



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday 17 October 2023

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 17 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 acknowledge in the gallery the guest of the member for Bankstown, Zac Louey, a student doing work experience in the member's office. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Blacktown, a delegation from SydWest Multicultural Services led by Saurav Shrestha. You are very much welcome here in the first Parliament in Australia. I also welcome guests of the member for Port Macquarie, Craig and Lisa Clarke. I am sure you will hear more from your member in question time—I hope not too much, though. I acknowledge my guests, members of the Lake Macquarie Old Boys Club.

Announcements

MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER: I inform the House of a matter close to my heart. The Motorcycle Council of NSW is hosting the Parliamentarians' Ride tomorrow. The ride has been run for many years to raise issues around motorcycle safety for both car drivers and motorcyclists. It is the official launch of Motorcycle Awareness Month, which occurs annually in October. This year's theme is "CRASH", which stands for Consumer Rating and Assessment of Safety Helmets and encourages riders to wear the safest protective gear they can. I am getting out my latest and most compliant helmet for the ride. I ask all members who have a motorcycle lying around, such as the member for Barwon and the member for Coogee, to come out and join us for the ride, a bit of breakfast and some sage advice from representatives of Transport for NSW.

DEATH OF THE HON. BRIAN JOSEPH LANGTON, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR KOGARAH

The SPEAKER (12:05): It is with regret that I inform the House of the passing of Brian Langton, a former member for Kogarah and Minister for Transport, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Emergency Services.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Bills

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

Returned

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

Announcements

DEATH OF AUNTY ESME TIMBERY

The SPEAKER (12:06): I advise members of the passing of local Aboriginal Elder Aunty Esme Timbery, a proud Bidjigal woman from La Perouse and a practising artist and shell worker since the 1940s. In 2005 Aunty Esme was the inaugural winner of the Parliament of New South Wales Indigenous Art Prize for her works representing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. We are proud to hold such an important and significant artwork in our collection. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of Aunty Esme.

*Members***GOVERNMENT WHIP**

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House of the election this day of Nathan Matthew Hagarty as Government Whip.

The SPEAKER: It is a significant announcement. I congratulate the member for Leppington.

*Question Time***ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Last Thursday in Parliament when asked if she told any Jewish community leader that the Jewish community should stay away from the Sydney CBD on Monday night, she said, "No, I did not." Did the Minister mislead the House?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:10): No.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:10): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the gap in approvals for low-rise and medium-density housing and what caused this?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:10): It is a pertinent question from the member for Granville and of interest to members in this House. We know that we have a major deficit in New South Wales when it comes to new housing approvals in the State: 48,000 completions in the last 12 months, compared with Victoria, which had 58,000. On a per capita basis we are last on the eastern seaboard. Many people are asking how we got into this situation. One of the glaring problems with planning in New South Wales, if we look at the past 12 years, is that low-rise density has been ignored in the face of the growing housing crisis.

I report to the House that terraces—everybody loves terraces popping up in our residential zones—and one- and two-storey unit blocks are permitted in R2 zoning in only two of 32 local environmental plans. Of the 32 local environmental plans for Sydney, just two allow terrace houses and low-rise density apartments. One of the reasons why we are all searching around for answers to the housing crisis in the State is the lack of private affordable housing in the marketplace. We have to start to point the finger. Who is responsible for this mess? Fortunately, we have somebody in the upper House who said, "The Opposition must come to terms with the fact that the previous Government is culpable in this crisis."

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Who said that?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I can report to the House that it was Mr Chris Rath, a young up-and-comer on the Opposition benches. He is very influential in the faction, they tell me. He is speaking truth to power. In response, the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces was asked about this by *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He said:

It shows the diversity of opinions we have in the Liberal Party when it comes to the housing debate.

Chris Rath has driven a truck through the Coalition's planning policy, and the shadow Minister is trying to sell it as a virtue and say it is a good thing that it has three, four, five, six different planning policies for New South Wales. What a joke. There is no commonality at all. Whom could the Hon. Chris Rath have been speaking about when launching such a stinging rebuke? I think he may have had the member for Vacluse in his sights. I am not positive, but not long ago we were told that the member for Vacluse was elected on a platform of protecting the unique heritage— [*Extension of time*]

It may be the case that he was talking about the member for Vacluse because recently she said unambiguously—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Swansea will come to order. Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Ms Kellie Sloane: My point of order relates to relevance. The Premier seems obsessed with the eastern suburbs. He misled the House last week when he talked about development in the east.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

Ms Kellie Sloane: He is misleading the House and being duplicitous because he has opposed development in his electorate of Kogarah.

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order. The member for Vaucluse will resume her seat while I hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Standing Order 131 (8) states:

Points of order taken during an answer to a question should not be vexatious, repetitive, interfering or used to make a statement in response to the answer.

That point of order was vexatious. It had absolutely nothing to do with Standing Order 129. Ridiculous points of order should no longer be tolerated unless members opposite can at least try to comply with the standing orders.

Mr Alister Henskens: To the point of order: The question was, "Will the Premier update the House on the gap in approvals between low-rise and medium-density housing and what caused this?"

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes. You guys caused it. That is what I am saying. That is the point I am trying to make.

Mr Alister Henskens: The member for Vaucluse was elected only in March. She could not have possibly caused the problem.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Vaucluse has said repeatedly—and we have heard it today—that she is opposing a plan to turn a derelict service station into a supermarket and boutique apartment block of 14 apartments.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: She is protecting the heritage of the eastern suburbs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have to protect those derelict service stations. We have to protect the \$1 coffee.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time. It is very early in question time. I will not tolerate this unparliamentary behaviour much longer. I will start directing members to remove themselves from the Chamber if they continue with this standard of behaviour.

Mr Dugald Saunders: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to bring a debate on with the member for Vaucluse without taking her character into question—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am not reflecting on the member's character. This is all on the public record, and surely it is germane to question time. I make the point that she is prepared to protect the unique character of the eastern suburbs, which presumably includes a derelict service station.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: She is protecting the \$1 coffee that is sold in the derelict service station, protecting the unique heritage of the doughnuts that have been left out for a week.

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have to protect the week-old sausage rolls. What a joke. It is 14 apartments. Just 500 apartments in that electorate have been zoned for increase. The member says they admit that—that they are full and cannot take any more. A modest proposal to demolish a derelict service station typifies the nimbysism now rife in Coalition parties. Upper House member Chris Rath has had the courage to call it out. There should not be any interruption from members opposite because I am quoting a Coalition MP. He went on to say:

They will lose their seats if one in five gen Zs and one in four millennials aren't voting Liberal at the next election because they can't afford to buy a house.

Truer words have never been spoken. Those opposite do not have a policy when it comes to planning or housing in New South Wales, other than saying no. They are short-changing the next generation of young Australians.

The SPEAKER: That was fun. However, such behaviour will not be tolerated throughout question time.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Did the Minister, or did she not, tell any Jewish community leader last Monday, "Maybe it'll just be easier if we don't light the Opera House to protect you people"?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:19): No, I did not.

TEACHER WORKFORCE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:19): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on action the Minns Labor Government is taking to address the serious teacher shortage crisis across the State?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:20): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning and member for Campbelltown for that important question. The question goes to the heart of one of the biggest priorities of this Labor Government. That priority is about improving outcomes for our 800,000 students across the State of New South Wales. One of the ways we are engaged in doing that—a crucial issue which previous governments refused to engage with—is acknowledging that critical to improving outcomes for the 800,000 students across New South Wales is making sure that we value the vital job that our teachers and educational leaders do in our schools. Instead of sitting on our hands and saying that there is not a teacher shortage crisis, which the previous Government continuously—

Mr Jihad Dib: They denied it, remember?

Ms PRUE CAR: They denied it. They said it was a beat-up. We are chipping away at the structural reasons why we have a teacher shortage and what we have inherited from those opposite. One of the most important ways we have done this is by fulfilling our election commitment to give job certainty to thousands of teachers across New South Wales. When the Liberals and The Nationals were in power in New South Wales they were addicted to casualisation. These statistics are completely alarming. They doubled the number of temporary teachers. Many of those teachers had been working in schools for years and years and years but simply could not get a permanent contract. The former Government doubled the number of temporary teachers, from 11,700 in 2011 to more than 24,000 when it left office.

That does not happen by mistake. It was a deliberate attempt to drive people into impermanent, insecure work to make sure that people do not have the rights of security in their workplace. Even the OECD, which is not a small outfit, admitted it had seriously adverse effects on students. In effect, that means the policy of doing this was an international embarrassment. That is why Labor came to government on a promise to make 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff permanent. I am proud to announce that we are not just delivering this commitment; we are smashing it out of the park. In the space of just six months, more than 16,700 temporary staff have accepted a permanent contract. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Jihad Dib: What was the figure?

Ms PRUE CAR: That figure was 16,700. We have exceeded even our own expectations. So far, under the first phase of this government commitment, 7,700 temporary support staff—all those wonderful people, mostly women, who support our students as school learning support officers, work in the office and are in the sick bay—have accepted a permanent contract. Ten thousand teachers have been offered a permanent position; almost 9,000 of those teachers have accepted the offer so far. That means that, in the middle of very difficult economic times, teachers and support staff in our schools are able to get a loan to get a house and are able to apply to rent a home for their family. This has real-life impacts, and it means we are actually encouraging young people to come into the profession that starts all the other professions. We need to improve the outcomes for our young people in our schools.

This is one of the biggest priorities, along with increasing teachers' pay, that we can enact as a government to address the teacher shortage crisis. A day does not go by as Minister where I do not get an email or a letter from a Coalition MP, saying, "What about the teacher shortage?" The response is always "What were you doing while you were in government?" I think this week I got an email from my neighbour the member for Badgerys Creek, saying, "Did you know there was a teacher shortage?" Yes, actually we did know there was a teacher shortage, and the people of New South Wales changed the government to do something about it. To all those teachers and support staff who we have made permanent, we value you and we want you to stay in our schools because you are the magic that is going to make a difference to the 800,000 students in our system.

FIRST NATIONS TREATY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:25): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier commit to a co-designed, inclusive and multi-partisan truth and treaty process to urgently establish a treaty with First Nations people in New South Wales?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:25): I thank the member for her question. I am not sure what "co-designed" would mean in its practical application. We will be talking with First Nations people in New South Wales, the leadership of the Aboriginal community in this State, many of whom put their heart and soul into constitutional change and recognition via a referendum last weekend and who, I think, by common consent, are hurting at the moment. I do not pretend that Indigenous views on constitutional changes are homogenous; they are not. There are a variety of views, but the vast majority wanted that constitutional change. My Government and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will of course be beginning consultations with First Nations people as soon as possible. After we speak to them and gain their sense of direction in relation to the next steps, we do commit to bring that to the Parliament.

We acknowledge that this is a hung Parliament and that we do not have a majority on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. To the extent possible, wherever possible, multi-partisanship is warranted, will be sought out and is needed in terms of pursuing meaningful change when it comes to our First Nations residents. The reason we need to do that is because what we are doing at the moment is not working. In the Closing the Gap data, the New South Wales life expectancy for Aboriginals is 9.3 years lower for males and 7.6 years lower for females. As I said in the House last week, the leading cause of death for young Aboriginal men is suicide. We know that in 17 socio-economic outcomes, Indigenous people are at the lowest on all of those indices. What we are doing is not working.

We respect and acknowledge the result of the referendum on the weekend, but that does not mean that is the end of (a) the pathway towards Indigenous reconciliation and (b) putting everything we can into Closing the Gap metrics, not just for health indices and criminal justice indices but also—and this is equally important—symbolism for First Nations people. Symbols are important, and symbolic reconciliation is, if one speaks to First Nations Australians who live in Australia's largest State, very important to them as well. I cannot give the member for Newtown easy answers. The truth of the matter is that, after the defeat of the referendum on the weekend, I do not have easy answers for this. But we will be guided by the leadership of the Aboriginal community in New South Wales, and we will bring that deliberation to the floor of this Parliament.

BUS INDUSTRY TASKFORCE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:28): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the recommendations coming from the Bus Industry Taskforce safety report?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:28): I thank the member for Coogee and Parliamentary Secretary for Transport for her ongoing work with the Bus Industry Taskforce, not only helping us to deliver more reliable bus services but also to make sure that we do that in the safest way possible. Many members would be aware that this Saturday a memorial service will be held at the Singleton Showground to honour those who lost their lives in a tragic bus accident on the June long weekend. Ten wedding guests travelling on a chartered bus died and another 25 passengers sustained injuries. I appreciate that many family members, friends, the broader Hunter community and those across our State will still be feeling deep pain, and that grieving may go on for many, many years. Our thoughts will be especially with them this weekend. In recent months, the Premier and I have met with the family members and heard their stories. I know many members have also sought to provide what support they could.

As I said in the days following this tragic event, road safety should always be above politics. I know that all members in this place are committed to playing their role to help support safer roads for our communities. In response to this incident, the Government wanted to take immediate action, which is why I expanded the terms of reference of the Bus Industry Taskforce and added a safety expert to its ranks, in Mr Darren Lane. I asked the taskforce to advise me specifically on the adequacy of certain aspects and regulatory arrangements. Last week I released the first safety report of the Bus Industry Taskforce. It includes five recommendations—all of which the Government is accepting—to improve bus safety in New South Wales, including that the New South Wales Rural and Regional Seatbelt Program continues to be rolled out in outer metro areas and that we need a campaign to promote seatbelt usage on buses to foster a culture of compliance amongst passengers.

The third recommendation is that the Government will work with bus operators to look at making sure they understand their obligations and take reasonable steps to inform passengers that they need to use a seatbelt. The fourth recommendation looks at risks to people standing on buses, and the fifth is around whether the speed

restrictions that currently apply to dedicated school services at 80 kilometres per hour when standing should be expanded to other bus services. I am very pleased to inform the House that work has already begun to implement those recommendations. [*Extension of time*]

Last week Transport for NSW launched a new campaign to remind people of their obligation to wear a seatbelt. If you are on a bus and a seatbelt is available, you need to use it. We acknowledge that there has been some confusion around these rules. Our campaign will make it absolutely clear that we want everyone to remember that seatbelts save lives. Just like when you buckle up in a car, you need to do the same on a bus or coach as well. Every time someone gets on a bus, particularly in regional areas, they will see posters and alerts to remind them of that so that hopefully, over time, we can build a culture of compliance. Just like when you get in a car and put on your seatbelt, when you get on a bus you need to do the same.

The Government will be working with bus operators and launching a statewide advertising campaign to remind people to wear a seatbelt. That campaign is being developed in consultation with the families affected by the tragic Singleton accident. I am incredibly grateful for their assistance and their passionate advocacy. They are such gracious members of our community. They will continue to work with Transport for NSW and the Government to make sure we do everything we possibly can to prevent further tragedies like the one we saw in the Hunter Valley on the June long weekend.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:33): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Did the Minister at any stage on Sunday 8 October or Monday 9 October raise any concerns or issues with the Premier or the Premier's office about lighting up the Opera House?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:33): Not to my recollection.

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:33): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister inform the House of what action the Minns Labor Government is taking to help alleviate pressures on busy emergency departments and keep frontline workers safe?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:34): That is a really good question from the member for Penrith. Like her football team, she is very good. I have spoken to the House about a number of these issues and the Government's initiatives to try to take the pressure off our busy emergency departments. Visitors in the gallery who have been to hospital recently will have seen firsthand, as I have, the enormous amount of pressure on our emergency departments across all of our communities. My task is to work with the department to start to open up additional pathways to provide alternative ways for people to get access to care. We also continue to make sure that emergency departments are for emergencies.

In opposition I spent some time catching up with the team at St Vincent's Hospital, including a gentleman by the name of Paul Preisz. For those who have not met him, Paul runs the emergency department at St Vincent's. He talked to me about a model of care that he has established there that essentially takes people who present to emergency departments who have been under the influence of alcohol and other drugs and moves them to another part of the hospital where they can get care in an environment that has low stimulation: lower lighting, less noise—essentially less busy than our emergency departments. I have spent time in government going back there and working with him and Toby Wilson, the CEO of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.

Using funds coming out of the ice royal commission, today we launched two services that will be up and running from next year that build on the work at St Vincent's. The first service will be at Nepean Hospital. It will allow patients presenting under the influence of alcohol and other drugs—often with the potential to do a lot of harm to themselves, other patients and staff—to be redirected to another part of the emergency area to get the care and treatment they need but in a setting that is more suitable to the health challenge they are experiencing. In some cases that is psychosis. That will ensure that busy emergency departments continue to be run efficiently and effectively so that people presenting there—often young children at night-time and elderly patients—can get the care they need. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mr RYAN PARK: The Prince of Wales Hospital will also have one of these units established. The Government initially picked these two sites because of the presentations of people under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. Across both sites an additional 50-odd staff are required and will be invested. These will be the first two units. There will be more, but we want these two units up and established. I am confident, having worked

with and engaged with the team at St Vincent's, as well as Toby from the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, who is leading the reform within the department, that we can get this right, they can work and we can roll them out to other venues.

We know that around 5 per cent of presentations to our emergency departments are from people under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. Whilst no-one pretends that these two units will be a silver bullet, we know that they will improve the care provided to people experiencing serious health impacts because of the use of alcohol and other drugs. At the same time they will free up space in our emergency departments, allow emergency departments to be run as efficiently and effectively as possible, and improve safety for our staff. Those are very important factors that I think make these units worth investing in. Investment in these types of initiatives is an important way in which we will manage very busy emergency departments. I look forward to updating the House on the other initiatives the Government is rolling out to take pressure off emergency departments and health services across New South Wales.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:39): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Section 8 of the Police Act empowers the Minister to direct the police commissioner in relation to the management and control of the Police Force. Last week the Minister said, "I will not be giving directions on matters that relate to the police's role in keeping our streets safe." By refusing to ever give directions to keep our streets safe, is the Minister refusing to do her job as police Minister?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:40): I cannot believe that the member for Bathurst, of all people, has asked that question. The member sat in that chair, and he knows only too well that the police are the best ones to make operational decisions. If I interfered with police, I could say "I want you arrested" or "I want you arrested." The member knows that. There should always be a separation of power. I will uphold that; I will adhere to that. The member for Bathurst is a disgrace for asking that question. It is below him. And the member for Dubbo is the only person in here who will lose his job. It will not be me, my friend.

The SPEAKER: Order! All members understood the answer. I call the member for North Shore to order for the second time.

NATIONAL SKILLS AGREEMENT

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:41): My question is addressed to the freshly minted Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister update the House on the new National Skills Agreement?

