-term impacts ... noting this would have ideally occurred through a pilot program before introducing the policy statewide.

We can stand in this place and rehash a debate from four months ago when we have important things to debate. But do not take it from me, take it from our national peak mental health research organisation when it says there is nuance and complexity to this issue. We should be honest and up-front with the people of New South Wales in that regard. Yes, the Government has adopted this policy, but let us appreciate the nuance to it. I note that Commonwealth Minister for Education Jason Clare has sought a collaborative approach, saying the Commonwealth should not make the decision on its own but take a national approach and work together. He said:

I think the time has come for a national approach to the banning or the restriction on the use of mobile phones by students in schools.

But the Labor State Government has gone on its own, when the Labor Commonwealth Minister for Education says let us work together. Nuance and understanding is required.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:13):** It is good to stand up as a member of the Government that made a commitment at the election to bring a ban into schools and to talk again and remind our communities about the importance of learning, especially where such huge distraction exists. On the weekend I spent time with some young people, some of them the brothers and sisters of students I used to teach. I took the opportunity to ask those young people what they thought about the beginning of term 4 and about the policy of banning phones at school. We had that conversation, and of course some of them have kept up with what is happening and some have not.

They were asking themselves whether the phones would be switched off and not available to them at recess and lunch. It was interesting to watch them interact. One of them pointed out that amongst a group of friends at recess there will be four or five young people sitting and communicating by texting one another, not eyeballing each other, not having a quick game of basketball or having a laugh over a joke, but completely immersed, head down with their eyes on the text and scrolling through social media. It reminded me of mum saying to me as a kid if I watched too much television that I would end up with square eyes.

The digital age certainly has challenges. The ban on mobile phones in schools attempts to help students navigate their way through that challenge. There is a consistent exposure to technology and oftentimes problematic content for very young minds. Inside a classroom that does not enable learning to happen. Often teachers, my former colleagues, tell me that it became a case of trying to manage classrooms and telling kids constantly to put their phones away. I think it is great that the Department of Education is working with a number of schools and offering them several options such as turning phones off and putting them away, putting them in school bags or in lockers for the entire school day, having a locked phone pouch, or handing them in to the front office and collecting them at the end of the day.

It is important to also stress the point that the student made to me and some of his friends on the weekend about how they need to learn how to engage again. Ban or no ban in a school, there is an acknowledgement from young people that they really do not know how to engage, how to look someone in the eye and ask how their weekend was or discuss a bit of music. They do not know how to live in the moment; it is someone else's moment. Members have heard that mobile phones in schools really do affect concentration and focus. The ban is about improving learning outcomes. On the weekend a young woman in year 11 said she would have liked the flexibility to discuss senior students being able to access their technology on their phones, but she also said that as a younger student she was a victim of bullying. She is weighing up what the compromise is.

Wherever we sit in the Chamber, we need to acknowledge that we should lead by example. How many times have I looked around the Chamber when someone is speaking in question time and most heads are down. We need to lead by example. I commend the Minister for working hard with teachers and students. I leave the final word, as I pick up my phone, to Ed—who I sent a message to, forgetting that his phone was locked away. Ed did work experience with me and I asked him what he thought. He said that children in junior years were too distracted by their phones and it will largely counteract that issue. Thanks, Ed.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:18):** I think it starts outside the classroom when it comes to managing devices such as iPads, Xboxes, PlayStations and phones. Outside the classroom is where discipline comes into play. There needs to be a good grounding in how technological devices and things such as phones and computers are used, for example banning them around the dinner table. If there is a computer in the kids' room it should be brought out and put in the lounge room or kitchen so that if children are on their computers at night they can be supervised and parents and carers can monitor what is on their phones, computers and iPads. I think it is important that that culture is instilled outside the classroom. Therefore, when those discussions are being had with students and children, they will take that forward and say, "I don't think you should be using those devices in your classroom", which I think is a wise thing.

Mobile phones should not be in classrooms. We always talk about getting kids off their devices and getting them outside playing, participating in life and being part of a healthy environment. I know the member for Cessnock, as a former PE teacher—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Run, jump, throw.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** See? Run, jump, throw. The three Rs: reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, as he says. I think the member for Cessnock would back me when it comes to making sure people get outside, enjoy the great outdoors and get off their devices. As he says, one can teach music as well. The member for Blue Mountains should be on the front bench along with the member for Cessnock. The member for Campbelltown, who brought this motion forward, should be on the front bench as well, because it is such an important issue.

I offer a quick snapshot of how the ban has been received. A lot of secondary schools have already implemented the ban; they have taken it on board and taken the initiative. I think there has been a pretty good take-up around my area, including at Oxley High School—they are lucky at Oxley High School because the principal there, Natalie Hill, does a great job. They already had a partial restriction, so they did not need the heavy hand of government. They could see that a ban was needed to try to facilitate some change. There has not been too much change since the ban has come in. No phones have been confiscated. Students have been good. Students are starting to hear some conversation and chatter in the playground while going for a walk. There has been a good vibe and it has been quite positive.

Quirindi High School is another place it has been taken up. The principal, Ian Worley, who came to Quirindi from Nundle, is a great principal. He has been in the role for a number of years now, and it is business as usual there as the policy is already in place. The policy at Quirindi High School is when the bell rings, the phone disappears. I like that. If a phone is seen, then a student is sent to the principal. The third time a phone is seen, the parent has to come and collect the student.

Those are some of the policies and procedures that are already in place across our region. I think it starts outside the classroom. It starts with discipline. It starts with showing some leadership, and parents talking to school-aged kids in their care about needing to think about what happens when they have their phone on, because it is distracting. When a student's phone buzzes in their pocket, they automatically reach for it, just like I am reaching for mine now. I see that there is a message from the member for Blue Mountains saying, "Hi, sing us a song, Tamworth." No, I will not. Not today. We will do that another time. One can put their phone in their pocket, switch it off and put it away, or it can be removed from the classroom altogether.

Following a comprehensive and independent review in 2018 involving extensive consultation with school communities, mobile devices were restricted in primary schools, which is fantastic. In secondary schools, trusted principals, like the ones I have just spoken about, have struck the right balance and managed their own restrictions without the heavy hand of government. It is a good thing. Kids do not need to be on their devices 24/7, and if we can start that change outside the classroom and show some leadership at home, that sets the platform for students going forward. The HSC starts with English tomorrow. It has been a hell of a couple of weeks for those who have been studying. We wish all students the very best. They have put the effort in and the results will follow.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:23):** I appreciate the shout-out from the member for Tamworth that I was a schoolteacher in a public school. I was there for nine years before I made the leap away from that career. I recall that mobile phones were just coming in at the time. That will give members some idea of how long ago it was.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Black-and-white TV?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Black-and-white TV, and we were still using chalk on the board. There were newfangled things called whiteboards, which apparently used a temporary marker or something. I do not know how it worked. I was busy on the oval getting kids to exercise and participate in sport. They were building personalities through the wonderful experiences of sport, including winning and losing, fair play and doing what it takes to come out on top. But I digress.

I think most of us as local MPs have been asked by families, and in some instances schools, to have a look at a video that was filmed in a school, more often than not involving premeditated violence. The camera was rolling before the first punch. People knew it was on; it was a hit job. I do not know about other members, but I find it quite harrowing. Local MPs have a responsibility to be there with their constituents during difficult times, but there is nothing nice or pretty, nothing to be applauded or celebrated, about violence in our schools. But we have all seen the videos. We all have been asked to sit there and look at that stuff.

We talk about possible improvements to academic outcomes for our students and minimising distractions in the classroom so that students can focus, concentrate more on what the teacher is saying and maybe have conversations with their peers, which is all wonderful. But if there is one fantastic outcome to be won here, it is the possibility that we will have less violence in our schools, because the filming of violence is purely for sensationalism. It is purely for publication online. It is purely about the need for fame or infamy, depending on where a student stands.

It happens all the time. It is not always violence. I have seen videos of kids tying other kids' shoelaces together and pushing them over. I guess that is a form of violence, but it is often done amongst mates as well, so there is a comedy part to that. Sometimes it is direct bullying of students who are not socially engaged with a particular group. Sometimes it is bullying or harassment of a teacher that is caught on camera by the students. Again, it is a set-up; it is staged. They all know it is going to happen. It is filmed and whacked on the internet, and then it is out there for everybody to see.

If the kids do not have phones, I hope that does not happen. When I was a schoolteacher, the kids did not have phones and I did not see those types of behaviours. I am not suggesting that the children of 2023 are the same as those of 2002, when I left teaching, but there is a perverse incentive to carry out some of these staged events when there is a video camera right there on a phone in a student's pocket. I hope that we get better educational outcomes. I hope that kids concentrate more and socialise more. I hope they build better bonds and friendships. I hope they engage in the wonderful social activities of helping humanity, building communities, playing sport and doing all those things. But the one thing I hope most of all is that we see less violence in our schools, because it will not be filmed and will not be put online. I support the motion.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:27):** I speak in the public interest debate on the motion put forward by the member for Campbelltown on banning mobile phones in schools. This debate already took place on 10 May this year, when the member for Londonderry put forward an almost identical public interest debate, which I spoke on at the time. The fact that we are speaking on this topic only five months later tells me that the Labor Government is light on substance and depth of topics. It wishes to rehash this story again. The public interest debate on banning mobile phones in schools is on automatic redial. It is smoke and mirrors.

Labor has no vision for New South Wales and is so lazy it announced a policy already in effect in New South Wales public schools. This policy is an election con job. Why? Because on 21 June 2018 the then education Minister, Rob Stokes, announced a review into rules for mobile phones in schools. I have the media release to prove it. The review was headed by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, who appointed two independent experts to assist with the review: Associate Professor Amanda Third and cyber safety expert Susan McLean.

The review consulted widely with students, educators, parents, carers and other interested members of the community. Some 13,761 survey responses were received, of which 64.24 per cent were students; 21.42 per cent were educators—teachers or principals—and 14.34 per cent were parents and carers. Of the student responses, 15.17 per cent were primary school students, with years 7 to 10 making up 64.53 per cent and 20.31 per cent coming from year 11 and year 12 students. The recommendations from the review included that students should pass a mandatory digital licence competency test before they are allowed to access devices at school, not just mobile phones; that mandatory cyber safety and digital literacy training be embedded in the New South Wales curriculum; the provision of better quality and more cyber safety education for teachers, including NESA-registered professional learning; restricting the use of smartphones; the provision of better guidance for secondary schools; and policies that could be adopted depending on a school's circumstances.

Those findings all came from the 2018 review; they are not new. The Labor Party has not just come to where it now is on this. The findings included data that was collected by internet survey methodology from

Australian teenagers aged between 14 and 17, showing that 65 per cent used mobile phones to access the internet, 74 per cent used a computer to access the internet and 80 per cent had smartphones. I could go on and on about the findings. Following the review findings, on 13 December 2018 the Liberal-Nationals Government announced that mobile devices would be restricted in primary and secondary schools, trusting principals to strike the right balance.

The survey was done and the information came forward, and on 13 December 2018 the then Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, said that from the first term of 2019 mobile phones would be banned in primary schools. That is something that we own. It is not something that the Labor Party all of a sudden had a thought bubble about and said, "Let's do it." It is the continuation of the hard yards that the previous Government put in. We announced a review, had the review done, the findings came back and guess what? We banned mobile phones in schools, and it was done.

The question now is: Will the Labor Government commit to providing funding for schools to buy other digital resources further than what it has in the budget? This is continual for all schools. When I look at this public interest debate, I wonder what deep pondering the Minns Labor Government will do when it sets the topic for it next. I reckon they will scour the landscape, reviewing previous smart Liberal-Nationals Government policies, and say, "That's a great idea. Let's try and do that. Oh, a thought bubble! Let's try and ban all mobile phones in schools. What a great idea. Let's do that." I thank them for driving an initiative that we put forward. I hope they get some more thought bubbles from the Liberal Party's previous efforts.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:33):** In reply: What a way to close: the member for Hawkesbury singing the praises of a government that did nothing. I acknowledge the Hon. Rob Stokes for putting in a process to address this issue. I cannot believe it: The member for Hawkesbury, telling us what the former Government did—which was nothing—is the best poster person for why we should be in government. I thank the member for Albury, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Tamworth, the member for Cessnock and, of course, the member for Hawkesbury.

I will correct a couple of things. The member for Albury said that the New South Wales Government is going it alone. Well, I am delighted to advise the House that that is untrue. It speaks volumes about how out of touch those opposite are. They are in their rightful place on the Opposition benches based on that statement alone. I advise the House that, in fact, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania banned mobile phones as early as 2018—a whole millennium away for that mob. They were lost during government and they are lost in opposition, and they are displaying that here today. The member for Albury might also want to advise his good mate and former Federal education Minister Dan Tehan, who constantly called for the banning of mobile phones in New South Wales.

In conclusion, we on this side of the House are focused on providing our students and classrooms with everything they need to get the best education they can. We know the importance of education and what it means for our students. We know our teachers want this, we know our parents want this and we know it is the smart thing to do, because we did something those opposite never did: consult the sector and consult parents. Yes, they conducted a review, but it was a review into nothing and they did nothing, which is why they are in their rightful place on the Opposition benches. I thank the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST AMENDMENT (CAR PARKING) BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Scully, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:36):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023. The bill seeks to amend section 20AA of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983, which establishes deadlines for the closure of on-grass car parking at Moore Park East. On-grass parking has been a feature of major events at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] precinct for over a century. However, driving is only one way people access the Moore Park precinct. As alternative options such as light rail and integrated ticketing

have been introduced, on-grass parking has been progressively closed, and amendments to the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act in 2022 finalised that process.

Some 650 spaces have already been removed from the grass opposite Allianz Stadium on the corner of Moore Park Road and Anzac Parade, known as Upper Kippax. The bill does not seek to restore parking on the grass at Upper Kippax. It will remain closed. The next 350 spaces opposite Allianz Stadium, known as Lower Kippax, are slated to be removed on 31 December 2023, as per section 20AA of the Act. Lastly, 950 spaces opposite the SCG, known as Showground Field, will be closed from 31 December 2025. Based on the best available information at the time, those deadlines were legislated without alternative parking arrangements being in place. Unfortunately, that has created a shortfall of spaces.

A shortage of parking will disproportionately affect residents who, despite the public transport improvements in the area, will still need to drive to attend events at the SCG and Allianz Stadium, particularly families, patrons with mobility issues, or those from areas where public transport is not readily available. With that said, the Government is not advocating for the long-term continuation of on-grass parking, and I am pleased that Venues NSW and the Greater Sydney Parklands are working together to ultimately return the grass to the community. Venues NSW is constructing a multi-level car park project on its land at Allianz Stadium that will, once operational, provide 1,500 parking spaces and offset the closure of the on-grass car parks at Upper Kippax and Lower Kippax. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

While construction has commenced, the new car park will not be available until the end of 2025, all going well, as Venues NSW delivers it around a busy event schedule. This is two years after the currently legislated closure of on-grass parking at Lower Kippax. Keeping on-grass parking at Lower Kippax until the new multi-level car park is open is critical to ensure that patrons can attend sporting and entertainment events at Allianz Stadium and the SCG. There is no solution yet for the 950 spaces at Showground Field, so we are giving Venues NSW and the Greater Sydney Parklands more time to ensure an alternative is in place that can cater for those who need to drive and park at the grounds.

The Government has also directed Transport for NSW to develop a transport plan for the Moore Park precinct. Randwick Racecourse has the space and has been trialled, but so far fans have not been interested. There have been a number of issues to address, such as events at Randwick Racecourse being scheduled concurrently with the SCG and Allianz Stadium, and light rail capacity. Irrespective, Randwick Racecourse could provide a potential future option to supplement parking for events in the Moore Park precinct in future, and Venues NSW and the Greater Sydney Parklands will work with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders on this and other parking options into the future.

Ultimately, we have not solved the problem of replacing the 950 spaces at Showground Field, so the current deadline must be changed to give Venues NSW, the Greater Sydney Parklands and other stakeholders time to find a solution. In the end, there will be a solution that resolves the issue to everyone's satisfaction, but at the moment we just need more time and this amendment gives us that. Travel to and from Moore Park for major events is complex. The new Allianz Stadium is bringing more people to the precinct than ever before. The light rail has been a great addition to the public transport mix, but there will still be those who have to drive, and those people need equitable access to these public venues as much as anyone else.

Integrated ticketing has also improved travel to and from the precinct, and I am encouraged that Venues NSW, the Greater Sydney Parklands and Transport for NSW will continue to work together to increase take-up of this service among patrons. The bill amends section 20AA to amend two deadlines and allows the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to make a regulation to close on-grass parking at a future time. When the grass is returned to the community, there will be suitable alternatives for fans to get to and from the precinct. The bill will replace the current dates for the closure of on-grass parking and allow the Minister to prescribe a date in future.

The bill sets out conditions for when the parking can be closed. For Lower Kippax, it will be closed when "a new car park has been built on Venues NSW land adjacent to the Sydney Football Stadium and is open to the public and operational." Parking in the south of Moore Park East will be closed if the Minister is satisfied that "on-grass parking is no longer required to meet the demand for parking for events at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium". Ultimately, the bill is about ensuring all sports fans from across New South Wales can attend events in the Moore Park precinct and that parking on the grass ultimately ends. In particular, it will ensure that those who have no alternative to driving can continue to access the precinct by parking on the grass in Moore Park for a little while longer while alternatives are put in place. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (17:48):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Motor Dealers and Repairers Amendment Bill 2023. The bill makes amendments to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013, most of which are based on a statutory review completed in 2020. The bill will ensure this legislative scheme can continue to operate as Parliament intended by making amendments that will result in significant but important reforms to the automotive industry in New South Wales.

The reforms include inserting a new legislative framework to permit and regulate online sales of motor vehicles by motor dealers; replacing the requirement for motor dealers, recyclers and repairers to maintain separate registers for specified matters with a more general requirement to keep certain records in relation to their business; making it an offence to possess a device capable of rendering the odometer of a motor vehicle inoperative or inaccurate; making it an offence for a motor vehicle recycler to buy a motor vehicle, motor vehicle part or accessory with cash, and to buy or sell an unidentified motor vehicle; extending the period for which a person may make a claim for compensation from the Motor Dealers and Repairers Compensation Fund; enhancing existing disciplinary provisions; increasing the maximum penalty for various offences; and making other minor and consequential amendments.

These proposals have been informed by consultation with key stakeholders, including the industry, the public and government agencies such as Transport for NSW and the NSW Police Force. Through this bill, the Government is committed to providing a statutory foundation that will ensure a thriving automotive sector here in New South Wales. I note that for years the industry has been calling for legislative change to reflect the modernisation of the sector. I am pleased that the Minns Labor Government is delivering this much-needed reform.

The automotive sector is a vital component of the New South Wales economy and critical to the lives of our fellow citizens. The automotive sector is worth over \$37 billion to the Australian economy, with New South Wales being the largest jurisdiction in terms of the numbers of vehicles registered and individuals employed and of registered enterprises. From Casula to Coffs Harbour and Campbelltown to Cobar, the bill before the House will benefit employees and business operators in the industry along with consumers, drivers and passengers.

The global automotive industry is undergoing a period of rapid change and innovation unprecedented in the past 100 years. Shifting consumer preferences towards digital sales, the acceleration in uptake of new technologies and new manufacturers entering the marketplace all require a statute that is fit for purpose. New South Wales must not be left behind in this crucial sector. New South Wales needs to have the right legislative settings to meet consumer demands for online sales and companies progressing to new online sale business models.

Previous consultation found that close to half the responses from the public said they would consider purchasing a new motor vehicle online in the future. Some 71 per cent of existing motor dealers said they would be looking to provide an online sales option to consumers in the future as well. This is what the bill will do. It sets up the whole framework for online sales, addressing consumer preferences and adapting to this rapidly evolving industry. The bill not only provides an updated legislative framework for the benefit of consumers, dealers and repairers, but also ensures that New South Wales remains a leader in vehicle sales, repairers are appropriately skilled and consumers benefit from these technological innovations while enjoying fit-for-purpose protections. New South Wales is known as the premier State. This Government is intent on making it the premier State for the automotive sector with this future-focused bill.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill: firstly, those which will create efficiencies and futureproof the legislative framework. This Government is committed to providing statutory tools that will help this highly significant and dynamic industry thrive. Currently, section 100 (3) of the Act says that prescribed parts are listed in the regulations. The bill proposes an amendment to this section to move the list to a register approved by the secretary and updated on the NSW Fair Trading website. As new technologies enter the marketplace, such as electric vehicles, this amendment will provide industry with increased certainty and enable faster changes in an evolving marketplace. The amendment will help to identify parts that need to be tracked and recorded. It will also enable the Government to better work with industry—both repairers and recyclers—to ensure the list is up to date as new parts and technologies enter the marketplace.

To prepare for this dynamic future, we need to ensure that the training packages provided to our apprentice mechanics align with the technological shifts seen across this sector. This bill will propose amendments to sections 25 and 26 of the Act to remove qualification requirements for the issue of a licence or tradesperson certificate from the regulations. Instead, qualifications will be approved by the secretary and published online on the NSW Fair Trading website. This will mean it is easier and faster to update prescribed courses as they become available or are modified. This reform will ensure our legal requirements can quickly recognise the latest skills and best practice as new world-class courses are offered. For future apprentices and those seeking to update their skill set, this will ensure they can meet the challenges of an ever-changing marketplace.

As part of this Government's commitment to futureproof the automotive industry and streamline administrative work for dealers, the bill proposes an amendment to the wording of section 100 of the Act to remove the requirement to keep certain registers. Industry has advised us that compliant systems are already in use, and that the removal of these requirements in favour of a more flexible approach could result in significant financial savings for repairers and recyclers, removing unnecessary red tape. This amendment opens the possibility of expanding the way dealers carry out their business by catering for the digital world and automation while still providing the consumer protections akin to those of the traditional sales model. The amendment would enable the Act to be more flexible in its compliance requirements and enable information to be obtained and provided electronically.

The bill seeks to amend section 11 to insert a new provision to allow for the secretary to declare that a trade show is a "declared trade show". A declared trade show allows interstate motor dealers to display their vehicles at New South Wales motor shows without requiring them to hold a New South Wales motor dealer licence. Currently the Minister is required to declare the trade shows through a ministerial order that is gazetted. It is proposed that an amendment be made to the Act to allow the secretary to temporarily exempt interstate dealers from the requirement to hold a licence for the purposes of participating in a New South Wales trade show. This will improve efficient processing of trade show declaration applications and reduce the administrative burden on the department and Minister, while maintaining a proper process to ensure that trade shows are properly declared. Instead of being gazetted, it is proposed that the declarations be made by the secretary and published on the NSW Fair Trading website.

The bill also introduces new amendments focused on shifting consumer preferences and online car dealing trends. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated consumer preference towards online retail and sales in the broader economy. This trend is affecting the automotive industry and dealer-franchise model. Developing effective statutes that assist consumers and the automotive industry during this period of transition forms a key component of the bill before us today. The bill will insert a new provision, section 19A, that will allow motor dealers to include their licence number on advertising material distributed and displayed by the motor dealer as well as on the website of the motor dealer. This amendment will also make it an offence to fail to display this information on those platforms. These changes will help dealers throughout the State who use online platforms to engage with consumers and also provide assurance to customers that they are dealing with a licensed business when buying online.

Amendments to section 20B of the Act will require an applicant for a motor dealer licence who plans to sell online to provide an Australian URL address of the website they intend to use to carry on their business. Under proposed new section 20B (4A), online dealers will also be required to provide the addresses of premises used to store motor vehicles and records, premises intended to be used as an office and premises of a kind prescribed in the regulations. These measures will support compliance work prescribed by the relevant legislation and uphold consumer protection across the sector. New part 4, division 3A inserts new definitions for an "online motor dealer" and "online purchaser". An online motor dealer means a motor dealer who carries on the business of a motor dealer wholly using a website through which the online motor dealer offers for sale and sells motor vehicles. In order to protect consumers, it is important that the same protections that apply to dealers selling out of a physical premises also apply to those who sell online.

New section 66B will stipulate that an online motor dealer must, before entering into a contract for sale of a motor vehicle with an online purchaser, provide the prospective purchaser with a disclosure document in the approved form. Disclosure documents refer to inspection reports, dealer's notices and other documents attached to the vehicle. These provisions would be considered satisfied under the proposed amendment if the documents are available to be viewed on the website used by the online motor dealer. Proposed new section 66C will require an online motor dealer to give a prospective online purchaser the opportunity to carry out inspections of a motor vehicle at certain points in an online sales transaction and at certain places. Finally, new section 66D places a cap on the deposit that an online purchaser may be required to pay to an online motor dealer before the online purchaser takes possession of a motor vehicle.

As I have previously noted, the last two years have led to significant shifts in consumer preferences in the automotive sector. As a result of shipping delays and a shortage of key components for new cars, New South Wales has seen an increase in consumers purchasing second-hand vehicles. Unfortunately, this has also led to a rise in cases of odometer tampering. In 2021-2022 there were \$112,200 worth of fines and 76 penalty notices issued for odometer fraud, compared to just 22 penalty notices issued in 2020. This trend has continued, with a further 35 penalty notices issued in 2022-23, totalling \$35,000. New South Wales consumers not only lose large sums of money by inaccurate mileage readings but also are at risk of serious harm because mileage is used to determine the timing of safety checks and repairs to their vehicles. This Government will not tolerate the abhorrent act of fleecing consumers with substandard motor vehicles. The proposed bill is intended to give pause to any individual or business that thinks they can get away with this behaviour.

I also emphasise that some of the most vulnerable consumers in New South Wales, including from our culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities, are at the greatest risk of this illegal act. Members from these communities are often unaware of their consumer rights under legislation or do not have the skills or means to make complaints to NSW Fair Trading. I am proud to say that my department will continue to prioritise outreach and engagement initiatives for the culturally and linguistically diverse community and the Indigenous community to support consumers when purchasing a used vehicle.

For many households confronting the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis, a used vehicle is their only option if they wish to travel to work or send their kids to school. Stamping out this behaviour to protect at-risk households, particularly in vulnerable communities, is my priority. This Government is intent on imposing significant financial penalties on these actions to protect consumers. New section 53 (1) will make it an offence for a person to possess a device capable of rendering the odometer of a motor vehicle inoperative or inaccurate. However, the proposed amendment will make allowances if the defendant holds a motor vehicle repair licence and repairs and/or replaces an odometer over the course of carrying out their business as a motor vehicle repairer.

This Government also supports proposed amendments that will insert elements of the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016 into the Act to address inconsistencies between the scrap metal laws and the motor vehicle recycling provisions in the Act. As part of the consultation process for the bill, the NSW Police Force recommended the introduction of cashless transactions for recyclers in line with the requirements of the Scrap Metal Industry Act. I thank the NSW Police Force for its valuable contribution to the consultation process.

New section 99A will make it an offence for motor vehicle recyclers to buy a motor vehicle or motor vehicle parts with cash, by cheque payable to cash or in kind with goods or services. The inclusion of cashless transactions would allow for greater enforcement and auditability of scrap metal dealers to prevent the theft and disposal of stolen vehicles and other parts. New section 99B (1) will also make it an offence for motor vehicle recyclers, unless they have police permission, to buy a motor vehicle if the unique identifier has been altered, defaced or removed.

New section 99B (2) will make it an offence to sell or dispose of an unidentified vehicle, unless with express police permission. These offences will also include significant financial penalties for businesses and individuals caught breaching these provisions. The bill seeks to enhance existing disciplinary provisions in the Act to provide the secretary with additional legislative tools to crack down on illegal conduct and further protect consumers. These amendments were informed by intelligence collected by NSW Fair Trading investigators, who are tireless in their work to weed out misconduct in this industry.

The amendments will enhance disciplinary provisions in the Act. They will allow the secretary to issue monetary penalties for certain offences, extend the time frame for disciplinary action against former licence holders and prevent certain individuals from holding licences. They will also enhance the ability of the secretary to take disciplinary action against certain licence holders. New section 45 (1) (d) will also enable the secretary to issue monetary penalties as disciplinary action. Section 45 of the Act lists the disciplinary actions that the secretary can take if a ground is established under sections 38 or 39 of the Act. At present, the secretary does not have the ability to impose a monetary penalty. The ability to impose a monetary penalty would bring the Act into alignment with other legislative instruments administered by Fair Trading where this action is available. It would also allow the department to access a full array of disciplinary options. A monetary penalty would be a disciplinary instrument that strikes a balance between existing measures that, in some scenarios, may be considered too harsh, such as cancelling a licence, or too lenient, such as issuing a penalty notice.