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:41): I thank the member for Blacktown for his question and for his long commitment to skills development and well-paid jobs for New South Wales residents. He has played an important role in that. It is an important week for skills and training in New South Wales because yesterday New South Wales signed off on the new National Skills Agreement. This is a five-year agreement that will provide us with the funding certainty to fix the mess left by the Liberals and The Nationals in this State. It is a landmark Labor initiative that guarantees a minimum of \$2.8 billion of Federal funding for our skills and TAFE system over the next five years. That includes at least an additional \$72 million for the skills budget this financial year. On top of that, the agreement has additional Federal funding of \$1 billion on offer to allow us to make the serious, long-term and lasting reform that this sector is in desperate need of.

It is a significant achievement and one that the former Government failed to negotiate for by putting this agreement off for a year. The former Minister can sit there with a querulous look on his face, but he is the one who failed it. The reform priorities of the agreement are very important for our State. They include expanding access to foundation skills training to boost our adult and community education sector; Closing the Gap initiatives to build on the Closing the Gap national plan in support of Aboriginal-controlled registered training organisations [RTOs]; enhancing vocational education and training [VET] data and evidence, which will fund system upgrades to implement modern data practices; improving completions to explore new and innovative ways to get VET completions, especially in our priority skills areas; and restoring TAFE to the heart of our skills and training sector, which is something we on this side of the House want to see.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will cease their chatter. It is distracting for the Minister.

Mr STEVE WHAN: The chatter from Opposition members just shows their embarrassment that in their forward estimates—

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

Mr STEVE WHAN: The forward projections they made for TAFE showed real dollar declines in every out year of their forward estimates.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Macquarie to order for the first time.

Mr STEVE WHAN: It was part of the dodgy accounting that went into their claim that they could get a budget surplus. In fact, they outlined a situation for TAFE that led to complete uncertainty, and which, they said in their forward estimates, projected lower funding in each out year. [*Extension of time*]

This agreement will enable us to rebuild TAFE. As promised, we will ensure that at least 70 per cent of all government funding in the skills sector goes to TAFE. We will rebuild from the years of uncertainty that I have spoken about under the former Government, which had forward estimates declining for TAFE in each out year. We have committed to things like the three TAFE NSW manufacturing centres of excellence. I am particularly pleased that an important part of this commitment is to closing the gap for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Under this agreement New South Wales will continue to support the growth of the Aboriginal community-controlled and First Nations-owned sector. The agreement will see New South Wales grow its VET workforce and boost the cultural competency of mainstream RTOs, so that no matter where Aboriginal people service they can do so in a culturally safe environment.

We will do this in close partnership with local communities to build on the successful work we already do in New South Wales to support Aboriginal people and Aboriginal-controlled training organisations. That is particularly important given the comments the Premier made before about moving forward and trying to close the gap in many significant areas. As our wonderful former colleague Linda Burney said in this place when she made her inaugural speech, education was the key to her success and it can be the key to closing the gap in so many areas. This new five-year agreement with the Commonwealth is a fabulous opportunity for New South Wales, working with a like-minded Federal Labor government to put the steps in place to boost our skills training over coming years and do it in a way that provides long-term certainty for those who need the skills and provides a well-skilled workforce for our State.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:46): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. On Monday 9 October, the Minister said that protests that took place in Western Sydney on Sunday 8 October were "generally well behaved". When she said this, was she aware that fireworks had been shot into the air from a car driving through a red light at Greenacre and that a preacher at Lakemba told the crowd, "I'm smiling and I'm happy. I'm elated," and "It's a day of courage. It's a day of pride"?

The SPEAKER: I will allow the question if the Deputy Premier is prepared to answer it.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:47): I am not sure what Opposition members think they are doing in a very difficult set of circumstances, or whether they think they are helping community harmony in the State by treating this very serious issue as a political football in the Parliament. I am not sure what they think they are doing, but these are not the actions of responsible servants of the State of New South Wales. As I have said in the media—and I will gladly say it to the House again—on Monday morning the early advice I received at the time about the gathering of the previous afternoon was that the police advised it was generally well behaved. What ended up happening on Monday evening, obviously, was unacceptable. The Premier himself has apologised for what has happened. We have put so much effort in as a government. Every Minister on this—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Ms PRUE CAR: I am directly answering this question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the point of order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Can we stop the clock?

The SPEAKER: No.

Mr Dugald Saunders: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The direct question was "Were you aware?"

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order: It was a wideranging question, and the answer was directly relevant to that wideranging question. The point of order was vexatious and was designed to interfere with the answer. It is about time that the Chair ensures that Opposition members at least try to cite a relevant standing order and do not just make them up as they go along.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House for his comments. There is no point of order. I believe the author of the question failed the test of asking a competent question. When that occurs, I will be less inclined to uphold a point of order.

Ms PRUE CAR: I think any reasonable person—

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jenny Leong: Mr Speaker, I ask you to restore the Deputy Premier's time or grant her an extension because three members have spoken while she was trying to provide her answer. The Deputy Premier was in the middle of her comments. Members in this Chamber have previously behaved in a way to try to silence the Deputy Premier. I ask you to give the Deputy Premier an extension of time so that she can continue to provide her answer.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Chair does not need members' assistance. The clock will be reset to one minute. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Ms PRUE CAR: Maybe members opposite should read their transcripts more diligently, because I have said clearly that I was speaking on early advice from early reports on an evolving situation. I say to the people of New South Wales via this House that this is what members of the New South Wales Coalition have come to. People on the other side of the world are suffering and they are using this to score political points.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. The Deputy Premier will cease being inflammatory.

Ms PRUE CAR: This is what those opposite have come to. They wonder why they are in the position that they are in and why people do not take them seriously.

STATE BUDGET AND DEBT

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in his capacity representing the Treasurer. Will the Minister outline the current economic challenges inherited by the Minns Labor Government and how the 2023-24 budget will set up New South Wales for the future?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:52): I thank the member for Liverpool for her question. She understands how important it is for us to get spending under control to reduce the pressures of inflation and interest rates and to do all that we can as a subnational government to try to deal with the economic challenges that we have confronted, and we did confront some challenges upon coming into office. The budget has been well endorsed by members on this side of the House and also by members opposite. After the second or third question on budget day, members opposite have not asked a question about the budget since. That shows their ringing endorsement for this Government's attempts to bring spending back under control. Members opposite understand the challenging circumstances that they left us.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The previous Government was addicted to debt, addicted to spending and addicted to privatisation. It was showing up in the budget bottom line. After delivering the two biggest deficits in the State's history—\$15.3 billion in 2021-22 and \$12 billion in 2022-23—it managed to run up \$129 billion in debt.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: That works out to be \$16,000 per person in New South Wales. Guess what? It was on track to be more. It was on track to reach \$187 billion by 2025-26. That is \$22,000 for every man, woman and child in the State. That is the previous Government's record of fiscal management. That meant that it was spending more money on interest payments than on the Police Force and TAFE combined. More money was going to bondholders than to the delivery of essential services. That is to the detriment of all of us. Without targeted and disciplined intervention, those fiscal pressures would have reduced the quality and quantity of services that the State would have been able to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

Even as the wealthiest State in a wealthy country, we cannot afford to rest on our good fortune. That is why a comprehensive review of expenditure was central to delivering a responsible budget that confronts the housing crisis, rebuilds essential services, provides cost-of-living support, gets the renewable energy road map back on track after it lost its way and, more importantly, pays down the Liberal-Nationals Coalition's debt. That comprehensive review meant that we could ensure that we were making decisions in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

We redirected around \$14 billion in budget measures to be reinvested in unfunded programs and essential services.

Mr Matt Kean: To the unions. You gave yourself a big revenue uplift for the unions.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Yes, it did go to union members.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Hornsby on two calls to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It went to union members who had been under an unfair wages cap on the member for Hornsby's watch. He is the guy who oversaw the biggest explosion in debt ever in New South Wales, and he sits there proud as punch that he was destining people to more privatisation and an unfair wages cap that was reducing their capacity to pay for houses.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Matt Kean: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister is talking about fiscal responsibility when he frittered away \$14 billion to his union mates.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: He might be on three calls, but he was on \$27.7 billion of new expenditure initiatives in the last 15 months of his watch. That is why they were able to rack up another \$21 billion in debt in their last 12 months alone.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: But we have been able to take steps to reduce the rate of gross debt by \$14.8 billion by 2025-26. That is the largest set of gross debt reduction measures in the State's history, all without privatisation and an unfair wages cap. In actual fact, by reducing the rate of debt, we have been able to redirect an additional \$2.3 billion into supporting essential services, like teachers and nurses and all the services that members opposite left unfunded when they left office because they did not like them.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Cut, cut, cut.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Yes, we have cut debt—exactly—including \$3.6 billion in the Essential Services Fund and \$13.8 billion in health and hospital services. Members opposite do not like it, but it is the truth.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired. I let the answer run on a little longer, but I think the Minister was enjoying the exchange.

PARKES HOSPITAL MATERNITY SERVICES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on the progress being made to reinstate permanent maternity services at Parkes Hospital, a service critical to the health and safety of expectant mothers and their newborn babies, and the future of that growing township?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:58): I thank the member for Orange for his advocacy. Members will understand that he has been a long-term and deep advocate for health care, particularly in the Central West and in his electorate of Orange. Whether it is men's mental health, prostate awareness, cancer support, Safe Haven support or women's health care, the member for Orange has brought to me and to my predecessor, former Minister Hazzard, a number of important healthcare issues. I want that to be acknowledged because he is certainly a strong advocate for the community that he is fortunate to represent.

Lachlan Health Service is essentially made up of two important hospitals: Parkes and Forbes. I will talk about Forbes, initially, before I get to the member's question. Forbes is a level 3 service in terms of maternity. It provides prenatal, postnatal and, of course, birthing services. At the moment, Parkes is providing only prenatal and postnatal services. We are currently trying to recruit at Parkes—particularly midwives—through incentives. Up to \$20,000 will go to that hospital to reinstate birthing services. I assure the House that the department is under no illusion of the priority that I place on health care for those living in regional and rural areas. Many of us who are lucky enough to come from the regions understand that it is an area in which we need to do better. I have said all along that my aim is to improve the level of health care for people living in those areas and improve their access, particularly around birthing services. The member should be aware that we are now actively in the process of trying to recruit.

Members in this Chamber—particularly those like the member for Bega and others who have a professional background in nursing, midwifery, medical services and health care—would understand that we have a global midwife shortage. That challenge is exacerbated in regional and rural New South Wales. It is a challenge that we are up for, but it is serious. I am having a number of discussions with the member for Bega, as my Parliamentary Secretary, as well as with the department about how we can improve the level of midwifery services and antenatal, postnatal and birthing services that are available for people living in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. *[Extension of time]*

The parliamentary inquiry into birth trauma is currently taking place across New South Wales. When asked about this inquiry, I said, "Yes, it is important because we do need to do better when it comes to maternity services across New South Wales." I sat in on one of the public hearings for a little while last week. I heard evidence about the challenges for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and that the way in which we deliver services is perhaps not meeting their needs. We must look at the way we are delivering services in rural and regional New South Wales as well. I and my Illawarra colleagues are having some deep discussions at the moment with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District about how to improve health services, particularly maternity services, for women and families across our growing community.

We will continue to focus on this area because we need to do better. The regional and rural health inquiry highlighted that. In relation to the service that the member for Orange is talking about, I have made it clear that we are actively recruiting. The challenge is global. That is not an excuse; it is a reality. We need to continue to lean in to doing whatever we can to ensure that we are providing high-quality antenatal, postnatal and birthing services across New South Wales. It is an issue for many people, particularly for those living in regional and rural areas. This Government is working in partnership with communities, doctors and midwives and is determined to continue to focus on improving, going forward.

SEATBELT CAMERAS

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (13:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is taking action to improve road safety with the introduction of camera enforcement for seatbelts?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (13:03): Earlier today I gave notice that the New South Wales Government will introduce legislation in this place to allow for the use of cameras to enforce the 50-year-old seatbelt law. It might surprise members in this Chamber to know that last year we issued more than 10,500 infringements for people not wearing seatbelts. That is incredible for a law that has been in place for 50 years.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to a former member for Maitland—in fact, our longest serving member for Maitland—and this State's longest serving transport Minister, the Hon. Milton Morris, who introduced that legislation in this place. Earlier today I had a conversation with his daughter Karen and his former electorate officer Mrs Kay Sharp about what we are doing. It is wonderful to have a relationship with people who are committed to safety and who saw that legacy introduced. I will talk more about them tomorrow, but they are excited to see this new legislation introduced.

The important statistic for us is fatalities. In the past five years, 142 people have died in accidents where they were not wearing seatbelts. That is an average of around 29 people per year who are no longer with us because they were not wearing a seatbelt. If we take that to serious injuries, it is around 76. It is a very dangerous habit to get into. We are very concerned about the road toll. I make clear that I appreciate the conversations that we have been having with members of the Opposition and the crossbench around road safety.

As of last night, the road toll in our State is 282. I was informed at a meeting the other day that I am the first transport Minister who has had those texts come directly to my phone every time there is a fatality or a major significant disruption on the network. I receive at least one a day, and it is too many. In fact, if we go back over the past 12 months, we are talking about 337 fatalities. Whatever action we can take, we will do it. The regions are over-represented in seatbelt-related trauma. In the past five years, more than 84 per cent of fatalities and 67 per cent of serious injuries in the regions involved the non-use of seatbelts. This is a simple change that we can implement. *[Extension of time]*

I take the opportunity to thank the member for South Coast for her question. As regional MPs, it is something that we do see. We know that one-third of our population lives in the regions, yet they represent somewhere in the order of two-thirds of those who lose their lives on our roads. We are implementing this simple, twenty-first century change to legislation that has been on our books in this State for 50 years. It is just one of the initiatives of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, which targets a reduction in fatalities on our roads. We want to

reduce the road toll by 50 per cent and serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030, and we have an overall aim of towards zero trauma by 2050. That is one target I am excited to get to.

The bill enables the same cameras that currently detect mobile phone usage to be used to pick up seatbelt compliance. This will go hand in hand with a public awareness campaign and a warning letter period during which people will have the opportunity to make sure they know about the law before fines are issued. This is so important. Every life lost on our roads brings grief, trauma and regret to our communities, which lasts a lifetime. Every dollar that is raised by these seatbelt cameras will go back into road safety, which is already the case with revenue from speed and mobile phone detection cameras. This is a simple, cost-effective way to improve road safety at a time when the road toll is on the rise. We know that mobile detection cameras have been effective in changing that dangerous behaviour; they work. Every time people get in the car, we want them to click, clack, front and back.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:09): By leave: In accordance with Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked of him by the member for Kiama during question time on 12 October 2023.

Ministerial Statements

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR DEPUTY CAPTAIN JOHN HOLMES

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:09): Today I take a moment to acknowledge the efforts of our volunteer firefighters in protecting the community from a number of bushfires across New South Wales. We are only in the middle of October and we are already seeing significant activity. It is also my solemn task to inform the House of the loss of two lives in the face of the recent bushfire threat. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I express our deepest sympathies to the family of a Rural Fire Service volunteer who lost his life in the Northern Rivers on Saturday. I have also conveyed condolences to his family, and Commissioner Rogers has visited them. Tragically, we have also received news of the death of a resident near Kempsey last night. Our thoughts are also with the man's loved ones today. I know the community and colleagues in the RFS are also feeling those losses deeply.

Our State is unfortunately all too familiar with the impact of devastating natural disasters and emergencies, and it is something we have seen again this week, with serious bushfires and grassfires across New South Wales. This morning almost 800 firefighters are fighting almost 70 bushfires and grassfires. On latest reports, about 20 of those are uncontained. In recent weeks thousands of volunteer firefighters across the State have been protecting communities and doing what they can. We can all take great pride in the fact that 70,000 members of the community commit themselves to helping and protecting their neighbours as part of the RFS. I know that many in this House are either members of, or have close relationships with, the RFS brigades in their electorates. The news of those deaths will be met with deep sadness across all our brigades.

Today we pause to remember Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes, who died serving his community. John was helping battle the Bean Creek fire approximately 15 kilometres north of Bonalbo in the Kyogle local government area [LGA] when he suffered a medical episode on Saturday. John joined the Mallanganee RFS Brigade in 1971 and quickly became an enduring and dedicated member. His unwavering commitment was recognised with a life membership last year, marking an inspirational volunteer career of over five decades. John was, of course, much more than a volunteer firefighter; he was also a role model and mentor to many. In a distinguished career he was awarded the National Emergency Medal for the 2019-20 bushfires, the Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation, the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation and the 30-year RFS Long Service Medal.

John's legacy will forever be proudly etched in the history of the RFS and the Mallanganee brigade. His small, tight-knit brigade and the wider community are mourning his loss. Our emergency service volunteers give up so much to help keep others safe. In the case of Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes, he gave his life in service to our community. I also pay tribute to the brigade members who came to his assistance on Saturday and who are now dealing with the loss of a valued colleague and friend. The RFS is continuing to provide his family and brigade with support services like their chaplaincy and peer support programs. Assistance is also being provided through the Rural Fire Service Association.

Today we are also confronted with the sad passing of a resident near the Willi Willi fire in the Kempsey LGA. I note the member for Oxley is there at the moment with his community. The 56-year-old man was found at Temagog, west of Kempsey, late last night. We also extend our deepest sympathies to his family and loved ones. Today our firefighters are trying to take advantage of more favourable conditions as they continue to battle fires. With warm weather forecast for later in the week, I again urge communities to do all they can to prepare.

The RFS is willing to work with them. Tragic events such as those that occurred are tough and extremely difficult. Again, we thank the volunteers for everything they do to keep us safe. I am immensely proud of all our firefighters—as we all are. I know that, as we call upon them again this fire season, they will continue to respond to protect our communities. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and all members of Parliament, I extend our deepest sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives at this very sad time.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:13): Today we honour the life and service of Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes of the Mallangane RFS Brigade, a man who dedicated over half a century to keeping us safe. He joined the Mallangane RFS Brigade in 1971 and was last year honoured with a life membership. That is over 50 years of service saving lives and keeping our communities safe. As we mourn, it is important to remember that the circumstances of his passing were emblematic of his lifelong commitment to us. John lost his life while battling the Bean Creek fire near Bonalbo. Though the pain is raw and the loss limitless, let us not forget his life of purpose and service. John's service was more than his rank or his brigade; it was a symbol of what community can achieve when we come together for the greater good. As we remember him, let us also acknowledge that the members of the brigade he was a part of—the Mallangane RFS Brigade—are, like John, heroes in the truest sense. It is a reminder that every man and woman—volunteer or paid—out there facing danger to save lives and property is confronting risks as they encounter dangerous situations.

The firefighting fraternity is very tight knit locally, across New South Wales and around the world. Many have been impacted by John's tragic passing, and our thoughts are not just with John's loved ones and friends but also with the entire RFS family. In these trying times, I urge each of us to honour John's legacy through acts of service and unity. Whether it is supporting local emergency services or simply looking out for one another, let us extend the sense of community in John's honour and memory. I also acknowledge the member for Oxley, who has today returned to his community, where the Willi Willi Road fire west of Kempsey has tragically claimed the life of a local property owner overnight. As the fires continue to burn across the State, our thoughts are also with the thousands of volunteers currently fighting fires in harm's way. On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, I extend our condolences to John's family and friends, and members of his brigade. May John rest in peace, and may his legacy of service and community spirit live on.

Documents

NSW ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Electoral Funding Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Electoral Commission entitled *Special Report on the public funding and regulation of the 2023 New South Wales State election*, received 13 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION NSW

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 13 of the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission NSW for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 16 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 6/58*, dated 17 October 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

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:

Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to acknowledge the failure of decisions made by the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation and to revise its decision-making processes, provide trauma-informed training and make public certain NRRC information, received from **Ms Janelle Saffin**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Steve Kamper—Sydney Coastline Artificial Reef—lodged 12 September 2023 (Dr Marjorie O'Neill)

[*Notices of motions given.*]

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

Bills

WASTE RECYCLING AND PROCESSING CORPORATION (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 11 October 2023.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:31): On behalf of the Opposition, I support the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023 introduced by the Minister for Lands and Property. The bill seeks to amend the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 to enable the Waste Assets Management Corporation [WAMC] to solely hold and manage legacy sites containing contamination and provide specialist contracting and consulting services to other agencies.

The Opposition is aware of the serious risks to health and public safety posed by legacy sites that are no longer being used for industrial activity and contain hazardous contaminated materials. The Opposition acknowledges the practicalities of a greater level of accountability and transparency when it comes to government expenditure relating to the management of such sites. Therefore, the Opposition supports the establishment of the Waste Assets Management Corporation as a centralised government entity to hold and manage legacy contaminated land that is no longer being used for its intended industrial activity. The Opposition also supports the establishment of the Waste Assets Management Corporation as a centralised government entity to provide specialist contracting and consulting services to other agencies in the remediation of sites no longer being used for their original purpose.

As the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] makes clear, contaminated land may threaten human health and the environment, limit land use or increase development costs. As the EPA also states, contaminated land must be managed to ensure that there are no unacceptable risks to human health or the environment from the contamination, and to ensure that land is suitable for its current or approved use. In addition to health and environmental concerns, contaminated land also has planning and economic consequences, particularly as the redevelopment of former industrial sites increases.

Together with the shift in community standards and perceptions around problems associated with contaminated sites that are no longer being used for their intended purposes, it is certainly imperative that such issues be dealt with in the most streamlined and cost-effective way and that, in so doing, the land can be utilised in a manner that is beneficial to the broader community. Given those two particular imperatives, the Opposition acknowledges the practicalities associated with the bill and the associated benefits. In regards to streamlined and cost-effective landfill rehabilitation and ensuring any potential human and environmental risks are managed and controlled, the Waste Assets Management Corporation is comprised of a highly specialised team of experts.

The team has a broad skill set and is composed of staff with expertise in landfill management, monitoring and remediation. As set out on the NSW Department of Planning and Environment website, the team has "extensive operational, engineering, environmental and planning expertise gained from decades of service within the public and private sectors". The Opposition is fully aware of the need to ensure the best possible team is in place to deal with contaminated sites in order to ensure any potential risks to human health and the environment are managed and controlled properly and to applicable standards. To that end, the Waste Assets Management Corporation is certified to international standards for both environmental and occupational health and safety management systems.

The Opposition therefore agrees that the Waste Assets Management Corporation is well placed to acquire and manage contaminated land; provide contracting and consulting services to other agencies on land not owned by the Waste Assets Management Corporation; develop land held by the Waste Assets Management Corporation to prevent further contamination of land and to mitigate risk posed by contamination to human health or the environment; and to hold assets and conduct business, including providing services that are required to manage land held by the Waste Assets Management Corporation. The Waste Assets Management Corporation's main operations are also focused on helping realise the potential for beneficial re-use of contaminated land that is no longer being used for its industrial purposes. To ensure this is done in a timely manner and in a way that benefits the broader community is of utmost importance.

I will highlight a few examples. The Opposition has long been supportive of the kinds of innovation and community infrastructure this bill seeks to support. In 2014 former Premier the Hon. Barry O'Farrell officially opened the \$100 million The Ridge Sporting Complex at Barden Ridge, which included the 18-hole The Ridge Golf Course, described as the "jewel in the crown" of the sporting facility. It is a sports facility of international standard. It is incredible to think that this impressive infrastructure was built on the site of a former tip. The Ridge Sporting Complex was made possible through an innovative agreement between the Waste Assets Management Corporation and Sutherland Shire Council. The mayor at the time said the project was the result of a visionary collaboration between the council, the community and the State Government. Essentially, this collaboration saw a former waste disposal site rehabilitated, transformed into a recreation area and ultimately returned to the community. The Sutherland Shire Council's website states:

The Ridge Sporting Complex is the Sutherland Shire's premier multi-sport facility catering to many sports such as Cricket, Football, Model Aircraft, Oztag, Rugby Union, school sport and general recreation from local level to regional and state level. The complex consists of 8 rectangle fields (winter) and 3 cricket fields (summer).

For the cricket and golf tragics, it is interesting to note that the first to tee off after the official opening of the golf course were cricket legends Steve Waugh and Glenn McGrath. If members speak to people who grew up in the area, they will learn it was almost impossible to imagine that what was once a barren wasteland is now such a wonderful asset for the community, visited from far and wide, and utilised for weekend sport and by school groups for carnivals and sports days. In order to transform the former waste disposal facility into the landmark site of excellence it is now, it went through a time-consuming process of rehabilitation. This included being treated, filled, contoured and compacted before the sporting facilities could be built.

Council at the time also took special measures to include a 120-hectare bushland conservation area. The landscaping was focused around native plants and seedlings in keeping with the surrounding bushland. It has become a major drawcard to the area, which is not a bad feat for a former rubbish dump. It also includes a BMX track that boasts 954 square metres of curves, dips and transitions and is one of the biggest of its kind in Australia. The construction of the international-standard BMX track and off-road bike competition circuit was in fact funded in part by a \$200,000 grant from the previous Coalition Government under the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, in recognition of the importance of creating open recreational spaces for residents to use and enjoy, which then contributes to greater health and wellbeing outcomes. This landmark facility has provided years of enjoyment for the community and it will no doubt provide many more.

Another example is the Bare Creek Bike Park in the Northern Beaches Council area. This remediated land, which has been returned to the community, is the site of the old Belrose landfill. In December 2020 the previous Coalition Government declared a new six-hectare bike park at Belrose open and ready for northern beaches residents and Australia's mountain-biking community to enjoy. The \$2 million Bare Creek Bike Park was created from a rehabilitated and transformed portion of the former Belrose Waste Management Centre landfill site and is now a world-class facility catering for riders of all levels. It took three years and 80,000 cubic metres of sandstone to rehabilitate this former tip site and create a world-class mountain bike park. It features 1.6 kilometres of downhill bike trails, flow trails, skills and dirt jump areas, a pump track and bike maintenance stations, as well as dedicated walking tracks. The park is not only a fantastic asset for residents to enjoy but also a drawcard attracting professional riders from across the country, which is welcome news for the local visitor economy. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces at the time, Rob Stokes, said of the project:

This project is another example of the NSW Government delivering quality public spaces and community infrastructure through the adaptive reuse of surplus and underutilised land.

Minister Stokes went on to say:

Public spaces play a vital role in bolstering our wellbeing and our local businesses and we will continue to deliver usable public spaces our communities can enjoy.

The state-of-the-art park is now managed by the Northern Beaches Council, with the previous Coalition Government having contributed a further \$1.5 million for ongoing maintenance of the bike park with the transfer of custodianship to the council. This is a truly remarkable transformation story, from tip to treasure.

I talk now about future and sustainable energy projects. As is evident by these remarkable examples of land rehabilitation and transformation, the Coalition has an excellent track record of delivering on infrastructure projects that transform closed landfills into community assets that benefit residents and visitors. The Opposition also notes that the Waste Assets Management Corporation is a joint venture partner in renewable energy business and provides other specialised environmental services. As stated on the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment website:

WAMC reduces the environmental impacts of operational and closed landfills through initiatives such as the efficient collection of landfill gas generating both renewable energy and renewable energy certificates.

The website goes on to outline:

WAMC facilities currently generate 87,600 megawatt hours per annum of renewable electricity while significantly reducing climate impacting methane gas emissions.

This is commendable. The Opposition certainly supports efforts that contribute to an environmentally sustainable future for New South Wales. The Opposition is aware of the serious risks to health and public safety posed by legacy sites containing hazardous and contaminated materials. It is practical to establish the Waste Assets Management Corporation as a centralised government entity to lead the management of these sites, including their remediation, and ensure a greater level of accountability and transparency when it comes to expenditure of funds. The Opposition therefore supports the bill amending the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 No 8, to enable the Waste Assets Management Corporation to solely hold and manage legacy sites containing contamination.

In so doing, the Opposition acknowledges the bill amends the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 No 8 to change its name to the Waste Assets Management Corporation Act, and to provide Waste Assets Management Corporation with the following functions: acquire and manage contaminated land; provide contracting and consulting services to other agencies on land not owned by Waste Assets Management Corporation; develop land held by Waste Assets Management Corporation to prevent further contamination of land and to mitigate risk posed by contamination to human health or the environment; and hold assets and conduct business, including providing services that are required to manage land held by Waste Assets Management Corporation. The bill also facilitates the transfer of land to and from Waste Assets Management Corporation with consent from both Waste Assets Management Corporation and the transferor, and approval from the relevant Ministers and Treasurer; and to establish that duty under the Duties Act 1997 is not chargeable for vesting or transfer of land under the Act.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:45): I make a brief contribution in support of the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023. The bill aims to amend the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 to empower the Waste Assets Management Corporation to support the development of a New South Wales government entity that manages legacy sites containing contamination, and for other purposes. The bill updates the name of the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 to the Waste Assets Management Corporation Act 2010. This change establishes a New South Wales government agency that is focused on the management and remediation of contaminated land.

The bill will enable the Waste Assets Management Corporation to acquire, control and manage contaminated land that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment. It will empower the corporation to provide services to aid in the remediation of contaminated land which is being acquired, managed or controlled by the corporation, including planning, maintenance or the development of infrastructure that pertains to the land's intended use or remediation. The corporation will be able to enter into arrangements with a person or body in connection with its other functions, including third-party arrangements, to carry out remedial works for the corporation on land that is owned by the corporation. In addition to the primary functions mentioned in the Act, the corporation may also have other functions that support or are related to the primary functions. These functions intend to aid the corporation in carrying out its primary duties effectively.

The bill will ensure that, whilst carrying out works on contaminated land, the chief executive must be satisfied that the works will prevent further contamination of the land or will be compatible with action taken to mitigate or minimise the risk of harm to human health or the environment presented by contaminants on the land. The bill states that for this Act the corporation may facilitate the transfer of land, other property or an interest in land and other property if it has been approved by the corporation and the transferor and has received approval from the relevant Minister and Treasurer. I acknowledge the presence of the Minister in the House.

The bill states that the Minister has the authority to transfer land that may be completely or partially contaminated by order published in the *Government Gazette*, from the State or government agency to the corporation, or from a council to the corporation. The Minister has this authority only if both parties consent to

the transfer of land and the transfer is in accordance with the Treasurer's direction under the Government Sector Finance Act 2018. On the day the order is published in the gazette, the corporation gains complete and unrestricted ownership of the land. There is no requirement for further legal processes such as transferring, assigning or providing additional assurances to establish ownership of the land. Whilst the corporation gains ownership, the land will still be subject to any pre-existing legal obligation, conditions or agreements that were applied before the order was published.

Further to this, on the day the order is published, any rights or liabilities of the transferor in relation to the land become the sole responsibility of the corporation. All proceedings regarding the land which were established before the order was published are considered to be proceedings pending by or against the corporation. Any decisions, actions or omissions that occurred concerning the land by the entity which was responsible for the land before the transfer date will become the legal responsibility of the corporation. The bill ensures that the corporation may advise the Minister by written notice when certain land is no longer required to be owned or managed by the corporation due to risk to human health or risk to the environment. Under those circumstances, the Minister has the authority by order published in the gazette to transfer the land owned or managed by the corporation to the previous owners responsible for the land before the initial transfer. This includes the transfer of all liabilities and obligations related to the contaminated land.

The bill clarifies that under the Duties Act 1997 land may be transferred despite a requirement of another Act or law that would typically govern how the land is dealt with or disposed of. Under the circumstances that land was to be transferred to the corporation, an agreement regarding the long-term use of the land and the funding required for remediation of the site would be reached with the transferor. The amendment is intended to prevent agencies from disposing of contaminated and unwanted land to the corporation without a suitable source of funding identified and agreed upon by both parties. Where funding has not been identified, a strategy will be developed through discussions between the Treasury, the transferor and the corporation. This bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to the restoration and long-term management of our legacy sites. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (14:52): I am pleased to make a brief contribution in support of the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023. As the Minister noted, the bill will provide for changes to the functions of the Waste Assets Management Corporation [WAMC]. The bill seeks to make a number of amendments to the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act 2010 No 8, including changing the name from Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act to Waste Assets Management Corporation Act.

The bill provides for the Waste Assets Management Corporation to have the function to acquire and manage contaminated land; secondly, to provide contracting and consulting services to other agencies on land not owned by the WAMC; thirdly, to develop land held by the WAMC to prevent further contamination of land and to mitigate risk posed by contamination to human health or to the environment; and, fourthly, to hold assets and conduct business, including providing services that are required to manage land held by the WAMC.

The bill also facilitates the transfer of land to and from the WAMC with consent from both the WAMC and the transferor, and approval from the relevant ministers and Treasurer. It establishes that duty under the Duties Act 1997 is not chargeable for vesting or transfer of land under the Act. Presently, there is no one agency with responsibility, capability or expertise to identify, manage and appropriately develop contaminated land, resulting in inconsistent, incomplete and inefficient contaminated land management practices. The bill capitalises on the specialisation, expertise and experience of the WAMC to establish a centralised New South Wales government agency for contaminated land management, providing cost efficiencies to government.

The new functions will allow for development on legacy sites in situations where the development will prevent further contamination or will assist in mitigating or minimising the risk of harm to human health and the environment. This development function is currently available to the WAMC on nine limited sites. On those sites the WAMC has created significant public benefit by developing over the legacy contaminated land. Examples include the Barden Ridge golf course and sporting complex, which was constructed by the WAMC over a closed landfill and, as the member for Tamworth outlined, has transformed community amenity in the region; the Bare Creek Bike Park, a world-class mountain-biking facility constructed by the WAMC over the closed Belrose landfill, as well as the landfill gas combustion engines at Eastern Creek, which collect methane from a closed landfill and create enough electricity to power approximately 6,000 homes.

The Eastern Creek renewable energy facility takes an innovative approach to supplying electricity to the grid while reducing greenhouse emissions from landfill gas. The annual outputs currently include 50,000 megawatt hours of renewable electricity exported to the power grid, 279,000 tonnes of direct greenhouse gas emissions—carbon dioxide equivalent—abated, the equivalent of taking approximately 112,000 cars off the road, and 110,000 litres of water saved. These are much-needed measures, especially in Western Sydney. The bill

will ensure that the WAMC is able to continue developing those public facilities over legacy land that is otherwise unusable. Current plans for existing WAMC-owned sites include a 50-megawatt solar farm over a legacy contaminated site at Castlereagh and a potential solar-hydrogen plant at Eastern Creek. As we consider future energy needs for Western Sydney's growing communities, such transfers of usage of legacy lands are much needed and much welcomed by our communities.

Consolidating legacy contaminated land in a single agency not only ensures that risks to human health and the environment are appropriately managed; it also ensures that public land which may otherwise be left in a dilapidated state is transformed into uses which benefit the State. Therefore it presents a win-win situation of keeping our communities safe and providing amenity or other benefit. The WAMC has a proven track record in transforming legacy contaminated land into usable public space or commercial operations. The proposed amendments in the bill enable the WAMC to expand this expertise to other government land and to address what is a burden for not only the communities living around these sites but for the agencies which are currently tasked with the management of contamination issues. I note the presence of the Minister in the House and thank him for bringing this important bill to the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (14:58): I am pleased to speak in support of the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023. As the Minister noted, the bill will provide for changes to the function of the Waste Assets Management Corporation, hereby known as WAMC. Currently, the functions of the WAMC are limited to management and rehabilitation of nine legacy landfills across Sydney. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that the WAMC is able to manage or remediate certain contaminated land where the contamination poses risks to the environment or human health, and to provide specialist contracting and consulting services to other agencies in connection with the management of contaminated land.

Presently, there is no one agency with responsibility, capability or expertise to identify, manage and appropriately develop contaminated land, resulting in inconsistent, incomplete and inefficient contaminated land management practices. The bill capitalises on the specialisation, expertise and experience of WAMC to establish a centralised New South Wales government agency for contaminated land management, providing cost efficiencies to government. WAMC staff are technical specialists with significant experience in operation, management and rehabilitation of landfills, with specialist skills in areas such as chemical engineering, soil science, civil earthworks, machine operating and environmental monitoring.

There is no question that a large portion of land owned by the New South Wales Government is contaminated. Responsibility for the management of this land is currently spread across multiple agencies, resulting in inefficiencies such as public servants with limited or no contaminated land experience being responsible for the management of this land; agencies not prioritising identification of contaminated land within their portfolio and, as a result, sites going undetected, leaving contamination plumes to spread and local communities to be impacted; drawn-out remedial programs causing increased stress on local communities and negative media for the Government; and the completion of remedial works being dependent on obtaining funding approval from Treasury. Currently, multiple agencies are approaching Treasury separately with different funding requests, each with their own business case prepared by an external consultant. A consolidated approach to contaminated land funding will reduce those external costs for business case preparation, hasten the commencement of remedial works and simplify the assessment process for Treasury.