It should be noted that this new suite of monetary penalties would not lead to cases of double punishment or double jeopardy. It is the department's established practice not to impose a monetary penalty where a fine or penalty notice has already been issued for the conduct in question. Disciplinary measures will also be enhanced by amending section 38 (2) to allow for disciplinary action to be taken against former licence holders five years after they last ceased to hold a licence. Currently, disciplinary action must not commence more than 12 months after the individual ceased to hold a licence. My department has encountered scenarios where it has received



information concerning the conduct of a former licence holder under the Act. However, because of the limitation in section 38 (2) of the Act, disciplinary action against the individual could not be considered due to the 12-month time frame.

To further enhance disciplinary action, section 186 (2) (f) of the Act will be amended to allow the regulation-making powers for the secretary to prohibit certain persons working at a licensed business. The Act currently requires that a person must be convicted of an offence before they can be prohibited. This is to be expanded to persons charged or found guilty as well as convicted. In situations where a person is found not guilty or a conviction is overturned, this prohibition would be lifted. It is also proposed to expand the list of prohibited persons to include a person who has been refused a licence or who is a director or officer of a body corporate that has been refused a licence; a person whose licence has been suspended, cancelled or revoked; or a person who is disqualified from holding a licence or being involved in the direction, management or conduct of a business for which a licence is required. These regulatory actions, such as cancelling a licence, are not done lightly and are a punishment for serious offences where a person is not fit to carry on their business.

Finally, new section 39 (a) will be inserted to allow for disciplinary action to be taken against an individual responsible for misconduct by a licensed body corporate. Currently, in situations where a licence is held by a body corporate, disciplinary action can only be taken against the licensed body corporate. This means that the individual responsible for the misconduct of the body corporate can simply re-establish a new body corporate with a new licence and continue operating. This behaviour, known in the industry as "phoenixing", allows a person to continue their misconduct under the protection of multiple corporate structures. This new provision will enable the secretary to take disciplinary action against a person who is a member of a partnership or officer of a body corporate. This would then prevent them from being able to obtain future licences to operate as motor dealers, repairers or recyclers. This is a pressing matter, given that a significant number of motor dealer licences, motor vehicle repairer licences and motor vehicle recycler licences are held by corporations.

The bill before us today marks a significant development in the automotive industry in New South Wales and implements the key reforms recommended in the statutory review of the Act. Industry and consumers will benefit from legislated online end-to-end sales of motor vehicles, reduced red tape through more flexible recordkeeping requirements, and increased transparency and traceability of end-of-life vehicles by introducing cashless transactions and enhanced penalty amounts to ensure that the deterrent effect is maintained. The bill would not be possible without the input of key industry, consumer and other government stakeholders. The bill has been in development for some time through public consultation, stakeholder roundtables and surveys.

I thank the Motor Traders' Association of New South Wales, the Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers, the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association, the Caravan and Camping Industry Association, the Australian Automotive Dealer Association, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, the Insurance Council of Australia and Legal Aid NSW for their considered input and for ensuring that the motor industry in New South Wales remains a fair and thriving part of the economy. Through the bill, this Government is committed to ensuring that this critical industry is futureproofed for the benefit of dealers, repairers, recyclers and all consumers in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **NEWCASTLE YOWIES**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:09):** The October long weekend was jam-packed with footy fun, including the Koori Knockout, the Indigenous rugby league competition that has been running in New South Wales for over 50 years. It is an awesome event showcasing the athleticism of First Nations sportspeople from across the State. This year the Newcastle Yowies women's team reigned victorious over the Redfern All Blacks in a nail-biting, overtime finish. The women's finals were levelled at 12-all in the final minutes and had to go into overtime. The victory for Newcastle was claimed off the back of a match-winning kick by Yowies halfback Caitlin Moran, ending the game with a final score of 13-12. The Yowies win came less than a day after the Newcastle Knights claimed their second consecutive National Women's Rugby League title. It seems that women's football is becoming something of a signature to Newcastle. I congratulate the Yowies on their victory. Well done!

#### **GAVIN DYKES**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:10):** I acknowledge principal Gavin Dykes of Xavier High School in Albury, who has announced he will be finishing and moving with his family to the far North Coast of New South Wales in search of a fresh start and to explore new opportunities. Gavin has been the principal at Xavier High School for the past 11 years, having commenced in 2013. His term of service in this important role surpasses that of his predecessor, Neville Powles, as the longest-serving principal for Xavier. Gavin's journey in the education

system over the past 33 years has been rewarding and challenging. I have no doubt he has made many friends with staff, students and parents, working with young people to nurture their potential and encourage a life of learning. During his tenure at Xavier he implemented development of the school's "five Cs" mission statement: courage, compassion, collaboration, challenge and to be Christ-like. I thank Gavin for his leadership and for building a really strong community of faith, learning and wellbeing at Xavier High School.

#### **AL AMANAH COLLEGE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:11):** Recently I attended the year 12 graduation ceremony for Al Amanah College in Liverpool. It was a delight to celebrate the accomplishments of the 2023 year 12 cohort, who have no doubt demonstrated remarkable resilience and positivity toward their final year of study. The audience was invited to watch a year 12 video created by students which offered a moving insight into the memories and emotions of their collective high school experience. Principal Ayman Alwan spoke to the value of the unique educational experience that Al Amanah provides, rooted in values and purpose. It was great to hear from school captains Siham Nachar and Omar Alwan, who eloquently summarised the experience of their fellow students. Students were presented with certificates and awards by staff as a token of their appreciation. I extend my warmest congratulations to the Al Amanah College class of 2023. I cannot wait to see what they achieve and to see them leave their mark on our community.

#### **YERRANDERIE TOWN**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:12):** Yerranderie, a historic ghost town in New South Wales, was once a bustling mining hub. In the early 1900s, it was home to over 2,000 people and produced millions of ounces of silver and gold. However, the construction of the Warragamba Dam in the 1950s cut off its main access, leading to its decline. In 1947 the town was bought by Aubin Lhuède and his daughter Valerie Lhuède, and they took over its management. A remarkable woman, Valerie dedicated her life to preserving Yerranderie's heritage. In 2011, at the age of 89, she handed the town over to the New South Wales Minister for the Environment. Today it is managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in Oberon. Valerie's efforts have ensured that Yerranderie remains a testament to Australia's rich history as it now serves as a regional park that combines remnants of the town with old mining sites and bushwalks. Her legacy continues to inspire, reminding us that one person can make a significant impact on a community's preservation. On behalf of all of Wollondilly, I thank Val Lhuède.

#### **EMERALD HILLS RAVENS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:13):** I congratulate the Emerald Hills Ravens on the recent celebration of their first anniversary. A decision over a morning coffee by Kristie, Vutzi, Yasemin and Suzan to affiliate the Ravens to the Campbelltown District Netball Association [CDNA] has led to a debut year of accomplishments, firmly placing the Emerald Hills estate on the sporting map. Foremost of all their inaugural successes were the Ravens' winter grand final victories in the division 5 and division 8 competitions, with a further two silver medals in the grade B and division 6 tournaments. I particularly shout out Lexi Vardy and Kristie Hobby, who at the CDNA awards night were recognised as Junior Umpire of the Year and Umpire Convenor of the Year. After a fantastic winter competition, I look forward to seeing the Ravens return to the court for the spring season. I wish all the players the best of luck.

#### **BEROWRA DISTRICT MIXED PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:14):** I congratulate one of my favourite community groups in Hornsby, the Berowra District Mixed Probus Club. In November this club will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. Created under the sponsorship of the Berowra Rotary Club, it was enthusiastically guided by Keith Carson, who became the foundation president. As a mixed club it was ahead of its time, and in 2014 Berowra's original Probus Club voted to also become a mixed club. It was established to increase social interaction among retirees and give them an opportunity to immerse themselves in new interests and cultural experiences. Over the years they have sustained an active membership of around 100 and many of their members have indicated that their association with the club has been the highlight of their retirement. They host monthly meetings and organise regular social activities that are designed to build friendships and get retirees involved in enjoyable events. I congratulate the club on reaching this significant milestone. I commend its members for their commitment to bringing together a community of men and women with similar interests. They do wonderful work, and I thank their current president, Brian Engert, and their executive for 20 years of outstanding service.

#### **ANTOINE KAZZI, OAM**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:15):** I acknowledge local legend and pioneer in multicultural journalism and community work Antoine Kazzi, OAM, for his 30 years of service in journalism. In

1988 Antoine, his wife and three children travelled from Lebanon to establish a new life in Greenacre. He holds a Diploma in French Literature and Civilization and a postgraduate qualification in literature and languages. Over time Antoine established himself as an author and went on to publish 17 books. He also wrote and published many articles relating to Lebanese-Australian matters for the *El-Telegraph Newspaper*, where he supervised over 3,000 articles relating to Middle Eastern and Australian matters. Over the past two decades, he became editor-in-chief for the Bankstown-based *El-Telegraph Newspaper*, Australia's largest Arabic newspaper. As a result, Antoine won the Best Feature of the Year at the Premier's Multicultural Media Awards in 2013 and was a recipient of the Award for Excellence in Ethnic Media in 2003 and the Certificate of Recognition for his Excellence in Journalism and Poetry in 2016. I extend my warm congratulations to Antoine and thank him for his service to the community.

#### GUYRA SPUDETTES

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (18:16):** I recognise Guyra league tag team the Spudettes for their win in the group 19 league tag competition and for being awarded the club championship trophy, which is the eleventh time Guyra has won this trophy since its inception in 1980. I congratulate each of the Guyra players involved in the championship win. In the grand final, the team impressively scored a 14-4 win against Uralla at Bellevue Oval in Armidale. The team members include Taylor Waters, Kayla Kim-Moran, Kelly Widders, Lorissa Wilson, Shaynia Duncan, Selina Surawski, Ashleigh Richardson, Corinne Tait, Astashia Marr and Jamiah Jarrett. A special mention to Kiarna Landsborough, who was named the player of the grand final following a very impressive performance in attack and defence. I commend each of the players and all the teams involved in the league tag competition for elevating the sport in the New England region.

#### NORWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE SOIREE '23

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:17):** Recently I had the pleasure of attending Soiree '23 at Norwest Christian College. Soiree was an evening of glamour and excitement as the school community came together to celebrate with year 12 students in the areas of drama, music, visual arts and design and technology. The Norwest Christian College auditorium was converted into a gallery space where visual arts, drama and design and technology major works were exhibited. Drama and music performances took place on the stage and overwhelmed the audience. I saw performances exposing the obsessions of a cactophile, the inner workings of a restaurant kitchen and a heart-wrenching alphabet of tragedy ending with Zara. I was entertained by goosebump-inducing vocal performances, sublime violin solos, renditions of Dave Gilmore riffs and a piano piece composed by Schubert. There was some stunning photography, drawing and mixed media and 3D works, as well as design and technology pieces. It was a display of creativity that is a true credit to the school's students and staff. I congratulate year 12 students on the culmination of a 12-month journey as they created, refined, honed and reworked the art they shared at Soiree '23.

#### WAKEHURST ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:18):** I extend my best wishes and congratulations to all HSC students in Wakehurst and across New South Wales as they embark on their exams. The next weeks will undoubtedly be full of excitement, anticipation and some nervousness. During this time, it is important to acknowledge that uncertainty about the future is entirely normal and acceptable. Not everyone has a clear vision of their career path immediately following school, and that is perfectly okay. Success is not only defined by exam results, and life presents numerous paths and opportunities. The journey ahead may not always be linear but it promises adventure, learning and growth. But they should be careful as they may end up in Parliament. The hard work, resilience and determination of our students have brought them to this moment, and those qualities will continue to guide them through life. They should embrace this time with confidence and an open mind for it is merely one moment in their unique and inspiring story. Students should make sure they thank their teachers. We know how hard they work for our students. Students should make sure they feel appreciated and thank their parents; that is for Alex. I wish all HSC students the best of luck—you've got this.

#### NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS WOMEN

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:19):** They have done it again. The weekend before last was a clash for the ages. In front of more than 40,000 fans at Accor Stadium, the Newcastle Knights Women came from behind to clinch a consecutive premiership against the Gold Coast Titans. The Knights scored three tries in the space of seven minutes at the close of the first half, before bringing it home when Tamika Upton crossed for two late tries. When the whistle sounded, the final score was 24-18. The Knights are now the second team in National Rugby League Women history to win back-to-back premierships. Tamika Upton, who will surely go down in history as a legend of the game in Newcastle, is the first player since 2015 to win both the Dally M and grand final player of the match awards in the same season. She is also the first player in the premiership era

to win back-to-back player of the match awards in consecutive grand finals. A huge congratulations to the Knights on this outstanding victory after a stellar season. Here's to next year's campaign.

#### **CANOELANDS ORCHARD CENTENARY**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:20):** I note the centenary celebrations of Canoelands Orchard, which was held at the farm in Canoelands. On Sunday 24 September 2023 I had the pleasure of attending this historic event, at which all members of the Christie family, close and extended, came together to share memories, a time capsule and to celebrate such a significant occasion. The orchard is spread across 100 acres and was purchased by John Cecil Christie in 1923. He purchased the Crown land for £100 and planted passionfruit, oranges and lemons on 25 acres of land that he had cleared by hand. Over the years and in the lead-up up to this milestone, the orchard has remained in the Christie family. The orchard is available to the public, who can enjoy the history, fruit flavours and natural beauty through pick-your-own-fruit experiences.

#### **HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:21):** Thousands of students throughout the State, including in the Heathcote electorate, will sit their first HSC examination tomorrow. The exams are a culmination of 13 years of schooling, and can determine the next steps students choose to take. While all the pressure no doubt falls on the shoulders of each individual student, it is important to acknowledge those who have helped them through their schooling life. First and foremost, I thank all the teachers and support staff, from kindergarten all the way to year 12, who have dedicated countless hours preparing students for these examinations. The guidance and support that teachers and school staff give to students is invaluable. I thank and congratulate the parents and carers for helping students to reach this point. There are plenty of ups and downs through these formative schooling years, and parents and carers provide much-needed support and pick up the pieces when needed. This is a proud time for them too. To all students doing their 2023 HSC exams I say good luck and take care.

#### **MOUNT GEORGE BILLY CART DERBY AND SPRING FAIR**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:22):** I congratulate Mount George Public School on another successful Mount George Billy Cart Derby and Spring Fair. Held on the school grounds, this year's event had a significant crowd, with thousands in attendance. The bilycart derby was the main attraction, complemented by market stalls, an art exhibition, a vintage car and motorbike show, stilt walkers, food stalls and live music. Mount George Public School students performed with the school band and participated in retail sales through the "Kidpreneur program". The bilycart derby drew 107 entrants between junior and adult ranks, with the junior division being more popular. The day was not without drama, though, as a high-speed crash occurred during the final of the adult competition, resulting in a suspected fractured leg for one competitor. Fortunately, St John Ambulance personnel were on hand to provide treatment. The event's success can be attributed to the hard work of organisers and volunteers, who demonstrate what a small community organisation can achieve. I thank Mount George Public School for hosting the Mount George Billy Cart Derby and Spring Fair, which brings the community together for a fun-filled day.

#### **JAMES LUSKAN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:23):** I acknowledge James Luskan, who has contributed 35 years of service to Fire and Rescue NSW. He first started in the City of Sydney, then moved to Smithfield and finished his time in Campbelltown. He has now retired. He brought together a team in Campbelltown to provide a service that was second to none. I acknowledge everything James has done as a leader, even in the beginning when he was out on the tools. He was even out on the tools during the fires that we went through in recent years. He is an amazing bloke, and he is representative of the significant service that all fireys give to our communities, particularly in our time of need. As James retires after 35 years of service, I thank him for not only his service but also everything he and his team are doing as we head into the fire season.

#### **KIAMA BLOWHOLE TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:24):** On Friday 22 September I was extremely pleased to attend and celebrate the official reopening of the freshly refurbished Kiama Blowhole Tennis Club, which has the oldest tennis courts in New South Wales. Funding for the upgrades came from the Essential Community Sport Assets Program, jointly funded by the Federal and State governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements as part of the broader Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Package. I acknowledge and thank the current president of the Kiama board of directors, Mr David Lehman; the Mayor of Kiama, Neil Reilly; committee member from Kiama Tennis Club David Graham; and local residents and tennis players Judy Murrell, Robbie Grant and Anne Boulton for their attendance. I acknowledge and thank Mr James Mahoney, who represents Harcourts, which sponsors the Kiama Tennis Club, along with my friend and colleague Ms Anna Watson, who represented the sports Minister. I acknowledge also Amanda Culceski—a formidable player

herself—who was in attendance representing Tennis NSW in her new role as tennis development officer. It was a terrific celebratory occasion for the local Kiama township. I thank everybody involved in making the official opening of the refurbished courts at Kiama Blowhole Tennis Club such a tremendous success for our local community.

#### **ZEN TEA LOUNGE FOUNDATION**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:25):** The Zen Tea Lounge Foundation is a grassroots charity in Western Sydney that has done amazing work to help survivors of family violence. One key program of the foundation is the "restore, reconnect and rebuild" initiative, which constitutes an eight-week self-empowerment workshop for domestic violence survivors to develop skills including finding purpose, self-care, healthy relationship building and positive parenting. Over the years the foundation has supported approximately 22,000 community members in Western Sydney through many workshops, events and outreach services. It has empowered women with financial independence and employment stability, improved the communication skills of migrant and refugee women and much more. Such achievements would not have been possible without the dedicated team of volunteers, frontline workers and ambassadors who form the foundation. I thank this passionate group of people for their service.

#### **TRIBUTE TO LOUISE SANTOS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:26):** I pay a special tribute to Louise Santos, an inspiring and much-loved and respected member of our community, who recently passed away while on holiday in France. Louise was a committed Bondi surf club member. She was the newest life member and had been serving as the club registrar. She was a four-time female club champion, and in 2008 became the first woman at the Bondi club to complete the gold medallion. Over her 20 years of service to the club as an administrator, Ms Santos had been the director of competition, youth captain, board captain and registrar. Recently, president Brent Jackson said:

Her influence reverberated through countless aspects of our club, and her absence will be profoundly felt by each and every one of us. Louise's legacy is one of unwavering dedication, and the profound impact she had on our club's journey.

I offer my condolences to her family, especially to her husband, Stuart, and her son, Josh.

#### **LILLY COOMBES**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:27):** I recognise Lilly Coombes from Ulladulla High School, who was recently awarded a Marie Bashir Peace Award. Lilly has been a member of the Ulladulla High School leadership team and is dedicated to promoting harmony and social justice, advocating for the rights of marginalised communities, especially First Nations peoples. Lilly actively challenges societal norms that violate human dignity and strives to rectify divisions based on race and class. In 2022 Lilly co-led a peer mentoring program to create a safe space to address challenges faced by low-socio-economic and disengaged students and to foster harmonious relationships. Lilly has already received early university offers to study law. I hope to see Lilly in this place representing her community one day. Congratulations, Lilly.

#### **GOULBURN LILAC CITY FESTIVAL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:28):** Once again I recognise the Goulburn Lilac City Festival. It is with bountiful colour, joy, community and spring spirit that the Goulburn City Lilac Festival has been celebrated since the 1950s. This year's festival attracted many local, regional and interstate visitors over the three-day long weekend in October. The festival has continued to evolve over the span of its life, with unique markets, flower displays, musical performances, entertainment and competitions. A new and very popular addition to the festival this year was the mascot, Lila the bear. His Excellency the Governor-General David Hurley opened the seventy-second festival. He is the first Governor-General to undertake the role in 70 years. Her Excellency Mrs Hurley took part in the opening by singing a song that she had written especially for the event. I congratulate all lilac committee members on their hard work in creating a very special atmosphere, and acknowledge that patronage of the 2023 festival was upwards of 5,000 people.

#### **OUR LADY MERCY PLACE HARRIS PARK**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:29):** The opening of the Our Lady Mercy Place Harris Park aged-care home on 18 September was a significant milestone in addressing the Maronite community's growing concerns for the care of the elderly in the Parramatta area. I thank The Maronite Patriarch, His Beatitude and Eminence, Mar Bechara Boutros Cardinal Rai, The Eparch of the Maronite Catholic Church, Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay and members of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia for blessing the aged-care facility. I acknowledge the Federal member for Parramatta, Dr Andrew Charlton, and the member for Rockdale for their attendance at the event. Together with community donations from the Maronite Eparchy and grant funding from the State and Federal governments, the creation of Our Lady Mercy Place was made possible. The operation of

the 85-room residential aged-care home is a collaboration between Mercy Health and the Maronite Catholic Parish, providing quality care to the residents and a commitment to caring for the whole person. It is a wonderful new facility in Parramatta.

#### ASHLEY SARGESON

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:30):** I congratulate Ashley Sargeson, owner of Touchwood Flowers Port Macquarie, on her success at the Australian Woman's Small Business Champion Awards. The prestigious awards originated in 1999 to recognise the achievements of outstanding small businesses owned by women from all States and Territories across Australia. The awards offer a unique opportunity to highlight Australia's outstanding small businesses and seek to recognise the hard work that women business owners contribute to the local community in generating employment and bringing a level of service to the community that is second to none. Attending the national presentation evening at Western Sydney Conference Centre at Penrith, Ashley said that she was speechless when her business Touchwood Flowers was announced the overall winner in the florist category. She said such an accolade inspires, motivates and recognises the creativity that her team bring to work every day. Ashley acknowledged Phoebe Gee, Jess Fussell and Kayla Drinkwater for their dedication, teamwork and attention to detail in everything they do. I congratulate the vibrant, innovative local business on this well-deserved honour.

#### ENDTRACHOMA PROJECT

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:31):** Rotary clubs across Australia have united to stop the spread of trachoma, an infectious disease that can lead to permanent and irreversible blindness. Australia is the only developed nation where trachoma is still considered to be endemic. The disease persists in Indigenous communities in outback Australia. Rotary clubs have joined together to form the EndTrachoma project. Padstow Rotary together with students from the Interact Club of East Hills Girls Technology High School recently assembled toiletry kits for the attendees at the Families as First Teachers program in the Northern Territory. We are grateful for the work of Rotary Padstow president Charles Mille, Rotary club liaison officers Thea Davies and Allyn Waters, and Interact coordinator Christie Dierikx, not to mention the students of East Hills Girls High School for their collective efforts in stopping the spread of trachoma.

#### FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:32):** I recognise the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment [FOKE] for its advocacy in our local community. FOKE was established in 1994. Since my election in March, I have met with them and affected residents to discuss concerns about a development proposal and rezoning to expand the Lourdes Retirement Village in Killara. On 28 June 2023, I said in this House:

... we must ensure that the community has its say, that there is infrastructure investment and that there is no substantial risk from bushfires.

A Ku-ring-gai Council submission of October 2022 clearly objects to this proposal, stating it "does not want to be held in any way responsible in the event of a bushfire-related incident and any resulting coronial inquest". The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces advised on 5 July 2023:

Any future Development Application submitted for the site must be formally referred to the RFS for its detailed consideration and will require a Bush Fire Safety Authority to be issued by the RFS under s100B.

I call on the Department of Planning to strongly consider Ku-ring-gai Council's submission and the bushfire risks. I thank FOKE for its advocacy.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** It is a moot point because the member for Davidson has concluded his community recognition statement.

#### OPERA IN THE BARN

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:34):** I acknowledge the terrific performances showcased at Opera in the Barn, held at Denbigh, Cobbitty, on 16 September to raise money for Turning Point Camden, a not-for-profit community welfare and drop-in centre. Turning Point is a place where people are empowered to make changes in their lives, allowing them to move forward, and services are provided that alleviate stress by meeting people's immediate needs. The organisers of Opera in the Barn have once again outdone themselves supporting this fantastic organisation, all while putting on a show for the ages. With an amazing line-up of opera greats and working for months with her growing Cobbitty Community Choir, Jodie McGuren once again produced a brilliant program for this year's edition. Some of the fantastic opera singers this year included Rebecca Currier, Gaetano Bonlante, Jud Arthur and Kathryn Bradbury-King, with Belinda Vaccarro on piano and Jodie McGuren

and her Cobbitty Community Choir. It was a privilege to attend. The performances were simply astounding and out of this world. It truly was a treat. I thank the organisers and performers. They did a great job.

#### **GYMEA COMBINED PROBUS CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:35):** I acknowledge the GyMEA Combined Probus Club for the important role its members play in fostering friendships and building networks for seniors in our community. The club meets on the second Tuesday of every month at Tradies GyMEA to bring together like-minded individuals who share a passion for social inclusion, with guest speakers covering topics like the ukulele, bees and the impact of the palm oil industry on orangutans. The club also facilitates regular activities from its members, ranging from day trips to points of interest including Vaucluse House, cruises, picnics, golf days, cards and games, lawns bowls, book club and monthly dinners at restaurants across the Sutherland shire. With October being Probus Month, I recognise the club's committee members for their dedication in facilitating a local network for people of a similar age and interest to share. I recognise Pat Howard, Diann De Vere, Pam Conway, Toni Proudlock, Jeanette Heidrichas, Barbara Bradley, Marilyn Hamor, Chris Furner, David Bell, Christine Collum, Grant Fletcher and Avril White. I commend GyMEA Combined Probus Club members for positively contributing to our community and extend to them my best wishes for the future.

#### **COASTIE CARNIE FAIR DAY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:36):** Earlier this month our region hosted the Coastie Carnie Fair Day, the centrepiece of the Coastal Twist Festival. The event was electrifying, and on the day we saw thousands of people come and join in support of the LGBTQIA+ community in our region and beyond. A day filled with colourful decorations, fabulous outfits, talented artists, delicious food and, most adorable of all, the Pooche Parade! Yes, there were cute puppies showing off their cat-walking skill on the real red carpet. I love the fact that our region is host to this celebration of inclusion across abilities, ages, genders, cultures and mindsets, further highlighted by the many local businesses that decorated their windows to support this festival. I thank the generous sponsors who are nurturing diversity and to Naughty Noodle Fun Haus, the powerhouse behind the Coastal Twist Festival. I acknowledge that its vision and courage in putting this festival together has changed lives. I know how much it has fought to overcome to bring this event to our community. I believe this is just the start. I am looking forward to seeing Coastal Twist continue to blossom to bring more people together in future events and celebrate the Naughty Noodle and its new home in the heart of Gosford. Let us make our whole Central Coast Rock!

#### **ELSIE'S RETREAT PROJECT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:37):** I was honoured to recently attend the Elsie's Retreat Project's A Touch of Orange Luncheon along with Scott McLachlan, chief executive of Central Coast Local Health District, Brooke Ledbetter, the nursing unit manager for the palliative care unit at Gosford Hospital, and over 140 attendees to show my continued support for the dedicated palliative care unit on the Central Coast. Elsie's Project is a major project of the Lions Club of Wyoming-East Gosford Centennial. Fundraising events such as this fund palliative care nursing scholarships to help local registered nurses undergo the necessary additional training for palliative care unit work at Gosford Hospital and, hopefully, the soon-to-be-delivered Wyong Hospital palliative care unit when it opens. I congratulate the following scholarship recipients: Rebecca Burke, Tara Millington, Rachel Horton and Jacqueline Brooks. I know that this funding will be an invaluable support to all of them. Events such as these would not be possible without the hard work of the Orange Army. I thank Margaret Pearce and the Elsie's Project committee members, who volunteer their dedicated and tireless efforts. I was very honoured to also receive my own Orange Army shirt on the day. I look forward to the opening of the Wyong palliative care unit.

#### **VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:38):** On 26 August I had the pleasure of attending the Happy Father's Day and Fascinated Fascinators Gala dinner held by the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW. Earlier in the year, on 14 May, I also attended the Happy Mother's Day event. It is heartening to know that we can consistently rely on the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW—Hội Phụ Nữ Việt Nam Tự Do NSW—to organise such meaningful and considerate events. The evening commenced with formalities, speeches and special songs dedicated to fathers. The second part of the event, the Fascinated Fascinators segment, featured an array of entertainment, including songs, a catwalk show, linedancing, dance performances and more. I extend my sincere gratitude to Ms Anh Linh Pham and the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW for their kind invitation. Such gatherings serve as a beautiful reminder of the significance of family bonds and the love we share with our parents. I eagerly anticipate future events that celebrate that significance.