The legislative amendments will ensure that the New South Wales Government has a centralised and appropriately resourced and skilled agency for the ownership and management of contaminated land. Given that WAMC is recognised as expert in this field and is already undertaking this role on limited but highly complicated sites, the bill provides a clear pathway for the Government to remove duplication services across agencies and solve many outstanding environmental issues on government land. The bill will ensure that clear responsibilities for contaminated land are established and longstanding environmental liabilities are resolved in a cost-effective and timely manner by experts within the public service. I commend the Minister for being in the Chamber for the debate today. I thank him for the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (15:02): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023. In particular, I thank members representing the electorates of Mount Druitt, Camden, Liverpool and Tamworth for their contributions to debate and for their commonsense support of the bill, which is great to have. The bill amends the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Act and provides for changes to the functions of the Waste Assets Management Corporation [WAMC]. The bill will ensure that clear responsibilities for contaminated land are established and longstanding environmental liabilities are resolved in a cost-effective and timely manner by experts within the public service.

Presently, there is no one agency with responsibility, capability or expertise to identify, manage and appropriately develop contaminated land, resulting in inconsistent, incomplete and inefficient contaminated land management practices. The bill capitalises on the specialisation, expertise and experience of WAMC to establish a centralised New South Wales government agency for contaminated land management, providing cost efficiencies to government. I note that members from both sides of the House noted the potential benefits to both human and environmental health, as well as the opportunity for streamlining and cost efficiencies. I thank Property and Development NSW and the Waste Assets Management Corporation for working together to develop this proactive solution for legacy contaminated land within the New South Wales Government's property portfolio.

The bill will enable Property and Development NSW and the Waste Assets Management Corporation to work with other New South Wales government agencies to manage and remediate legacy contaminated land. This approach is another example to the public that this Government considers the environment a high priority. I look forward to the passing of the bill and its eventual proclamation by the Governor in the Executive Council. This is yet another example of the Government effecting change following robust and constructive consultation between government agencies to produce a long-term outcome that will benefit the Government, the public and the environment. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 11 October 2023.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:06): I speak for the Opposition in debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill is part of a process, which commenced when the Hon. Philip Ruddock was the Federal Attorney-General, that has driven uniformity in the laws of defamation in Australia and that led to a national model defamation law in 2005. Since then, the attorneys-general around Australia have met from time to time to make changes to the model national law. The bill is another product of that work. The reforms that have led to the bill coming before the House started under the former New South Wales Coalition Government. A discussion paper was released in April 2021 for the reforms and an exposure draft was released in August 2022. The result of that consultation and the bill going through the Commonwealth Attorney-General's process have led to the bill being introduced to Parliament.

The bill deals with three essential issues. One is the question of liability for publication by many passive publishers, which now occurs in the modern social media landscape. The laws and the principles in the law of defamation with regard to publication were first developed well over 100 years ago. The second issue is with regard to preliminary discovery, and the third relates to absolute privilege for complaints to the police. The Opposition supports all three of those reforms proposed in the bill.

The issue of the modern information landscape and liability for publication in defamation was most recently discussed by the High Court in a case where a number of different large media organisations—Fairfax Media Publications, Nationwide News and Australian News Channel—brought an appeal in relation to cases that had been brought against them by Dylan Voller. The circumstances that gave rise to that case, which is reported in [2021] HCA 27, were that each media organisation maintained a public Facebook page on which it posted content relating to news stories and provided hyperlinks to those stories on its website. They invited comment on the posted content from members of the public who are Facebook users. Comments that are made appear on the Facebook pages and are available to be seen by other Facebook users.

In each of the three proceedings brought in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the plaintiff respondent in the High Court claimed that, following the appellants posting about particular news stories referring to him, including posts concerning his incarceration in a juvenile justice detention centre in the Northern Territory, a number of third-party Facebook users responded with comments that were defamatory of him. Mr Voller alleged that the media organisations, whose websites and Facebook pages effectively hosted those defamatory comments, were liable, as the publishers of those comments, for the alleged defamation of him.

As I said, the rules with regard to publication of defamatory matter were developed a long time ago and well before social media and digital publications. In particular, the joint judgement of Chief Justice Kiefel and justices Keane and Gleeson went through the case law and found that, in accordance with established principles, an action for defamation does not require proof of fault. It is what is known as a strict liability tort. The intention of the author of the defamatory material is not relevant. The liability of a person as a publisher depends upon mere communication of the defamatory matter to a third party.

The general principle that was enacted in a longstanding decision of the High Court in *Webb v Bloch* was that a person who has been instrumental in, or contributes to any extent to, the publication of defamatory matter is a publisher. All that is required is a voluntary act of participation in a communication. As Justice Isaacs said in *Webb v Bloch*, publication may involve acts of participation other than, and which may precede, the actual physical distribution of the defamatory matter.

Those statements, of course, clearly acknowledge the strictness of the publication rule in operation in this case. Many people are technically now publishers of defamatory material, even though there was a passive nature in the way that they were technical publishers for the law of defamation. Examples include people who have control over websites and Facebook pages that invite people to post comments. They include search engines, like Google, that direct people towards sites that may contain defamatory material. They also include caching services, which temporarily store information that may be defamatory; conduit services, which enable users to connect with the internet; and storage services for publishers. They are also technical, albeit passive, publishers of defamatory material. The reforms within the bill deal with these types of publishers. For example, in schedule 1 to the bill, proposed new section 10C is sought to be inserted within the Defamation Act as follows:

- (1) A digital intermediary is not liable for defamation for the publication of digital matter if the intermediary proves—
 - (a) the matter was published using 1 or more of the following services provided by the intermediary—
 - (i) a caching service,
 - (ii) a conduit service,
 - (iii) a storage service, and
 - (b) the intermediary's role in the publication was limited to providing 1 or more of the services ... and
 - (c) the intermediary did not do any of the following—
 - (i) initiate the steps required to publish the matter,
 - (ii) select any of the recipients of the matter,
 - (iii) encourage the poster of the matter to publish the matter,
 - (iv) edit the content of the matter ...
 - (v) promote the matter ...

In other words, it is purely passive with no active steps. When this law is enacted, it is the nature of the active steps that will give rise to liability for the defamatory publication. Also, under proposed new section 10D there will be an exemption for search engine providers. People are familiar with Google and the like, which can direct people to websites. Again, there will be a new defence. New section 10D states:

- (1) A search engine provider for a search engine is not liable for defamation for—
 - (a) the publication of digital matter comprised of search results if the provider's role was limited to providing an automated process for the user of the search engine to generate the results, or
 - (b) the publication of digital matter to which the search results provide a hyperlink if the provider's role in the publication of the matter is limited to the role mentioned in paragraph (a).

These are all sensible reforms. There are some subsidiary reforms to give weight to those changes to the law in proposed new section 10E, where provision is made for the early determination of digital intermediary exemptions. This is so that digital intermediaries would not have to incur the legal cost of waiting until the end of a defamation action in a final hearing before they can raise these defences. They can have what used to be known as a separate trial at an early stage of the proceedings to determine their liability. There is also a change to section 15 of the Act to make offer of amends, which is a special provision with regard to digital matter. In addition, new section 23A deals with the issue of preliminary discovery.

Preliminary discovery in a defamation action can be very important. The leading case was the matter of Eduardo Cojuangco, which was decided by the High Court in the 1980s. Mr Cojuangco brought an action against John Fairfax and Sons, who relied upon a qualified privilege defence. Mr Cojuangco wanted to know who was the source of the information that Fairfax was relying on for the purposes of a qualified privilege defence, and so an action for preliminary discovery was brought. A preliminary discovery involves orders in the nature of

providing information in advance of proceedings, a bit like a subpoena, which will identify a party who could be sued in proceedings.

I outline what gave rise to the working group's recommendations for these amendments to the Defamation Act. The working group identified that there can sometimes be issues regarding physical safety and privacy, including names and addresses and the like, which can make it inappropriate for orders for preliminary discovery to be given. That is the typical type of preliminary discovery order so that someone can be served with process. Proposed section 23A provides a statutory enactment of what usually is part of the discretion that the court would have to exercise when an order for preliminary discovery is made under the Civil Liability Act. The Attorney General acknowledged that in his second reading speech. Those are some provisions in the bill.

There is also a defence for publication involving digital intermediaries, which is inserted in the proposed new section 31A. That is a new and significant reform. It provides that, if a defendant is a digital intermediary and the defendant at the time of the publication has an accessible complaints mechanism, if the plaintiff gives the defendant a written complaint and the defendant takes down the offending material or takes reasonable steps to take down the offending material within seven days after the complaint is given, then that will be a complete defence. If no complaint is made by the plaintiff to the defendant, then that can also be grounds for a successful defence under the new section. This acknowledges that people who host webpages, Facebook pages and so on may not always be aware that defamatory comments are posted on their sites. The onus is then put on the plaintiff when they see defamatory material concerning them to request that it be taken down and give an opportunity for a passive but technical publisher to remove the material and avoid any liability.

The bill also creates a new category of absolute privilege. Absolute privilege is enjoyed by members of Parliament when we make statements in Parliament. Absolute privilege is a complete defence to a defamation action that cannot be vitiated even by malice, unlike qualified privilege, which can always be vitiated by malice. By "vitiating" I mean that a person loses the defence. In Parliament, and in other places, in order to protect the important work and the free flow of information that occurs within it, absolute privilege is afforded to members of Parliament. If an abuse is made of that privilege, that is a matter for the Parliament's Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics to deal with, rather than any member of Parliament being liable for defamation action.

One anomaly is that most people would think that when they make a complaint to the police it would be governed by the defence under the laws of defamation but, technically speaking, it is governed only by a qualified privilege, which could be vitiated by malice. Sometimes people may have malice towards a person that they are making a complaint about because they have actually suffered a criminal wrong at their hands. The amendment seeks to turn complaints and statements made to a Police Force official or service of an Australian jurisdiction into a complete defence or an absolute privilege under section 27. That is contained in schedule 1 [7] to the bill, which inserts a new provision into section 27 (2) (b) of the Defamation Act.

The proposed amendments are reasonable. The amendments about digital intermediaries certainly deal with the changing landscape of the flow of information within the modern world and fall within the category of modernising the law of defamation to be reasonable with regard to the world we live in. Uniformity of defamation laws within our country is highly desirable. When I was a junior solicitor doing defamation work for Channel 9 and other publishers, there was a different law in each State and Territory of Australia. Media was already a problem back then but it has become more of a problem over time, and that is what led to the Ruddock-initiated responses. He was going to enact a Federal law and use constitutional means and the corporation's powers to do that. At the end of the day, that was enough of a threat to encourage the State governments to enact a national model law. That has been a significant and definite improvement to the landscape of the law of defamation in our country. For the reasons that should be apparent from my contribution, the Opposition will support the bill.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:27): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. The object of the bill is to amend the Defamation Act 2005 to implement nationally agreed changes to the law of defamation. As the previous member stated, this is a national unification of defamation law in Australia that began some time ago and was agreed to by all jurisdictions and attorneys-general. I am delighted that the Attorney General, Michael Daley, brought the bill before the House to insert closure and certainty into this legislative reform that has been going on for quite some time. I acknowledge the Opposition's support for the bill because it is not just a mechanism of legislation to reform an Act; it is to provide the unification that I previously referred to. I will elaborate further in my contribution.

In November 2004 the attorneys-general of the States and Territories agreed to support the enactment in their respective jurisdictions of uniform model provisions in relation to the law of defamation called the Model Defamation Provisions, which I will refer to as the MDPs. The MDPs were prepared by the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel's Committee. Each State and Territory subsequently enacted legislation to give effect to

the MDPs. In New South Wales, the MDPs were enacted by the Defamation Act 2005, otherwise known as the 2005 Act.

All the States and Territories are parties to the Model Defamation Provisions Intergovernmental Agreement. The agreement established the Model Defamation Law Working Party [DWP], which the previous speaker referred to. The functions of the DWP include reporting to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General [SCAG] on proposals to amend the MDPs. In 2018 this was further progressed when the Council of Attorneys-General, as it then was, reconvened the DWP to review the MDPs. The stage one review of the MDPs, led by New South Wales, was conducted in 2019 and 2020. I will make reference to that later on in my contribution.

The long and the short is that the bill addresses the liability of digital intermediaries for the publication of third-party content. It implements a pragmatic set of reforms that will apply to a broad range of digital intermediaries, including social media platforms, search engines, review websites, internet service providers and internet content hosts. Digital intermediaries also include forum administrators, which I will elaborate on in my ongoing contribution. Those are individuals or organisations that use online platforms to host forums that invite or encourage third parties to post comments, whether they be defamatory, intentional or otherwise.

One example might be an ordinary person who sets up a Facebook page to encourage members of a community group to discuss matters that may be deemed to be defamatory or otherwise by any individual or an organisation. Another example could be a non-profit organisation that maintains a public Facebook page to promote discussion and engagement. For the purposes of defamation law, the current test for determining who is a publisher is very broad. It is a common-law test, and it means that most digital intermediaries are likely to be considered publishers of third-party content. It is because of digital intermediaries that, if we choose, any one of us can publish to the world at large. A more common term used in the *Urban Dictionary*, or unofficial *Urban Dictionary*, is "keyboard warriors", as we frequently see through all social media.

Ms Jodie Harrison: I can think of a couple.

Mr GREG WARREN: I think so. I note that Minister Harrison is in the House for her contribution to debate on the bill.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Likes the keyboard.

Mr GREG WARREN: Likes the keyboard, indeed. While the age of digital communications has brought great social benefits, it has also presented significant challenges in many areas of law, including defamation, which ultimately has resulted in this legislation being considered in the House this afternoon. One of those challenges is that the digital intermediaries are many and varied. They each play different roles in the publication of third-party content, and the pace at which their technology changes is very fast. When we follow social media, we may see an organisation or an individual make a post on a social media platform. However, the commentary of that post may be inconsistent with the intent of the post. These laws provide the legal framework to also address those issues.

The reform process behind the bill carefully examined the different functions of digital intermediaries. This was to assess, from a public policy perspective, what their liability should be under defamation law for publishing third-party content. The other key consideration was the underlying principles of defamation law in this country—the simple framework and principles that apply to defamation in all jurisdictions. This Government is putting those amendments in place through the bill. Fundamentally, the purpose of defamation law is to strike a balance between two competing priorities: first, the freedom of expression; and, secondly—and very importantly—protecting a person's reputation. All too often we see social media platforms like TikTok, Twitter, Instagram or Facebook being used as a firewall. People think they can say and do anything they like on social media. It may be personally and objectively unjustified, inaccurate and untrue; however, they do not care.

Another fundamental, primary and important reason that this legislation must be passed is so defamation laws throughout Australia are unified, which is why we are considering the bill this afternoon. The reforms in the bill aim to improve the capacity of the law to achieve this balance in cases involving digital intermediaries, whether they are an individual or an organisation. The purpose of amending the bill is to clarify when a digital intermediary is potentially liable for publishing third-party content. This has obvious benefits for digital intermediary defendants, but the reforms are also intended to create more certainty for plaintiffs.

The bill enacts six key reforms: one, a conditional exemption from defamation liability for conduit, caching and storage devices, and for search engines in relation to organic search results; two, updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications; three, a requirement for courts to consider balancing factors when making preliminary discovery orders against digital intermediaries; four, a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process; five, a specific power for

courts to make non-party orders against digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory matter online; and, six, expanded electronic means by which notices can be served. In summary, whilst this is the mechanism of this Government—and, indeed, this Parliament—it is a step towards unifying laws around Australia, which has remained long unaddressed. Tonight we are making those amendments in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:37): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. The object of the bill is to amend the Defamation Act 2005 to land on nationally agreed changes to the law of defamation, which modernises the law of defamation to take into account the change in the nature of publications of information in the digital age. Living close on the border with Queensland, there is often a crossover with many forms of media. In making a contribution to this debate, I feel obligated to say that this is a good amendment bill, and I compliment the Government for bringing it forward. Previous speakers in the debate, including the shadow Attorney General, mentioned that in 2005 we had many defamation laws across Australia with quite different rules. This meant it was difficult for television and print media operating in a growing national media market. In 2005, when the Hon. Philip Ruddock was the Federal Attorney-General, the national Model Defamation Provisions were enacted. Those largely uniform laws have now been applied in each of the States and Territories of Australia.

Stage one of the recent reviews to the national model provisions occurred with the amendment of the New South Wales Act in 2020. The Coalition supported and strongly led the national reform process when in government, but the process had not concluded prior to the March 2023 State election. As members know, the bill provides a conditional exemption from defamation liability for conduit, caching and storage services, and for search engines in relation to organic search results. It also expands the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications, requires courts to consider balancing factors when making preliminary discovery orders against digital intermediaries, and provides a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries subject to a simple complaints process, which is also a significant reform. It also gives an absolute privilege defence to complaints made to police which, although said to be justified by sexual offences, is not limited only to sexual offence complaints.

The key issues addressed by the bill include whether the laws of defamation should be updated to take into account modern social media, electronic publication of defamatory material and the passive nature of many technical publishers; whether complainants in sexual assault cases should have absolute privilege for their complaints to the police in place of the current qualified privilege defence; and whether the process of uniform defamation laws should be continued. This is a very good bill. Over many years I have seen the Parliament react to the ever-changing IT world and the social world that we live in. We all post things on Facebook, and at times I look on in wonder when my colleagues from both sides of the House get perhaps 20 comments on a post and only 10 are visible. Obviously, the other 10 have been deleted.

Recently I was rather amazed. During NAIDOC Week I posted about an Indigenous march up the main street of Tweed Heads. I posted about a welcome corroboree, a smoking ceremony and a welcome to country by many Elders from the land council. Believe it or not, over the next week and a half I received 47,000 views and something like 9,000 comments. There was an onus on me to delete racial comments, negative comments and so on, but I ended up taking it down. I was spending hours upon hours on it. Often I have posted other things, and if I get over a 100 likes that is pretty good, but I received 47,000 views. So the bill is really good. I compliment the Government on introducing it and I also compliment members on this side of the Chamber on supporting it. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:42): I speak in support of the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. I congratulate the Attorney General, the Hon. Michael Daley, on introducing it to the House. It is an important piece of legislation that looks at a range of different aspects of defamation, aiming to bring our defamation legislation into the modern age. I will talk later on about how one particular aspect of the bill affects victim-survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment, but first I address the social media part of the bill.

We are privileged to live in a healthy liberal democratic country that values free expression and diversity of opinion. We cherish those values and recognise the importance of balancing those interests with protecting a person's reputation. The bill is designed to ensure that we maintain that balance, particularly during a time of significant technological change that has opened up new communication channels. With the ongoing evolution of social media platforms, ordinary people are reaching new audiences at an unprecedented rate. Who would have thought that the member for Tweed would be able to reach as many people as he does on Facebook in any other form 10 years ago?

Social media can often be a cause for good. It can help people raise awareness of important issues and it can cut straight to the human side of a story. It is a tool that empowers us to be more connected to the world than ever before. But it also presents challenges. It can be used to enable bullying and hate speech and to diminish personal reputations. For those reasons, our defamation laws need to keep pace with a changing media and communication landscape to remain fit for purpose. All Australian governments have invested a significant body of work into achieving that objective, and on 22 September the Standing Council of Attorneys-General approved by majority the amendments in this bill.