*Private Members' Statements***CATHWEST INNOVATION COLLEGE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:40):** I recently had the pleasure of attending a Blacktown Chamber of Commerce meeting that was hosted at the CathWest Innovation College in my electorate of Mount Druitt. The attendees had the opportunity to tour that impressive facility. The innovative educational institution, with campuses in both Mount Druitt and Emu Plains, is a shining example of educational excellence in Western Sydney. Established in 2020, CathWest has become a vibrant learning hub for over 350 students from diverse backgrounds. CathWest stands out for its commitment to providing a wide range of educational opportunities. Students can pursue their Higher School Certificate, engage in apprenticeships or traineeships, explore entrepreneurial ventures, earn industry-recognised credentials or secure university admissions.

Notably, in 2023 CathWest had 225 school-based apprentice or trainee students, surpassing any other school in New South Wales. Furthermore, an impressive 93 per cent of CathWest students continue their vocational education and training journey after graduation, in stark contrast to the 60 per cent dropout rate among apprentices under the previous Liberal Government. The decline in vocational education is evident in the statistics, including a 45 per cent decrease in TAFE NSW teachers, a 15 per cent drop in permanent teachers—replaced by casuals—since 2015, a 28 per cent decline in TAFE enrolments since 2012, a 33 per cent drop in apprenticeship and traineeship commencements since 2011, and a staggering 67 per cent decrease in TAFE completions since 2011.

CathWest's innovative educational programs offer students a choice between trade training and inquiry pathways. The former involves industry training and workplace qualifications while the latter allows students to pursue passion projects with mentor teachers and industry partners. Upon graduation, each student receives an industry profile or passport cataloguing their skills and experiences, making them highly desirable candidates for employers. Beyond academics, CathWest equips students with essential life skills such as time management, problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking, numeracy and literacy. The comprehensive approach ensures that graduates are both academically prepared and job ready.

Additionally, the college's partnership with TAFE NSW provides students with access to state-of-the-art facilities and expert educators in various trade pathways. CathWest's dedication to excellence is reflected in its numerous awards, including the Innovation in VET Award at the 2022 Australian Training Awards and Training Provider of the Year at the 2021 NSW Training Awards. In 2023 the college reached a milestone of 225 school-based apprentices or trainees across 23 qualifications in 12 industry sectors, demonstrating remarkable growth in its trade pathways. In conclusion, CathWest Innovation College is a true model of educational excellence, offering our youth the skills, knowledge and opportunities they need to succeed. Its commitment to innovation and student success is a source of pride for our community, and I wholeheartedly commend its outstanding efforts.

**STATE BUDGET AND BADGERYS CREEK ELECTORATE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:44):** It is with both a small degree of relief and continued frustration that I reflect in the Chamber today on the recent budget handed down by the Minns Labor Government. Residents of New South Wales expecting a fresh start instead find themselves navigating through a maze of disappointment and uncertainty, particularly concerning critical cost-of-living support measures such as the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers and the future of Elizabeth Drive, a pivotal route to the Western Sydney International Airport. I am, however, relieved to confirm that, due to relentless advocacy from me and my community, the Mamre Road stage one upgrade project will proceed as planned under the former Coalition Government, with a budget of \$253.6 million over the next four years.

In an ever-increasing cost-of-living-pressure environment, families are being stifled by escalating living costs. The decision by the Minns Labor Government to dismantle the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers programs is not only short-sighted but extremely disappointing. The vouchers symbolise far more than just mere financial aid. They support the aspirations and desires of our young people, and the desires of parents for their children to be exercising, to be outdoors, to be involved in team sports and to explore what could be potential incredible athletic and creative abilities. Without that support, tens of thousands of children will be deprived of pursuing their artistic and athletic passions as well as the ability to keep active and have a healthier lifestyle.

That hits no harder than in Western Sydney. Western Sydney—the community that I am proud to represent in this place—has a significant number of families. The fact that the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers program has been significantly pared back and dismantled by the current Labor Government is going to hurt and impact Western Sydney families more than ever. Because we are talking about families that have four, five, six or sometimes even more children in their homes, parents simply cannot afford to pay the registration fees and



afford the uniforms or soccer or footy boots. The Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers went a long way to covering the costs of those things, getting kids into sport and artistic pursuits. It is incredibly disappointing that the Minns Labor Government backtracked on its promise prior to the election to roll it over.

However, thankfully there is a win amongst a range of setbacks in the current budget and I am heartened to confirm that the Mamre Road stage one upgrade started by the former Coalition Government will continue. I acknowledge the unwavering and vocal support of my local community to insist that it continue. However, people in my community are still worried about the budget, because there are a lot of unanswered questions about where the money is going, where it is being cut and different details about certain projects. One particular thorn in our side is Elizabeth Drive. The former Government committed \$200 million to be funded in the forward estimates to upgrade that road. It is interesting. The road is actually between my electorate and that of the Labor member for Leppington. I would have thought he would be banging the Cabinet table to demand that that funding continue under this Government to ensure that his community on the Kemps Creek side of Elizabeth Drive is supported by a much safer road.

Since putting my concern as a question on notice to the Minister, I have been advised in very vague terms that the Government will continue the work to improve Elizabeth Drive, including important safety work and progressing the design and enabling work on the proposed future Elizabeth Drive upgrade. But \$10 million does not go a long way for a road that is literally a goat track. It needs money spent on it in the forward estimates, not in the 10-year future, where maybe it will happen at some point later in life. It needs to be committed to in the forward estimates. There needs to be a commitment by the Labor Government to recognise that Elizabeth Drive must be upgraded because it is a critical link to the most technologically advanced international airport currently under construction. I call on the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Roads, to answer questions in this Chamber about Elizabeth Drive.

#### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:49):** Australia has long been known as a sporting nation. It is often said that, to Australians, sport is a religion. We are a nation of sports lovers and 80 per cent of us agree that sport is a significant part of Australian culture. We are proud that we punch above our weight on the international stage and our entire nation comes together to watch moments of magic like Cathy Freeman's epic gold in the 400 metres at the Olympics, Cortnee Vine's winning kick to end the longest penalty shootout in a football World Cup and take Australia through to the semis, or the Diamonds winning the Netball World Cup for the twelfth time. Whether it is through participation, spectatorship or community engagement, sport has the power to improve our health, empower individuals and unite communities. But despite all these benefits, there are still many barriers to making sure that sport is accessible to our most vulnerable community members.

Sport has also long had the potential to build a sense of belonging and pride as a force for social good by building bridges between us all. Sport can quite literally change lives. In Liverpool and south-west Sydney, we have seen a number of our young sons and daughters go on to not only change their lives, but also be role models for many others through sport. Some of these names include Mark Bosnich, Michael Clarke and Anthony Minichiello. But we cannot rely on previous sporting victories and assume that challenges and barriers to accessing community sport do not exist. A white paper prepared by Western Sydney University identified Sydney as being among the 10 most culturally diverse cities in the world. Much of Sydney's diversity can be found in the west and south-west, the parts of the city that are growing most rapidly in terms of population and consequently economically. The white paper identifies a role for professional sporting clubs and governments to respond to the challenges they highlight. We must ensure that the growth in our region is not to the benefit of very few at the expense of most in our community.

Australian sporting organisations, from the grassroots to elite level, develop and deliver a range of community sport and physical activity engagement initiatives to promote health, improve educational outcomes and enhance social cohesion. Although sporting organisations are contributing to their communities in a variety of ways, very few are formally evaluating and effectively reporting on these program outcomes. As a result, the effectiveness and impact of community engagement initiatives on health, wellness and social outcomes are largely unknown. From grassroots to the elite level, the COVID pandemic has undoubtedly changed the global sporting landscape. Australia's national sporting organisations, professional teams and community clubs were all impacted by lockdowns and the cancellation of matches, competitions and major sporting events.

As we transition to the new normal, there is a need for professional and community-based sporting organisations to reassess and potentially refocus their engagement activities. It comes as no surprise then that more than half of Australians, 56 per cent, believe sporting codes should focus more on community participation. When community spirit is bolstered through sport, not only does the local area benefit but also it feeds back into the national sense of identity. Local sporting clubs create a shared sense of belonging and community outside family and workplaces, alongside religious and other service organisations.

Recently I doorknocked a young man with a keen interest in our community. Stefan was not only interested in what was happening around him but also was confident in articulating his thoughts and ideas as to what Liverpool desperately lacks and needs. Stefan identified local sporting facilities and programs as hugely important to engaging with local youth and community members. He identified boredom and the lack of community sporting infrastructure for youth as key reasons for disengagement, which can often lead to young people getting into conflict with the law or feeling like opportunities are just not there for them in south-west Sydney. I bring to the attention of the House the unfortunate lack of resources and investment in local sporting facilities in Liverpool by several levels of government over the past decade.

I start with the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. Despite Liverpool experiencing a number of natural disasters over the past few years and bearing the brunt of restrictive lockdowns during the COVID pandemic, Liverpool was consistently overlooked for grants and funding. This also includes the mysterious disappearance of discussion about \$3.1 million in a range of participation initiatives focused on areas most affected by restrictions, including south-western Sydney and regional New South Wales. This funding was to prioritise individuals or groups who traditionally have less access to physical activity opportunities. This has been compounded by the ongoing incompetence of Liverpool City Council in delivering central community sporting infrastructure to those in our area who would most benefit from it.

In the previous term of council under the former mayor, Wendy Waller, the facilities at Woodward Park and Whitlam Leisure Centre in Liverpool and Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre in Miller had been master planned for preparation in action, but since then there has been nothing. Every week I speak with local sporting groups and residents who express concern about the future of our local sporting talent. [*Time expired.*]

### OBERON WIND FARM

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (18:54):** I address a matter of concern that affects the community of Oberon and the surrounding area. Forestry Corporation of NSW wants to install at least 400 wind towers in the State forests that are scattered throughout the Oberon community. Forestry Corporation has gone to the community, and the community has spoken: It does not want wind turbines in our area, changing the landscape into an industrial factory. In short, these towers will change the economic, environmental and social fabric of the community. It does not make sense that Forestry Corporation is barging into the local community and desecrating the environment for the sake of another environmental project, particularly considering the number of less intrusive locations that are available across the country.

I do not want to hear someone from the city or elsewhere telling me that these are a great idea. They may feel good recommending them in someone else's backyard but it is not their community that will be turned upside down. If it is such a good idea, let us put them up and down the east coast and then hear those living in the city scream about wind turbines. The Oberon community has come out strongly against the proposal, even creating a community group called Oberon Against Wind Towers. It has hosted forums and sent out newsletters, flyers and posters to educate and inform the community about the proposal. While renewable energy sources are needed for the future, there are valid reasons this proposal has not got the support of the local community and why people are worried about it.

I share some of the concerns that constituents have raised with me thus far. The towers are about 280 metres tall. To put that in perspective, Oberon could have 400 towers above 200 metres high in the local community. It does not sound like much, but when compared with the radiata pines in the forests that grow to about 35 to 40 metres it means the proposed new wind towers will sit 240 metres above the treescape. At 285 metres tall, these turbines are not the average tower. The wind towers will rival the height of Sydney Tower. Sydney Tower is 309 metres high. We are talking about 400 towers that are 285 metres high spread across the community.

In other areas where this type of proposal has been successful, land and house prices have had a significant fall in value, which can have a detrimental impact on home owners and the local economy as a whole. Oberon is known for its landscape and natural wonders. Jenolan Caves and Mayfield Gardens are two spectacular areas that attract tourists. I have spoken to many rural landholders who are also opposed to the proposal because it makes no difference where the towers are placed as they will be seen from kilometres away. There will be an impact on wildlife and farming practices, smoke and the wind turbines will restrict future firefighting by fixed-wing aircraft, and the list goes on. They will be seen in every single direction, not to mention the kilometres of interconnecting transmission lines across the landscape.

The Oberon community has held a number of community forums, with one recently attracting over 500 residents. Big and small landowners, retailers, business owners, tourism operators, conservationists and retirees were all in attendance, representing a broad cross-section of the community. The Oberon community has sent a clear and united message to Forestry Corporation that it cannot roll into the community and expect them to support these giant towers. These wind towers are no different from mining proposals, which need to gain a social

licence in the local community to proceed. Forestry Corporation has no social licence and needs to stop its proposal from going any further. It cannot create buffer zones for a project that is 280 metres into the sky.

Forestry Corporation does not have to wait to issue permits for the project to be investigated further. It has not engaged with the local Aboriginal communities. It needs to stop wasting taxpayers' dollars on this proposal right now. Forestry Corporation's role is to manage environmental conservation, community access, tourism, fire, land management and renewable timber production, not go down the path of establishing wind turbines at a cost to any community. The community says no, stop it right now. I also call on the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Tara Moriarty, who is responsible for forests, to stop this project right now or front up to the community of Oberon and tell us why she thinks it is a good idea and why people's lives should be turned upside down. The community has spoken: Enough is enough, end it now.

### ILLAWARRA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (18:59):** As days get longer and the water gets warmer—hopefully—it is more important than ever that we ensure the safety of the community at our local beaches. In the electorate of Keira, we are very fortunate to live in a region that comes alive during the summertime. Thousands of families will head down to the beach to enjoy the sun, relax and create long-lasting memories. However, this would not be possible without the dedicated work of our local surf lifesaving members, who take on a vital role during this time to keep our community safe.

It gives me great pride to recognise in the Chamber the outstanding efforts of our local surf lifesaving members, who are already working tirelessly to ensure that the community is safe in and around the water. I am honoured to represent a region that values its surf lifesaving members and celebrates their outstanding accomplishments in protecting the community and our beaches. I specifically recognise the exceptional work of the Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club, which was recently recognised at the Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence. The awards celebrated the impact of the club, its incredible members and, most importantly, its work for our local community.

The Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club was the most recognised Illawarra surf lifesaving club, leading the way with four category wins. Clubman Brody Robertson was recognised as the Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year, and Halle Bone was recognised as the Youth Volunteer of the Year. The club's call-out team was named the Services Team of the Year, and Jaclyn Percy received the Trainer of the Year award. I congratulate not only the award recipients but also the Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club and all the clubs in the Illawarra region, as without them my community would not be able to enjoy the amazing benefits of the region's coastal beaches in a safe way.

I am honoured to recognise the outstanding efforts of our emergency service community volunteers, who have aided and will continue to aid the community in its most distressing times. Our emergency personnel constantly put themselves in the line of danger, and it takes a special kind of individual to selflessly devote their time to helping the community in this way. I take extreme pride in knowing that one of our own from the Illawarra, Morgan Clarke, has been recognised at the Rotary Clubs and Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community Awards as the Overall Officer of the Year in a Volunteer Capacity. Morgan has been a member of the mighty Woonona Surf Life Saving Club since age 16, and during this time has contributed greatly to assisting our community through her tireless hours of hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

Morgan has been recognised not only in her capacity as a volunteer but also as the Woonona Surf Life Saving Club captain. These are both remarkable achievements and a true testament to Morgan's character and passion for her community. As one of three female duty officers in the Illawarra for the upcoming surf lifesaving season, Morgan is committed to improving youth involvement and enhancing female engagement throughout the Illawarra. I thank Morgan for her continued work in the community and across the Illawarra. This summer it is important that people remember to stay safe when they are in the water, and to thank the surf lifesaving volunteers the next time they head down to the beach. I thank all the volunteers as well as the paid lifesaving professionals across our coastline who work very hard to keep all of us safe, and who will continue to do so over the summer months.

### KIAMA ELECTORATE ROADS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:03):** One of the reasons I stood for Parliament was to fix the Princes Highway. Since my election to this place, I have been determined to work hard and get things done. I am proud to have secured more than \$2 billion of road upgrades that have literally transformed my local community. However, I express my concern with the treatment of our community by this Government when it comes to local roads funding promises. The first issue I raise is the Tripoli Way bypass, which I add for the benefit of members

is also referred to as the Albion Park bypass. It will serve to relieve traffic congestion in the growing township of Albion Park. The project will also benefit suburbs such as Tullimbar and Calderwood.

The southern Illawarra is the fastest growing area of New South Wales outside of south-western Sydney. While this speech is not meant to be a history lesson, the approval of the Calderwood rezoning followed a donation from a developer to the former Labor Government. At the time of the approval of the then part 3 application, no thought had been given to the impacts of congestion on the existing population or the needs of the future population. A win-win for the developer that got its approval and the Government that got its \$40,000, but a lose-lose for the new and existing residents that must live with growth without the comparable and necessary infrastructure.

Working with Shellharbour City Council and Councillor Kellie Marsh, we are now trying to address that infrastructure backlog, but there are some people who are simply not helping. Worse, they outright lied about their intentions. At the last election, NSW Labor produced a letter advising that it would commit an additional \$20 million to the Tripoli Way bypass. The targeted letter to Albion Park households in the run-up to the election proclaimed that "only Labor" would deliver on this promise. To be absolutely clear, by the time Labor made this pledge, I, together with Councillor Kellie Marsh and Shellharbour City Council, had already advocated and delivered \$4.2 million for planning, property acquisition and design. This funding was substantially enhanced with a further \$16.6 million from the New South Wales Government to build the project in partnership with Shellharbour City Council.

After all of this was announced, Labor persisted with its targeted letter and phone-canvassing campaign, stating, "Only Labor will deliver an additional \$20 million to build the Tripoli Way bypass." We do not need to cite legal precedents to work out what the word "additional" means. This specific promise implies that a Labor Government would provide money over and above that already committed. The election has now come and gone. Now in government, Labor has confirmed that it will not deliver an additional \$20 million for Tripoli Way. When questioned about this, the Government said it would provide only an additional \$3.4 million and confessed that it was relying on the \$16.6 million allocated by the previous Government.

In short, the Labor Party lied to every single resident of Albion Park. But what makes things even worse is that the \$3.4 million does not appear in the budget papers. But, as I have come to learn, nothing in this Government's budget papers can be believed. The claim of the additional \$20 million was nothing more than a blatant political lie in a sinful attempt to hoodwink my constituents. Labor targeted the people of Albion Park with this lie, day in and day out, used them for their votes and conned them with a lie that it had no intention of delivering on. Suffice to say I have been working closely with my Independent colleagues on council and, despite the blatant lies of those opposite, we will get the project done.

I also want to state my disappointment with the refusal of this Government to transfer Jamberoo Mountain Road from Kiama Council to the State roads network. Following heavy rains in June 2021, Jamberoo Mountain Road was closed, which severed a critical link between the coast and the highlands. In 2009 the then Labor Government dumped Jamberoo Mountain Road onto Kiama Council without a cent in compensation. During my time in government, I lobbied for and secured significant funding for Kiama Council to maintain Jamberoo Mountain Road, but my view remains that, given the importance of this road, it should be a State road. But Labor just does not care about regional communities and continues to ignore calls from local people, the council and me as the local MP to transfer this road and be up-front and transparent by releasing the reclassification report which considered this very question.

Finally, I note that in NSW Labor's latest budget, two of its key local election commitments will not start construction this term, despite Labor's pre-election fanfare and lies. The East Nowra Sub Arterial and the Dapto access ramps will be in planning for the next four years: no doing money in this budget, just planning money. Do not even start me on Labor's delays to the Milton-Ulladulla bypass and Labor's games and delays over the Jervis Bay Road interchange, or the lack of serious progress to the Nowra bypass. One thing I have come to learn is that State Labor just does not build infrastructure. Labor is terrific at politics, lies and deceit, but it is terrible when it comes to keeping promises and getting things done for our community—all talk, no action—and we will not forget.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:08):** We will not forget the previous Government and the member for Kiama, who was a Government Minister and who promised the transfer of regional roads away from the State back to local councils. That Government did not do it. That Government said it, but did nothing and funded nothing. That Government did absolutely nothing, yet the member for Kiama seeks to apply an argument that is inconsistent with fact, which is why he is so defensive. The reality is that the Coalition Government—the Liberal-Nationals Government—let down the people of New South Wales, let down the people of Kiama and did not fulfil its commitment to transfer regional roads, which is why the member for Kiama is complaining. Mate, own it. You guys did it. We are trying to fix it.

## WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:09):** Despite being home to half of Sydney's residents and Australia's third largest economy, Western Sydney has long been under-served, under-resourced and under-represented in the corridors of power, especially during the past 12 years of government. The Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield Aerotropolis mark a turning point in this story. With the airport set to open in 2026 and work well underway at the aerotropolis, the region sits on the precipice of a revolution in the way we westies live, work, study and play.

For the local population, the airport and aerotropolis will provide much-needed and much-deserved roads, utilities, transport connections, educational institutions and jobs. This is due, in part, to the transport infrastructure projects recently funded in the first Minns Government budget, such as the M12 upgrade to Elizabeth Drive; Sydney Metro West; rapid bus links to the airport from Campbelltown, Penrith and Liverpool; and the upgrade of Fifteenth Avenue. All of these projects will provide a gateway to Australia's only genuine global city and be the driver for the largest jobs boom in Western Sydney history, with a highly skilled and resilient multicultural population offering a unique value proposition to global businesses.

Some, however, are determined to stand in the way of this progress. Avalon Airport CEO Tony Brun recently attempted to stir up old Sydney-Melbourne rivalries by claiming that his provincial Victorian airport should receive the same backing and funding as the new aerotropolis. In this bid for recognition, Mr Brun claims that Western Sydney airport is not the centre of the universe and argues for diverting attention and resources away from its development. The notion that Avalon Airport and Western Sydney International are comparable is simply laughable. It is like comparing the Opera House with The Espy. The reality is that Western Sydney airport is a project of immense national significance. International airports are once-in-a-century transformational infrastructure. This \$20 billion investment by State and Federal governments will be a shot in the arm for not just Western Sydney but the entire country.

Mr Brun claims that the 60-minute drive catchment of Avalon Airport includes 3.3 million people, compared with the 2.5 million population of Western Sydney. While this unorthodox metric may currently hold true, the population of Western Sydney is set to grow by over a million in the next decade. The Western Parkland region will have a population equal to that of Adelaide by 2036. It is therefore only right that the area receives similar attention and investment to one of our major capital cities. Avalon Airport's backers claim it will create approximately 5,000 to 6,000 jobs in the next five years. That is dwarfed by the 200,000 jobs the airport and aerotropolis will create during its construction and the 50,000 to 60,000 additional jobs it will provide when fully operational. By contrast to Avalon, those jobs will be diverse and innovative, centred around high-tech industries, advanced manufacturing, aeronautics and agribusiness.

In addition to the economic benefits, the raft of infrastructure spending and investment around the airport will provide unprecedented educational and employment pathways for locals. It will also tackle decades of intergenerational socio-economic inequality and the negative stereotypes that have so often come with it. I appreciate that Mr Brun is doing his job in attempting to spruik investment for his local business, but the challenges and opportunities facing these vastly different regions of New South Wales and Victoria have little in common economically and socially. To put it simply, Mr Brun has missed the mark. Western Sydney is the centre of the universe.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:13):** I thank the member for Leppington, my good mate Nathan Hagarty, who is a fighter for the new seat of Leppington. He is out there advocating for Western Sydney airport, ensuring that we get the investment in infrastructure—the M12 and all those road connections and other ancillaries. There has been no greater fighter. In fact, he is the first one.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** The only one.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** He is the only one, but he is the first and the best. What a great man he is. He highlights the importance of investing in west and south-west Sydney to ensure that we see Western Sydney airport reach its full potential. The Government knows that it will benefit not only people in west and south-west Sydney but also those across New South Wales. Even members on the other side know that; there is a bipartisan view on the importance of the success of west and south-west Sydney.

## ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:14):** Last night I attended a community event at Masada College in St Ives held by the upper North Shore Jewish communities, who were uniting for the wellbeing of their brethren in Israel. The communal prayer event was obviously to mourn the events over the weekend in Israel. The service was conducted by many rabbis representing the Chabad North Shore, Masada, the North Shore Synagogue and the Cremorne Synagogue. Other community members in attendance included the member for Bradfield, Paul

Fletcher; the member for Davidson; the mayor of Ku-ring-gai, Councillor Sam Ngai; the deputy mayor, Councillor Christine Kay; and Councillor Barbara Ward.

The synagogue was full and, understandably, the mood was incredibly sombre. Many of those in attendance have relatives in Israel, and a parent of a soldier from the Israel Defense Forces who is in the Gaza war zone was also present. The service included speeches by the rabbi and MPs, and all of those present were of course aware of the murder, rape and kidnapping of defenceless citizens that occurred in Israel over the weekend. Indeed, it was said to be the greatest murder of Jews since the Holocaust. As a teenager my father was a witness to the transportation of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust, and I found it incredibly sad to think that his son and grandchildren are again seeing the murder of Jews in the world. It should be said that the events that are happening in the Middle East are really a world apart from the electorate of Wahroonga, where the Jewish and Muslim communities live side by side in incredible harmony.

There were strong statements of support for our local Jewish community and Israel by the MPs and the mayor of Ku-ring-gai, and I told the meeting that just last year I was in Israel and met many wonderful people. I was incredibly impressed by the State of Israel, which has the most vibrant democracy and the freest community in the whole of the Middle East. I assured the local community that many non-Jews support the State of Israel and were absolutely appalled by the attack on innocent civilians that occurred over the weekend.

I made the point that the Hamas terrorists had not only committed great atrocities against those civilians but also greatly damaged world peace, and I think we are all concerned about the broader implications for world peace of what happened on the weekend. There were readings from the *Torah* as well as a number of prayers for the soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, the citizens in the line of fire, the hostages and the wounded. It was a good way for the community to come together in their joint grief and shock at the events.

Unfortunately, at the same time that that meeting for peace took place, a much less peaceful meeting was taking place on the other side of Sydney at the Town Hall and at the Opera House. Racist chants were made and flares were discharged at the Opera House, which had been lit up in solidarity with the people of Israel. It is appalling that the Minns Labor Government allowed that illegal protest to take place in the city. It completely undid any of the goodwill that was intended by the Government in lighting the Opera House. The events were a complete international embarrassment and a besmirching of the reputation of our State.

When I returned home from Masada College, I received a text message from a friend in France, who had seen reports on social media of what had happened at the Opera House and asked me whether that was, in fact, taking place. In conclusion, I think it is important for the Jewish community to know that we stand in solidarity with them. We denounce the terrible atrocities that have happened on the other side of the world. We, including the people in the Wahroonga electorate, are all desirous of world peace.

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

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:19):** Tonight I speak about something very important that is happening this Saturday. It is something that we have been waiting for since possibly 1770, and I really hope that our community can vote yes and change the course of Australian history. We have 60,000-plus years of history in this nation with our Aboriginal culture, the oldest culture in the world. We are so privileged to walk on country that was never ceded and that was, is and always will be Aboriginal land. It really is an honour. I work on Darkinjung land most days, and I am here on Gadigal land today.

It is with incredible joy that I speak of my Aboriginal brothers and sisters who have been part of the journey to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. I speak of young people from my community, Jacob and Allira, who are part of the youth journey to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and Aboriginal people and Elders across Australia, who, after much deliberation in 2017, came together to say this is a journey that we need to be on. This is a journey of a long history of repression and disrespect of Aboriginal culture in Australia. All that my generation learnt about our history in school is 1770, and yet the history is so much longer than 1770.

I sit here beside my Aboriginal colleague Greg Warren, the member for Campbelltown and Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning. The connection to the land, to country and to culture and the relationships for Aboriginal people are things that we, as non-Aboriginal Australians, have so much more work to do to have a better and deeper understanding of the profound—there are no words. There are no words to describe the way Aboriginal people have treated their land. They are part of the land. This conversation we are having about the yes vote is something that we have seen from our Aboriginal people in 1938 on the Day of Mourning, led by Bill Ferguson. One of my constituents, Allison Preece, a beautiful lady, is one of Bill's grandkids and part of the adopted generation. It was a day of mourning in opposition to Australia Day, and it was the first time Aboriginal people really stood up in a protest.

We saw the Freedom Ride with Charlie Perkins. A group of kids from the school where I taught Aboriginal studies replicated the Freedom Ride and travelled out to Moree and places across Australia. In 1965 Charlie Perkins was run off the road and the racism was there, but my kids from school had the opportunity to go on a journey with other Aboriginal kids from across the Central Coast to see that that segregation and that separation and that racism continue in our country. That was not that long ago. In 1967 there was the successful—thank goodness—referendum to see that Aboriginal people were counted not as flora and fauna but as actual human beings in our nation. It was way too late, but it was something that saw a significant change. This next referendum is so important and is the next significant change for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Please say yes, everybody.

This referendum is not going to be Mabo Day. It is not going to be the time when people came out and said, "Aboriginal people will take our land." When that decision came through, it was a hugely important recognition that this land was not terra nullius but has been inhabited by and has been part of the Aboriginal people since time immemorial. In 1992 a whole bunch of Australians said that the Aboriginal people were going to take our land, take our clothes, walk in and take over our properties. That did not happen, and it is not going to happen this time, despite what people have been led to believe on pre-poll. I get frightened by some of the misinformation and the brainwashing that has gone on by the Opposition.

In 1997 we had the Bringing Them Home report, a recognition that it was government policy to take Aboriginal children away from their families. We have so much work to do because the deep pain within our Aboriginal community and the trauma of what non-Aboriginal people have done to Aboriginal people is still within the hearts of human beings—our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. We have a chance in Australia to change this. I praise the work of the Barang Regional Alliance on the Central Coast, an alliance of seven Aboriginal organisations including Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services, Bara Barang Corporation Ltd, The Glen Centre, NAISDA Dance College and Gudjagang Ngara Ii-dhi Aboriginal Corporation. It is doing incredible work and leading the campaign to help people on the Central Coast understand that this is a time to change our nation, say yes to the referendum and say yes to including Aboriginal people in the Constitution of Australia.

## **COFFS HARBOUR HEALTH CAMPUS**

### **PINK SILKS PERPETUAL TRUST**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:24):** I am extremely proud of the entire Coffs Harbour Health Campus team for their commitment to improving health outcomes for our community. The doctors, nurses, allied health workers, volunteers and all support staff deserve recognition for the vital duties they are performing daily across our health system. Their compassion, care and innovation are truly inspirational. Thanks to the team led by the coordinator of Coffs Clinical Network and general manager of the Coffs Harbour Health Campus, Lydia Dennett. Coffs Harbour hospital is a regional healthcare leader and is renowned for the pursuit of excellence.

A Coffs Harbour Health Campus manager has been recognised for her own pursuit of excellence with a prestigious State award for supporting young doctors. Alicia Butchers, the junior medical officer manager at Coffs Harbour, has been named the Judy Muller Award recipient for 2023. This is an annual prize presented by the Health Education and Training Institute to recognise the work of an individual who has made a substantial contribution to the education and support of pre-vocational trainees. Alicia has been praised for her passion and dedication to improving the education, training and welfare of junior doctors at Coffs Harbour Health Campus and for helping junior medical staff in their education and training journey. I congratulate Alicia on her outstanding achievement and her extraordinary commitment to the betterment of our community.

Also at Coffs Harbour hospital, clinical nurse educator Alison Taylor is among 36 finalists in the NSW Health Awards for their exceptional contributions to the public health system. Alison is a finalist in the prestigious Staff Member of the Year category. Now in their twenty-fifth year, the NSW Health Awards recognise personalised, sustainable and digitally enabled programs that contribute to the wellbeing of patients and the community. Alison is highly regarded as an inspirational leader who has created and implemented several innovative projects to improve the care provided for patients with mental illness. She is passionate about working collaboratively to integrate patients and their families into the centre of their care and has won wide acclaim for creating a positive culture to support staff wellbeing.

Alison's warm smile and positivity promote change and enhance care for Mid North Coast Local Health District's mental health consumers in all areas of Coffs Harbour hospital. Finalists and winners will be celebrated at the NSW Health Awards ceremony on Tuesday 24 October at the Sydney International Convention Centre. I wish Alison every success at the awards, and I congratulate her on representing the Coffs Coast with such distinction. She is a wonderful health leader.

The Coffs Coast community deserves hearty congratulations for supporting a much-loved local charity, the Pink Silks Perpetual Trust, resulting in the donation of a portable life support unit to the Coffs Harbour Health Campus. The ventilator, which costs \$67,171, will help doctors and nurses care for critically ill patients who have transferred to the hospital's theatres and intensive care departments from smaller hospitals at Bellingen, Macksville and Dorrigo. Pink Silks Perpetual Trust chair and co-founder Tanya Johnson, OAM, and intensive care nurse unit manager Keryn Chauncy were on hand recently to inspect the new equipment. The portable ventilator is considered a game changer. This device can be taken anywhere with an unconscious patient, including to medical imaging and theatre. Being MRI compatible as well, the device significantly reduces the imaging procedure and the time the patient is away from the intensive care unit and emergency department. Faster diagnosis means that treatment can start more quickly, which is regarded as critically important for the patient involved.

The Pink Silks Perpetual Trust events such as the Pink Silks Trust Race Day, High Tea and Golf Day bring our community together in a mighty show of support for local women who are experiencing challenging times due to illness. Some 16 years after launching the Pink Silks Perpetual Trust, this proudly homegrown charity has donated more than \$1.2 million to support women who need its help. The charity's next fundraising events are the Pink Silks Trust Golf Day on Friday 12 January 2024 and the Pink Silks Trust Race Day on Sunday 14 January 2024. I thank the Pink Silks Perpetual Trust for helping to make our community an even better place to live.

### **EAST HILLS ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:29):** Members on this side of the House believe in public transport that works for passengers and for the essential workers who provide it. I commend the Minns Labor Government for delivering a budget that ends privatisation and delivers the change that the people of New South Wales deserve. It is clear to everyone that the bus system we inherited is not working. You only have to talk to passengers in my community to understand that the previous Government had its priorities all wrong. The previous Government awarded contracts based on lowest price without any apparent concern for service or reliability. It put price above passengers. What was the result? I am aware of many instances in my electorate of passengers being left on the side of the road and school students being stranded.

In my electorate there is only one bus service from Revesby Heights to Bankstown hospital. During the winter months, route 926 service consistently failed to arrive on time—or, even worse, services were just cancelled. This is the only bus service to the hospital. So many passengers missed their critical medical appointments. Then we had schoolchildren left stranded in the mornings on the streets across Panania, Picnic Point and Revesby. Parents were forced to leave work to return to the bus stops and take their children to school. The inconvenience caused to my community was unacceptable.

Constituents living in the suburbs of Milperra, Condell Park, Georges Hall, Revesby Heights and Picnic Point do not have a train station. People of these suburbs and communities rely heavily on the public bus service. They deserve efficient bus services. It is my commitment to ensure that bus services are delivered as promised for those communities. Whilst U-Go Mobility, which took over the contract for the region, has shared responsibility, we know the previous Government left a bus system that did not work for anyone—not for passengers, not for bus companies and not for drivers. The community of East Hills deserves better.

I commend the Minns Labor Government, particularly New South Wales Minister for Transport Jo Haylen, who has been working closely with community and industry to resolve the mess left behind. In May 2023 the Minister announced the creation of the Bus Industry Taskforce to make recommendations to improve the reliability, quality and effectiveness of bus services across New South Wales. This was an election commitment. The people of my electorate voted to improve bus services and we are delivering on this. The taskforce is investigating key factors relevant to the performance of bus operators and making recommendations to the Minister on options to address it. I know that many members of this House have already met with the taskforce and provided submissions to its important work.

I have advocated on behalf of my community for key adjustments to bus services to region 10. Our children deserve to be able to get to and from school safely to access their education. That is why I have been fighting to secure a designated bus service from Padstow to Menai High School via Padstow Heights. We are delivering on our promise to provide this service for our community, with a direct service commencing term 1 of 2024, something the previous Government could not do. The people of the East Hills electorate deserve efficient bus services. It is my commitment to ensure that bus services are delivered as promised for those communities.

### **HORNSBY RUGBY CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (19:32):** Recently I was privileged to attend an event to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the great Hornsby Rugby Club. The well-attended dinner event marked the 1962



re-establishment of the Hornsby Rugby Club into the club that exists today. Attending the commemoration were players and administrators past and present, as well as my friend and former Wallaby Peter FitzSimons as the special guest. Hornsby Rugby Club is one of the most respected sporting organisations in my local area and has enjoyed much success throughout its history. A number of past and future international representatives have played for the club amongst the many very talented rugby union players who have called the Hornsby Lions home over the years.

The night also marked the launch of *Into the Lion's Den*, a book detailing the history of this great club. The book was put together by club stalwart Ross Storey, who has been involved with the Hornsby Rugby Club as a player, coach and administrator—sometimes all three at the same time—since 1966. Ross' impressive book is extremely well researched. It took an enormous effort over a long time to collate the club's history into the easy-to-read format in which it is presented.

Ross Storey's hard work has been well worth it as he has managed to record the history while colourfully illustrating the highs and lows of the Hornsby Rugby Club in great detail. At the same time, the book is a pleasure to read, even for non-rugby followers. Throughout its 500 pages, across two volumes, are hundreds of terrific photographs with many faces and names that anyone from the Hornsby area would recognise. Many of the more impressive action photos taken in recent years have been contributed by the current club secretary, Lenny Patchett, who is also a playing member.

I was particularly interested to read a wonderful chapter detailing the important role the club has played in supporting immigrants to be made to feel warmly welcomed to the local area through the sport of rugby, particularly those from Wales, New Zealand and the Pacific islands of Fiji and Tonga. The special connection that Hornsby Rugby Club has developed over many years with the small Fijian village of Saunaka is exceptional. The significant contribution that some of those adopted Hornsby players have made to the club is highlighted by the inclusion of eight of them in Hornsby Rugby's "Team of the Century". They are Tui Malifa, Nasivi Ravouvou, Bill Seuseu, Dave Patrick, Ben Bowen, Karl Davies, Bill Vai and Ralami Navotuvotu. In addition, chapters are devoted to great clubmen and local legends such as Andy Warner, Glen Marks, Al Ross, Tod Wills and Evan Fraser. The first print of Ross Storey's book *Into the Lion's Den* is already sold out, and I sincerely hope the second print is not far away.

A few others amongst those who have contributed, and continue to contribute, to Hornsby Rugby Club are Tristan Jones, Greg Harris, Marty Harris, Murray Keir and, of course, the book's author, Ross Storey. All of those gentlemen are amongst the club's life members. Today Hornsby Rugby Club complements its men's senior teams with a strong women's team and a thriving junior club that includes girls' teams that continue to grow year after year. The junior club is ably led by the president, David Millar, who is actively supported by two former presidents, Michael Onslow and Andrew Marren. Two Hornsby junior rugby graduates who have progressed in the sport are Brumbies player Billy Pollard, who hails from Hornsby Heights, and current Wallabies second rower, Nick Frost, who is from Berowra. The women's team is coached by former player and junior coach Kieran Tobin and is led by long-time player Angela Astley, nee Marando, with another long-time player, Jessica Knight, joining the coaching ranks.

Many of the names I have mentioned are still involved in Hornsby Rugby Club's Golden Oldies team as players. That is another thriving part of the club that was pulled together by former first grade captain Marty Harris in 2012 under the banner of "the Busted Lions". It was for this part of the club that I was fortunate enough to be invited to don the famous red, black and gold jersey and participate in a game a few years ago. I also greatly appreciated being allowed to score a try in my one and only appearance—I will try to keep it at that. I congratulate club president Tim Burns and his committee, including Kath Davenport, Karen Truskett-Jones and Rebecca Palisi, on guiding their club to achieve this significant milestone. With the Hornsby Rugby Club, the sport of rugby in my electorate is in great hands at all levels. I dare say that the Wallabies could do with a dose of the can-do attitude of the Hornsby Lions.

**Mr Greg Warren:** And without you.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Definitely without me—I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Campbelltown. The Hornsby Rugby Club is really part of the heart and soul of the Hornsby district. It has been a great club for over 60 years. In fact, history books show that it goes back to the early 1900s, when a young Charlie Somerville, who went on to become the mayor of Hornsby, played for the club. He is the person on which the character of Ginger Meggs is based. The club has a long and deep history in Hornsby. May it continue for many years into the future.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (19:37):** On Sunday around 200 people gathered in Queanbeyan to once again express their support for a yes vote in Saturday's referendum. The Prime Minister came to Queanbeyan, along with our Federal member, Kristy McBain, and a number of members of the Federal and Australian Capital Territory parliaments. Kate Carnell also came as representative of Liberals for Yes. She is a former Liberal Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory. It was a gathering that crossed party lines because many of us felt it was important to once again emphasise the importance of voting yes as a modest and fair way of trying to help our Indigenous Australians to overcome some of the disadvantage they have experienced historically and that they continue to experience.

Aunty Matilda House gave the welcome. She was the National Indigenous Elder of the Year this year, and I have mentioned her before in this place. Aunty Matilda was very emotional when the Prime Minister got there, and that is because it is so important to people like Aunty Matilda and to Indigenous people that we get a yes vote on Saturday. I think some of them fear what voting no would express for Australia. Queanbeyan's deputy mayor, Esma Livermore, is our first Indigenous deputy mayor in Queanbeyan and, indeed, our first Indigenous councillor. She gave a wonderful speech at the event, and the Prime Minister spoke about the proposal itself. He emphasised some of the things that the no campaign has been saying that are not true. For instance, he emphasised that no-one proposing the Voice has committed to spending a cent more; they are trying to use the Voice to ensure that money is better spent. He spoke about the fairness and equity of the proposal made by the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which has been falsely claimed by opponents to be a Labor proposal. He pointed out that it came from Indigenous people themselves because they want to see us taking this action to help close the gap.

I have made a number of comments on social media recently that have received some unfortunate responses, particularly about spending on Aboriginal people and Indigenous programs. I point out that, far from being bigger than the health spend, as some have said on social media, there is a direct spend nationwide of about \$5.6 billion. That is about 1.1 per cent of the Australian budget being spent directly on Indigenous people. Of course, Indigenous people are also eligible for the services that everybody else in Australia is eligible for, including health and education, and that is only fair and right.

It has been disappointing to see opposition from people who go completely the other way and say that they will not vote yes because they want sovereignty or that sovereignty has not been ceded. I implore those people to put aside the sovereignty argument and take a step towards progress. If the Australian people cannot support this modest proposal to elect a Voice that has no binding authority over the Parliament, then they are hardly likely to vote for something that transfers sovereignty or recognises sovereignty and gives powers associated with that. We must take this modest step now to ensure that we can make progress.

Social media comments, in some cases, have been awful. Frankly, some of the comments on my posts have bordered on fascist in many ways. There is a tendency for some people to run these sorts of nationalist things up and to run campaigns that demonise people. We should dismiss the argument that prominent members of the Indigenous community are multibillionaires and will profit from this. That argument simply panders to fear and tries to raise the nationalist sentiments of fascists in many countries. It is a simple proposal and it is a simple point; this is to lift up people who undeniably experience poorer outcomes, and it is to give them a say in how they are lifted up. It will not cost anybody else. I say to the one or two people who watch my videos of Parliament that lifting someone else up costs absolutely nothing. Vote yes. It is the simple and fair thing to do.

## ORANGE ELECTORATE RAIL SERVICES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:43):** I once again highlight the need for improved rail services for the communities of the Orange electorate and for the greater Central West. I have advocated and lobbied for improved passenger rail services for the good people of Orange ever since I was first elected seven years ago. From the outset, I acknowledge the passionate members of the Orange Rail Action Group, whose collective and unwavering efforts to improve passenger rail services for our country commuters have helped to prioritise this issue. The Orange Rail Action Group garnered over 10,000 signatures from Orange locals, a number representing approximately half of the adult population of this vibrant regional city, petitioning the New South Wales Parliament for improved rail services. The petition has sought the government of the day to implement an early morning express passenger train direct from Orange to Sydney Central and its return in the same afternoon, and for infrastructure upgrades to the main western lines to support faster and more efficient passenger rail and freight services.

In June 2019, here in this place, I proudly debated the Orange Rail Action Group's petition. It is unfortunate that the government of the day did not heed or action these reasonable requests during its tenure. To frustrate my community's stakeholders even further, the former Government also failed to release to the public the fast rail report which it commissioned internationally renowned rail expert Professor Andrew McNaughton to produce.

To date, that taxpayer-funded report remains confidential and classified Cabinet in confidence. The western rail line was an element of the report, and it would be entirely beneficial for the rail expert's view on the need for passenger and freight rail services and infrastructure, now and for the future, to be disclosed.

Undeterred, the members of the Orange Rail Action Group have since continued to garner support for improved rail services throughout the Central West. They have met with and received support in their endeavours from Blayney Shire Council, Orange City Council, Cabonne Shire Council and Parkes Shire Council. These councils recognise that investing in improved rail services is not just about short-term gains; it is about securing a prosperous and promising future for our communities. Why are passenger rail services so important to Orange and the broader Central West? One reason is for economic prosperity. Improving our rail connections will catalyse economic growth in our region. It will reduce the logistical hurdles faced by businesses, allowing them to reach major markets in Sydney more efficiently. This, in turn, will spur investment, create jobs and contribute to the economic wellbeing of Orange and its neighbouring areas.

It will also enhance connectivity. Improved passenger rail services will strengthen the bonds between regional communities and our State's capital. It will substantially reduce travel times, making it easier for our residents to access health care, educational institutions and a wide range of services in Sydney. This is not just a convenience, but it is about ensuring equal access to opportunities for all. Another benefit will be traffic congestion reduction. As the population grows, so does traffic congestion on our roads. Investing in better rail services will incentivise more people to choose public transportation, reducing the number of cars on our roads and subsequently decreasing traffic congestion. This not only benefits commuters but also contributes to a more sustainable future and better road safety.

Better rail services will boost tourism. Our region is blessed with stunning landscapes, a rich historical heritage and a vibrant cultural scene. Improved rail connectivity will attract more tourists to explore our area, bringing their patronage to local businesses, hotels, restaurants and attractions. This boost in tourism is a direct path to a stronger local economy. Access to health care and other opportunities will be improved. Many locals require specialist health services, which are often based in Sydney. Improved rail services will make the journey to access these services increasingly accessible and affordable for them, ensuring they can access the health care they need and helping to close the city-country health service divide.

Let us turn our attention to a grand vision that could redefine our region's future—the establishment and stabling of a daily bullet train service in Orange. This is not merely a convenience; it is a statement of our region's immense potential. Imagine Orange as a key regional hub, a place where a seamless rail service stops daily, connecting us to our State's capital. This will not only attract investment but will also create jobs, drive innovation and put our region firmly on the map. The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, recently met with me, along with members of the Orange Rail Action Group and representatives of Orange City Council.

I thank the Minister for her time listening to our requests for what are reasonable and achievable improvements to rail services, which will be significant to our country communities. The stabling of a bullet passenger train at Orange, providing a daily service to Sydney and return, will provide our community with the regular and reliable public transport service they need and deserve. I will continue to work closely with the Minister towards achieving the installation of improved rail services for the communities of the Orange electorate and the broader Central West.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:48):** There is no better champion for Orange and, indeed, for the Central West of New South Wales than the member for Orange. I do not say that as his parliamentary colleague, but as a bloke who was born and raised in Dubbo. I truly understand the disconnect that those in the Central Tablelands, the Central West and the Central West slopes and plains feel. Tonight the member for Orange has clearly outlined his community's serious concerns. I am delighted to hear that Minister Aitchison has met with the Orange Rail Action Group, but the advocacy by the member for Orange and what he is doing for those in the Central Tablelands, the Central West slopes and plains and, indeed, the whole of the Central West is second to none. They are lucky to have him. This Parliament is lucky to have him, and I thank him for his work.

#### STATE BUDGET AND CAMDEN ELECTORATE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:49):** It has been a little over three weeks since the Treasurer handed down the first budget of the new Minns Labor Government. In that budget the Government sought to deliver on its key election promises made to the people of our State and has done so by investing in public services, all without the privatisation of essential services. We all know that the former Government was obsessed with privatisation. It did not understand then, and still does not understand now, that people rely on public services every day. Whether it be public transport, public schools or public venues, public services are vital to the everyday

functioning of our society in New South Wales. I am proud that this Government is committed to investing in public services and not selling them off.

Today I speak about the impacts of the budget on my electorate of Camden. The people of Camden were previously neglected under 12 years of Coalition governments in our State. The recent budget invests in our essential services that are so vital to the people of Camden. The public service wage cap was the legacy of the former Government, a legacy of suppressing wages for our teachers and nurses. Camden has the second highest number of teachers in the State behind Blue Mountains. Camden also has one of the highest numbers of nurses in the State. It is those essential workers that keep our society functioning every day, staffing our essential services like schools and hospitals that are integral for everyday people.

Nurses and teachers are prime examples of workers who were ignored and neglected by former governments, with their wage cap limiting pay and undervaluing the tireless work of nurses and teachers for our State. Those workers sent a message to the former Government in March and that message was loud and clear: Essential workers will not tolerate low wages and governments that refuse to listen to them. Under the Minns Labor Government, New South Wales teachers are now the highest paid in the country, making a real difference to the over 2,000 teachers that live in my electorate while also eating into the teacher shortage that has plagued our classrooms for years. All other public sector workers have received a 4 per cent pay increase, the largest in over a decade.

The budget is delivering for Camden. By providing responsible cost-of-living relief to those doing it tough, the Government is supporting the people of Camden. That is why 6,370 households in Camden are eligible for energy bill relief to help people pay soaring electricity bills. It is also why the budget provides \$500 of fee relief per child for three-year-olds in long day care centres, supporting families across Camden. The budget also provides funding for much-needed high schools in Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills, easing the overcrowding that has become the norm for fast-growing parts of my electorate. In addition, Gledswood Hills will be upgraded and a new public school will be built in Gregory Hills.

The Minns Labor Government's first budget is delivering for the people of Camden and the people of New South Wales. By investing in essential services and infrastructure that people in my electorate rely on, we can ensure that people are receiving the quality services they demand from government, all without selling off publicly owned assets. The budget is the start of a new Government that delivers for the people who need it most. Schools like Spring Farm Public School and Camden South Public School will have access to safer crossings, allowing students to walk easily and safely to school. Camden will no longer be left behind, because a Labor government delivers. While there is still an enormous amount of work to do to address some of the most pressing challenges in my electorate and around the State, this budget gives us a great start and ultimately delivers for the people of Camden more than any other budget from the past decade.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:53):** I thank the member for Camden. I must disclose that I am biased; she taught music to my two sons. Darcy stopped playing the saxophone; however, he still enjoys the good company of the member for Camden in her role as an elected member of this Parliament. I acknowledge her efforts to ensure funding to upgrade Gledswood Hills high school and to getting a school built in Gregory Hills, which was promised for so long. It was not until Sally Quinell was elected the member for Camden and this Government took office that a commitment was made to build the schools those communities of the future need. I was out there only the other day with the Hon. John Graham ensuring that Spring Farm Parkway and Menangle Road connects to the Hume Highway. There is so much more to come. I look forward to working with the member for Camden.

#### STATE BUDGET AND UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:54):** This evening I update the House on several pressing infrastructure projects needed for the Upper Hunter electorate. It is all about infrastructure that will unlock housing and development. Allow me to refer to *Budget Paper No. 3*, the Infrastructure Statement, page 1-6, box 1.2, "Aligning housing and infrastructure delivery":

Infrastructure is a key enabler of increased housing supply, with timely provision critical to supporting housing delivery and creating communities that meet the needs of residents for years to come.

That statement at its core is relevant to my communities of Sandy Hollow and Scone just as much as it is to communities across the Sydney Basin. Let me start at Sandy Hollow, which is just south-west of Muswellbrook. It has the distinction of being the childhood home and stomping ground of the fourteenth Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Stephen Gageler, AC, who commences his appointment next month. Muswellbrook Shire Council has plans to improve the supply of drinking water to the residents of Sandy Hollow, but the Denman-Sandy Hollow water pipeline is currently parked, awaiting a funding green light to progress to construction. In 2020 the previous Government committed \$18.9 million to the pipeline. Since then,

Muswellbrook Shire Council has undertaken the cost work and the design work. With a detailed costing prepared late last year, the project is ready to proceed. However, as we all know, construction costs have increased, and additional funding of \$9 million is now required.

Before the election, the previous Government committed to cover the cost increases to get the job done. But, with a change of government and as 2023 draws to a close, Sandy Hollow residents continue to wait, left with virtually undrinkable water from the Goulburn River. Instead, they opt to truck water to their homes and fill household tanks to ensure a palatable water supply, which costs about \$200 per fortnight. If you think that sounds rough, you should see the corrosive impact that calcium in the existing water supply has on plumbing fittings—taps, showers and toilets—and household appliances. Worse still is a limited water supply should a grass or bushfire start, with the surrounding countryside parched by a long, dry winter coupled with the recent sizzling start to spring. We have a problem.

We have a council with funding that needs a top-up to cover cost blowouts and residents who want an improved, reliable domestic water supply. But wait—there's more. Muswellbrook Shire Council believes that, once delivered, this project may facilitate growing industrial and residential development and economic diversification in the Denman-Sandy Hollow district. I say to the Premier that for \$9 million, here is a project that could help ease housing pressures and at the same time open up economic development opportunities at this pivotal transition time for the Upper Hunter electorate.

Now let us go to Scone, which is the horse capital of Australia and home of the internationally renowned thoroughbred breeding industry. Scone has its own pressing infrastructure need, one that if not attended to promptly could, as mentioned earlier, stifle future investment and development. Upper Hunter Shire Council has proposed an infrastructure upgrade for the Scone sewerage system, which requires financial assistance from the Government. The council's sewerage system is at capacity and requires an upgrade to cater for new developments—a residential development of 300 lots and significant commercial developments. As I mentioned earlier, quoting from the Government's recently printed budget papers, infrastructure is a key enabler, with timely provision critical to supporting housing delivery and creating communities that meet the needs of residents for years to come. I ask the Minns Labor Government to put action into those words and back these two projects for the Upper Hunter electorate.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:58):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for raising these matters, but I draw the House's attention to the Coalition's having been in government for 12 years. I do not necessarily blame the current member for Upper Hunter, but during his predecessor's time, the Liberals and Nationals shovelled houses upon houses into his electorate and did not fund any kind of adequate infrastructure. We have been in government for six months and those opposite are yet again asking, "What are you doing?" and "How are we doing?"

**Mr David Layzell:** Put your money where your mouth is.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** We are fixing the budget that those opposite broke. It is the Liberals and The Nationals in New South Wales that shoved people into the Upper Hunter electorate and failed them. That is why it is suffering now. Opposition members should blame themselves.

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

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:59):** I speak about why I am voting yes in this Saturday's referendum and put the case on behalf of so many in my community who will also be voting yes and supporting a First Nations Voice to Parliament. I recognise that there are diverse views in my community, and whilst everyone has a democratic right to vote according to their own values, after a lifetime of working in Aboriginal affairs I genuinely believe that a yes vote is the way for us to start to see real change in this country. The cornerstone of a process for Aboriginal people through a Voice to Parliament and the recognition of the invisibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution are at the heart of this referendum. We are here because of the failure of past policies and the urgent need for a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament.

In my working life teaching and supporting Aboriginal students and their families, it has been palpable to me that Aboriginal people in the main are not the ones designing and developing programs to better support Indigenous people—far from it. As an MP I see now that programs that are designed without Aboriginal people are also not reviewed at all—or rarely—to see if they are successful or if, indeed, they achieve the aims they set out to achieve. That is on us. Decades of programs have not had Aboriginal people front and centre. They have not been reviewed or measured and they are viewed harshly when they fail. This is a failure of public policy.

Previous iterations of Aboriginal voices through entities like the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission were wound down by the government of the day. That is why a constitutionally enshrined Voice that

will be designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and that cannot be dismantled depending on the political favour of the day, is critical. It is non-controversial. Since 2011, we have witnessed seven public processes and 10 public reports on constitutional recognition. As Megan Davis points out in her outstanding work *Voice of Reason*, "for each Prime Minister, we had to explain the process from scratch". The Voice will provide that body of work in perpetuity and put an end to the horror that sees Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people marginalised from the creation and assessment of programs that purport to be in their best interests. First Nations people need to be front and centre. In his review of Megan Davis' work, Mark McKenna noted:

Over the past fifty years, the presence of Indigenous culture and history has become more visible in Australia's public culture; from Welcome to Country ceremonies, to place names, art, dance, music and literature, and the opening ceremonies of football finals, school assemblies and, since 2008, the opening of federal parliament after each federal election.

Indeed, every morning at the beginning of a sitting day in the New South Wales Parliament there is an acknowledgement of country. McKenna continues:

For many Australians and certainly for visitors from overseas, this is the most distinctive aspect of Australian culture.