Uniform defamation laws should always be a key objective in this space. The bill aims to move us in the same direction that most States are moving, enacting amendments that provide clarity and address the liability of digital intermediaries for the publication of third-party content. Digital intermediaries include a broad range of persons and organisations such as internet service providers, internet content hosts, social media platforms, search engines and review websites, among others. Digital intermediaries also include forum administrators—individuals or organisations that use online platforms to host forums that invite or encourage third parties to post comments.

The need to move forward with the reform stems in part from the High Court decision in the case of *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller*. In that case the High Court held, following the common law's traditionally broad approach to the element of publication, that the media companies were the publishers of third-party comments responding to news stories they posted on their Facebook pages. The fact that no editorial staff drafted those comments was not relevant to the finding. Clearly, the state of defamation law as it applies to digital intermediaries needs to be updated to provide clarity and to strike a better balance between protecting reputations and not unreasonably limiting freedom of expression.

I now move to why the bill is of particular interest to me as Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The bill provides protections for victim-survivors of abuse, including victim-survivors of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Currently the potential threat of defamation action can have a chilling effect on victim-survivors coming forward to make a report to police. That is why the bill extends absolute privilege to matter published to police. Importantly, the extension of absolute privilege provides a complete defence to defamation and cannot be defeated under any circumstance. It is the strongest possible protection from defamation liability and will provide a very strong defence for victim-survivors making reports to police. That is in contrast to the current available defence of qualified privilege, which can be defeated if a plaintiff proves that a defendant is motivated by malice.

Guiding principles will be used to determine whether to extend absolute privilege to matter published to any other complaint-handling bodies. New South Wales has already extended absolute privilege to a wide range of circumstances under schedule 1 to the Defamation Act. Some are in scope of the part B reforms such as matters arising under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. There are many and varied reasons why sexual, domestic or family abuse victims do not raise their abuse with others, let alone report it to relevant authorities, including to police. Often they are afraid that they will not be believed or that the person who perpetrated the abuse, or indeed the supporters of that person, will take further action against them in retribution. I am keen to see another one of those barriers—that is, fear of defamation when making a report to the police—be removed.

Extending absolute privilege to matter published to police is a vital and significant step in improving protections available to victim-survivors and removing barriers for women reporting abuse. In closing, I reiterate my support for the bill. It strikes a better balance between the right to free expression and the protection of reputation. All members in this place, including me, recognise that we live in an era of evolving digital communications, and our defamation laws must keep up. As Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am very pleased to see and will always support reforms that remove barriers and empower victim-survivors to report abuse to police. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:49): On behalf of the Greens, I contribute to debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023, and acknowledge our relevant spokesperson in the other place, Ms Sue Higginson. The Greens support the bill, but we will move some amendments to it in the other place. Both sections of the legislation are welcome, and I note the Minister for Women contributed to debate on the bill. We welcome the reforms that protect women, mostly, from disclosures. However, in terms of the changes the bill makes to the Defamation Act 2005, it is a pity we cannot do anything to address misinformation, because we have certainly seen that a few billionaires control the loudest mouthpieces in our modern forums and there are no repercussions for misinformation. We look forward to truth in political advertising, at least, down the track.

Last year in *Google LLC v Deferos* in the High Court the majority held that Google was not liable for search returns that linked to defamatory content in an article on *The Age* website. While I am not here to defend Google, the case raised a very important area of the law that needed to be addressed and reformed. The bill amends the Defamation Act 2005 to codify that High Court ruling by creating an exemption for digital intermediaries from defamation liability if the service provider was automated and the intermediary did not play an active role

in the publishing or distribution of material. A lot of interesting case law will be required to tease out what an "intermediary" really means, because a person can be both a host and an intermediary interchangeably. While it depends on the automatic publication of defamatory material, it is going to be very interesting.

At the moment a "digital intermediary" is defined as anyone who participates in the publication of digital material, other than the original author. That includes search engines, social media providers, forum administrators and back-end service providers such as cloud services and email service providers. It is not difficult to think that someone who is providing cloud services should not be found to be responsible in any way, but there is a huge grey area around community forums. Certainly for me in my electorate, and for MPs in other electorates, it is all a little bit blurry. The exemption is limited to organic search results and does not apply to sponsored search results or if the search engine plays an active role in the result, such as by autofilling the search bar. It is a narrow exemption.

The exemption applies to both hyperlinks and associated short texts and images that are defamatory, and hyperlinks that are not defamatory themselves but are linked to defamatory content, so a step has been removed. The bill creates a defence for publications involving digital intermediaries if a search engine can prove that it is a digital intermediary and not a publisher or originator, if the function is automated and if it has an accessible reporting mechanism in which potential plaintiffs can report the publishing of defamatory material and if the search engine took steps to address the issue within seven days.

I have been sued for defamation a couple of times. They were the classic slap cases that chill every member of Parliament. The fact is that, to get rid of an MP, one bankrupts them. I am very careful, as are all MPs, about what goes on my website as a host. I worry about people in the community who may misunderstand this law and think that hosting a community page would somehow exempt them from it. This legislative change is very important, heady and complicated. I urge the Minister to do the work to communicate the changes, and to do so in community languages. A very small class of people will benefit from this exemption, and more work must be done. Digital intermediaries are not eligible for the defence if there is malicious intent—for example, if a forum is set up with malicious intentions. Again, it will be very interesting to see what the court decides is "malicious intent".

The bill also allows for notices to be served digitally by messaging services if that is the primary address that was provided when it was registered. Email was already included in the Act as a means to serve documents. The bill also instructs courts granting preliminary discovery orders to complainants in defamation matters to take into consideration the objects of the Model Defamation Provisions and any privacy, safety or public interest considerations that may arise should the preliminary discovery order be made. That provision would allow for a judge to consider safety concerns when considering whether to grant a preliminary discovery order in defamation proceedings against vulnerable people such as victims of domestic and family violence.

The other part of the bill extends the defence of absolute privilege to police reports and documents, to prevent people from being deterred from coming forward with allegations of sexual misconduct or domestic violence for fear of being held liable for defamation. Some of the amendments that The Greens will move in the other place relate to that point. We think the list of people who could be reported to is very narrow. For example, if there was sexual misconduct or an allegation of sexual misconduct in this place, and a person spoke to an appropriate person whose job was to hear that allegation, we think the defence of absolute privilege should be extended to that appropriate person, as it is in other areas of the law.

The Greens are excited about the legislative harmonisation. I am always excited about the harmonisation of any law. In 2004 it was resolved by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General that defamation laws across Australia should be uniform given the nature of online platforms not being restricted to State jurisdictions. We are deep in the globalisation era, and I believe we are now in the misinformation era, so we are playing catch-up. The Model Defamation Provisions were agreed to across the country. In 2020 the Standing Council of Attorneys-General agreed to a suite of reforms, which were introduced in 2021. The issue of defamation liability for digital intermediaries came up in the review of those reforms, and that has led to the reforms in the bill.

The reform around the issue of absolute privilege was led by the Victorian Labor Government, and both parts of the bill were agreed to by a majority of attorneys-general across the country. The Greens have received correspondence from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services about its submission to the legislative review. It is supportive of the requirement of courts to consider the objects of the Model Defamation Provisions and any privacy, safety or public interest considerations that may arise when considering preliminary discovery.

Australia's Right to Know coalition, which comprises all Australian media outlets, criticised the reforms for not providing greater liability protection to publishers, and specifically for not addressing the sector's concerns about the High Court ruling on the Voller case in 2021, which found media outlets liable for defamatory comments

made by third-party posters on digital platforms. The bill does not address that. The Attorney General—and, indeed, the Attorneys-General of all States and Territories—should look at the Voller case and work out what to do, because freedom of the press is an integral part of our democracy. However, so much of the information that people receive contains misinformation and a lack of verifiable facts. The Legislation Review Digest expressed some concern about the bill infringing upon a complainant's right to protect their reputation through limiting access to remedies. It may also limit freedom of speech. We will watch this space.

The Greens support the bill. We have some tweaks that we want to make in the other place, but the extension of absolute privilege to police reports and documents is welcome, as is the requirement for a court to consider safety or the public interest when making preliminary discovery orders. Those progressive reforms will benefit victims of domestic violence and sexual misconduct. With those small amendments, we hope the bill will pass in the other place, as well as in this House.

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:00): I speak in support of the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. The age of digital communication has brought great social benefits, including the ability to share information with many people in many places around the world in a very short period. There are no physical boundaries anymore to the sharing and disseminating of information. However, when information is misused by people, it presents significant challenges for many areas of the law, including defamation.

The key principle underlying defamation law is to strike a balance between two competing priorities: freedom of expression and the protection of a person's reputation. As members are aware, in November 2004, all Australian Attorneys-General agreed to enact defamation model provisions in recognition of the need for uniform defamation law in Australia. All States and Territories subsequently enacted the original Model Defamation Provisions in legislation. In New South Wales, that resulted in the Defamation Act 2005. A lot has changed since then, and technology has moved at a very fast pace.

Two recent cases are relevant to this issue. One is *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller* [2021], in which the High Court confirmed how defamation law applies to forum administrators. This case involved a situation where media companies had posted news stories about Mr Voller on their public Facebook pages. Third parties posted comments responding to the news stories, and Mr Voller claimed the third-party comments defamed him. The High Court held that the media companies were publishers of the third-party comments, and that a publisher was anyone that had been instrumental in, or contributed to, the publication of defamatory matter. The second case is *Google LLC v Defteros* [2022], in which the High Court held that a search engine provider was not liable for defamation as a publisher of defamatory matter on a webpage as it merely facilitated access to the article; it did not approve or encourage its writing or provide a forum for its communication.

The bill amends the Defamation Act 2005 to enact reforms developed through the stage two review of the Model Defamation Provisions. On 22 September 2023 the Standing Council of Attorneys-General approved by majority final amendments to the Model Defamation Provisions for part A and part B of the stage two review. Part A of the review, led by New South Wales, concerned digital intermediary liability for the publication of third-party content. The term "digital intermediary" covers a wide range of functions such as internet service providers, search engines, social media platforms and review websites. It also includes organisations or individuals who use online platforms to host forums that invite third-party comments. Part B of the review, led by Victoria, considered whether absolute privilege should be extended to cover reports of conduct such as sexual harassment and sexual assault to police and other complaint-handling bodies.

In summary, the bill enacts six key reforms: a conditional exemption from defamation liability for conduit services, caching services and storage services, and for search engines in relation to organic search results; updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications; a requirement for courts to consider balancing factors when making preliminary discovery orders against digital intermediaries; a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process; a specific power for courts to make non-party orders against digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory matter online; and expanded electronic means by which notices can be served.

The most significant reform in the bill is the introduction of a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process. The purpose of the new defence is to protect digital intermediaries from liability for defamatory third-party content in situations where they are merely a subordinate distributor and are unaware of the content. In short, once the digital intermediary has received a complaint, to rely on the defence the intermediary must take reasonable steps to remove or otherwise prevent access to the content within seven days. The seven-day period should give a digital intermediary sufficient time to assess the complaint, while also ensuring the defamatory content is removed quickly.

The new innocent dissemination defence would be available to all digital intermediaries, for example, social media platforms and review websites. Importantly, it would also be available to forum administrators.

Extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken to inform the policy development and drafting process for the digital intermediary amendments. Those stakeholders included legal peak bodies, legal practitioners, academics, media companies, advocacy groups and individuals. A variety of technology sector stakeholders also participated, including search engines, social media platforms, review platforms, collaborative knowledge platforms and software providers.

In summary, under the new defence a forum administrator would need to receive a written complaint regarding a defamatory third-party comment before they could be held liable for it. Once the forum administrator has received a complaint, they must take reasonable steps to remove or prevent access to the comment within seven days in order to avoid liability. The purpose of the defence is to recognise that digital intermediaries such as forum administrators should not be liable for defamatory content posted by third parties in situations where they are merely a subordinate distributor and are unaware of the content. At the same time, it ensures that a plaintiff has the option of seeking assistance from the forum administrator, who may be best placed to address the content.

Another important part of the amendment addresses the fact that people posting comments using digital intermediaries often do so using a pseudonym, or not using their real legal names. That means it can be difficult for a plaintiff to find out the identity and contact details of the poster in order to commence defamation proceedings against them. Often plaintiffs might request information about the poster from a digital intermediary, but the digital intermediary might refuse due to privacy concerns, or the digital intermediary might consider that it has no obligation to provide them without a court order. In those circumstances, the plaintiff might seek an order for preliminary discovery from the court. If successful, the court orders the digital intermediary to provide the plaintiff with the information it holds concerning the poster's identity and contact details. Courts regularly make these preliminary discovery orders, but some stakeholders have raised concerns that the threshold for granting preliminary discovery orders is too low. There may be privacy and safety risks if the location of, for example, a domestic violence victim or a political dissident is disclosed. The bill will require courts to take into account any privacy, safety or public interest considerations before making an order for preliminary discovery.

The absolute privilege amendments in the bill were developed through part B of the stage two review of the Model Defamation Provisions, which was led by Victoria. The bill will amend the New South Wales Defamation Act to extend the defence of absolute privilege to defamatory matter published to police. This is to address concerns about the effect that the potential threat of defamation proceedings might have on victim-survivors coming forward to make a report to police. The bill removes a potential barrier to victim-survivors reporting matters like sexual harassment or abuse.

Overall, the bill strikes the right balance between protecting reputations and a person's freedom of expression in the context of the very modern challenges now faced in the area of defamation law. I understand from the Attorney General's second reading speech on the bill that there will be a review of the stage one and stage two amendments no later than three years after their commencement in the States and Territories. That is a sensible approach in an ever-changing world, especially in terms of digital communication. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:09): I support the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023 in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General. I thank the Attorney General for preparing this bill and for his collaboration with key stakeholders—namely, the NSW Defamation Expert Panel. The panel includes the Hon. Chief Justice Lucy McCallum of the Australian Capital Territory Supreme Court; the Hon. Justice John Sackar of the Supreme Court of New South Wales; Judge Judith Gibson of the District Court of New South Wales; Michael Sexton, SC, the New South Wales Solicitor General; and Professor David Rolph of the University of Sydney Law School. Personally, I thank former colleague of mine and friend at the New South Wales bar the late Sandy Dawson, SC, for his contribution to New South Wales defamation law over many years.

The Defamation Amendment Bill 2023 enacts substantial reforms to defamation laws known as the Model Defamation Provisions. These reforms were agreed by the majority of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General. In 2004 Attorneys-General across Australia recognised the need for uniform defamation laws in Australia. All States and Territories enacted the original Model Defamation Provisions through legislation; in New South Wales this was the Defamation Act 2005. To maintain uniformity, a stage one review of the Model Defamation Provisions was completed in 2018, with resulting amendments enacted by the Defamation Amendment Act 2020. A second review addressed digital publishing. Over 105 submissions were received supporting development of this bill, and similar bills pending across Australia, to achieve uniform defamation laws.

The bill implements pragmatic reforms to balance protection of reputation and freedom of expression. Online communications facilitate a digital renaissance yet also challenge defamation law. In the formative years of the defamation law, publishing was subject to editorial standards and pre-moderation. Most defamation cases involved public figures and mainstream media. Now anyone with wi-fi can publish with no requirements to

moderate their content. Digital media has become the primary source of communication in our society. It is essential that the law adapts to safeguard the integrity of communication, as provided in this bill.

Chiefly, the bill provides digital intermediary amendments to give clarity and guidance in the rapidly evolving digital sphere. Digital intermediaries include internet service providers, content hosts, social media platforms, search engines, review websites and many other forms of digital advancement. To illustrate the scope of digital intermediaries, if a person created and published content on a website, the webpage host, social media platforms that shared the content and any search engine that referenced the content become digital intermediaries. Forum administrators, like everyday people in our electorates, who establish a Facebook page to share community information are also digital intermediaries and vulnerable under current defamation law.

The common-law test for publication and defamation is quite broad. Simply, any contributor to publication of defamatory matter is a publisher. Applying this test, nearly all digital intermediaries are considered publishers. The High Court's decision in *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd & Ors v Voller* [2021] HCA 27 raised stakeholder concerns regarding liability to forum administrators. In this case, media companies posted news stories about a Mr Voller on their Facebook pages. Third parties commented on those stories, resulting in Mr Voller claiming defamation. The High Court held the media liable as publishers of third-party content and comments. A similar Victorian case, *Zuchowski v Howe* [2022] VCC 1604, showed this broad test can impact private individuals. It found a volunteer administrator of a public Facebook page to be a primary publisher of defamatory third-party comments.

Schedule 1 [1] to the bill adds terms to definitions in the Defamation Act at section 4. It defines "digital intermediary" as "a person, other than an author, originator, or poster of the matter, who administers the online service by means of which the matter is published." The term is defined broadly to cover new or emerging functions, given the rapid pace of technical advancement. The review recognised that some digital intermediaries are so passive they should be considered conduits rather than publishers. As with post and telephone lines in existing defamation law, schedule 1 [3] to the bill establishes a statutory protection for defamation liability for third-party content for three specific digital intermediary functions: firstly, a caching service storing content temporarily for efficient transmission; secondly, a conduit service enabling users to connect with the internet and send or receive data, like Gmail or Safari; and, thirdly, a remote storage service, such as cloud providers.

The Defamation Act promotes effective, non-litigious methods of dispute resolution. Part 3 of the Act enables parties to settle disputes by encouraging a publisher to make reasonable offers to make amends. This bill proposes minor amendments to discretionary elements at section 15 (1A) (b) by changing the current reference to making amends from "an offer to remove the matter from the website or location" to read "an offer to take access prevention steps". This allows a publisher to offer to remove, block, disable or prevent access to a matter, importantly, considering outcomes that most plaintiffs are seeking.