How long can Australians remain content to draw on this rich Indigenous knowledge and heritage as mere symbolism? Surely we have to give more; surely we need to demonstrate that we have listened to and heard Indigenous Australians—

—by supporting the Uluru statement. The passing of the upcoming referendum will be a powerful symbol of reconciliation in this country. We know that many First Nations people in our communities continue to suffer systemic disadvantage that truly hurts their futures and the futures of successive generations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on their own country continue to endure disproportionately poor health and educational outcomes, rates of incarceration and levels of poverty. The Uluru Statement from the Heart, which was contributed to by thousands of First Nations people across Australia, told us that constitutional recognition is needed to begin healing the trauma of the past and to set a new path forward that truly delivers better outcomes for First Nations people.

This is a chance to advance justice and equality and to step towards a future where First Nations people are respected, are listened to and have the power to make decisions about their lives. I finish with a quote from Delta Kay, a local Bundjalung Elder from Byron Bay who was raised on her mother's mother's traditional country. She said:

I want to see an Indigenous Voice to parliament that will challenge policies and law. I want to see an Indigenous voice that knows our people and will have solutions ...

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, which is why I am voting yes this Saturday.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:04):** I thank the member for Ballina for her very astute contribution in her private member's statement. She is not only a colleague and a woman who is passionate about this issue, but she has the credibility in the legal fraternity and has practised it and achieved outcomes for her local community and local First Nations people. She is absolutely correct: How can we possibly change in the future if we continue with the past? I am voting yes for the same reasons that the member for Ballina outlined. Mr Temporary Speaker, I know that you are too, and I commend you for that. I commend all members who are taking that position. I urge all members to reflect on the member for Ballina's point that every morning, when this Parliament sits, we acknowledge our First Nations people. That is a pivotal point. I thank the member for Ballina for bringing this contribution to the House.

## WASTE INCINERATION

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:06):** Tonight I speak in opposition to waste incineration—or what has erroneously been greenwashed as "waste to energy" in New South Wales. If one looks in *Hansard*, they will see that I have spoken in this House multiple times in opposition to this and similar matters proposed in my electorate. In summary, for those who are not aware, the multinational, multibillion-dollar giant that is Veolia has proposed to build a waste incinerator at its existing landfill site outside of the village of Tarago in my electorate of Goulburn. The proposal suggests transporting 380,000 tonnes of municipal, commercial and industrial waste produced in Sydney each year to be incinerated, burnt to toxic ash and then buried within the Sydney Water catchment area.

The waste from the city is already transported to the village twice a day. The stinking, leaking rubbish containers are taken via rail past pristine national parks and our primary school. They are then loaded onto trucks and buried in the abandoned mine near the village. The company has received multiple Environment Protection Authority [EPA] breaches for the mismanagement of this operation—most recently in August, with polluted waste leachate leaking onto the quiet village streets. The \$30,000 fine from the EPA is a pittance to a company worth nearly \$22 billion. To equate this to relatable terms, a person worth \$1 million would be fined just over 1¢. In fact, it would be 1.36¢. Veolia would find more than that kind of change under its lounge cushions.

Despite the breaches, Veolia continues to carry on because the Government allows it. The danger is that Veolia has proved that it cannot comply with its operating conditions, and incinerating this waste will become an immeasurable risk. There will be a risk to not just immediate human health surrounding the project but also every one of the many agricultural productions surrounding the village. Across the floor of this House, when the incinerator was first proposed, I agreed with the now environment Minister's sentiment when she was the shadow Minister and stood in opposition to the similar proposal in Eastern Creek. The Hon. Penny Sharpe said:

Time for talk is over. This project shouldn't be going ahead and the government should stop it now.

Now that she is the Minister, we hear crickets. The Minister has refused to meet with my constituents to hear their concerns, which are similar to the concerns she expressed when in opposition. The Minister has directed my questions about the issue to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The project proposes to burn 380,000 tonnes of rubbish in order to generate steam and a measly 39 megawatts of electricity annually. Is that not an energy and environment issue? The Minister has to understand that the department will assess this as a part of the planning appraisal, and my constituents deserve to be heard. He should give them the courtesy of listening. We need to sort the rubbish in Sydney, improve recycling and food organics and garden organics, save the wasted emissions from the trains and the trucks, and stop taking the trash to Tarago.

The next Minister who has declined a request is the Hon. Tara Moriarty, the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Regional New South Wales. She declined the request of Longwater Agricultural Association to meet and discuss the proposal, specifically the response of the Department of Primary Industries Agriculture to the waste incinerator proposal in which it basically undertook a box-checking exercise. It issued a response stating that it had collaborated and partnered with stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

There was no consultation with any members of the Longwater Agricultural Association. Let it be known that this group represents 57 agricultural enterprises within a 40-kilometre radius of the proposed development that comprise a total of 63,000 hectares valued at approximately \$700 million. Its members' farming activities involve sheep, cattle, chickens, wool and crops. They have 143 employees. It is a significant agricultural stakeholder, whom the Minister referred back to the department. These farmers and their communities have been in Tarago for generations. My constituents deserve to be heard by the Minister and she should give them the courtesy of listening. I again take the opportunity to raise the New South Wales waste strategy. My belief is that the inclusion of waste incineration is onerous and risky. The circular economy is a far greater, nuanced approach. I urge the House to review the current New South Wales waste strategy and ban these toxic waste incinerators.

### ANNANGROVE ROAD

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (20:11):** I speak on an issue that has remained outstanding and is of the utmost importance to my community. It is also of the utmost importance to the many motorists who use the road network within the northern suburbs of my electorate. I speak in respect of Annangrove Road, which we require to be reclassified as a State road. Annangrove Road traverses the suburbs of Annangrove, Kenthurst and Dural. It is used daily by motorists travelling through the Blacktown, Riverstone, Hawkesbury, Kellyville and Castle Hill electorates. It is used as a connector road to travel via Kenthurst Road through Round Corner to connect to Old Northern Road. Motorists are using Annangrove Road to connect to the M2 and to travel to other parts of Sydney. Over the past several years the north-west region has seen an increasing number of residents moving into the area. The population will continue to increase significantly over the next 10 years and, therefore, something needs to be done about Annangrove Road.

The importance of Annangrove Road as a main road was reported on by *The Daily Telegraph* in 2017. The journalist correctly described the importance of the road by saying, "Annangrove Road could hold the key to busting traffic woes in key Hills town centres." The Hills Shire Council general manager, Michael Edgar, who was then a group manager, was reported in *The Daily Telegraph* commenting as follows:

Annangrove Rd serves as a link between Windsor Rd and ultimately Dural Round Corner via New Line and Boundary Roads, to Pennant Hills Road.

We believe that a link from Annangrove Rd to Old Northern Rd, bypassing Dural Round Corner makes sense in the medium term and a corridor should be agreed and funded—as it will be a long time before outer M8 and M9 motorways become a reality.

The comments concerning Annangrove Road were made almost seven years ago, and yet little progress has been made to upgrade Annangrove Road since that time. The Hills Shire Council has sought to work cooperatively with the Roads and Maritime Services, now known as Transport for NSW, to solve the problem of traffic congestion arising from the growth in population. I note the council reported on 26 March 2019 that it had sought for Annangrove Road to be reclassified from a sub-arterial road to an arterial road to recognise the higher volume of traffic arising from the growth in population. Council also sought funding for the bypass where Annangrove Road connects to Old Northern Road to remove traffic from Round Corner. To date the transport department has

not moved to reclassify Annangrove Road to an arterial road, nor has council received any funding for the much-needed bypass.

I have received numerous representations from residents who complain about the traffic gridlock on Annangrove Road. Residents feel frustrated as Annangrove Road is the only viable option for many residents. During peak hours residents are delayed extensively. Various bottleneck points, such as the intersection of Annangrove Road and Kenthurst Road, frustrate motorists. I have travelled upon Annangrove Road during peak times, and I know the frustration they feel. It is scandalous that our residents' complaints have not been addressed. It is not simply the residents of my electorate who are frustrated, as Annangrove Road is used extensively by residents of all the neighbouring electorates. Over the past five years the population in the locality has increased by approximately 40 per cent. Notwithstanding the increased population and projected increase in the region, little action has been taken to improve that part of the road network.

On 4 September Annangrove Road was again the subject of comment in the community newspaper. The *Hills to Hawkesbury* magazine, which is the main community magazine, referred to the ever-increasing traffic congestion in the areas of Kenthurst, Annangrove and Dural. Annangrove Road should be reclassified as a State arterial road and Transport for NSW should take over responsibility for the road. I call upon the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Roads, to take appropriate action through Transport for NSW to reclassify Annangrove Road to a State road and to upgrade Annangrove Road to address the traffic gridlock, which results from the increase in population in the north-west region of our city.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:15):** I sincerely thank the member for Castle Hill. He is new to this place and is taking up issues that I know he truly believes in on behalf of his community. But the reality is that, like he stated, in 2017—seven years ago—Annangrove Road was highlighted as an issue. I remember being in this place and hearing his predecessors, who were then on this side of the House, talk about the issue but do nothing. In 2019, as the member said, the inner section at Kenthurst Road was referred to particularly. I was then the shadow Minister for Western Sydney and I am now the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney, so I know exactly what he is talking about. We are trying to get things right and make investments, but the reality is that we did not see the investment in west and south-west Sydney, or indeed in the north-west, that we should have seen under the previous Government. We are working towards fixing that in the future.

#### *Bills*

### **PAINTBALL AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

#### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:17 until  
Wednesday 11 October 2023 at 10:00.**

#### *Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

### **DANDELION SUPPORT NETWORK**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I was delighted to attend the Dandelion Support Network's High Tea last month, which raised over \$22,000 to support this Shire-based organisation's work for children and families in need. The Dandelion Support Network's vision is that all babies and children have access to nursery items essential for their safety, well-being and development. A dedicated group of more than 80 volunteers accepts donations of good quality preloved and new nursery furniture as well as items like prams, car seats and toys, and readies them for families following high quality assurance standards. Since 2011 Dandelion Support Network has helped more than 16,000 families, partnering with agencies and support services that work with some of the most vulnerable families in our community. Its board comprises Kathryn Brennan (chair), Craig Berger, Michael Barker, Dominique Brown, Tracy Edwards and Amanda Treharne. I commend staff Gabrielle Humphreys (general manager), plus Brenda Lavender, Saskia Duncan, Kaylene Pring, Katrina Lonergan and Danielle Ruming, plus the volunteers, who work with passion and dedication to provide much needed support for children and families. This support helps keep children safe and improves health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes of those touched by Dandelion Support Network.



### CRONULLA POLAR BEARS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the Cronulla Polar Bears Winter Swimming Club on winning their 13th Australian Winter Swimming Association of Australia Men's National title, at the 46th Australian Winter Swimming Championships held at Warringah Aquatic Centre on 17 September. They last won the title in 2015 at Wagga Wagga. One thousand swimmers took to the pools, in 14 age groups. The Polar Bears had five individual gold medallists, John Butterfield, Ron Masaar, Adam Murphy, Ian Matthews and Steve Parkes. John Butterfield won the gold medal for 50 metres freestyle in the O85s, setting a new Australian record time. In the opens category, Steve Parkes and Jim Dicksons came first and second respectively. Adam Murphy was awarded the John Stacpoole Award for Swimmer of the Meet. The Polar Bears were formed in 1953 and have been training every Sunday between May and September since their opening 70 years ago. The club has won at least 24 out of 26 South Metropolitan championships.

### PETER WILLIAMS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Port Hacking Outriggers Club member Peter Williams on winning gold at the World Distance Outriggers Canoe Titles held in Samoa. Peter was the coach of and a paddler for the Australian men's 60+ team, which was part of the first Australian men's crew to take home a gold medal at the World Titles. Along with his teammates, Peter was selected through a series of races and then a two day selection camp on the Sunshine Coast.

### SARAH DIMECH

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Congratulations to Wyong Roos player Sarah Dimech from Charmhaven who was presented Female Player of the Year at the Club's Senior Presentation on 22 September. Sarah is part of that generation of female players forcibly retired from tackle rugby league at the age of 12 years. Sarah was a member of the Roos League Tag team which won the 2019 Premiership though she was rehabbing from a ruptured ACL come Grand Final Day. The Club first entered an Open Women's Tackle team in the Newcastle Hunter A Division in Season 2022. Sarah was an important part of that team which qualified for the Finals, then went on to skipper the 2023 squad which again made the Finals. Sarah has represented NSW Country in the National Championships and Central Coast Roosters in the Harvey Norman Women's Premiership. In 2023 Sarah played 25 matches across all competitions and selection also beckons for Malta in the 2025 World Cup to be staged in France. I wish Sarah all the best in her sporting endeavours.

### WE CARE CONNECT

**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)**—We Care Connect based in Wyong are announced as Volunteer Team of the Year at the 2023 Central Coast Volunteer Award Ceremony held at Gosford Golf Club. We Care Connect volunteers Janette, Rob and Mel accepted the award on behalf of their team of over 80 volunteers. In 2016 Derryck Klarkowski started We Care Connect with a small group of volunteers to reach young families and break the barrier of childhood poverty. Families donate much needed items such as clothes, linen, bassinet, cot, sheets, blankets, mattress protectors and wraps, towels and face washers, nappy bags, changing mats, car seats, prams, toys, and essential items. These items go a long way for young families, grandparents caring for their grandchildren or emergency foster carers. Today 10,000 children live below the poverty line on the Central Coast and the organisation continue to grow helping over 6,000 kids on the Central Coast, reaching over 150,000 donations. Derryck believes it is not enough and there is much more work needed in the community. Congratulations to the We Care Connect team for being acknowledged in the important work and difference you are making too many families and children across the community.

### NORTH CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING

**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)**—North Construction & Building head office at Tuggerah took out first place in the National Business Excellence Award for Large Commercial Building Company at the 2023 National Business Excellence Awards, hosted by Master Builders Australia. The company was established by Michael North and Warwick Mosman in 1987, the company's core values and focus on regional NSW have remained steadfast through changes of ownership and expansion. Over the years North Construction & Building delivered projects like the Helipad at Gosford Hospital, Post Office at Woy Woy, St Edwards College East Gosford, Woy Woy Aged Care, Gosford City Arts Centre, Terrigal Surf Club and The Art House at Wyong. Recently the company had been awarded the contract to deliver

major project across the Central Coast including the new Gosford Regional Library, Toukley ARY, Coast Christian School, Bluewave Living Woy Woy, Norah Head Community Hall and Play Space and Mangrove Creek Visitor Centre. North have been involved in more than 120 separate school, early learning and university projects and retains their focus for the Central Coast. Congratulations to North Construction & Building for receiving the national award and I wish your company all the best for the future.

#### **ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL, CASTLE HILL, FIRST ART SHOW**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—St Gabriel's School at Castle Hill was founded 100 years ago as a school for the deaf. The school broadened its admission to children with special needs in 2010. Today the school delivers core primary and secondary education, including numeracy and literacy, as well as subjects to develop social skills and communication. The Castle Hill Electorate is fortunate have the St Gabriel's school providing education of our children. I was honoured to attend the schools first art show. The art show was held at the school on 21 September 2023. There was some truly amazing art on display. The art show was attended by parents, teachers, and members of our community who just wanted to see the art on display. It was wonderful to the priceless smiles on parent's and children's faces as they examined their own wonderful art. I recognise the contribution of Principal Michael Farrell and Visual Art Teacher Isobella Davenport, but much more importantly I recognise the wonderful and extraordinary St Gabriel's School children for their contribution to our community. The Castle Hill community looks forward to next year's amazing St. Gabriel's School Art Show.

#### **NORTHOLM GRAMMAR, LEADERSHIP INVESTITURE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I was delighted to attend the Northholm Grammar School Leadership Investiture on 22 September 2023. The Investiture recognised the commissioning of the Student Leaders for 2023 – 2024. The process to select the leadership group involved an extensive process including interviews and elections. I congratulate the incoming student leadership group. School Captains: Sophie Hamilton-James and Kai Strickland. Senior Prefects: Sofia Attia, Mia Lawton, Taine Cassar, Amelia Garner, Emelie Gartner, and Olivia Knight. Capell House Captains: Kirralee Bray and Matthew Coad. Lincoln House Captains: Samuel Miles and Edward Williams. Patteson House Captains: Noah Brown and Luncinda O'Brien. Rowland House Captains: Isabella Henderson and Xanthia Hughes. The Investiture marks the acceptance by the new leaders of the important role of guiding, maintaining, and building a strong and resilient school community. The newly appointed School Captains, Sophie Hamilton-James and Kai Strickland provided an inspirational first address to the school community. I have no doubt they will be wonderful school representatives. Thank you to Principal Bradbury for the invitation to attend Northholm Grammar. Congratulations to the outgoing and to the incoming student leaders.

#### **HILLS KELLYVILLE ROTARY, GARDEN COMPETITION, 2023**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The historical Sydney Hills Garden Competition was started by started by Alderman Eric Mobbs MBE in 1959. Over the past ten years the Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club has conducted the garden competition. I was delighted to attend, on 22 September 2023, with Mayor Dr. Peter Gangemi and Deputy Mayor Mitchell Blue, this year's Garden Awards Presentation evening. There were sixty-seven entries submitted to the judges this year. Chairman of the Garden Competition Keith Stapley stated, "there were a great selection of older gardens" and further "the orchids and succulents this year were great." Many awards given recognising some wonderful gardens during the evening. I specifically congratulate Danuta Szczypior who took out the Eric Mobbs Award for Excellence in Gardening and Paul and Margaret Gaudrey who took out the prestigious Champions of Champion Award. I recognise and thank the Hills Kellyville Rotary Club for another great garden competition. Special recognition and appreciation for service to the community is given to the Chief Judge Ross Miller and to the Garden Competition Chairman Keith Stapley. Thank you to everyone who contributed to another great garden competition.

#### **WARILLA FLORIST AND CLASSY BASKETS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Warilla Florist and Classy Baskets, for winning the Outstanding Florist category at the Illawarra and South Coast Local Business Awards ceremony held on 13 September 2023. The Illawarra and South Coast Local Business Awards are a gala evening that the local business community look forward to and a chance to celebrate successes and reflect on business achievements. The Illawarra and South Coast Local Business Awards are only possible with the support of Presenting Partner, Commonwealth Bank and support partners, Stockland Shellharbour, BxNetworking, White Key Marketing and Cornerstone. Being a finalist at the Illawarra and South Coast Local Business Awards is an enormous achievement and is a great reflection of the effort of the business community therefore to win a category is exceptional. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Warilla Florist and Classy Baskets on this outstanding achievement.

**WARILLA LAKE SOUTH GORILLAS U18'S**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate the Warilla Lake South Gorillas Under 18's Men's Team for winning the Group 7 Senior Rugby League Grand Final at Centenary Field in Albion Park on Sunday 17 September 2023 beating the previously undefeated Gerringong Lions, 24 points to 20. Well done to the whole team, training staff and coach, Leigh Clark, on a very successful year. Special mention to Hudson Bailey who was named Man of the Match. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to the Under 18's team and wish them all the best for next season.

**GABI WHITE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Gabi White, Corpus Christi High School, being selected to play in next month's National Youth Football Championships in Wollongong. After starting football with Shellharbour juniors, Gabi progressed to the Illawarra Stingrays and now plays for Football NSW Institute in the NPL1 competition. Travelling up to train and play in Sydney around three times a week, football is a passion for Gabi. This event will allow many of the next generation of footballers to show their skills in front of big-time selectors. In a big win for the Illawarra football community, Wollongong will be one of the venues to host the 2023 National Youth Championships. WIN Stadium in Wollongong and John Crehan Park in Cringila will be the venues for the under 14 and 16 girls' championships running October 9 to 13. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to express our congratulations to Gabi and wish her all the best for her future football endeavours.

**NEWCASTLE CITY AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Newcastle City Australian Football Club, more affectionately known as the Blues, bring joy and excitement to the local AFL fans and supporters each season and this year was no different. The Blues marked their 140-year anniversary with not just one but four grand final wins. Four of five of the senior teams made it to their grand final, with the Black Diamond Men's Cup, Black Diamond Women's Cup, and Black Diamond Men's Plate teams coming out on top and the Black Diamond Shield side just falling short. Well done. In the junior competitions, the under 13s Girls, under 13s Mixed Swans, under 15s Girls, and under 15s Boys, all reached their grand final. A special congratulations is in order for the under 15 Boys who took home first place medals after an excellent season. Every player and every team has made such a good effort this season. Well done to you all and here's to another 140 years.

**WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—On 29 September, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service marked 50 years since their first day of. The Northern NSW service commenced operations two years later in Newcastle in 1975, with an all-volunteer crew of local surf life savers flying during summer weekends. Since then, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service has been supporting Australians and saving lives every day. The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service operates in partnership with NSW Ambulance and NSW Health to deliver aeromedical and rescue services to those in need across the entire state. In 2022, Westpac committed to supporting the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service for at least another five years to take the partnership well past 50 years. The Northern NSW branch will celebrate its own 50 year anniversary in 2025. Thank you to all the hard-working responders associated with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, and to everyone else who makes it possible.

**COMING TOGETHER FOR AUSTIN WOOD'S BRIGHTER FUTURE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I rise today to bring attention to an event that embodies the indomitable spirit of our community. On the 4th of November, Picton Showground will host a fundraiser for a brave young boy, Austin Wood, diagnosed with quadriplegic cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and dystonia. This event is not just a testament to Austin's resilience but also to the Wood family's courage and the community's boundless compassion. The fundraiser will include a car and bike show, food trucks, children's entertainment, and more. All proceeds will go toward Austin's stem-cell treatment in Bangkok, which aims to improve his quality of life significantly. While the therapy may not cure him, it represents hope—a precious commodity for the Wood family and others dealing with similar hardships. This is a family-friendly event with entry via a gold coin donation. I extend my sincerest gratitude to all who support this cause, including the Tahmoor Lions Club and the countless volunteers who are making the event possible. Let's continue to rally behind Austin and his family as they embark on this journey.

**HONOURING BARTON MAWER: A LOCAL LEGEND IN THE FAST LANE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Today I'm thrilled to honour a local hero who's made it big on the international stage—Barton Mawer of Picton. Barton recently clinched his fourth World Time Attack Challenge title and shattered an outright lap record previously held by F1 racer Nico Hulkenberg. Piloting the RP968 Porsche,

he bested the previous record by a staggering 1.5 seconds—a lifetime in the world of motorsports. Barton's dedication to the sport spans over 30 years. From go-karting on his family's farm to competing in high-profile series globally, his journey has been nothing short of spectacular. His influence doesn't stop at the racetrack; he's also nurturing the next generation, including his son Felix, through driver-coaching programs and sharing valuable engineering knowledge. As if setting the record wasn't enough, Barton celebrated his win with a leap from his car's roof, landing him with a broken heel. But in typical Barton fashion, he took it in stride, reminding us all of the highs and lows of sport. So let's give it up for Barton Mawer, not just for his incredible win, but for being an exemplary role model in our community.

#### **REMEMBERING BRYCE FAIRLEY: A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND COMPASSION**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The community is mourning the loss of Bryce Fairley, who passed away after a courageous battle with lung cancer. Born in 1950, Bryce lived in Bargo for 15 years. He leaves behind his wife Vicki, two children, and seven grandchildren. Alongside a career as a computer operator and metallurgist, Bryce and Vicki ran WeCare Country Kennels, a dog boarding and rescue shelter. Known for his dedication, Bryce served various roles in the Bargo fire brigade, including captain and senior deputy. Even after moving interstate, his commitment to service never waned, and he was proud to be a life member of the brigade. His final wish was to wear his "Life Member" patch on his last journey. Vicki described Bryce as a man whose entire life was an achievement, devoted to family, community, and his passion for dogs. "There's going to be a lot of dogs waiting for him at the Pearly Gates," she said. Bryce Fairley will be remembered as a selfless community servant and a loving family man. His impact, spanning generations and species, leaves an indelible mark.

#### **ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – KINDERGARTEN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Nivan Joshi and Lauren Femia on receiving a 2023 Mercy Award, on Friday 22nd September at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An exceptional student in the KG Class at St Anthony's Primary School, Nivan received the Mercy Award for Respect, recognising his courteous engagement with teachers and students. Demonstrating mutual respect, Nivan treats everyone with dignity by listening to his peers during class. Lauren is an outstanding member of the KW class at St Anthony's Primary School. She was awarded the Mercy Award for Compassion, recognising the caring way she interacts with peers and teachers. Lauren's compassionate nature makes her empathetic to those around her, treating everyone equally with respect and kindness. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Nivan and Lauren were selected as the kindergarten winners of this important award. Congratulations once again Lauren and Nivan. You are commended for the example you set to your peers. Thank you as well to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teaching and support staff for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

#### **ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – YEAR ONE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Mila Weight and Claudia Colless on receiving a 2023 Mercy Award, on Friday 22nd September at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An outstanding member of the 1G Class at St Anthony's Primary School, Mila received the Mercy Award for Service. Mila is always willing to lend a helping hand. She shares her contagious smile and bubbly spirit with teachers and peers alike. Claudia is an excellent student in the 1W class at St Anthony's Primary School, who was awarded the Mercy Award for Respect. Great listening skills and a willingness to help others makes Claudia a class role model. In fulfilment of St Anthony's mission, Claudia's friendly nature helps all students to feel they belong. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Mila and Claudia were selected as the Year One winners of this important award. Congratulations once again Claudia and Mila. You are commended for the example of service and respect you set to your peers. Thank you to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teaching and support staff, for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

#### **ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – YEAR TWO**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Adia Anwin and Thajana Umakanthan on receiving a 2023 Mercy Award, on Friday 22nd September at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. Adia is an outstanding member of the 2G Class at St Anthony's Primary School, who was awarded the Mercy Award for Courage. Adia's fearless spirit and persistence serve as an inspiration to the whole school. Adia embraces challenges and bravely putting faith into action, through word and deed. An excellent member of the 2W class at St Anthony's Primary School, Thajana received the Mercy Award for Justice, recognising the fair and giving nature she shares with her peers. Thajana includes others, encouraging everyone to have a go. Her kindness and courage to stand up for others fulfills St Anthony of Padua's legacy. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Adia and Thajana were selected as the Year Two award recipients. Congratulations once again Adia and Thajana. You are commended

for the example you set to your peers. Thank you to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teaching and support staff, for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF TORONTO SUNRISE**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to acknowledge and thank members of the Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise for the wonderful work they do for the Lake Macquarie community and so many people in need. Recently members raised \$12,000 for the Mark Hughes Foundation by hosting a family friendly Pig Day Out at the Toronto Hotel. The event attracted hundreds of residents, who came together to watch the seven piglets compete in five races. One of the club members son's, 46-year-old Thomas Gwalter died earlier this year from brain cancer. Tom received incredible support from the Mark Hughes Foundation during his battle with the disease, and the club wanted to return the favour by raising some much-needed funds. The Club supports the community in so many ways, this year alone members have held fundraisers for flood victims in the Central West NSW and the Riverina, the Garden of Hope located in a Shariya Refugee camp in Northern Iraq, and NOVA for women and children. They also sponsored the Heaven Can Wait Charity Dinner and a therapy dog called Monty who brings joy to hospital patients. I once again thank members of the Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise for all that they do.

#### **FAYE SAVAGE**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—Over one million children have cuddled a colourful, comforting Trauma Teddy since the Australian Red Cross first launched its volunteer hand-knitting program back in 1990. At last count, more than 600 volunteer knitters in 75 knitting groups hand knit teddies in Australia. They lovingly craft around 50,000 Trauma Teddies a year. Ingleburn resident Faye Savage has been knitting Trauma Teddies for 15 years and was awarded a certificate from the Australian Red Cross acknowledging her volunteer contributions. Faye is a long-standing member of the Ingleburn Knitting Group and has knitted many hundreds of Trauma Teddies, providing comfort for countless children. Once Faye has knitted a Trauma Teddy, she passes it on to Campbelltown Red Cross to sew up and stuff. This way, Faye can knit more teddies and bring comfort to more children. Faye is humble about her contributions to community, made even more remarkable given her own personal health battles. Faye's commendation is well-deserved. I was honoured to host Faye and members of Ingleburn Knitting Group in recognition of Faye's generosity, kindness and dedicated service to others.

#### **BARRY SCHUBERG**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I pay tribute to my dear friend and much-loved community member, Mr Barry Schuberg. Barry passed away recently after a battle with oesophageal cancer. A self-confessed cricket tragic, Barry was fondly known as the 'scoreboard man'. Barry proudly scored his 100th game for Fairfield Liverpool Lions at Rosedale Oval in 2021. Barry turned the numbers of the 'old' scoreboard, and then keenly learnt to use an electronic scoreboard. Barry cherished his role on the scoreboard and supported the Lions' top grade and youth sides. I had the privilege of knowing Barry through Break the Cycle Glenquarie, where he would tend the centre's vegetable garden. Barry's vegetables would end up on the plates of those less fortunate who dropped by Break the Cycle for a bite to eat. Barry was a generous and kind soul. Despite his own health battles, Barry's latter days were filled with helping others as he had all through his life. Always with a story to tell and an infectious smile, Barry will be greatly missed. When all is said and done, Barry would say he had a good innings. Rest in peace.

#### **FESTIVAL OF CHORAL MUSIC**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to the many talented students from schools in my Summer Hill electorate who recently had the chance to perform on the Opera House stage as part of the Department of Education's Festival of Choral Music. The festival is an amazing opportunity for public school students to enjoy the many benefits of participating in a choir; a strong sense of community, learning to work in a team, self-confidence, rhythm and improved breathing to name just a few. The festival is held over four concerts and more than four thousand students are involved. At the centre of each of the concerts is a seven hundred and fifty-voice combined choir that offers students from across the state the opportunity to experience the thrill and challenge of live performance. Gifted musicians also get the chance to perform, showcasing their talents as part of the instrument ensembles. Congratulations to students and their dedicated teachers from Ashbury Public School, Ashfield Boys High School, Dulwich Hill Public School, Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design, Ferncourt Public School, Haberfield Public School, Marrickville High School, Summer Hill Public School and Wilkins Public School on your wonderful performances.

### **CIRCLE PAINTS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I recently had the opportunity to visit Circle Paints and meet with Managing Director and Founder Ms Jocelyn Bell. Circle Paints is a paint reuse charity whose mission is to reduce waste to landfill, reduce carbon emissions and provide customers with affordable, high quality decorative paint. After only opening in February 2023 the charity has grown so quickly that demand for their products is rapidly out growing supply. After becoming aware of the amount of paint that was being dried out then sent to landfill and knowing that paint reuse was operating successfully in other places, Circle Paints was founded to create and grow a market for reuse of waste paint in Sydney, with a vision to expand beyond Sydney over time. It is wonderful to see organisations like Circle Paints finding a home in the Inner West, adding to our vibrant environmentally focussed, recycling and re-use community. I am inspired by the success in such a short time of Jocelyn and the team at Circle Paints and encourage everyone to support the great work they are doing in re-directing waste from land fill. Congratulations Jocelyn and all the team at Circle Paints.

### **SMALL BUSINESS MONTH – NATURALLY READY STUDIO**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Small Business Month is happening throughout October and I am excited to invite everyone to celebrate by joining a workshop at one of the many unique small businesses in my electorate, Naturally Ready Marrickville. Founded by Ms Louella Docot Naturally Ready Marrickville is a creative handmade studio where you can learn to make your own perfume and home fragrance products like scented candles and botanical bath products. Whilst Naturally Ready Marrickville has only been open 18 months, Ms Docot has run her successful business Kiss Ready from her home since 2014. After learning about the many beneficial properties of chia whilst working for Australian growers of chia seeds, Ms Docot started formulating natural products with cold pressed chia seed oil. Ms Docot has been recognised as a Finalist in the AusMumpreneur Awards in the Hair and Beauty Business Excellence category for her products. At her upcoming workshop Ms Docot will share tips of opening, managing, and running a small handmade creative studio and how to turn passion into profit. I encourage everyone to get involved in this workshop and support our vibrant local businesses this Small Business Month.

### **THIRROUL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—The famous coastline that snakes along the eastern boundary of the Heathcote electorate is one of the most picturesque and pristine in NSW. So it comes as no surprise that visitors flock to the beaches from Bundeena south to Bulli. However, it is volunteers – like those from Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club – that are the ones tasked with keeping beachgoers safe. Thirroul SLSC was formed in 1907 and was one of the foundation surf life saving clubs. Thirroul Beach is one of the most popular beaches in the Illawarra region for visitors and locals alike during summer. Thirroul SLSC has always been at the forefront of change being arguably the first club to start a regular nippers program. In 1960, Thirroul was also one of the first surf life saving clubs to admit women as active patrolling members. In the 2022/23 season Thirroul SLSC conducted: 17 first aid treatments; 34 rescues; and 241 preventative actions. The club's 506 members also recorded an incredible 3587 volunteer patrol hours during the 22/23 season. To all the members of Thirroul SLSC, thank you for keeping us safe.

### **MADDISON BARBER**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Maddison Barber, for her contributions to our local small business community. Maddison Barber is the organiser behind the "Get It Girl" Women in Business Expo in Taree. This event brought together female business owners from a wide area, providing them with a platform to network and collaborate. With over 160 participating businesses, it has become the largest Women in Business event on the Mid North Coast, highlighting the strength of our local female entrepreneurs. Maddison Barber, a small business owner herself with three ventures and an eight-month-old baby, understands the challenges faced by entrepreneurs. Her initiative to create an environment for local small business owners to connect and motivate each other is commendable. Maddison's vision extends beyond this expo, as she plans to continue supporting local women in business through events featuring business coaches and awards nights. Thank you, Maddison Barber, for your entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to creating a supportive community of women in business in our community.

### **AMANDA BROOKS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Amanda Brooks, who has been awarded RSPCA NSW's Volunteer of the Month. Amanda Brooks' commitment to animal welfare has earned her this prestigious title. For over 40 years, she has volunteered at the Taree branch of RSPCA NSW, contributing 40 hours a month to this noble cause, all while managing her farm and a full-time job. Amanda's recent recognition as Volunteer of the Month was very well-deserved, she was awarded an honorary lifetime membership with

RSPCA NSW just last year. This accolade makes her a finalist for the RSPCA NSW Volunteer of the Year award. Amanda, thank you for your invaluable service to our community and I wish you all the best for the RSPCA NSW Volunteer of the Year award.

#### **WHARF ST. DISTILLERY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Wharf St. Distillery for their outstanding performance at the Australian Distilled Spirits Awards. I take pride in acknowledging local businesses that excel on a national level. Wharf St. Distillery's recent success, winning five medals in five entries at the Australian Distilled Spirits Awards, demonstrates their dedication to crafting quality spirits. Their Oyster Shell Gin earned a Gold, Citrus and Pigface received Silver, and Navy and Barrel Aged claimed Bronze awards. In a competition featuring 975 entries, this is Australia's largest and most prestigious distilled spirits award. It highlights Wharf St. Distillery's commitment to excellence and reflects positively on our community. Congratulations Wharf St. Distillery for your accomplishments and this well-deserved recognition. Thank you for continuing to represent our region with distinction.

#### **BILL ODDIE RETIREMENT**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I would like to pay tribute to a member of the local health service who recently retired after almost 30 years of work in local hospitals. William Oddie, known as Bill, started as a casual cleaner at Coraki Hospital in 1994 before moving on to Ballina District Hospital as a Wardsperson and then to Lismore Base Hospital. At Lismore Base Bill worked in the Patient Transport Service then went on to become a Security Officer at the hospital. He found that was the right place for him, and continued in the role for 16 years until his retirement in July 2023. Bill was actively involved in the Health Services Union, and was the President of the local sub-branch for over 10 years and a Union State Councillor from 2016. The hospital's Corporate Services Manager, Stuart Rollans, said Bill was known for his proactive approach to ensuring all his colleagues had enough work hours, his compassionate approach to assisting anyone in need, and his contribution during and after the 2022 floods. Bill has a record of community service, helping create a new Lions club in Coraki and being involved in the Goonellabah Football Club as coach and treasurer.

#### **BUSH WHACKERS BARBER**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I would like to put on the record a story about a local business in my electorate that shows the true meaning of 'good will'. Justin McGarrow only opened the doors of his business Bush Whackers Barber in Tenterfield a couple of months ago. In the lead up to Father's Day earlier this month, he provided free haircuts for aged care residents from the Tenterfield Care Centre. Justin knew about the centre because he used to work there as a carer. He knew the men and he thought it was something he could do for them. Justin said Kasey at the Tenterfield Care Centre helped him organise it and managed the logistics of getting about eight men to the barber shop. So it wasn't just a haircut, they had the full experience of going down town to the barbershop and being looked after. And leaving looking their very best. The Centre reported that all the men had smiles on their faces and were full of stories to share when they got back. A new business is a vote of confidence in a rural community. Congratulations to Justin on his new venture. I wish him the best.

#### **KOORI MAIL'S GIANT LOVE HEART MURAL MARKS END OF RECOVERY JOURNEY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to the Koori Mail for completing an eye-catching mural of a gigantic love heart in the colours of the Aboriginal flag on the outside of its Lismore offices, marking the end of its flood recovery journey. The mural was unveiled on 29th August 2023 and is a symbol of survival for the whole community, including the many Widjabul Wiabal people of the Bundjalung nation whose land we live on. The Koori Mail has been the national newspaper for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for three decades but in February 2022 its future was in peril after floodwaters went right through its premises. Despite its own struggles in the aftermath, the Koori Mail became a beacon of hope for those in need when it organised a community hub in the carpark opposite its devastated building. The hub distributed free meals, clothing and groceries to flood victims for almost a year, along with plenty of good cheer. The hub has now closed but the enormous heart remains – in the Koori Mail's words, "a symbol of black joy and black love for all people in our region". Thank you.

#### **KYRAN VAN DAM**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—From Friday 25 to Tuesday 29 August 2023, the 2023 School Sport Australia Swimming Championships brought swimmers aged between ten and twelve from all over Australia to the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. The Centre, which is an iconic part of Australian sporting history given the glory achieved by such legends as Ian Thorpe, Grant Hackett and Susie O'Neill at the Sydney 2000 Olympics, was the perfect setting for this event. One of the young swimmers who took to the pool

was Charlestown ten-year-old Kyran van Dam. A member of the NSW under-10s team, Kyran competed in the Boys 10 Years 50 LC Metre Backstroke, the Boys 10-12 200 LC Metre Relay Handicap Relay, and the Boys 10 Years 200 LC Metre Freestyle Relay 4 x 50. Along with his teammates, he took home the bronze in the Boys 10 Years 200 LC Metre Medley Relay. They collectively achieved a time of 2:29.47 in that event. Congratulations to Kyran, his teammates, and all the young athletes from around the country who competed at this year's Swimming Championships. Fantastic work!

#### ISABELLE WELCH

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Ten-year-old local Isabelle Welch recently represented the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association at the 2023 School Sport Australia 10-12 years Swimming Championships. Held from Friday 25 to Tuesday 29 August 2023, the Championships brought swimmers aged between ten and twelve from all over Australia to the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. It must have been incredible for these young swimmers to show their skill at the same facility where legends like Ian Thorpe, Grant Hackett and the mighty Madame Butterfly, Susie O'Neill, won glory for themselves and Australia at Sydney 2000. Isabelle performed exceptionally well, winning a Gold and a Silver medal in two relays and 8th overall in the 10 years fifty metre freestyle. It is fantastic to see young people from the Charlestown electorate achieve in sports, and I congratulate Isabelle on her hard work. I wish her all the best with her future sporting endeavours!

#### SOPHIE MCCALLUM

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—From Saturday 9 September to Friday 15 September, talented young netballers from around Australia gathered in Perth for the 2023 School Sport Australia National Netball Championships. Coming so soon after the mighty Diamonds swept to victory at the Netball World Cup in South Africa, the young athletes gathered at the Gold Netball Centre in Jolimont must have been especially excited to take their skills to the court. Amongst them was young Mount Hutton local Sophie McCallum, who played on the NSW Primary School Sport Association side. By all reports it was a fantastic tournament, with some closely fought matches and great displays of sportsmanship from the boys and girls. New South Wales came third in the girls' tournament, with ten wins and four losses for a total of 34 points—just one point below second place Queensland. I would like to congratulate Sophie on her contribution to this fabulous result, and I can't wait to hear about her netball prowess in the future!

#### CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL ORGANISATION – 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to thank and congratulate the Children's Festival Organisation of New South Wales, who recently celebrated their 25th Anniversary of organising events across Sydney. Since its initial inception in 1999, there have been 39 Children's Festivals held in Bankstown, Canterbury, Marrickville, Campbelltown, and the City of Sydney. This has attracted over a quarter of a million participants from various cultural backgrounds. As the Member for Oatley, former Minister and now Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I have had the opportunity to work closely alongside the Children's Festival Organisation for many years. It's been an absolute pleasure to see how the organisation has brought communities together from all different walks of life. New South Wales is a multicultural success story, and this is thanks to the work of organisations like the Children's Festival Organisation, who go above and beyond to support diversity within our communities. I would like to thank Thuat V. Nguyen AM, President of the Children's Festival Organisation, as well as the entire team who have worked incredibly hard to make our communities a better place. I look forward to attending many more Children's Festivals into the future.

#### OATLEY WEST COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, it was a pleasure to attend the Oatley West Community Festival recently. There was so much on offer, including rides, food, entertainment, and art. There was truly something for everyone. The Community Festival team works tirelessly each and every year to ensure that the event is a success, and their hard work certainly paid off this year. It was wonderful to see so many families out and about, enjoying the beautiful weather. With the rising cost of living at the moment, it was good to see that families could still enjoy a great day out without breaking the bank. Food, rides, and stalls were all very reasonably priced, allowing everyone to get involved and enjoy themselves. I would like to thank the Festival Committee for their hard work, as well as everyone who came and supported the event across the weekend. The volunteers did a fantastic job this year, and they should be very proud for ensuring this year's event was another smashing success. I look forward to attending the Community Fun Day next year!



**THE RECONNECT PROJECT – ANNETTE MAYNE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise and extend my gratitude to the Reconnect Project for their efforts in our community. There is a significant digital divide in New South Wales - many lower-income families are at a disadvantage, as are Indigenous Australians. With an estimated 23 million mobile phones sitting unused, the Reconnect Project aims to breathe new life into pre-loved devices, providing access to those who need it most. Alongside her team, founder Annette Mayne is seeking to close the digital divide in our communities, whilst also working hard to fight 'e-waste'. Older devices are repaired, erased, and cleaned to be used again, allowing those in need to access the people and services they need most. Just recently, Annette received the Zonta Club of Botany Bay's 'Woman of Achievement' award, recognising those who have made significant contributions to communities across the Sutherland Shire, Georges River and Bayside. I would like to thank Annette and the wonderful team she has behind her, ensuring that our communities thrive in an increasingly digital world.

**DEBADATTA PAUL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to commend the remarkable achievements of Debadatta Paul, whose dedication to early childhood education has left a lasting impact on Kids Academy Glenmore Park. She has also been honoured with well-deserved recognition through a nomination in the NSW Training Awards earlier this year. These awards are a beacon, highlighting the steadfast commitment and accomplishments of individuals like Debadatta in the education sector. Her role as a Room Leader at Kids Academy Glenmore Park extends beyond mere responsibilities. She is ardently passionate about unlocking the unique potential within every child under her stewardship and has consistently demonstrated this through her innovative and caring approach to teaching. Completing a traineeship through the Affinity Learning Academy, Debadatta has amplified her skills and knowledge, further enriching the learning experiences she provides to our young minds. Her nomination is not merely a recognition of individual triumph but is symbolic of the profound impact all dedicated educators have on our children, nurturing their future growth.

**SYDNEY SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS INC.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to heartily congratulate the Sydney Society of Model Engineers on marking a momentous 52 years since opening the Model Park in its cherished location in Luddenham. The Society, proudly standing as Australia's oldest model engineering club, has fostered a remarkable community of enthusiasts, crafting miniature marvels and igniting imaginations for generations. The Model Park, with its splendid array of sections dedicated to various facets of model engineering – from large-scale ride-on trains and meticulous HO Gauge railways, to the enchanting radio-controlled garden railway trains – has been a spectacular hub for both members and visitors alike. Today, I recognise their dedication to preserving and promoting the enthralling world of model engineering, and for providing a space where craftsmanship, friendship, and community spirit thrive together. Congratulations to the Sydney Society of Model Engineers; may the tracks ahead continue to weave through progress, innovation, and shared joy.

**CONDOLENCES – SMITH FAMILY ARMIDALE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—With a very heavy heart I rise to offer on behalf of the Northern Tablelands Electorate, sincere condolences to the Smith family of Armidale, on the unimaginable loss of their three loved and treasured children, and the children's devoted grandfather. I join our community in mourning this loss, the result of a tragic aircraft accident near Canberra last Friday. To David, Elyse and their family, know that Armidale and the wider community acknowledge your devastating loss and stand ready to support you through this most challenging of times. I recognise that Raphael (11), Evita (9), Philomena (6) and Elyse Smith's father, Peter, will be forever missed and mourned by everyone whose lives they touched.

**DOBSON'S DISTILLERY, KENTUCKY**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the achievements of Dobson's Distillery, located at Kentucky on the win at the 2023 San-Francisco World Spirits Competition recently. At this event the company won a raft of awards, winning double gold for Belle Epoque Cask Strength Whiskey and Dobson's New England Dry Gin; Two Silver for the Dobson's Sweet Pea Gin and Milk of Amnesia – Spiced Rum; and bronze for their Dobson's Raven Whiskey. I congratulate the company's owners Steve and Lyn Dobson on this outstanding achievement. The Distillery started in Kentucky in 2004 and over the last 19 years the owners and their team have been serving locals and travellers alike the experience of grain to glass. I also congratulate: Joshua Dobson, Ben Miles and Liam Tracey, being the supportive team behind Steve and Lyn and their successful spirits. I commend Dobson's Distillery for winning these awards in the highly competitive international field. Dobson's Distillery is kicking goals and grabbing golds!

### **ARMIDALE EX SERVICES CLUB WIN PERFECT PLATE AWARD**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I would like to recognise the Armidale Ex Services Club for being presented the winner of the New England's local Club Perfect Plate Award. There were three state-wide winners and 13 regional winners, with the club's Mill Bistro taking top honours for the New England Northwest region. I congratulate the Bistro's head chef Shibojoyoti Basak on his culinary efforts, with the winning dish being the slow cooked 16-hour brisket. Judges were celebrity chefs Courtney Roulston and Matt Moran, who travelled across the state tasting what clubs had to offer. There were over 174 participating eateries from 146 NSW clubs serving up an estimated 80,000 Perfect Plate dishes. I commend Armidale Ex Services Club for supporting Shibojoyoti and the other clubs from the region who entered the competition, including the Inverell Sporties, Glen Innes and District Services Club and Armidale City Bowling Club.

### **LORNA WEBB**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I am delighted to acknowledge Lorna Webb of Lithgow who recently reached the momentous milestone in celebrating her 100th Birthday. During her life Lorna had many achievements including through her working career as a much loved and wonderful teacher. Lorna also embodied the qualities needed to be a Captain and Commissioner of the Girl Guides Association. Lorna has seen many incredible changes during her life having lived through two World Wars, four British Monarchs and man walking on the moon. A wonderful and contributing community member Lorna embodies many attributes that have endeared her to all who know her. I congratulate Lorna Webb on her 100th Birthday.

### **MERV TOBIN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—There are many community groups across the Bathurst Region and they all play an important role in enhancing the quality of life of our residents. One such group is the Bathurst Toastmasters organisation which aims to improve our ability to communicate with others and build skills to help your career. One of the stalwarts of Bathurst Toastmasters is Mr Merv Tobin who has been with the organisation for decades. In fact, I would like to congratulate Mr Tobin who has chalked up 40 years as a member of Toastmasters Bathurst. He was given official recognition for his dedication to the organisation at the Bathurst Toastmasters meeting at Bathurst Panthers on October 1. Particular mention was made of how Mr Tobin was instrumental in keeping Toastmasters operational during COVID when the club was on the brink of having to cease operations because of the obstacles the pandemic posed. Bathurst Toastmasters Club was founded in 1981 and its members come from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. However, all are dedicated to improving their public speaking skills, from engaging storytelling to brilliant business presentations. Congratulations Merv Tobin, Bathurst Toastmasters owes you a debt of gratitude.

### **VIVABILITY BATHURST**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Bathurst's Vivability initiative is once again making a huge difference in the community. Vivability opened a Café some twelve months ago with the primary purpose of providing meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Now employing 17 people the Café has been embraced by the Bathurst Community with a regular customer base continuously showing support. Testament of this success was the recognition given Café Viva at the recent Bathurst Business Awards in winning the inaugural Peoples Choice Award for the Bathurst Favourite Hospitality Organisation. With continued growth in mind and under the stewardship of CEO Nick Packham, Viva Café has now launched a weekly 'Big Lunch' for people in the community who are doing it tough. Vivability is a wonderful example of a fantastic social enterprise and I Congratulate all involved on their success and the integral role they play in the Bathurst Community.

### **TWEED HEADS CROQUET CLUB**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—I wish to acknowledge Tweed Heads Croquet Club and their commitment to continue the legacy of two of their long-term members. The club recently held their Spring Festival Golf Croquet Tournament, and during the official opening announced the tournament would be known as the Bryan and Pam Shaw Memorial Tournament. Bryan and Pam were actively involved with the club for many years and established the tournament eleven years ago. Bryan most recently held the position of treasurer until his passing in August this year and Pam, considered the life and soul of the club unfortunately passed away two years ago. This is a wonderful honour for a special couple. Croquet can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. I am honoured to be the patron of the Tweed Heads Croquet Club and encourage anyone thinking of having a go to go check it out. The Club is always welcoming new members.

### **MARIE KNIGHT**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—In 2018, Coonabarabran resident, Marie noticed the farming community struggling on many levels during the drought, including losing livestock and newborn lambs. This prompted her

idea of knitting jumpers for newborn lambs. After contacting a farmer online to offer to knit the jumpers for the newborn lambs, Marie had given away 700 jumpers in one week. The jumpers give the lambs a better chance of surviving in the colder months, when the mothers reject them, and farmers do not have the means to consistently care for them. The jumpers have now become a global initiative, with almost half a million jumpers knitted by volunteers and provided to the farmers for free. I would like to thank Marie for starting this great initiative. With another drought looking to be very possible, ideas like these not only assist a farmer when most needed, but also create awareness of the struggles farmers face during drastic weather.

#### **RNSH NURSES AWARDED 2023 EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AWARDS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to congratulate two nurses from Royal North Shore Hospital, Caitlin MacDonagh and Gillian Prott, for becoming finalists in the 2023 Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. We know that our nurses and midwives do incredible work across our hospitals and these awards are just one way that we can express our thanks and acknowledge their incredible work. These awards are to recognise the dedication and contributions of nurses and midwives across New South Wales and the impact they have on the wellbeing of patients. Both Caitlin and Gillian were awarded the colleague-nominated Healing Heart category, which recognises nurses who provide excellent and compassionate service to their patients. Caitlin is recognised by her colleagues as a compassionate palliative care nurse, working in an advanced team involving multidisciplinary collaboration. Gillian is recognised for her excellence in patient care and is an integral part of her team. I congratulate Caitlin and Gillian for their excellent contributions to the healthcare industry and once again congratulate both of you on receiving such a prestigious recognition.

#### **SAVOIR FAIRE FAREWELLS MOSMAN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to acknowledge the closure of one of Mosman's most popular fashion retailer's Savoir Faire, after almost thirty years of operation. Savoir Faire, a fashion store featuring a range of clothing and accessory items was established in 1996 by Robyn Flowers. Known for its stock of high-quality jewellery, race day hats and furs, the store soon became known amongst locals as the one of the best places to shop for women of all ages. Robyn has recently decided to close the store to settle into a retirement dedicated to travelling and painting. I would like to commend Robyn and everyone else involved over the years in Savoir Faire for their contributions to the store. The success of the store is an attestation to the creativity and work ethic of those living in our community. I would like to wish Robyn every success for her well deserved retirement.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT GO4FUN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to acknowledge the Northern Sydney Local Health District's adoption of the Go4Fun initiative aimed towards encouraging and educating children and their families to build healthy habits. Introduced by NSW Health, Go4Fun is a free ten week program for children aged seven to thirteen above a healthy weight focused on providing nutritional information, advice, and activities to encourage healthy lifestyle changes and improvements in self-esteem. Exercise and learning are delivered through games to show children that making healthy choices can be comfortable and enjoyable. The program also involves parents to help make positive lifestyle changes in families. I look forward to seeing this program continue in Term 4 of this year and have faith that it will prove to be a success. I would also like to thank everybody involved in the foundation and running of the program for all your efforts towards developing better and positive mindset on staying healthy in our local community.

#### **GUNDAGAI PEN MUSEUM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise Bruce and Rhoda Wicks who are the owners of the Australian Pen Museum in Gundagai. The Museum is the only one of its kind in the country, and remarkably is just one of three worldwide. The Assembly Hall was originally constructed in 1881, Bruce and Rhoda later purchased the building in 2016 and the Australian Pen Museum formally opened in March this year. Bruce and Rhoda have been responsible for privately acquiring, restoring, and maintaining the Museum. The entrance to the Museum displays a 'Scroll of Honour' with a list of individuals who have kindly donated items or other contributions to the Museum which contains over 3000 items. Many of the Pen Museum's items are unique, and perhaps the most significant piece is a handwritten cameo illusion of US President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, originally issued on January 1st, 1863. A 1920 school is also situated within the old Assembly Hall, complete with desks, exercise books, slate boards and teaching materials, as they were in the early twentieth century. The history within the Pen Museum is truly fascinating, and I'd like to thank Bruce and Rhoda for their efforts.

### 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—My congratulations are extended to Diane and Bruce White, owners of Midstate Electrical Contracting and their employees as they celebrate 30 years of service. Bruce and Diane opened their business in September 1993, priding themselves on being a business that can provide a comprehensive range of services for the smallest domestic client to the largest industrial customer. Bruce and Diane's knowledge and services extend well beyond their 30 years of business, having been in the electrical contracting field since 1962, when Bruce was only 21. Over the past 30 years Bruce and Diane have employed and trained 16 apprentices who have since gone on to continue this line of work and even open their own businesses. Having your own business isn't an easy task, so being operational for the last 30 years during the hardest of times including, floods, droughts and Covid 19 is a testament to Mr and Mrs White's strength and dedication to the Electrical Contracting Industry. Congratulations again to Bruce and Diane on this magnificent milestone.

### JUGIONG POLOCROSSE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I'd like to recognise the extraordinary achievements by members of the Jugiong Polocrosse Club. Between 21-23 April, the Albury-Holbrook Polocrosse Club hosted the South African Polocrosse Club for an Under 16's International Test Series. The Junior Australian side commenced the series with a narrow 22-21 loss in extra time before levelling things up on day two with a convincing 22-14 win. In the end, the Australian side secured the series with a 22-20 victory in the final match. Ryan Weston and Jim Henry played a crucial part in Australia's victory with Ryan being named player of the series. Ryan began learning polocrosse around the age of his 8, as his parents Sandra and Will have a long-standing history with the sport and have both represented the State of NSW. In 2015, Will travelled to Durban, on the East Coast of South Africa with the Australian World Cup squad and competed for his sixth time since 2008. Will has also competed for Australia at the World Cup since then. Jugiong has a proud history in producing Australian representatives. My congratulations again to the Jugiong Polocrosse Club, Jim Henry, and the Weston Family.

### DEPUTY MAYOR COUNCILLOR DANIEL HAN

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Last week the City of Ryde Council elected a new Deputy Mayor, Councillor Daniel Han. Cr Han's commitment to our community and his dedication to making positive changes are truly commendable, and I congratulate him on his elevation to this important office. Cr Han embodies everything that is good about authentic grassroots leadership, and understands the unique needs of our local community. He is a particularly strong advocate for sport, culture and business, while most effectively representing our fast growing Korean community in Ryde at the highest political levels. His track record speaks for itself, showcasing a passion for community engagement and a drive to address the issues that matter most to the people of Ryde. Most notably, he is the brains behind the highly successful KoreaTown initiative in Eastwood, which is boosting local business and attracting many other groups wanting to copy the model. Cr Han's election is a cause for celebration, and is not just a victory for him personally, but also a win for the entire community. I look forward to working with him closely over the course of his term, congratulate him on his election and thank him for his leadership.