The bill also amends two mandatory elements. Currently section 15 (1) provides that an offer to make amends must include an offer to publish a reasonable correction or clarification. Mandatory elements were not designed with online publications in mind. They were developed for hard-copy publications like newspapers where a correction in a subsequent edition would likely reach the same audience. A digital intermediary may not have the same opportunities due to the pace and unpredictability of viewership. For example, Google could not feasibly publish a reasonable correction for a search result. The bill also inserts new section 15 (1B) to update mandatory elements for digital matter. It states:

(1B) If the matter in question is digital matter, an offer to take access prevention steps may be made instead of, or in addition to— publishing a correction. With this change, non-litigious remedies cater to actionable outcomes to genuinely prevent continued dissemination of defamatory content. In defamation proceedings, courts generally only grant orders against parties in the proceedings. This bill inserts new section 39A to empower a court to make an order against a digital intermediary who is not party to the proceedings to take access prevention steps to limit republication. Even if the court has determined digital content is defamatory, it can be difficult to enforce remedies. If content has gone viral, it may be recreated or published indefinitely, leaving an originator unable to carry out an imposed remedy to remove it. In such an instance, despite not being party to the proceedings, digital intermediaries may be able to assist. [*Extension of time*]

To safeguard publishers, the bill introduces new section 23A to provide balance factors that the court must consider before making a preliminary discovery order. Preliminary discovery orders enable the court to require a digital intermediary to disclose information concerning the originator's identity. In digital publishing, many originators post defamatory material anonymously and via a pseudonym. For anyone to commence defamation proceedings, they must identify and locate the publisher. Section 23A ensures the court considers objectives of the Act and relevant privacy, safety and public interest concerns before making a preliminary discovery order. Whilst the court already has discretion to consider these factors, this makes it mandatory, promoting consistency

and protecting vulnerable members of society. People may publish online via a pseudonym to remain anonymous and avoid consequence but also if they fear for their safety. The balancing factors protect against the possibility of a person seeking a preliminary order, under the pretence of commencing defamation proceedings, to gain access to an originator's identity.

The bill introduces a new innocent dissemination defence, recognising that digital intermediaries should not be liable for defamatory content as subordinate distributors. It protects good behaviour, protecting a digital intermediary who moderated defamatory content under section 31A (5). To claim this defence, the defendant must meet the onus in section 31A. They must establish themselves as a "digital intermediary" to rely on this defence. Under section 31A (1) (b), at the time of publication the defendant must have had an "accessible complaints mechanism", such as an online form, direct message or email address. That ensures that only contactable digital intermediaries can avail themselves of the defence. If the defendant receives a written complaint, reasonable access prevention steps must be taken within seven days for the defence to apply. These include a step to remove the matter or to block, disable or prevent access to the matter.

In the review, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General agreed to extend absolute privilege to matters published by police in response to concerns that potential defamation proceedings may deter victim-survivors from reporting sexual harassment or assault. It may surprise members of the Chamber to learn that a report made to police is not currently protected by absolute privilege. Currently, victim-survivors are protected by the qualified privilege defence. This can be defeated if the defendant's publication was "actuated by malice". Given the nature of these cases, it is likely that a plaintiff claiming defamation would assert the defendant deliberately lied, constituting malice. This adds another layer to the age-old "he said, she said" narrative that is too prevalent in Australian courts.

Absolute privilege is the strongest protection we can give victim-survivors from defamation liability. Section 27 (2) of the Act provides a non-exhaustive list in which absolute privilege applies. The bill inserts new section 27 (2) (b) (i), extending an occasion of absolute privilege where the matter is published to an official of a police force. Many barriers deter victim-survivors reporting. Today we could remove one, because fear of liability for defamation should not be yet another barrier. Cases like *Google LLC v Defteros* in 2022 and *Trkulja v Google LLC* in 2018 highlight the disparity in liability of digital intermediaries. In *Defteros*, the High Court held that Google was not liable for hyperlinking defamatory webpages. Yet in *Trkulja* the High Court found Google liable for defamation due to autocomplete predictions in a search bar.

These cases emphasise the need for uniform defamation reform to assist with judgements that will define defamation in this modern digital age. With rapidly evolving technological advancements in publishing, defamation laws in Australia must be equipped to safeguard free expression. The bill protects the creation and sharing of digital media, whilst maintaining the integrity of defamation provisions. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (16:24): I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill enacts substantial reforms to the Defamation Act 2005, thus contributing to Australia's uniform defamation laws, the Model Defamation Provisions. I thank the Attorney General for bringing the bill forward. Part A amendments in the bill include statutory exemptions from defamation liability for a narrow group of digital intermediaries; a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries; a new court power to make orders against non-party digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory matter online; and updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications. The purpose of the part A reforms is to clarify the law in this area for the benefit of both plaintiffs and digital intermediary defendants, including forum administrators.

The part B amendments in the bill extend the defence of absolute privilege to matter published to police. This is to ensure the potential threat of defamation proceedings does not deter victim-survivors from reporting. I believe the contributions by Minister Harrison and the member for Prospect to the debate have more than adequately covered part B of the bill. Uniformity remains a key objective of the Model Defamation Provisions. It is imperative that defamation laws remain uniform with other States. New South Wales recognises that there is an urgent need to enact the digital intermediary amendments to provide clarity and clear guidance in this space. These reforms are necessary to address the status and liability of forum administrators following the High Court decision in the case of *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd & Ors v Voller*. In *Voller*, the forum administrators were media companies hosting public pages on Facebook, but forum administrators may also include individuals or small organisations.

The state of defamation law as it applies to forum administrators currently is not acceptable. When it comes to defamation I acknowledge the need to achieve a balance between two important but competing interests: firstly, the protection of a person's reputation; and, secondly, freedom of expression. While this has always been challenging—especially in the area of defamation law—it is far more difficult now given the complexity and

proliferation of online publications and the ever-evolving technology. It is appropriate that forum administrators are included in the definition of "digital intermediary" for the purpose of our reforms. This is one of the key issues the reforms seek to address. Another important aspect of the definition of "digital intermediary" is the exclusions. The definition specifically excludes the author, originator or poster of the matter because they are not intermediaries. "Poster" is defined to mean a person who uses the online service to communicate the matter to one or more other persons. The terms "author" and "originator" are not defined. Those terms are used in the existing innocent dissemination offence in section 32.

The bill addresses the liability of digital intermediaries for the publication of third-party content. It implements a practical set of reforms that will apply to a broad range of digital intermediaries, including social media platforms, search engines, review websites, internet service providers and internet content hosts. Digital intermediaries also include forum administrators. These are individual organisations that use online platforms to host forums that invite or encourage third parties to post comments. For the purpose of defamation law, the test determining who is a publisher is very broad. It is a common-law test and it means that most digital intermediaries are likely to be considered publishers of third-party content.

The reform process behind the bill carefully examined the different functions of digital intermediaries. This was to assess from a public policy perspective what their liability should be in defamation law for the publication of third-party content. The other key consideration was the underlying principles of defamation law. Fundamentally, the purpose of defamation law is to strike a balance between two competing priorities, as I outlined earlier. The reforms in the bill aim to improve the capacity of the law to achieve this balance in cases involving digital intermediaries. The purpose of the amendments is to clarify when a digital intermediary is potentially liable for the publication of third-party content. This has obvious benefits for digital intermediary defendants, but the reforms are also intended to create more certainty for plaintiffs.

In summary, the bill enacts six key reforms: a conditional exemption from defamation liability for conduit, caching and storage services, and for search engines in relation to organic search results; updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications; a requirement for courts to consider balancing factors when making preliminary discovery orders against digital intermediaries; a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process; a specific power for courts to make non-party orders against digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory matter online; and expanded electronic means by which notices can be served.

The most significant reform in the bill is the introduction of a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process. The purpose of the new defence is to protect digital intermediaries from liability for defamatory third-party content where they are merely a subordinate distributor of the content and are unaware of it. In short, once the digital intermediary has received a complaint, to rely on the defence it must take reasonable steps to remove or otherwise prevent access to the content within seven days. The seven-day period should allow a digital intermediary sufficient time to assess the complaint, at the same time ensuring the defamatory content is removed quickly. The new innocent dissemination defence would be available to all digital intermediaries, including, for example, social media platforms and review websites. Importantly, it would also be available to forum administrators.

It is important to note the extensive stakeholder consultation that was undertaken to inform the policy development and drafting process for the digital intermediary amendments. In April 2021, a lengthy discussion paper was released for public consultation and 48 written submissions were received. This was followed by three large stakeholder roundtables to discuss the issues raised in the written submissions. In August 2022 exposure draft amendments and an accompanying background paper were released for public consultation, followed by a large stakeholder roundtable where 36 written submissions were received. A wide range of stakeholders participated in the consultation. They included legal peak bodies, legal practitioners, academics, media companies, advocacy groups and individuals. A variety of technology sector stakeholders also participated, including search engines, social media platforms, review platforms, collaborative knowledge platforms and software providers. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

I seek an extension of time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): An extension is granted.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN: There is strong support for reform to clarify the law. The issues addressed by the digital intermediary amendments are highly complex. Governments around the world are grappling with the policy questions that arise. The member for Campbelltown raised some very important points in his contribution earlier around keyboard warriors. I doubt that there is a member in this place who has not been exposed to the

vitriol of a keyboard warrior at any time during their public life, or indeed in their private life. Unsurprisingly, there is a wide range of stakeholder views on the best solution. All of the stakeholder views have been taken into account through the extensive consultation process undertaken during the drafting of this bill, and we think the bill gets the balance right. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:37): I support the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023, which seeks to establish a number of things: conditional statutory exemptions from defamation liability for a narrow group of digital intermediaries; a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries; a new court power to make orders against non-party digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory material online; and updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amends for online publications.

The bill seeks to clarify the law for both plaintiffs and digital intermediary defendants, including forum administrators. The particular set of rules emanates from a very famous case which received global coverage at the time, and that is the case of *Fairfax Media Publications v Dylan Voller*. It was a fascinating case. Dylan Voller, a former detainee in the Northern Territory's Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, brought proceedings against three appellant media companies for alleged defamatory comments posted on Facebook by readers in response to articles placed on the media defendants' respective Facebook pages.

At first instance, Justice Rothman determined that the media organisations were publishers of the material posted by third parties, as they "maintained Facebook pages and encouraged and facilitated the making of comments by third parties which when posted on the page were made available to Facebook users generally". I can understand the reasoning of Justice Rothman based on the plethora of jurisprudence that existed at that time, being the people who were responsible for that particular content, so the reasoning followed a logical path. Indeed, the decision was affirmed by the Court of Appeal. In the High Court there were two separate judgements. I give a shout-out to Chief Justice Kiefel for her services as the first female Chief Justice of the High Court. She will be retiring. She has been an incredible jurist and I wish her all the best in her retirement. That judgement also comprised Keane and Gleeson and Gageler and Gordon, who dismissed the appeal.

In doing so, the plurality confirmed a long line of authority to the effect that the element of publication does not depend on knowledge of defamatory matter or an intention to communicate it. Gageler and Gordon added that the word "intentionally" is to be understood as meaning "an intention to facilitate, or provide a platform for, communication of the allegedly defamatory matter" and, beyond that, any further requirement of knowledge or intention is irrelevant. Rather, the liability of a person as a publisher depends on mere communication of the defamatory matter to a third person, and any voluntary act of participation in the communication of defamatory matter to a third party is sufficient to make a defendant a publisher.

The majority found that the media outlets had intentionally facilitated and encouraged third-party comments on their Facebook pages and, therefore, became publishers of each comment posted by a Facebook user at the moment they were posted. This was sufficiently constituted by each media outlet contracting with Facebook to provide their public page, posting on that page, thereby giving third-party users the ability to comment on that content. It therefore follows that the online environment was distinguished from similar previous cases that involved billboards or physical walls that had been defaced with defamatory graffiti, in which case the defendant was found not to have played a role in facilitating the publication. Essentially, the majority of the court found that if someone used a spray can to say something defamatory on the side of a building, they were not liable.

The majority also clarified the relevance of the defence of innocent dissemination in the context of publication, which is what the bill is largely about, finding that a successful defence of innocent dissemination has the effect of excusing from liability a defendant who would otherwise have been liable as a publisher. It does not mean that publication is taken to have not occurred. They are saying that it did but the publisher would not necessarily be liable. That is what, in part, the bill goes to.

The most significant reform of this legislation is the introduction of a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, the purpose of which is to recognise that digital intermediaries should not be liable for defamatory content where they are merely a subordinate distributor and lack actual knowledge of the content in question. Put simply, once the digital intermediary has received a written complaint about a publication, it must take reasonable steps, if available, to remove or otherwise prevent access to the material within seven days in order to be able to rely on the defence. I am sure that many members have engaged with Facebook, Instagram and others in our own communities.

In essence, this amending bill simply says that someone administering those sorts of forums should not be liable for defamatory material that may be posted. The response to that particular person who is administering that page is to say, "This content has been identified. We want you to do something about it." Interestingly, the Attorney General has been quite deliberate in not taking an approach that might be taken in relation to other legal documents like subpoenas to expand the need of certain types of steps to be undertaken to make that person aware.

A simple inbox message would seem to suffice, according to the legislation. Perhaps the Attorney General in his speech in reply could qualify some of the other steps that might need to be taken. If there is room for clarity, I would appreciate it.

The new defence has been designed to avoid the problems that have been identified with the application of existing section 32 of the Defamation Act—innocent dissemination defence to digital intermediaries. As I understand it, the new defence provides that the plaintiff must give the intermediary a written complaint containing certain basic information to put the digital intermediary on notice. We need to clarify the identification of the content, because I do not think that is clear. We need to make clear what the content is so that it can then be addressed. What is sufficient is not clear. It might be obvious to members but I do not know if it is obvious from reading the bill.

The defence gives a clear time frame in which action needs to be taken to rely on the defence, and the defence is available to digital intermediaries that moderate and remove content that may be defamatory or breach their terms of service. So the defence protects the appropriate right of reasonable behaviour—or, as the Attorney General put it, "good behaviour". The onus is on the defendant to prove these elements. First of all, the defendant must establish that they were a digital intermediary in relation to the publication. That means that if the defendant was the author, originator or poster of the digital matter, they cannot rely on that defence.

As I understand it, the term "digital intermediary" is a catch-all term covering a wide range of functions. Some obvious examples relate to forum administrators and people on knowledge-sharing platforms or websites like Google Reviews. I assume the bill is trying to provide the widest possible net so that this defence can be available to a wide range of people who engage online. Those functions will only get more significant, more detailed and more easily available with the expansion of the technology. Importantly, the definition of "digital intermediary" includes forum administrators. That means an individual or organisation holding a forum where content is exchanged would be able to rely on this defence.

I note that the bill extends absolute privilege to certain categories of persons making complaints to police. The Attorney General said that the original impetus behind part B of the bill was a concern that the potential threat of defamation proceedings may deter victim-survivors from coming forward to police or other complaint-handling bodies in relation to things like sexual harassment and sexual assault. The Attorney General said that while reports to police and other complaint-handling bodies would be protected by the existing qualified privilege defence, the victim-survivor would still need to establish that the defence applies. The qualified privilege defence can be defeated if the plaintiff proves that the defendant was acting with malice in making the publication.

I support the bill and understand the need for what is being proposed. However, this provision appears to be a solution in search of a problem. I did some research prior to coming to the Chamber to find cases where someone has sued based on something the police have been told. Anyone who has worked in this area would tell you that would be highly unusual. The first rule of litigation is to always sue the people with the deepest pockets, so it's more likely that someone would seek to sue for wrongful prosecution rather than for a statement that may have been made. There is also the issue of time bars surrounding the time in which a defamation case can be brought. I understand the reasons for the bill. It could be argued that this privilege could be extended to other forms of complaints and it might be asked why this particular set of circumstances? Having said that, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:47): I speak in favour of the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023. I thank the Attorney General for bringing this important bill to the House. It brings much-needed reforms to defamation law in New South Wales that were recommended by the Model Defamation Law Working Party, which has spent many years consulting with relevant stakeholders. On behalf of my community in Shellharbour, I thank the working party and all stakeholders who assisted to get the bill to this stage.

The purpose of defamation law is to ensure a balance between two competing priorities: freedom of expression and the protection of a person's reputation. The bill seeks to ensure this balance remains in a digital age, where publication is instant and State boundaries are meaningless. The days of the publication of material limited to a geographic location or State are long over. Publication via the internet, whether on a standalone media website or via social media, now dominates the media landscape, and State-based defamation laws are no longer practical. Such laws, which were developed in the pre-internet era, need to be changed. The bill forms part of numerous reforms to bring defamation law into the digital age.

Defamation cases of old usually involved traditional media, such as newspapers and later television, which were alleged to have defamed a person via a news story or a television segment. In the pre-internet world it was relatively easy to know who was responsible for any alleged defaming. Times have certainly changed. There are many examples of this but I will talk about Facebook. Facebook pages bring great social benefit and allow members of my community to remain socially engaged from the comfort of their own home or office. But such

pages also present challenges to the defamation law. My community is well served by numerous Facebook pages, such as "What's happening in Dapto and Surrounds" and the fantastic and fabulous "Shellharbour Village Care Group", which seek to raise awareness of social issues of interest to locals. I commend Hetty Cummins for running one of those pages. I have been brief. I could go on further but I am aware of time constraints. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:50): In reply: I thank the shadow Attorney General, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Tweed, the member for Charlestown, the member for Ballina, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Prospect, the member for Penrith, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Kiama for their contributions to debate on the Defamation Amendment Bill 2023.

Back in 2004, the State and Territory Attorneys-General agreed to enact Model Defamation Provisions. The main reason for this was that technological developments had made the idea that publications were limited by State and Territory borders completely redundant. While the internet was well and truly up and running by then, I doubt that anyone could have predicted the transformation in digital communications that has occurred in the past 20 years. Now in 2023 we use digital intermediaries every single day to communicate with our family, friends, communities and to the world at large, if we feel so inclined. While many digital intermediaries like Google, Facebook and Twitter are household names, others play an important role in the background.

For the purposes of the bill, an ordinary person or a local community organisation might also be a digital intermediary if they host a discussion forum that invites third-party comments on an online platform. The different functions of digital intermediaries are too many to count, and they are constantly evolving. The role digital intermediaries play in the publication process throws up a whole raft of questions for the law. Part A of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General stage two review of the Model Defamation Provisions had the task of developing reforms in response to this issue. This resulted in the digital intermediary amendments in the bill, which are designed to clarify the law in relation to their liability in defamation for the publication of third-party content. This is intended to be for the benefit of both plaintiffs and digital intermediary defendants.

The key amendments are, first, a conditional exemption from defamation liability for conduit, caching and storage services, and for search engines in relation to organic search results. Second, there are updates to the mandatory requirements for an offer to make amendments for online publications. Third, there will be a requirement for courts to consider balancing factors when making preliminary discovery orders against digital intermediaries. Fourth, there is a new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process. Fifth, there is a specific power for courts to make non-party orders against digital intermediaries to prevent access to defamatory matter online. Finally, there are expanded electronic means by which notices can be served. The bill also includes an important amendment to extend absolute privilege for matter published to police. This is to implement the part B amendments to the Model Defamation Provisions agreed by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General.