### PLAQUE UNVEILING FOR ANNA LAO AM

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—Ryde recently celebrated the extraordinary accomplishments of local badminton luminary Anna Lao AM, Australia's most successful badminton player in history. Anna's journey began in 1988 with the conquest of her first Australian Open Ladies Singles title, followed by a remarkable threefold victory in Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles in 1989 and 1991. Anna's prowess reached its pinnacle in 1992 when she represented Australia at the Barcelona Olympics, securing a fifth-place finish in both Singles and Doubles—an unparalleled achievement in Australian badminton. Beyond her illustrious playing career, Anna transitioned into coaching and administration, nurturing the next generation of Australian players. Her dedication to badminton earned her recognition as a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours. I first met Anna back in High School when she asked me to MC an event at Ryde Aquatic for her badminton tournament. Ever since then I have been in awe of the work she has done for our community and her tireless efforts across Ryde and Australia. It was a privilege to unveil her plaque, and I look forward to continuing to support her work in the local community.

### ELECTION OF ESTHER KIM AS PRESIDENT OF THE KOREAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—On the 23rd of September the Korean community headed to the polls to elect a new president for the Korean Society of Sydney. I'd like to congratulate Esther Kim on her victory, and wish her every success for the term ahead. Esther is a highly accomplished leader, and has impressed many with her readiness to put community before self. She has given up considerable time over the years to volunteer and

support those who do it tough within the Korean Australian community, and know many parents, the elderly and non-English speakers in Ryde and beyond are indebted to Esther for her dedication and service. The Korean Society is a wonderful organisation, and I am confident Esther will implement a full agenda for her term ahead. In her new role, I know she will be able to effectively represent our extraordinary and fast growing Korean community, and look forward to working with her closely both in my role as the Member for Ryde, and as the Shadow Assistant Minister for Multiculturalism. Congratulations Esther, and good luck!

#### **CARL UPTON'S AMAZING MACHINES**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Mr Carl Upton, a resident of Corowa who "grew into" the path of building tractors, leading to the creation of some of the world's most exceptionally engineered machines. Carl's journey began at the tender age of 16, when he completed his fitting and machining course. On venturing into the field of mending broken-down machines, Carl quickly realised there were design flaws. He embarked on a mission to improve agricultural machinery and along the way was setting new standards for the industry. In 1976 he introduced the MT-855 tractors followed by the HT 14/350, a remarkable 350-horsepower engine. The tractors were created and manufactured at Corowa. To this day they remain in impeccable working order, as evidenced when these mighty engines roar to life - a testament to the craftsmanship of Mr Upton. Mr Upton's enduring legacy and those ground-breaking achievements over the past 78 years with Upton Engineering, are now passed on to his sons Paul and Marc to continue the business. Well done, Mr Upton! Your skill and design insights are part of a grand Australian bush tradition.

#### **CLANCY TOMLINSON YEAR 12 STUDENT AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Clancy Tomlinson a year 12 student from Corowa High School, who has received the prestigious 2023 NSW Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. The award was dedicated to Clancy for her remarkable contributions to the school community. Clancy, who is a school captain for 2023, demonstrates leadership qualities which inspire her peers and educators. Her academic excellence stems from her unwavering commitment to learning and personal growth. Clancy's leadership skills are partnered with her sporting prowess, notably receiving the Moronga Medal at the 2023 Head of the School Girls (HOSG) rowing regatta. Furthermore, Clancy was recognised with the 2023 Federation Council Australia Day School Achiever Award and the Corowa Lions Club Youth of the Year award. Clancy, I look forward to your continued success and for further preparation to take on leadership roles in your community.

#### **VALE IAN ELLIS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the passing of Ian Ellis, a cornerstone of our community. Born in 1931, Ian's educational journey took him from Walkyrie Primary School to Albury Grammar School, where he shone as both school captain and dux. Upon completing his education, Ian returned to the family farm in Larundel, Walla Walla, where he poured his heart into farming. In 1957, he married Yvonne Lawson, and together they raised five children with a deep commitment to education throughout life. Ian's love for the land was matched only by his dedication to his community. He was a tireless member of the local fire brigade, supported Alma Park School's P & C, contributed to NSW Farmers and Landcare, and served as a board member of The Scots School Albury. He showcased his passion for agriculture at local shows and served as an elder in the Presbyterian church community. Ian's legacy is one of unwavering devotion to both his family and community. His involvement with the Liberal Party of NSW, beginning in 1978, and his consistent participation in every election as a party stalwart, underscored his commitment to shaping our community's future. Vale Ian Ellis.

#### **WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I rise to congratulate Councillor Richard Shields on his recent election as Mayor of Woollahra Municipal Council, in my electorate of Vaucluse. Richard grew up in Woollahra – just a stone's throw from council chambers. He brings strong local knowledge and community connections, as well as business acumen and governance skills. I know his contribution will be strong and heartfelt. I also wish to congratulate Councillor Sarah Swan who has been elected as Deputy Mayor. Councillor Swan represents Cooper Ward and also has strong ties to our community. She is an energetic and persuasive representative for our community. Congratulations, Sarah! Councillors Shields and Swan will build on the strong record of delivery of their predecessors Cr Susan Wynne and Cr Isabelle Shapiro OAM. I am looking forward to a continued strong relationship with all representatives on Woollahra Council and wish Mayor Shields the very best in his new role.

### DR VINH BINH LIEU

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr Vinh Binh Lieu, a valued member of our Vietnamese community in Sydney. After fleeing the Fall of Saigon in early 1979, Dr Vinh came to Australia and graduated as a young doctor from the University of Sydney with dreams of serving his own community in bettering their health. In 1986, he established the Vinh Binh Medical Centre in Bankstown which has since become a service to the wider local community. For over 36 years, he has continuously dedicated his career to community health and wellbeing, however, his passion for helping others didn't stop there. He established the Vietnamese-Australian Medical Association in 2007, the Australian Dragon Business Association in 2007, and the Australasian Golden Heart Organisation in 2009. Dr Vinh also founded charities where he was able to raise money and aid those who were affected by the Victorian bushfires and Queensland Premier's Flood Relief Appeal, which successfully raised over \$120,000. His services were deeply appreciated by the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Vinh received the Bankstown Citizen of the Year award in 2012 and was later prestigiously awarded an Order of Australia medal.

### CHULLORA PUBLIC SCHOOL – OPERATION ART COMPETITION 2023

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am very proud to mention Chullora Public School located in my Electorate of Bankstown has participated in the Operation Art Competition 2023. Operation Art is an annual program promoting arts in healthcare in NSW, encouraging students from kindergarten to Year 10 to design artwork to help brighten the stay of sick children and their families in the hospital. The school's participation provides students with an authentic purpose and audience for their artmaking and an opportunity to share their artworks with the wider community. Chullora Public School has been participating for over a decade, facilitated by specialist visual arts teacher Mrs Sophia Alexiadis. Multiple Chullora Public School artworks have been selected by the judging panel for award categories. This year, 2 artworks were submitted by year 5 student, Zain El Assad, titled 'A Crackle of Cockatoos in The Playground' that has been selected in the touring 50 and will be exhibited in Sydney, regional NSW, NSW Art Gallery and later join the permanent collection at Westmead Children's Hospital. Chullora Public School students welcomed the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile initiative and to support sick children in the hospital.

### IWAA MULTICULTURAL PEACE WALK

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Sunday 24th September 2023, the Islamic Women's Association of Australia [IWAA] celebrated International Day of Peace (21st September 2023), by conducting a multicultural peace walk. The multicultural peace walk brought together participants from all walks of life, all faiths, and especially refugees and migrants who have found peace in Australia after escaping war-torn countries. IWAA is a not-for-profit organisation that delivers services to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. IWAA provides Aged Care, Disability Support Services, Community Development, Settlement Support Services, and Family Violence Services and has an unwavering commitment to providing cultural, religious, and gender-specific services, with over 600 employees who collectively speak more than 60 languages. The theme of the multicultural peace walk is Peace and Inclusion across all cultures as we celebrate our diverse community. Participants came from Australia's First Nations and multicultural communities, as well as those from different faiths including Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Judaism, and Buddhist. It is incredible to see our multicultural community celebrate and embrace diversity, where individuals from different backgrounds come together to celebrate peace. I would like to acknowledge the IWAA for providing this amazing opportunity to celebrate peace and inclusion in our community.

### GOULBURN REGIONAL ART GALLERY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery. The Goulburn Regional Art Gallery is a cultural facility of Goulburn Mulwaree Council and the regions hub for exhibiting and presenting Australian contemporary art within two gallery spaces. Reaching out to all generations across the community through programs and workshops within the Gallery and out on the road, with local artists being sought to facilitate these. Working in collaboration with other creative centres including the Hume Conservatorium, and across various Council sites the Gallery have their Collections on permanent display and continues to develop partnerships and provide support to artists. Excitedly the Gallery has now been announced as a nominee in three categories of The 2023 IMAGinE Awards, which highlight the resilience, innovation, and creativity of museums, galleries, and Aboriginal cultural centres, and recognising the people that work in them. The nominated projects are, the group exhibition "All light, all air, all space" for the category "Exhibition Projects" for Small Galleries, "The Window", for the category "Engagement Program" for Medium Organisations and "Life

Forms", for the category "Innovation and Resilience Award. I wish the nominees every success and acknowledge their dedication, work and creativity.

#### **MRS OLDBUCKS PANTRY**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Mrs Oldbucks Pantry, in Berrima. Known for its delicious range of jams, chutneys, fruit jellies, pure nut butters, chocolate, ice cream toppings, and speciality teas. All products are traditionally made from the finest of ingredients and without preservatives or additives. Mrs Oldbucks Pantry also provides customers with the opportunity purchase their quality and taste tempting goods online. Top sellers include, Fruit and Nut Dark Chocolate, Fruit and Nut Milk Chocolate, Glace Figs, Glace Ginger, and Glace Peaches. The tea selection for tea lovers is extensive, which includes varieties of Black teas, Chai teas, Green teas, Herbal teas, Rooitea teas, White teas and Teaballs and also offering Latte Powders and Chocolates. The range of Pantry Essentials is also a delight of flavours to thrill the tastebuds, which include marinades, dressings, truffle oil, salt and aioli and other spices. It is wonderful that Mrs Oldbucks has now been named as a Finalist in the Illawarra Business Awards in the Excellence in Large Business category. Congratulations to all the team and all the very best on Award Night.

#### **PEPPERGREEN ESTATE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise PepperGreen Estate. PepperGreen Estate's Cellar Door is located at Market Place in Berrima and is well known for the pride it takes in producing the finest grapes from their vineyard in Canyonleigh, known for its cool climate wines. Wine lovers can experience the palatable taste of the Pinot Noir, Shiraz, Riesling, Chardonnay, and other unique varieties from the vineyard. There is also the chance to wine and dine at their Tasting Room, which also allows diners to be embraced by the historical architectural surroundings, within a relaxed atmosphere of beautiful Berrima. It is wonderful that PepperGreen Estate has now been named as a Finalist in the Illawarra Business Awards in the Excellence in Small Business category – recognising their dedication to their small business and excellent offering for residents and businesses alike. Congratulations to all the team and I wish you all the very best and great success on the Awards Night.

#### **POOLWERX DUBBO**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Dubbo Poolwerx for once again taking out the national award for Top Retail Sales, now for the ninth year in a row! Celebrating at the awards presentation in Fiji, the team also won Employer of the Year and Technician of the Year which was awarded to Tim McDougal. Being recognised in front of over 400 franchise partners for earning the top spot is no small feat, however this year was even more special as Adrian and Jane Driscoll were joined by their brand-new business partners Leah and Daniel Maziuk. With incredible customer service and a focus on ensuring customers are given the right advice, it is great to see Dubbo Poolwerx being recognised for going the extra mile and truly delivering a great service to the Dubbo region. Add into that the family-like dynamics of Dubbo team, it's no wonder the awards just keep coming for this incredible store! Congratulations Poolwerx Dubbo on another year of well-earned recognition! Thank you for the wonderful business you're operating in our community. Keep up the great work!

#### **DUBBO EVENTING AND SHOWJUMPING ASSOCIATION**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Dubbo women Kate Edwards, Brooke Garland and Sandie Bagget from the Dubbo Eventing & Showjumping Association on their recent success at Equimillion held in Sydney. Equimillion is an equestrian event run exclusively for retired Thoroughbred racehorses across the disciplines of Eventing, Jumping, Dressage & Show horse. The event aims to showcase the versatility & sustainability of Thoroughbreds careers outside of racing, and kicked off with its inaugural event in October. Travelling across the mountains, Kate, Brooke & Sandie took their 'off the track' mounts and dove headfirst into a pool of strong competition. By the end of the comp, Sandie had earned herself 5th place in the 80cm Amateur Eventing, Brooke took home 4th place in the 90cm Showjumping, and a big well done to Kate and Midtown Magic for coming out victorious with 1st place in the 80cm Amateur Showjumping! Congratulations again Ladies on some fabulous results and best of luck with the preparations for next year's event!

#### **MADISON CASLEY MUDGEES SCOUT GROUP**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Madison Casley of the 1st Mudgee Scout Group on receiving the Australian Scout Medal. Madison's scouting journey began as a cub at the age of 8, and over the years, she has demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership within her scout unit. Completing the Australian Scout Medal is no small feat, requiring three years of dedication and effort. Madison's journey involved a series of tasks, including planning, running, and leading a 3-day bushwalk, which showcases her outdoor skills and leadership abilities. Additionally, her consistent attendance at Tuesday night programs, involvement in unit activities, and support for younger members exemplify her commitment to the scouting

community. Madison's contributions extended beyond her regular scouting duties, and she actively participated in fundraising efforts to support her section and the group. Her attendance at a leadership course further demonstrates her commitment to personal growth and applying newfound skills to benefit the 1st Mudgee Scout Group and Venturer Group. Madison's achievements and dedication serve as an inspiration to those around her. Congratulations once again to Madison Casley on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Tuesday 26 September 2023, Northern Beaches Council held mayor elections to decide who will lead our community. Cr Sue Heins from Curl Curl Ward was re-elected Mayor, and Cr Georgia Ryburn from Manly Ward was elected Deputy Mayor. I thank outgoing Deputy Mayor, Cr David Walton from Curl Curl Ward for his service. I will take the opportunity to acknowledge all Northern Beaches councillors: Cr Jose Menano-Pires, Cr Stuart Sprott and Cr Michael Regan MP from Frenchs Forest Ward; Cr Candy Bingham and Cr Sarah Grattan from Manly Ward; Cr Bianca Crvelin, Cr Vincent De Luca OAM, and Cr Ruth Robins from Narrabeen Ward; Cr Kristyn Glanville from Curl Curl Ward; and Cr Michael Gencher, Cr Miranda Korzy, and Cr Karina Page from Pittwater Ward for their ongoing service. Northern Beaches Council is one of two councils that make up our Davidson electorate community, taking in Belrose, Davidson and Frenchs Forest. I look forward to working with all councillors for the remainder of their term to the September 2024 elections.

#### **MASADA COLLEGE PINK STUMPS DAY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 22 September 2023, Masada College at St Ives held their annual Pink Stumps Day 'Let's Get Pinked Up Masada' to support the wonderful McGrath Foundation, raising \$9,582.11. We heard from Marisa Calo, who shared her inspiring journey, and nurse Saskia Hyman, a Gynaecology Cancer and Prostate Cancer Patient Navigator at Adventist Healthcare. I thank and acknowledge the Masada event team Jessie Kirkpatrick, Jo Marx, Alex Wild and Jack Liang for their hard work and thank them for their efforts. The McGrath Foundation was founded by Glenn and Jane McGrath to raise awareness on Breast Cancer and raise money to support and fund Breast Care Nurses in rural and regional Australia. It's been pivotal in many lives throughout Australia. I have been honoured to meet Glenn over the years, and I thank him for his passion, along with fellow directors Tracy Bevan, John Conde AO, Terry Brown, Glenys Beauchamp AO PSM and Christine Holman. To date, the McGrath Foundation has 204 Breast Care Nurses across Australia, supported 127,000 families since 2005 and provided 254,600 hours of nursing in the last year. I look forward in continuing to support Masada College and the McGrath Foundation.

#### **COMPUTER PALS FOR SENIORS TURRAMURRA**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 6 October 2023 I met with Computer Pals for Seniors Turramurra [CPST] to recognise the contribution of its volunteers, in particular president, Dean Simes, who recently marked his 100th birthday. Computer Pals for Seniors was founded in 2000 to support seniors on Sydney's upper North Shore with the coming of the digital age. In particular, the risks associated with online scams need to be addressed. 23 years later – through financial crises and pandemics, they continue with 128 members. I thank Ku-ring-gai Council for their support by letting them use the Turramurra Centre for Seniors. I acknowledge Dean for his ongoing work – which includes fixing computers - and congratulate him on reaching the 100 years milestone. I also acknowledge committee members John Richards, Bill Soper, John Cameron, Laraine Nicholls, Greg Smith, Dorothy Soper and Chat Lau. Computer Pals for Seniors are the heart of our community. I look forward to supporting them well into the future.

#### **ETHAN THOMPSON NAMED GROUP 3 RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Thundering through the footy fields as a proud Macleay Valley Mustang, Ethan Thompson has finished the season with the highest honour after an impressive stint. I rise today, to acknowledge Ethan's vigour that earned him the Group 3 Rugby League Player of the Year 2023. Ethan obtained 17 points from 14 club games. A decisive victory for the young lock, clearing four points of the runner-up. It was a standout season for the hardworking Mustangs, returning this year with a fire in their stomachs against teams from Port Macquarie and the Manning region. The Mustangs are the only team to hail from the Macleay Valley region and represent northern players in the Group Three competition. After finishing third last the season prior, the boys returned this year with a newfound focus and locked in a top-four finish – as well as battling it out in the Minor Semi-Final. This is a huge achievement for our Mustangs, and for Ethan Thompson to be recognised as the best above all players across the league. Well done on the stellar season. We can't wait to see what your achievements for 2024.



### CHLOE SAUNDERS DEBUT SEASON FOR NRLW

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, congratulating Macleay Valley's Chloe Saunders on starring in her debut season with the Cronulla Sharks for the NRLW. The former Macleay Valley Mustang is no stranger to the big stage in the way of sports, previously representing our region in first grade Women's Cricket for the Balmain Tigers, the National AON Seven series and went on to captain the NSW Sevens side this year. Chloe is a dedicated and fierce competitor, inspiring young women throughout Oxley to pursue a sporting pathway. The 2nd Rower only switched codes this year, proving to be a commendable force for the Sharks – nabbing two incredible tries to add to the tally. The diligence Chloe shows on field is also reflected off field where she contributes tirelessly to the growth of women's rugby union and league. The passion that resonates in Chloe is felt by all aspiring sports stars in our region, and it's an honour to have a role-model like Chloe hail from our community. Well done, Chloe for everything you have accomplished in cricket, union and now rugby league. We can't wait to see what you accomplish next season.

### MACKSVILLE DISTRICT HOSPITAL OFFICIAL OPENS COMMUNITY GARDEN

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today to highlight what three months of diligence and generosity achieved from community members from all walks of life, with the official opening of the new garden at Macksville District Hospital. This combined effort from Nambucca Valley Rotary, Nambucca Heads High School, Shoretrack, local tradespeople, and volunteers created a communal space fitted with concrete paving, a checkerboard, a small bridge, and native vegetation. This project was made possible by the late Clive Thew and has enabled patients and visitors a space to enjoy, reflect and experience a moment of reprieve from a place that can be uncomfortable and often daunting. I am proud that the community could rally together to create an inclusive space to relax and unwind. I am particularly overjoyed with the students from Nambucca Heads alongside youth program participants, who got their hands dirty, planting trees and shrubs, and contributing to our wonderful region. This is an incredible accomplishment for the Macksville District Hospital. It was utilised in this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations, and I look forward to seeing the garden bloom in its bright future.

### SYDNEY ROOSTERS NRLW

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I rise to congratulate the NRLW Sydney Roosters award winners, who I was pleased to join at their awards night on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at Easts Bondi Junction. I would like to acknowledge the 2023 NRLW Sydney Roosters Award Winners: Brydie Parker who received the Our Community Award, and is also a 2023 Veronica White Medal nominee; Rookie of the Year Mia Wood; Players' Player Corban Baxter; and the KARI NRLW Player of the Year, Tarryn Aiken, who was also awarded the Steggles Try of the Year in her first year at the club. Congratulations to the winners, and to all the players of the NRLW Sydney Roosters on a fantastic season this year.

### GOOD360

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the work of Good360, which is playing a vital role in a circular economy. Good360 negotiates with more than 500 major manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to redirect new goods that have not sold or cannot be used, passing them direct to charities that support vulnerable people in need. This means more than 1,800 organisations in NSW and 90 in the Sydney electorate alone distributing new goods to people in need. This is a win-win – less material dumped in landfill and fewer wasted resources, with more people in need getting help with everything from food, clothing and furniture to toys and toiletries. Good360 calculates that every one dollar they are donated or granted means \$20 benefit to the community and the environment. Getting goods direct to people in need is a major boost for those facing big increases in the cost of living, and does not add to inflation – simply redirecting consumer goods to where they are most needed. I commend Good360 for this work as a major player that connects unused goods with people who need them, saving money, resources and the environment.

### JONES AND SMITH DISTILLERY

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, family-owned small businesses are the backbone of Australia and I wish to congratulate the owners of one such business on taking out a National title. Jones and Smith Distillery is a labour of love for Tony and Dot Jones, their daughter Kylie Smith and her husband Nic Smith. From its Spring Hill base outside Orange, the family has produced a number of award-winning spirits since establishing the business five years ago, most notably its 'Epoch' range of gin. This year they have set the bar high with the Epoch Navy Strength Gin taking out the best in show award at this year's Australian Gin Distillers Association 2023 national gin awards. Described by the judges as 'full-flavoured, very smooth and a most impressive gin', Epoch Navy Strength took out the over-proof class before claiming overall honours in a tight judging. A former newsagent, Tony Jones has turned his life-long interest in the production of spirits into a new

family venture, which aligns with Orange's growing reputation as a food and beverage destination. I congratulate Jones and Smith on its Australian award and look forward to more in the future. Salut!

#### **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (CWA) CO- WORKING SPACE CANOWINDRA**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, On September 27th, Canowindra celebrated the inauguration of the first CWA Co-Working space, one of four planned across NSW. The NSW Minister for Women, Hon. Jodie Harrison, attended the occasion, underlining the government's dedication to uplift and back women throughout the state. This initiative emphasises the significance of designing environments that foster inclusivity for women in all societal facets. It presents opportunities for skill growth, establishing connections, and strengthening community ties. Beyond being a milestone in the local setting, it serves as an inspirational model for other regions. This transformative project, breathing life into the hall, offers a modern co-working arena with facilities ranging from high-speed internet desks to top-tier audio-visual tools and secure access. At its heart is a cosy relaxation zone with plush seating. Such innovations were brought to life courtesy of the NSW Government's generous \$400,000 grant. Targeting towns with populations under 5,000, Canowindra's visionaries, Jan Kerr and Fiona Ferguson, turned this dream into reality, showcasing what's possible when communities seize opportunities. This co-working hub, beyond just a space, stands as a symbol of unity, collaboration, and progress for women in regional NSW. Congratulations to all involved.

#### **TRACTOR TREK FOR PROSTATE CANCER FOUNDATION**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise the Tractor Trek for Prostate Cancer Foundation. In a heart-warming display of unity and purpose, a dedicated team of ten men, supported by seven iconic Ferguson tractors and additional vehicles, journeyed through 600km of Australia's challenging outback. Their six-day expedition began in Bourke, weaving through towns like Louth, Wanaaring, and Hungerford, finally concluding their route via Yantabulla and Fords Bridge. These vintage tractors, with a top speed of just 23km/h, demanded resilience and commitment from the crew. Originally conceptualised by Richard Jefferay from Parkes Tyrepower as a spirited adventure, the trek took on a deeper meaning when aligned with the cause of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. The drive was further fuelled by personal connections; Richard's father, Dick, is a prostate cancer survivor. Through their spirited journey, the group managed to raise an impressive sum exceeding \$38,000 for the foundation, which stands firm in its mission to aid those diagnosed and their families, with 66 Australian men receiving a diagnosis daily. This trek, marked by both adventure and generosity, beautifully showcases the community's spirit and determination. Congratulations to all involved.

#### **FINLEY MENSLED**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate, members of the Finley MenShed, for their significant service contribution to the health and wellbeing of their local community. This MenShed was established in 2010 and has since raised enough funds to purchase the land on which it is situated. With sales of shed grown vegetables lovingly grown by members and the recycling of aluminium cans they have also been able to contribute generously to other organisations including the local second-hand shop. This important organisation has recently extended its membership to women who are now very welcome to join and take part in all activities of this group. These activities include woodwork, ceramics, furniture restoration, metal work and leather work. Helen extends her best wishes to President Gavin Butcher and members of the Finley MenShed which continues to give back to its community, both mentally, physically and financially. Congratulations and I wish you well into the future.

#### **JOHN BEER - DENILQUIN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise and congratulate John Beer for his significant service contribution to the Mayrung Rural Fire Service. John has recently been awarded a lifetime membership of the brigade after 60 years of service. His dedication has helped to ensure the safety of Mayrung and district peoples, livestock and property. This sense of community is reflected in the Beer families long term involvement as members of the Mayrung RFS, a magnificent effort! I extend my congratulations and best wishes to John and his wife Lorraine for this outstanding long service. Volunteers like him are the backbone of community.

#### **GARY GRAYSON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise retired soldier Gary 'Alf' Grayson for his service during the Vietnam war and congratulate him on his recent honour to mark Vietnam Veterans Day. Gary enlisted at just 15 years old and was sent Vietnam at 19. He served as a radio technician in various communication sites throughout South Vietnam. Throughout this difficult conflict, Gary and his comrades provided critical communication support between battlefield locations. This was often from highly visible dangerous locations making them easy targets. His good friend lost his life during a mortar attack. On his return

to Australia Gary continued to serve in the Australian Army, retiring after 20 years later as Warrant Officer First Class1. He now describes himself as a retired soldier. I express my sincere appreciation for Gary's lifetime dedication throughout his career. Your commitment does not go unnoticed, and our community is grateful for this significant lifetime service.

#### **GRAZE N CAKES AVALON – SANDY AND VIET DANG**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I wish to acknowledge local small business, Graze N Cakes, a unique fusion coffee shop located in Avalon Beach. Since opening in 2017, Graze N Cakes has become a cherished establishment in the Pittwater community. More than just a place to satisfy your cravings, Graze N Cakes is testament to the passion, dedication and pursuit of culinary excellence of owners, Sandy and Viet Dang. Having worked in industrial kitchens, as a pastry chef, and previously operated Graze N Cakes in Cammeray, Sandy and Viet have an impressive resume between them. The pair are dedicated to using only the highest quality, locally sourced, fresh ingredients, driven by the belief that freshness is not just a state of mind, but also a state of texture and taste. From their legendary pork belly and pulled pork to the tofu Bánh mì, Graze N Cakes has become a beloved part of the Avalon Community. Their cakes have delighted our taste buds and brought the community together. As they enter their 7th year, we celebrate Sandy and Viet Dang and their hard work. Thank you for enhancing our lives with your culinary artistry!

#### **BASHFUL BEES – MANDY PARKER AND SONYA LINK**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I wish to acknowledge North Narrabeen local Mandy Parker, and Sonya Link, aka "The Bashful Bees", on recently completing the Variety Bash event. The Variety Bash is an annual charity event, which sees motorists undertake a weeklong adventure, exploring Australia's dirt roads and making pitstops at schools and communities along the way, to witness the positive impact of grants awarded by Variety Australia. The Bashful Bees participated in the Bash for the first time in 2006. This year's course saw the Bashful Bees take an 11-day, 6,000-kilometre trip from Bathurst, New South Wales, to Batavia Coast, Western Australia, in their black and yellow 1967 Holden HR, known as 'the Beehive'. Congratulations to Mandy and Sonya on raising \$11,000 this year, and a phenomenal \$250,000 over the last 17 years. I wish them all the best as they prepare for their next journey in 2024.

#### **MITCH GEDDES**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Thank you, Mitch Geddes, for your dedication to the Pittwater community. Thank you, Mitch, for your herculean contributions in supporting families with dogs in their quest for fair access to certain parts of certain beach at certain times. The road has been long, and we are by no means at the end. But, Mitch, your tenacity and commitment to this cause is the reason that families with dogs even have a chance to share our small parts of just a couple of Pittwater's many beaches. There is something quite special about a dog and their people being able to enjoy the sand and water on an open beach. Mitch, I was saddened to learn about the passing of your much-loved Welsh Spaniel, Cooee, on Wednesday, 13 September 2023. Cooee, you, and I, first met in about September 2017, and our interactions over that period are a chief reason why I so strongly support Mitch's efforts and that of the dog-loving community in the quest for fair access to public spaces. Mitch, it is my hope that sooner rather than later families in our community will enjoy the fruits of your hard labour!

#### **BAPS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—On the 5th of September, I had the honour of attending the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. The theme for the event; Pacific Rangvu Che, featured the unique talents of young girls as they aimed to spread the timeless values of Akshar-Purushottam philosophy across the Asia-Pacific region. I congratulate the young girls on their beautiful songs, dances, and performances as they proudly showcased their Hindu culture and values well. The event focused on fostering a cultural identity of togetherness and collective spirituality within the Hindu community of Parramatta. Whether that be through song, dance or storytelling, the girls' performances illustrated the beauty in coming together to promote cultural awareness of fundamental Hindu principles. Unification and the spreading of joy across the Pacific region is the perfect display of the spirit of Hindi people as BAPS invites individuals from all walks of life to celebrate together as one. It is important that organisations such as BAPS are recognised more often as we are taught to see unity in diversity and embrace different cultures and belief systems.

#### **CITY OF PARRAMATTA ART SOCIETY ART AWARDS 2023**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Artistic talent is thriving in Parramatta! On September 29th I had the incredible honour of attending, the City of Parramatta's 2023 Art Society Awards alongside Lord Mayor Pierre Esber, Deputy Lord Mayor Dr Patricia Prociv and Councillors Michelle Garrard and Henry Green. Located in the Hunter Street Gallery, the official opening with engaging presentations provided by committee members of the

Art Society. High attendance at the event reflected the support and appreciation for quality art in Parramatta. I would also like to recognise the efforts of Deputy Lord Mayor Dr Patricia Prociw in presiding over the council's judging process. A special congratulations to the first prize winners: in the oil category - Ruhullah Naqshbandi; in the pastel category – Colina Grant; in the watercolour category – Aung Win Maung; and, in the mixed media category – Helga Kelly. The tremendous talent displayed within their respective mediums showcases the importance of government support in the local arts sector. The Arts Society's Annual Awards exhibition will continue until November 4th, all are welcome to observe the wonderful local talent Parramatta has to offer.

#### **ASBESTOS AND DUST DISEASE RESEARCH INSTITUTE DONATION**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I commend the Revesby Workers' Club for committing \$45,000 to the Asbestos and Dust Disease Research Institute (ADDRI). Australia has one of the world's highest incidences of malignant mesothelioma per capita, with more than 700 new cases diagnosed each year due to the widespread use asbestos. Sadly, there is no cure and current treatments to preserve and extend life are limited with most patients losing their lives within 9 to 12 months following diagnosis. The fight against this disease is of special significance to me as Pat Rogan, popular Revesby Workers' Club President and long standing former East Hills MP, contracted the disease from his time working in an asbestos environment before he entered Parliament. Sadly, Pat passed in February 2015. ADDRI undertakes research which, if successful, will alleviate the suffering of many in our local community which are affected by the disease. Unfortunately, asbestos is still being used, particularly in countries where there is little to no regard for workers' health and safety. I commend the Revesby Workers' Club for its continued support of ADDRI as the institute continues to tackle this life-threatening disease.

#### **GRACE CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OP SHOP AT PADSTOW OPENS**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Grace Chinese Christian Church on the opening of their new Op Shop in Padstow, called Inner Journey. This op shop sells unopened or undamaged brand-name items at reduced prices. They are selling books, toys, shoes, clothes, accessories, and kitchenware. There is also a pantry onsite for people to donate food and help themselves to what they need. Buying second-hand or "thrifting" is essential for sustainability. It reduces waste, conserves resources, and lessens the environmental impact of fashion. Additionally, it promotes affordability, and allows for unique personal style, making it a win-win option for individuals and the planet. Funds raised by the Inner Journey Op Shop will be used to expand gambling counselling services, as well as helping the disadvantaged in the community. I encourage my community to visit Inner Journey to donate, purchase some pre-loved items, or volunteer some free time to help out.

#### **LEBANESE FILM FESTIVAL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Lebanese Film Festival, hosted by the Canterbury-Bankstown City Council. The Lebanese Film Festival holds immense significance as a cultural event and, serves as a vital platform to share Lebanon's rich cinematic heritage with the world. This annual event serves as an important showcase for Lebanese filmmakers, both emerging talents and established auteurs, to exhibit their creative prowess on a global stage. Through storytelling and cinematography, these films capture the nation's complex history, societal dynamics, and diverse traditions, allowing audiences worldwide to connect with its people on a profound level. I am so proud of our community for coming together to celebrate these diverse stories and was extremely grateful for the opportunity to attend Opening Night. The diversity in our community enriches us all, broadens our perspectives and leads to a kinder and more compassionate society. I would highly recommend everyone check out next year's Lebanese Film Festival.

#### **BRISBANE WATER ROTARY CLUB**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I commend the Rotary Club of Brisbane Water on the success of their annual Charity Golf Day at the Everglades Country Club. The amazing Rotary club were hosted at the beautiful Everglades Country Club where lunch, raffles, and speeches rounded off a great morning of friendly competition on the golf course. The day began with a royal greeting to the Rotary club with cakes and champagne being served upon arrival. There were so many attendees that there were more than 20 teams! The club was able to raise close to a staggering \$7000 towards cancer research and local youth projects. It is truly remarkable to hear such great news of local enterprises getting involved in the fight for community support. It is with the actions of these mighty organisations such as Rotary and help from establishments on the Central Coast such as Everglades that we can champion toward a brighter future.

#### **UMINA BEACH MEN'S BOWLING CLUB**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate the Umina Beach Men's Bowling Club on their RUOK? Day Event run by welfare head, Rex Hunt, with help from Steve Stead, Robin Hill, and Don

Stephenson. The event consisted of an auction and raffles which were accompanied by yellow attire worn by attendees to promote RUOK? day and in turn raise awareness for mental health. The event was described as a sensational event and lots of fun, which was reflected in a wonderful atmosphere for a mighty good cause. As a result of the outstanding organisation of the event, \$1000 was raised for RUOK? Day and in particular men's mental health through the auction and raffles. What a day and what a contribution from the amazing Umina Beach Men's Bowling Club! It is fantastic to see Central Coast based organisations getting behind events and fundraisers that can help build a healthy community spirit, whilst also raising valuable awareness about issues that impact all of us. It is always great to see our community spirit being bolstered by our local organisations involvement and I wish Umina Beach Men's Bowling Club all the best.

### GRANDMA MOSES

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I'm thrilled to acknowledge all participants in the Grandma Moses Art Competition held at the Gosford Leisure and Learning Centre. The competition is an amazing tribute to American artist, Anna Mary Moses, also known as 'Grandma Moses', who created over 1500 artworks. One of her pieces is now on display in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and The Phillips Collection in Washington. The competition's participants are over 50s and are encouraged to get involved in the community by submitting their artwork, with over \$3000 worth of prizes to be handed out. It's a fantastic initiative hosted by Gosford 50+ Leisure and Learning Centre. A particular shout out goes to Giuliano Balos and their artwork titled 'The House on The Hill' for being the winner of the contest. Initiatives such as the Grandma Moses Art competition are a great opportunity for members of the Central Coast community, particularly those over the age of 50, to get involved in community activities and engage in the bright and fantastic culture that Central Coast boasts. A massive congratulations to all those involved in the organisation and development of the competition.

### FIRST NATIONAL COAST AND COUNTRY REAL ESTATE KIAMA

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises First National Coast & Country Real Estate in Kiama who recently celebrated victory in the 2023 Local Business Awards. Mr Terry Digger and Mr Jason Stalgis, the dedicated Principals of First National Real Estate, expressed profound gratitude in accepting the Local Illawarra Business Award on behalf of the entire First National Coast & Country team. They acknowledged that this remarkable achievement was made possible through the unwavering dedication of their team, the loyalty of their clients, and the unwavering support for our local community. Year after year, First National Real Estate asked their clients to cast their votes in the Business Awards, while also crafting submissions that outlined the exceptional level of service they consistently provide our local Kiama community. The team's dedication bore fruit, with consecutive finalist positions in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and ultimately, triumphant victories in the Real Estate Agency category in 2018 and, once again, in 2023. Congratulations to the team at First National Real Estate on receiving this prestigious award. Your commitment to honesty, integrity, customer service and hard work has paid off.

### SAMUEL HALL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Samuel Hall a prominent local artist and mural maestro born and raised in Kiama. From the pink horses on Swamp Road, or the bluebird drinking the woman's coffee at King's Café in Jamberoo, or Sam's collaboration with indigenous artist "Saltwater Dreamtime" at the Kiama Visitor's Centre at the Blowhole, among many others have all been Sam Hall projects. Back in 2018, Sam transformed a brick wall at Jamberoo Public School into a beautiful piece of mural artwork which was extremely popular and appreciated by the local Jamberoo community. Sam's favourite artwork is the one he did recently in Indonesia. He was invited to join international artists in Java to collaborate on a project. Sam's ultimate goal is to establish his own community-based studio in the future and to build a creative team around him. Our community is very proud of Sam, his incredible talent and his efforts to share his skills and ability with others.

### DAISY PRING

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises a local Gerringong artist Daisy Pring who is setting the stage alight with her music. Daisy Pring is a former Kiama High School student who has been singing and performing her entire life. At just 20 years old, Daisy is preparing to release her second single, Falling Together, on 10th October 2023. Daisy's artistic influences include Ariana Grande, The Weeknd and Raye, to Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey. Influence from The Weeknd is more obvious on her second single, including thick, low-fidelity synthesisers underlaid with a slick guitar riff. While her first single, Retrograde, has a bouncier, almost disco sound, Falling Together, is a power anthem. Daisy wrote the song at home on her midi piano before taking it to Australian-Japanese music producer Taka Perry. The single launches on all good music streaming platforms on Tuesday 10th October, and Daisy is hosting a gig this Thursday 12th October 2023 at El Horses in Nowra to celebrate, with Kiama's Denim On Her supporting. Daisy will also

perform at the Crooked River Wines' Dave Ferrit Festival on 2nd-3rd December 2023 which is headlined by DMA's and Icehouse.

#### **LADIES LIKE TO LUNCH**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise the Ladies Like to Lunch group, a not-for-profit organisation supporting cancer patients and those impacted by cancer in South-West Sydney communities. The group organise fundraisers including their annual Pink Ribbon Gala to promote initiatives and public awareness for such an important cause. I had the pleasure to catch up with Antoinette Sulfaro and Grace Newcombe last month, who raised the Care Package Program that was introduced in 2019 to support women during their cancer treatment. Donated to the wellness clinic at Liverpool Hospital, the care package is a kit providing a wide range of products that assist with the side effects of patients on a treatment plan. I look forward to collaborating with the Ladies Like to Lunch team and look forward to supporting their wonderful cause.

#### **LIVERPOOL MEALS ON WHEELS AGM**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate the newly elected executive team of the City of Liverpool Meals on Wheels Group. A group that supports the elderly across the Liverpool LGA, Meals on Wheels have operated from humble beginnings since 1964, and have operated out of their site on Memorial Avenue in Liverpool since 1977. On 29 August 2023 I had the opportunity to attend their annual general meeting, where Vince Tripodina was elected President, Diane Young elected Vice-President, Kerry Oxlade elected Secretary, John Peters elected Treasurer, and elected committee members Diane Whittle, Ruth Grimson, and Lydia Peters. I wish them, alongside Service Manager Maryann Harris and the rest of the team all the best for the next year and look forward to working with them into the future.

#### **UNCLE TROY DAVIS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Uncle Troy Davis for his recent appointment as the new Chair of the Gandangara Land Council. This significant achievement not only reflects Uncle Troy's unwavering dedication and exemplary leadership but also fills our community with immense pride. I look forward to collaborating closely with Uncle Troy and the Gandangara Land Council as they continue their journey to co-create a brighter future for first nations people, striving towards more inclusive, sustainable, and harmonious community. I would also like to extend my warmest regards to Uncle Tony Scholes for his tenure as former Chair of the Gandangara Land Council. Uncle Tony Scholes served our community with utmost dedication and passion, particularly in his commitment to preserving our indigenous heritage. His remarkable leadership will always be held in high regard.

#### **PAT AND TED CELEBRATE 70 YEARS OF MARRIAGE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I was honoured to visit with Mary and George Mair, known to their family and friends as Pat and Ted, to offer my congratulations on their 70th wedding anniversary. Pat and Ted were married in September 1923 at St Matthew's Church in Albury and continue to share their loving bond still to this day. Ted was a long-term railway clerk originally in Mossvale and then in the Albury booking office for over 43 years. Pat was a hairdresser from 1948 at age 15 until the pair started their family in 1958 when the first of their two children was born. Pat and Ted moved to Grafton in 2008 to be closer to the family and have made the Clarence Valley their home ever since. Mr and Mrs Mair celebrated this momentous occasion with their family and friends. I wish Pat and Ted all the best for their continued happiness.

#### **CWA CASINO AND CASINO GOLF CLUB – CHARITY GOLF FUNDRAISER**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I wish to congratulate the members of the Country Women's Association in Casino, Casino CWA Vice President Jane Flick, and Casino Golf Club for hosting a successful charity fundraiser to support Arlo Sonnex and his family. Casino Golf Club came to life on the 25th of June with a fantastic BBQ lunch and raffle. The highlight event of the day was the charity auction, where prizes generously donated by over 60 local businesses, individuals and community groups were auctioned off to raise critical funds for the Sonnex family. 20-month-old Arlo Sonnex was born with an extremely rare condition called CITP – congenital insensitivity to pain – which is an inability to feel any pain coupled with recurrent infections and permanent damage to the oral cavity. It is a lifelong condition that will impact young Arlo in all facets of his life, including physical, developmental, social and intellectual. This event was a heart-warming depiction of our local community's spirit and resilience in the face of adversity. All participants and supporters should feel proud to actively support this young boy's medical journey and I wish him all the best.

#### **HOPE ENDEAN – 2023 AUSTRALIAN COMMERCIAL RADIO AWARDS FINALIST**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I am pleased to congratulate Hope Endean on her selection as finalist in the Best New Talent on Air (Country) category at the 2023 Australian Commercial Radio Awards

[ACRAs]. Radio listeners living in the Clarence region are all too familiar with Hope. She is the afternoon host of FM104.7 radio's 'Drive Home with Hope' program, a segment featuring celebrity news and Australia's top music hits. Hope's enthusiastic and personable delivery has engaged her listeners for over two years now, and this has not gone unnoticed by the ACRAs panel of esteemed judges. Hope's drive and passion for her career is an inspiration to other young people and creatives living in the Clarence Valley community. It is the voices of young people today that will drive forward society tomorrow, and I encourage their voices to be heard. I will be cheering for Hope as she attends the finale event set in Sydney on the 14th of October. Good luck, Hope!

### **MINDARIBBA WARRIORS AND SISTAS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Maitland's Indigenous Representative Rugby League teams on their success at the recent Koori Knockout Championships, held at the Central Coast Sporting Complex in Tuggerah over the long weekend. The Koori Knockout is a four-day competition that is one of the largest gatherings of First Nations people in the country and dates back to 1971. The Mindaribba teams made three grand finals and won two. The Warriors under-13s boys dominated, taking out the grand final 30-0. The Warriors under-15s boys took the final down to the wire securing a golden point win 18-16 with an extra-time penalty goal. The Mindaribba Sistas under-17s proudly also made it to the grand finals going down to the Northern United Dirawongs. What a great result for the club, I wish to congratulate each of the individual players on their efforts. The players conducted themselves with positivity, mateship, country pride and a love and passion for the game and their heritage. Congratulations Mindaribba Warriors and Sistas. You are most worthy of this recognition.

### **ST BEDE'S YEAR 12 GRADUATING CLASS, 2023**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—A big congratulations to the first ever Year 12 graduating class of St Bede's Catholic College Chisholm. The students started Year 7 in 2018 as the brand-new school's only year group and are now its first graduating cohort. As the senior class at the school, this year group has played an important role in shaping St Bede's early history. The students have paved the way for the years following them and have created the culture and community of the school today. It is always hard to be the first, but this class has set the standard for future students at the school to aspire to, and along the way have exceeded the staff and their parent's expectations. The school year received the inaugural whole school clap out as part of their graduation ceremony. Congratulations to the staff and parents who have also worked hard and played a role establishing this school community. I would also particularly like to congratulate the schools founding principal John Murphy, who is certainly very proud of all these students and the happy memories they have created at St Bede's. Congratulations St Bede's inaugural graduating class of 2023.

### **MICHELLE WHITING**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Michelle Whiting for her high commendation in the recent Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Award. Michelle is a passionate teacher's aide who has been recognised for enhancing students' growth and wellbeing. Michelle provides literacy support for both primary and secondary school students. Michelle's colleagues praise her for her dedication to professional growth and her drive to best support students through her work. Her student's clear pattern of improvement, at an increased rate, following her support is clear evidence of her impact. Michelle has worked as a learning support officer at OneSchool Global, East Maitland for 15 years, starting in 2008, and over that time has played a critical role in student learning within the classroom. Michelle has seen a massive growth in the school since it's opening. When she began it was made up of an old building and only three demountables. The school is now unrecognisable with a new permanent building, however the heart of the school remains the same. Congratulations Michelle for your achievements and thank you for your contribution to the children of the Maitland community.

### **UNIVERSITY 2 WINS NNA OPENS NETBALL GRAND FINAL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The University 2 Opens Netball team defeated Nova Storm 50-49 in the Greater Bank NNA Tri Series Grand Final at National Park on Saturday September 16. The University club made the Grand Final in three divisions – Championship, Opens and Under 23 - but it was the Opens team which came out on top in a hard-fought battle. The match was played in very hot conditions and both teams pushed each other hard, displaying just what top athletes these players are. The happy crowd enjoyed the day immensely. For those who couldn't make it, the matches were live-streamed on YouTube. Fans were cheering from a special grandstand installed for a great viewing experience, supplemented by a big screen to see the action close-up. After two Covid affected seasons, high quality netball matches were again the order of the day. This netball competition is extremely beneficial as a pathway for juniors to develop into elite players that we all like to watch. My congratulations to University for a successful season, and especially to the Opens players, coaches and support staff. Well done!

### **EMBRACING THE GREEN BIN - LAKE MACQUARIE LEADING DRIVE FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Food scraps still comprise about 17 per cent of waste going into our garbage bins. Lake Macquarie residents have risen to the challenge by reducing this percentage, changing their habits to embrace the three-bin system and helping their area become one of the best food and green waste recyclers in Australia. Locals are chipping in and doing their bit to help reduce our heavy footprint on the environment. Excessive amounts of organic waste cause greenhouse gas emissions, like methane, if sent to landfill rather than being composted, where important nutrients are returned to the soil. Tens of thousands of tonnes of food and garden waste is sent to a processing facility at Awaba to become compost, and its diversion from landfill also reduces the amount council must pay in NSW Government waste levies. This enables more money to be spent on improving other services for residents. I thank the residents of Lake Macquarie in the Wallsend Electorate for realising that every little scrap counts, and that we can always do more to protect our environment.

### **MACQUARIE COLLEGE MOVIE MAGIC**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—A Macquarie College student-produced film, *Clash of the Cover Bands*, was a very special one night only screening at Glendale's Event Cinema on September 6, 2023. Students wrote and produced the movie, starring in it and organising costumes and props. Well-known local venues like Lizotte's, Civic Playhouse and Triple M studios were used as filming locations to give the feature length movie a sense of authenticity. 150 students from Years 8 to 12 spent nine months planning, shooting and editing the jukebox-style musical. It runs for 85 minutes and features a dozen well-known songs, telling the story of three bands in a struggle to win a competition to play in America and maybe win a world-wide competition. All students who worked on the project were thrilled about the experience of organising and realising creative ideas from page to screen. The whole project was supervised by Macquarie College CAPA leader Andrew Scully, who emphasised the experience of the journey - not only for the characters in the film, but for the dozens of students themselves. Bravo, everybody. You deserved having your names up in lights!

### **LORI-ANN MCKINNON – 2023 KOORI CURRICULUM EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to congratulate the winner of the Koori Curriculum Educator of the Year Award for 2023, Lori-Ann McKinnon from Port Macquarie Community Pre-School. Lori-Ann is a proud Birpai woman who passionately brings a wealth of cultural knowledge to her role as Aboriginal Engagement Educator. Completely immersing herself in all aspects of the Ninganah No More program, Lori-Ann facilitates education in Aboriginal cultural practices and language revitalisation. Pre-schoolers benefit from exposure to the Gathang language which is the language of the Birpai community. Lori-Ann produces resources, uses play based activities, songs, games and stories to extend children's learning. She also leads the Beach/Bush kinder program, taking groups of children on country to learn language and develop connections with the land of her ancestors. In the wider Aboriginal community, Lori-Ann has nurtured the strong relationships that the pre-school has established with local Aboriginal families and businesses in the community, together with the establishment of an Elder in Residence at the preschool. All of these aspects have culminated in the preschool enjoying a dramatic increase in the number of Aboriginal children enrolled to experience an authentic journey of reconciliation.

### **HASTINGS VALLEY FINE ARTS OPEN ART PRIZE 2023**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I take this opportunity to congratulate the Hastings Valley Fine Arts Association on its 40th Anniversary and commend them on another successful Open Art Prize and Exhibition. The Open Art Prize is a major exhibition for local artists and members of the Association. This year there were over 83 entries and 163 works exhibited across four categories. The Association attracts sponsorship from many local business for the prizes and any profits made support the Hastings Education Fund. This year awards were presented to: Best in Show Julie Hamann. Oil and Acrylic Winner Fred Bullen, Second Felicity Rabe; and Third Miffy Coady. Water based medium on paper Winner Stewart Hambrett; Second Sarah Spencer; and Third Rita Carosi. Pastel/Drawing Winner Jill Cairns, Second Colleen Palmer and Third Bernice Daher. Mixed Media Winner Wendy Friend, Second Brian Davidson; and Third Peggy Eather. In July this year the Association celebrated its 40th Anniversary with several founding members in attendance to highlight the history of the organisation and its journey over the past four decades. I encourage all of you to visit the Association's gallery when you are next in Port Macquarie.

### **KOALA HOSPITAL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today it is with much gratitude that I acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital. Staff, volunteers and the community came together recently to celebrate this incredible and significant milestone. The Hospital which is now formerly known as



Koala Conservation Australia continues on its ambitious program to conserve the koala population across our region and share its expertise with other organisations. Founders Max and Jean Starr can be credited with the organisation's humble beginnings and while at the time very little was known about koalas it was the start of the experiential learning journey for the Hospital that now receives global recognition for its research and for its expertise in koala treatment, rehabilitation and conservation. Across our community there is a genuine sense of pride for what has been achieved and for the ongoing plans for koala care and conservation. Koala Conversation Australia is directly supported by over 200 volunteers and members and has developed into a major tourist attraction while concurrently investing in research, training, education and conservation. Congratulations past and present Board Directors, Committee Members, volunteers and staff for your contributions and for what has been achieved supporting our iconic koala.

#### **FIFTIETH WAGGA LAKE RUN AND RIDE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to congratulate the Wagga Lake Run and Ride on hosting their 50th anniversary event in September this year. There were over 1000 participants to help celebrate the milestone. The course may have changed names and direction several times over the past 50 years; however, it remains one of the only free to enter fun runs in Australia. It was a great community event, and I was privileged to attend and officially start the 10km race. We were all lucky to have sunny weather and mild temperatures which were perfect for the event. Thank you to Phil Roy the Lake Fun Run and Ride President for his work in organising the event. Many thanks also to the committee who were instrumental in running the 50th Anniversary run and to Rick Priest who has provided the PA system for each event in the past 50 years. And, to Peter Fitzpatrick who has been on the committee for over 40 years helping especially in the week leading up and the day of the event. Congratulations to everyone who helped organise the event and to the participants.

#### **HARRY FRANCIS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge and congratulate Harry Francis from Tumut. Harry has just been awarded the National Electrical and Communications Association New South Wales Apprentice of the Year award on Friday the 8th of September. Harry is currently working at Pat Hogan Electrical in Tumut and was nominated by the General Manager of Power and Infrastructure Darren DuBois, who has said that Harry "is an excellent apprentice and a valued member of the PHE team". Executive chairman Mark Hogan spoke to the Tumut and Adelong Times and commended Harry on his enthusiasm to learn, his exceptional work quality and standards and most importantly always upholding the company's values. The 22-year-old Tumut local said the nomination was the highlight of his apprenticeship. Harry will no doubt be a highly regarded and skilled electrical trades person, once he finishes his apprenticeship. He has now been invited to enter the national apprentice awards. I congratulate Harry for his enthusiasm and work ethic which has been recognised with this award and I hope he continues challenging himself while staying across industry innovations and I wish this fantastic young sparkie the best of luck for the national awards.

#### **HUMPHREY THE BIDGEE SCHOOL THERAPY DOG**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge Humphrey the therapy dog who is retiring from the Bidgee school after seven years of service to the amazing students and staff. Humphrey has been instrumental in supporting both staff and students. He is well known for helping students deal with their emotions and to improve their mental wellbeing. He has been a positive impact for everyone within the school and will be missed. Thank you to Marianne Mitchell, the principal of the Bidgee school, who was instrumental in the development of their therapy dog program and has also installed two sensory pods for the school this year. This along with the therapy dogs are used by the wellbeing team and occupational therapists to support the young people of this school to experience success. I would like to congratulate Humphrey, the beloved Labrador, on his retirement and seven years of service for the students and staff of the Bidgee School. It will be a big change for everyone to start term four without Humphrey, but I am sure everyone will be able to use the skills they have learnt from Humphrey for all their future endeavours."

#### **BAULKHAM HILLS NETBALL PRESENTATION**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—It was recently my pleasure to attend the Baulkham Hills Shire Netball Association's Presentation Evening held within my Electorate of Kellyville. The Association is of an immense size, constituting teams that cater to all ages and including both women's and mixed teams. Playing out of the Wellgate Avenue Netball Complex in Kellyville, the club relies heavily on its volunteers who run the club's administrative duties. It was a pleasure at the presentation evening to recognise those volunteers alongside the teams and players who were successful throughout the last year. My thanks go out to all involved in the running of the club, but especially committee members: Kylie Tzavaras, Monique O'Callaghan, Cassie Johnson, Rhiannon Latham, Leanne Spears, Katey Bryers, Andrea Curr, Lynne Robertson, Claudette Noble and Rebecca Smith.

**WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY (KINGSWOOD) SOLAR TEAM**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—The Western Sydney University (Kingswood) Solar Team has engineered a solar car to compete at this year's Bridgestone World Solar Challenge at Darwin in October. The team, comprised of 25 students, will take on the challenge, where they will compete against other world-class solar car teams. These students have spent months preparing and testing their solar powered car alongside completing university studies. The solar car named UNLIMITED 5.0 can reach a speed of 130km/h and can travel 400km. This solar car took two years to design, engineer and manufacture, containing some of the most efficient solar technology. I would like to wish the Western Sydney University (Kingswood) Solar Team good luck in Darwin. The community and I are cheering for you!

**THE JANNALI HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of The Jannali High School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Kiera Dzeperoski and Hayden Phillis, Vice Captains Ashlee Amer and Ashley Goddard and the Prefects Moana Caleo, Allie McIlveen, Holly Wilson, James Goddard and Samuel Hogg. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Rick Coleman, I have every confidence that these dedicated young adults will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify The Jannali High School's motto of being 'the place to succeed'.

**PORT HACKING HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Port Hacking High School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Emily Kyriakides and Max Whittaker, Vice Captains Riley Hafouri and Matthew Basanovic and Prefects Abbey Dobson, Zuzia Mrozevska, Yulia Yanusova and James Copeland. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Rick Turansky, I have every confidence that these dedicated young adults will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Port Hacking High School's motto that 'to strive is to achieve'.

**MENAI HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Menai High School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I urge them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the new student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Lily Thompson and Nathan Maddock and Vice Captains Jessica Giannaklis, Allegra Montoya, Michael Habkhouk and Pearce O'Grady. With the guidance of their Acting Principal John Stanley, I have every confidence that these dedicated young adults will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Menai High School's motto of 'care and commitment'.

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