I briefly address some matters raised by members during debate on the bill. A number of members emphasised that the test for publication in defamation law is very broad. This broad common-law test is the key underlying factor for the part A digital intermediary reforms in the bill. It effectively means that nearly all digital intermediaries would be considered to be publishers of third-party content. The Model Defamation Provisions—and therefore the New South Wales Defamation Act—do not interfere with the common-law test for publication. Instead, the legislation provides for defences to preclude or limit liability where there is a public policy reason for doing so.

I note in discussing the broad test for publication, members have referred to the High Court decision in *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd & Ors v Voller* [2021] HCA 27. In that case, the High Court held that several media companies were the publishers of third-party comments on their Facebook pages responding to news stories they posted. The media companies in *Voller* were "forum administrators". This includes individuals or organisations that use online platforms to host discussion forums that invite third-party comments. The member for Ballina suggested that the digital intermediary amendments in the bill do not deal with the *Voller* decision. On the contrary, the status and potential liability of forum administrators following the *Voller* decision is one of the key issues the digital intermediary reforms address.

The new innocent dissemination defence for digital intermediaries, subject to a simple complaints process, has been designed specifically with forum administrators in mind. The defence would be available to any digital intermediary as defined, but I will describe its application to a forum administrator. Under the new defence, a forum administrator, such as a person or organisation hosting a Facebook page, would need to receive a written complaint regarding any allegedly defamatory third-party comments before they could be held liable. Once the forum administrator has received a complaint, they must take reasonable steps to remove or otherwise prevent

access to the matter within seven days in order to avoid liability. The new defence is designed to clarify the law and to provide more certainty for both plaintiffs and digital intermediaries such as forum administrators.

The member for Ballina also suggested that it is not clear what it means to be a digital intermediary and that only a small class of digital intermediaries would benefit from the reforms. A significant amount of policy analysis was undertaken to develop the definition of digital intermediary in the bill. This was informed by stakeholder feedback. Digital intermediary is defined to mean "a person, other than an author, originator or poster of the matter, who provides or administers the online service by means of which the matter is published". A note makes clear that there may be more than one digital intermediary in relation to the publication of the same digital matter.

An online service essentially means any service provided to a person to enable them to use the internet. This includes using the internet to do a range of things such as sending or receiving content, searching for content, sharing content and interacting with other people. Some examples of an online service are included in a note to the definition to emphasise the range of services that are covered by the definition. An online service specifically includes a forum created or administered by a person using a facility provided by an internet-based social media platform that enables users to share content or interact with other users about a topic. The term digital intermediary is intended apply broadly. It was developed to cover the full spectrum of functions considered by the stage two review of the Model Defamation Provisions. It deliberately includes forum administrators such as the media companies in the Voller case. It is also intended to cover any new or emerging functions, given the pace at which technology in this area evolves.

The member for Ballina also suggested that the exception to the new defence on the basis that the digital intermediary was actuated by malice was too vague. This malice exception is intended to cover circumstances where the digital intermediary created, provided or administered the forum or platform on which the matter was published with an improper motive. It is also intended to cover circumstances where the digital intermediary invited the publication of defamatory matter with an improper motive. An example of this kind of malice is a person who creates a social media page for the purpose of encouraging users of the social media platform to post comments about the plaintiff being dishonest or incompetent when the defendant has no reason to believe they were. Malice is an appropriate concept for articulating this exception to the defence. Malice is an established concept within defamation law as a circumstance that may defeat defences. Courts have, to date, been able to adapt the concept of malice to capture a variety of situations.

The member for Ballina also raised concerns that the absolute privilege reforms do not go far enough and that they should extend to reports made to an appropriate office. The Standing Council of Attorneys-General agreed to two reforms for part B of the stage two review of the Model Defamation Provisions: first, an amendment to extend absolute privilege to matter published to police; and, second, guiding principles to be used by jurisdictions to determine whether to extend absolute privilege to matter published to a complaints handling body for the purposes of part B.

The fundamental role of defamation law is to strike a balance between two competing but important interests: the protection of a person's reputation and freedom of expression. This has been a constant reference point for the development of the reforms that are included in the bill. While we may not always be aware of it, the protection of these interests has a very real impact on our individual lives and the open society that we may want to maintain. The amendments in the bill are substantial, as they should be. The digital intermediary amendments respond to contemporary challenges that significant advances in communication technology have created for defamation law. The absolute privilege amendments will ensure that victim-survivors are not inhibited by the potential threat of defamation proceedings for coming forward to police. Overall, the amendments will modernise the Act so that in the years to come the laws are more capable of achieving a balance between protecting reputations and freedom of expression. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2023**First Reading**

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I set down consideration of the bill as an order of the day for tomorrow.

*Public Interest Debate***HOUSING SUPPLY**

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that increasing housing supply is the most urgent solution to addressing the housing crisis, which has seen housing costs and availability become the single biggest pressure for families and young people.
- (2) Supports the Government's push to use available surplus government land for housing supply, with 30 per cent targeted for social, affordable or universal housing.
- (3) Notes the Government is committing \$2.2 billion for the Housing and Infrastructure Plan so that more homes can be delivered.
- (4) Notes the Government is reducing the administrative burden on building new homes that was put in place by the former Government.

There is no other way to put it: New South Wales is in a housing crisis. We are in a housing crisis because there is a lack of private affordable housing on the market and low-rise high-density housing has been ignored repeatedly for many decades, especially in the past decade. New South Wales also has a major housing approvals deficit, with 48,000 completions in the past 12 months compared with 58,000 in Victoria. New South Wales has the lowest rate of housing completions on the eastern seaboard. Rates of homelessness and housing stress are rising rapidly, and across all metrics the problem is getting worse. Many low income households are spending well over 30 per cent of their income on housing costs. Where does the blame lie? The good member in the other place the Hon. Chris Rath was clear about where he thinks the blame lies. In the other place last Wednesday, he said:

The Opposition must come to terms with the fact that our previous Government is culpable in this crisis.

I say to Liberal members of Parliament who are a little worried every time they get a phone call, an email or a letter from one of those boomer nimbys in their electorates:—

his words, not mine—

The reality is you will not lose your seat because of 10 letters from a few nimbys who do not want a development to go ahead.

It is fortunate that we have a courageous member in the upper House who knows who is to blame and does not shy away from telling it like it is. The daring person who speaks truth to power is none other than the Hon. Chris Rath, MLC. In response to this brave and objectively correct stance, the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces was asked about it in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He said:

It shows the diversity of opinions we have in the Liberal Party when it comes to housing debate.

The broad church strikes again. Being a broad church, there are views at odds with the good member from the other place. For example, we heard during question time earlier today the position of the member for Vaucluse. She opposed the plan to turn a run-down and neglected service station into a supermarket and boutique apartment block of a modest 14 apartments. It must be a special block, and something worth preserving—this crumbling Caltex, this abandoned Ampol, this broken BP, this shattered Shell, this mouldy Mobil, this scuffed Speedway. Actually, they would not have Speedways in Vaucluse, would they?

Mr Jihad Dib: No. Don't forget Metro.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Yes, I shouldn't forget Metro. I get it. Sometimes as members or councillors we oppose developments. I am sure there will be an attempt to air my record as a councillor. But let me be clear. I am not opposed to development, and I never have been, but I am opposed to bad development. For example, in Middleton Grange, a suburb with run-down roads and a shopping centre, a proponent wanted to put 900 apartments with no access to public transport. The community at the time consisted of about 3,000 residents, and about 700 people turned up to the community meeting.

Ms Charishma Kaliyanda: Because they care.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Yes. About one-quarter of the community turned up to oppose that development. I go back to the electorate of Vacluse, where only 500 apartments have been zoned for increase. By contrast, the Department of Planning anticipates that over the next 20 years or so the population in my electorate of Leppington will increase exponentially, up to fourfold. We people out west are happy to take our fair share, but we obviously want our fair share of infrastructure. Much like the housing crisis caused by the previous Government, we have seen a failure of the previous Government to build necessary services and infrastructure. There is no public high school in all of Austral, Leppington and Denham Court, a region that is taking the brunt of the growth in housing in this part of the world. The roads are run down.

I have spoken many times about Fifteenth Avenue, which is the main arterial road through Austral and Middleton Grange. In fact, in my inaugural speech I remarked that in 1904 the local member gave it the unenviable title of the worst road in the country. Sadly, not much has changed. But I report to the House that the Minns Labor Government is fixing many of the problems caused by the previous Government. We are planning to fix the housing crisis, but we are also planning to upgrade Fifteenth Avenue, build new schools, upgrade existing schools and turn things around. We are reforming infrastructure contributions. We are limiting urban sprawl. We are committed to delivering our share of the Commonwealth's \$1.2 million National Housing Accord. Our 2023-24 budget measures support long-term housing supply in this State.

I commend the member from the other place for having the bravery to call out the former Government and its many failures. He has laid bare the ineptitude of his own party, and he should be commended for being honest. He understands that the Opposition is complicit in the housing crisis and that it has no real plan other than to say no, which deprives younger generations of Australians of their future. We used to live in a country where we worked hard and got a good income, and it was quite reasonable to buy a nice house in the suburbs. That is now out of reach for many in this State, but we are fixing it. We know that building up and not out is the solution. Housing is the single biggest pressure point for families and young people, and the Government has a plan to fix that.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (17:08): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in today's public interest debate. I will get straight to it. Let us talk about the other Chris, and that is Premier Chris Minns. In his bright and shiny housing policy document, he said:

We aren't promising the world. We are promising what we can deliver. And if we don't deliver, by all means hold us to account.

That is exactly what we are going to do and—mark my words—so too will the housing sector and the people of New South Wales. When it comes to holding this Labor Government to account, I will give the House just one figure. It is one of many, just to get us started. According to Labor's own figures in its recent flimsy, hopeless budget, Labor will deliver 88 affordable homes each year until 2039-40. In bingo terms, that is two fat ladies.

[Government members interjected.]

Settle down! It's the figure 8-8. Haven't any of you played bingo before?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. Government members have made their point, and I ask them to remain silent. The member for Willoughby will direct his comments through the Chair and will not incite Government members.

Mr TIM JAMES: It is hardly a fresh start. In fact, it feels much more like a slow crawl, as we would come to expect from NSW Labor. There is no question that we are in a housing crisis. We need real solutions to make housing projects more viable and reduce the financial burden of getting into the housing market. The Opposition is hearing how expensive it is to get housing projects up and running in New South Wales and how, in fact, measures taken by this Labor Government are only making matters worse. There is real concern in the housing sector today—I hear it every week—and, indeed, across our community more broadly. The Government has introduced a litany of measures in its first six months—more than six months now—which, in fact, will make it harder for people making their way in life to get their first step on the property ladder.

Even Labor luminaries and senior Labor figures are deeply concerned with the approach that Labor is taking. One of Labor's most powerful mayors in New South Wales, Darcy Byrne, has attacked the Government over housing, accusing it of using councils as a punching bag, instead of crafting genuine policy and putting money on the table. He said the following:

Punching down at councils won't fix housing supply and is no substitute for an actual policy.

So Darcy Byrne, a Labor figure and mayor, knows that the New South Wales Labor Party has no actual policy when it comes to housing, and certainly no real delivery. Let us look at how Labor is failing every hurdle to build more homes in New South Wales to address the housing crisis: one, by imposing a new tax on housing, the Housing and Productivity Contribution; two, ignoring industry calls for a full deferral of increased BASIX

standards for 12 months; three, proposing to cancel or delay the Sydney Metro West, an integral piece of public transport infrastructure, which is essential to supporting increased housing density along the rail corridor; four, creating uncertainty and returning to the drawing board on new density rules for affordable housing because initial proposals were unworkable—I will come back to that soon enough; and, five, putting construction of over 70,000 homes in limbo because of a lack of certainty over the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

Labor's great big new tax on housing, the Housing and Productivity Contribution, adds a cost of at least \$10,000 onto every new home in the Sydney metropolitan area and \$8,000 on new homes in the regions surrounding Sydney. Labor's refusal to listen to industry when industry called for increased BASIX standards to be deferred leaves New South Wales standing alone as the only State that has rushed the implementation of those standards on 1 October this year, increasing costs and threatening the viability of new housing project to combat the housing crisis. It is failing to invest in infrastructure projects, such as the metro west, so needed to support those living in housing. Labor's failed attempt to increase density for projects with 15 per cent affordable housing was, industry said, "impractical and unfeasible".

Labor should go back to the drawing board, have another go, do its homework and maybe it will get it right the second time. The Opposition has outlined practical housing policies, with vision, that would make a real difference to tackling the Australia-wide housing crisis in New South Wales. It is the starting point for the Coalition in developing new housing policies—with more to come, obviously—to address one of the most pressing issues facing families and young people and communities across our State. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Before I call the member for Liverpool, I welcome student guests in the public gallery.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:14): I make a contribution to this important public interest debate. I thank my colleague and neighbour the member for Leppington for bringing this topic to the House.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: My pleasure.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Ordinarily, I would say it is a pleasure if it were not for the constant stream of stories of hardship, distress and trauma that come through my office every single week from young people, older people, new migrants and many others who are struggling to get into the housing market and struggling to access something that we take for granted in this place: the great Australian dream of owning our own home. Unfortunately, for many people of my generation and younger, that dream is more and more becoming exactly that: a dream that will not be realised.

The good member for Leppington highlighted a range of reasons that we find ourselves in the midst of this housing crisis. That is exactly what we are in: a housing crisis. A few weeks ago, an article by Nila Sweeney in the Financial Review identified the toughest suburbs for renters in Australia. Ashcroft, Busby and Miller—all suburbs in the electorate of Liverpool—count amongst the toughest suburbs in which to rent, alongside Christie Downs in Adelaide. Over the past 12 months, rents have increased by 10 per cent and people are paying approximately 41 per cent of their income in rent.

To give some context, housing stress is designated by an income benchmark of 30 per cent of income being spent on housing. In Liverpool, 25 per cent of households spend over 30 per cent of their income on mortgage repayments, and 44 per cent of renters have payments that account for over 30 per cent of their household income. This form of rental stress grew by over 20 per cent from 2016 to 2021. The most recent budget allocates approximately \$7.3 million for new social housing upgrades and about \$14.7 million for increasing housing supply. The member for Willoughby might think that this is not very much, but it is far more than what the previous Government did in presiding over the decimation of our social and affordable housing system over the past 12 years.

The previous Government sold tens of millions of dollars' worth of social housing just in my electorate of Liverpool, pricing out many more people in the electorate. Amongst first home buyers, the Government's first home buyer concessions are especially relevant to south-west Sydney, given Liverpool's young median age of 35.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: The First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme is designed to provide much-needed tax relief for first home buyers in Western Sydney, given relatively lower, though still substantial, house prices in Western Sydney. In 2021 the median monthly mortgage repayment in Liverpool households was about \$1,993, relative to a weekly family income of \$1,578. The median house price in Liverpool is approximately \$900,000, compared with a Sydney-wide median of \$1.3 million. Whilst there is that difference, a range of other factors present challenges for those in my community to access that great Australian dream that I referred to.

The rental reforms that the Government has proposed mean that tens of thousands of people will receive extra protection from the recent appointment of the State's first Rental Commissioner. Forty per cent of dwellings in Liverpool are rented, compared with the statewide average of 30 per cent. The Government is making it easier to allow pets in homes and is committed to further relief through the implementation of a portable bond scheme. All of these are incredibly important in addressing the challenges that face so many across the State of New South Wales. I will address a few other things that the Government is doing. The Government is bringing all relevant parts of our planning system under one Minister; under the previous Government, there were five. As can be imagined, many things fell through the cracks.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Are we cutting red tape?

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: That is exactly right.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The member for Davidson and the member for Leppington will cease interjecting.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: That helps us to cut red tape, especially when it comes to overlapping responsibilities and delivering faster development application [DA] approval times. The Government cannot do all of this on its own, unfortunately. In the Liverpool electorate, waiting times for council DA approvals are the longest in this State.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Shame!

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Yes, that is absolutely a shame.

Ms Karen McKeown: Was it a Liberal mayor?

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Of course. Unfortunately, the Government cannot do all of the heavy lifting, but all of these things that we are doing will go a long way further towards addressing the housing crisis in this State.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:19): I am surprised to see the Labor Party move this public interest debate motion. Why? Because the Labor Party are a bunch of hypocrites when it comes to housing. They are Jack Munday on main street, Harry Triguboff on Macquarie Street. They are nimbys out there, yimbys in here. Coffs Harbour, like many regional New South Wales cities, is facing a housing crisis, so the announcement of a major redevelopment of an existing public housing estate by the Liberals and The Nationals in government was welcomed by most. The proposal would have redeveloped 127 existing social dwellings at Argyll Estate mostly built in the 1960s and 1970s that are no longer fit for purpose. The estate is close to schools and shops. The current houses are in declining condition and do not cater for the needs of social housing tenants, as very few meet modern design, environmental and accessibility requirements, especially as the residents of the estate are getting older and would like to stay in their community.

The proposal would have resulted in about 400 homes, with about 35 per cent of those social homes, and with an addition of about 270 homes to the affordable private market as well. Council was on board. The housing providers were on board. But who was not on board? Well, The Greens again proved just how out of touch they were with reality and were not on board and, rather opportunistically, neither was the Labor Party. The Greens launched their campaign for the last Federal election at the estate and said that "the proposal did nothing to address the region's crippling housing shortage". They opposed it at the State election as well and, to complete the trifecta, opposed it on council too. I do not know how they propose to address the housing problem if they keep blocking the creation of new housing.

Last month the Labor Minister for Housing came to my electorate and declared to the world, "It is fantastic to be here in Coffs Harbour today onsite on the Argyll Estate to make the announcement that the New South Wales Government will not be proceeding with the development of the Argyll Estate." She said it was "fantastic". That is what makes today's motion just so laughable. The Labor candidate at the State election said:

A Labor government will audit all vacant State-owned land to find opportunities for residential development.

At least 30 percent of any development will be social and affordable housing.

While I acknowledge that the land is not vacant, we know that the properties in that estate will have to be demolished and rebuilt in the near future. That is why the plan made so much sense. It proposed to rebuild homes nearing the end of their life and replace them with modern homes where older tenants could stay in their community. While The Greens and Labor continue to block any opportunity for housing, in an ultimate sleight of hand they turn around and blame anyone but themselves for creating the issue. They have no plans and no ideas for any new housing. The next time you run into a Greens or Labor person in a coastal area who complains about

the lack of housing, ask them to tell you where the housing should go. They should get out their colouring pencils or crayons and colour on a map exactly where they propose new housing should go, both greenfield and infill.

Ms Tamara Smith: On your farm.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: They can do it on my farm if they like. But they will not commit. They will not tell you where they want to build more homes because they have no ideas and no plans. Then the new Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson, told people to "get out of the way" in *The Guardian* earlier this year. She also said:

You will not see me proceeding with a state redevelopment that only delivers 30 per cent social and affordable housing, it isn't enough.

...

I'm looking at 40, 50, even more per cent.

The motion as proposed by the new Government Whip has been contradicted by—who?—the Minister for Housing. Those opposite have now had over 200 days—nearly seven months—in government to tweak plans or come up with a new plan, and all we see is a cancellation of years of hard work. We need rapid housing solutions. The Labor Party cancelled the Argyll Estate redevelopment for purely ideological reasons. That blinkered approach stands in the way of practical solutions to the housing crisis and getting new homes built sooner. Instead, my community is waiting for action from the Government. All they have heard so far is talk. There are no answers as to when it will be delivered. Last month's decision will mean that more people will be on the streets for longer and more people will be suffering housing stress for longer. Maybe the Minister should take her own advice that she offered *The Guardian* all those months ago:

If they can't get behind it, well, get out of the way because we desperately need it.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:23): I thank the member for Leppington. He is the new Whip for our party. He is obviously trying to show off by moving a motion in the House straightaway. Well done. Obviously he gets it. He represents the electorate of Leppington. Where did Leppington come from? It did not exist in the last Parliament. The number of people who are moving into the Liverpool, Blacktown and Canterbury-Bankstown areas is massive. We need a housing policy to balance the growth and provide the infrastructure. The member for Willoughby, the shadow Minister for bugger-all, was in his own echo chamber. Stop talking to yourself. You talk to yourself nonstop.

Mr Tim James: Did he say shadow Minister for "bugger-all"? That was called offensive the other day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Blacktown will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Willoughby will not interject.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: It is on the record. That is good. The member for Willoughby writing a housing policy is almost like a clown running through a minefield writing a housing policy. He has just got no idea. The member for Liverpool then brought up quite real concerns about what is happening in multicultural communities, where people are living in this country for the first time and trying to find homes to live in and rent. Whatever the member for Coffs Harbour said—well done. The debate is about housing policy, not just one estate.

I note the history of the Liberal Party and The Nationals in government. Over the past 12 years they had six planning Ministers. Brad Hazzard kicked it off first with three years and 20 days. He set the record. Then we rotated to Pru Goward, who lasted about 344 days. Rob Stokes then had a crack at it for a year and 303 days. Anthony Roberts is in the Chamber. I cannot wait for his learned response. He did two years and 52 days, but then Rob Stokes was back again. It would be interesting to find out from the former planning Minister what happened there. He did another two years and then Anthony Roberts was back in the chair again. It was like a rotating seat. Was it a revolving door? Was it a hot potato? Or was it just self-interest? "I want it." "No, I want it."

Then, after the Liberal Party had been in government for 10 years, on 16 March 2021 David Elliott from Baulkham Hills, with much fanfare, pomp and circumstance, announced in this place that, after ongoing lobbying, the Government had finally got Memorial Avenue upgraded in Castle Hill—one road to sustain the massive population. That was after massive lobbying. Members opposite could not even deliver infrastructure to their own electorates. The former member for Riverstone even said that the upgrade of that project, which the member for Baulkham Hills was so excited by, had been waiting for some time and would be a huge benefit for the north-west. No wonder two former MPs in that area are not in the Chamber anymore. Before he left Parliament Rob Stokes gave probably the most profound speech of his career on 16 November 2022. He said:

We have quite literally manufactured our very own global physical inactivity pandemic.

He also said:

As a society, we can choose between investing in the essential infrastructure that encourages healthy lifestyles or paying the hospital bill for a growing pandemic of non-communicable disease.

...

We can only do this if our cities are designed to support the rights of every human to live as healthy, social and active citizens.

By the former Liberal Government's own admission, after 12 years its planning just simply got it wrong. We have a health pandemic and infrastructure chaos. *Architecture & Design* recently reported that in the North Shore area:

Frontline healthcare workers in Sydney will benefit from a range of affordable housing options being offered by leading Australian property developer Third.i and joint venture partner, Phoenix Property Investors (PPI) at their Crows Nest Metro over station ...

With Evolve Housing, they have done some negotiations with the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association to make sure that key workers can live in Crows Nest and work at the North Shore hospital. But what happened there previously? The former Liberal Government, Premier Berejiklian and North Sydney Council turned the zoning that allows for residential into zero. Labor has the answers. Labor will deliver the solutions for the future of our State.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:28): I make a contribution to the public interest debate, which was moved by the member for Leppington. The Greens are concerned about what is not in the motion. The motion talks about the 30 per cent of surplus public land that will be made available for the delivery of social and affordable housing. While we absolutely want to see more social and affordable housing delivered, we are talking about 30 per cent of surplus public land being social and affordable. What is missing from the motion is what is happening to the remaining 70 per cent of public land. The Minns Labor Government was elected on a mandate to end privatisation in the State, but 70 per cent of public land will be sold off and privatised to fund 30 per cent of land for social and affordable housing.

The motion does not state that under the Government's privatisation agenda the sale of 70 per cent of public land will fund 30 per cent of public land for social and affordable housing. The Greens cannot back in a position where public land is sold off to private interests, private investors and private developers when we are in the middle of a housing and cost-of-living crisis. We note also that, once again, the golden egg of supply was held up as the solution to the housing crisis. Supply alone does not solve the housing crisis; the supply of more public and affordable housing solves the housing crisis.

For those members who were not here during the days of former Premier Berejiklian, I remember her talking up the record levels of supply that were delivered in New South Wales. While it is true that record levels of supply were delivered in New South Wales, we also had record levels of homelessness. So we do not need more evidence that record levels of supply alone cannot save the housing crisis. The fact is that New South Wales topped the country both in record levels of supply and in a massive increase in homelessness. This demonstrates that supply alone does not solve the problem. A massive increase in the supply of genuinely affordable housing for people in a cost-of-living crisis will solve the problem. When we blame local councils and the red tape that stops the "poor developers" from being able to deliver housing and solve the housing crisis, we are totally and fundamentally missing the point.

The point is that developers do not want to solve the housing crisis. They want to profit as much as possible from housing in this State. It is not the Government's responsibility to make it easier for private developers to make a profit. It is the Government's responsibility to deliver public, social and affordable housing for the people of New South Wales. The Liberals and The Nationals, and particularly the member for Coffs Harbour, tried to blame The Greens for opposing developments and so on. I say to them that I cannot wait for the Government to propose the development of more public housing on public land in our community. If the Government does not privatise any public land, I will be happy to back it in all the way—bring it on. For those reasons, and because of the hypocrisy of those on the Opposition benches, The Greens will move an amendment to the public interest debate motion. I move:

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

- (1) Notes the hypocrisy of the Liberal and National parties for offering solutions on housing affordability after 12 years in government when they did nothing to address the housing crisis.
- (2) Commits to doing all we can to address the housing crisis across New South Wales, which has seen housing costs and availability become the single biggest pressure for families and young people.

I urge the Government to back The Greens' amendment and demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Liberals and The Nationals. The Government should not vote with The Nationals and the Liberals in opposition to the amendment as it would protect those parties. Our amendment calls out the hypocrisy of the Liberals and The Nationals and commits to standing with the people of New South Wales who are struggling in this crisis.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (17:33): I move:

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

- (1) Acknowledges that increasing housing supply is the most urgent solution to addressing the housing crisis, which has seen housing costs and availability become the single biggest pressure for families and young people.
- (2) Condemns the Minns Labor Government's budget for squandering the opportunity to direct the \$14 billion in windfall revenue towards measures to transform our housing system, including an expansion of the First Home Buyer Choice scheme and the creation of incentives for local councils that meet housing targets.
- (3) Notes that Labor's plan will help to deliver only 88 affordable homes each year until 2039-40.

Once again, Labor is trying to rewrite history. It is good to see the Ferguson family trying to hide Labor's mess.

Mr Paul Scully: I am not one of them.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Bar the Minister. The objective truth, plain and simple, is that the former Liberal-Nationals Government led the nation on housing delivery. In fact, let us look at our record and compare it with Labor, which is offering to build 88 affordable homes per year until 2040 and which will put a tax on homes at an increased cost of \$37,000 per home. A strong housing market is an important source of wealth creation for the local economy. When in government our focus was on delivering more social and affordable homes and assisting people with their housing needs. Our focus was on offering more opportunities to people and making it easier to partner with government. I am proud that over the past five years we invested \$9.3 billion in the sector, compared with \$5 billion in Victoria and \$4.9 billion in Queensland. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition's investment was the largest in the country, amounting to some 32 per cent of the national total of \$29 billion. Through our economic model and collaborative approach to empowering our community housing provider sector, social housing in New South Wales rose by 9 per cent over 10 years, which is more than double the national figure of 4 per cent.

New South Wales has more than 158,000 social homes, which is more than Victoria and Queensland combined. Our achievements included delivering 6,405 new and replacement social and affordable homes between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2022. We increased the proportion of social homes allocated to priority applicants from 49 per cent in 2018-2019 to 64 per cent in 2021-2022. We empowered the community housing sector by transferring 14,000 social homes to the community housing sector to manage and increase the sector's scale. We established the billion-dollar Social and Affordable Housing Fund, generating some 3,000 homes, which were delivered by community housing providers. In 2022 we delivered the largest investment the State has ever seen to address end-to-end housing. That \$2.8 billion housing package included \$200 million to upgrade almost 16,000 social homes.

We reduced our assessment time frames for planning proposals by some 33 per cent. Time frames for regionally significant development assessments were reduced by 25 per cent. We reduced time frames on State significant projects by 17 per cent. We introduced the ePlanning program to streamline the development application process. Despite COVID, there were some 62,000 home approvals in 2021, which was 20 per cent higher than in the previous year. We pioneered the Accelerated Housing Grant Scheme, which provided funds to fast-track infrastructure for new developments, delivering new homes years earlier than they might otherwise have been delivered. We provided some \$174 million for key worker homes and \$270 million for the Aboriginal Housing Office.

I turn the attention of the House to the success of the Land and Housing Corporation. While members on the other side of the House would have us believe the economic model of selling the farm resulted in fewer assets, that could not be further from the truth. Our model meant that the \$9 billion we invested did not rely on the taxpayer or take away from critical investments in hospitals, schools and roads—all of the services that our communities need. Instead, we relied on the sale of aged assets that were no longer fit for purpose to provide quality housing. Of course, every dollar from those property sales goes back to the Land and Housing Corporation to deliver more and better social housing.

As all members know, the rising cost of living and low rental vacancy rates has resulted in increased pressure for many people across the State, despite record investment from the former Government. Those people do not have time to wait for a budget increase or a new strategy from the new Government to provide more housing in years to come. They deserve clear, decisive and evidence-based action now. The current Government says it is serious about delivering more housing for the most vulnerable people of New South Wales, and I genuinely hope it is. On behalf of our communities, I ask the Government how it intends to deliver and pay for that housing? Quite frankly, Labor's plan to deliver only 88 affordable homes per year to 2039-2040 is not good enough, and to raise the price of homes through a new tax by some \$37,000 is inexcusable.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:39): In reply: I note the various contributions that have been made by members on this important topic of debate. I note the contribution of the member for Willoughby. I missed bits and pieces of it, but he referred to going back to the drawing board. He was clearly talking about the

next election policy for the Liberals in 2027. There was some chat about BASIX standards and him wanting to get rid of BASIX. Basic facts: If he wants to do that, he might want to check with his leader first. I note that the member for Coffs Harbour made a contribution.

I thank the member for Newtown, who is very passionate about public housing and spoke passionately on this topic. Over this term of government, the Government will certainly be working with her and her party on delivering more affordable housing and social housing in this State, which has sadly been left behind after 12 years of neglect by the previous Government. Unfortunately I cannot accept the amendment. I appreciate some of the sentiment, especially in regard to the previous Government. The member for Lane Cove then moved an amendment to the amendment. I am not sure how all of this works, but I do not think you can amend an amendment. I guess it is academic, as I will not be accepting it.

On my side of the House, I thank my neighbour the member for Liverpool, who spoke about housing stress. While we have a fair bit of banter in this place, especially during the public interest debates, housing is a very serious issue. It is a fundamental right to have housing. I know in my neck of the woods, as well as in Liverpool, housing stress is a very serious concern. Whenever research is done and reports are written in relation to housing stress, one finds that postcodes in my neck of the woods, in the member for Liverpool's neck of the woods and in Blacktown regularly feature. It is something that we deal with in our offices every single day.

The member for Lane Cove was rattling off a lot of statistics, and I congratulate him on that. Over the next six years we will deliver in excess of 20,000 homes. Sadly under the previous Government that figure was 14,000. As I said, housing is a very serious issue. Unfortunately the young students that were here earlier have left, but we have a serious responsibility to ensure that those students who attended this debate live in a State where they are able to afford a house and can enter the housing market. This Government is making a very serious effort to fix that problem.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Leppington has moved a motion, to which the member for Newtown has moved an amendment, to which the member for Lane Cove has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Lane Cove to the amendment of the member for Newtown be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes33
Noes51
Majority.....18

AYES

Amon, R	Kean, M	Sloane, K
Anderson, K	Lane, J	Speakman, M
Ayyad, T	Layzell, D	Taylor, M
Clancy, J	Marshall, A	Thompson, T
Cross, M	Perrottet, D	Toole, P
Crouch, A (teller)	Petinos, E	Tuckerman, W
Davies, T	Preston, R	Ward, G
Griffin, J	Provest, G	Williams, L
Henskens, A	Roberts, A	Williams, R
Hodges, M	Saunders, D	Williamson, R
James, T	Singh, G (teller)	Wilson, F

NOES

Aitchison, J	Greenwich, A	Park, R
Atalla, E	Hagarty, N (teller)	Piper, G
Bali, S	Hannan, J	Quinnell, S
Barr, C	Harris, D	Regan, M
Butler, L	Harrison, J	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Saliba, D
Car, P	Hoening, R	Scully, P
Catley, Y	Holland, M	Shetty, K
Chanthivong, A	Kaliyanda, C	Smith, T
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Stuart, M
Crakanthorp, T	Kirby, W	Tesch, L

NOES

Daley, M
Dalton, H
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J

Leong, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
O'Neill, M

Vo, T
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K

PAIRS

Cooke, S
Coure, M
Di Pasqua, S
Kemp, M

Minns, C
Voltz, L
Li, J
Davis, D

Amendment of the member for Lane Cove to the amendment of the member for Newtown negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question now is that the amendment of the member for Newtown be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Ayes, 3

Ms J. Leong
Ms K. Shetty
Ms T. Smith

Amendment of the member for Newtown negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question now is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.*Community Recognition Statements***AUSTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:56): Recently Austral Public School celebrated 130 years of education. I was privileged to join the community of staff, students and parents to celebrate this historic anniversary. In 1891 an application for a school in the Austral area was made for 44 students to serve as a second school for the children in the western portion of what was then known as the Hoxton Park area. The school took the name "Austral" after the Austral Banking and Land Proprietary, with the name gradually coming to be used for the entire area before being officially gazetted in 1972. Since opening its doors in 1893, Austral Public School has been a community mainstay through the area's growth from farmland to brief soldier settlement to new growth corridor. The school population has grown from its initial 44 to around 540 students today and will continue to grow through planned upgrades.

LAURA STRAWBRIDGE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:57): I acknowledge an exceptional young woman in the Wahroonga electorate, Laura Strawbridge of Pymble. Laura is the captain of Ku-ring-gai High School and earlier this year was selected as a 2023 youth MP representing the electorate of Wahroonga. This decision was inspired by her love for the local community, her desire to make a positive change and former youth MPs who spoke highly of the program. In the Youth Parliament she also holds the special role of Deputy Leader of the Opposition. She has balanced this with studying for the HSC, which she is doing now, and working part-time as a crew trainer and area leader at Hornsby McDonald's. Recently Laura was on a panel with other high school students and the Federal Minister for Youth on ABC's *Q+A*. She was wise beyond her years, giving unique insights into AI, education and the Voice. I congratulate Laura and wish her luck for the completion of year 12.

STOCKTON BEACH

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:58): After nine years of fighting hand in hand with the community to get sand back on Stockton Beach, I am excited that 100,000 cubic metres of sand are currently being sprayed onto the beach. It is a spectacular sight to see. Under the former Government very little happened to fix the erosion at Stockton Beach. The people of Stockton never gave up, and I am so proud to represent them

in this House. The initial dredging will provide immediate relief to the community. The \$21 million that I secured in the lead-up to the election will fund a long-term mass sand nourishment strategy and keep the Stockton community safe from coastal erosion. This could not have been possible without the ongoing support and commitment of community leaders Barbara Whitcher, Ron Boyd, Callan Nickerson, Simon Jones, Alison Rigby, Melanie Taggart, Lucas Gresham and the rest of the Stockton Community Group. Their commitment and dedication to this issue is to be applauded and generations of Novocastrians will reap the benefits of their hard work.

TRIBUTE TO GREG TUCKER

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (17:59): I acknowledge Greg Tucker. The Bathurst community has lost one of its favourite sons with the recent passing of Greg Tucker. Mr Tucker truly was a community-minded person who loved and lived life to the fullest. Originally from Nyngan, such was his love for Bathurst and its people that he called the city home for most of his life. This followed his attending boarding school at All Saints College and subsequently working as a teacher there for more than two decades. However, a career change came when he purchased a local travel agency he called Panorama Cruise & Travel, which was the perfect fit for his love of cruising and travelling the world. Mr Tucker became well known in food and wine circles as the founder of the local Winter Winery Wander and was a member of the Bathurst Region Eats and Drinks organisation. I know the Bathurst community is saddened by the loss of Greg Tucker, who lost his battle with bowel cancer on 31 August 2023 aged 71. He has left behind a lasting legacy in the city he was proud to be a part of for so many years. Vale, Greg Tucker.

FIJI DAY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:00): On 10 October 1970 Fijians gained independence from British colonial rule, marking the end of a hard-fought freedom struggle and the beginning of a new independent and multicultural nation. Last weekend at Woodward Park in Liverpool I joined the community for Fiji Day celebrations where Fiji's rich heritage was on full display with stalls, music, rides, cultural performances, food and fireworks. The event showcased the vibrant community in Liverpool and attracted crowds from across south-west Sydney. We were joined by special guest, Minister Sashi Kiran, the Fijian Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, who spoke about mental health and support for diaspora youth in Sydney. With one of the largest Fijian communities in the world, Fiji Day is an opportunity to share and celebrate with each other. I extend my sincere congratulations to the event organiser, Sashi Lal, as well as all those involved in its success.

TRIBUTE TO PETER "GRUMP" FENNING

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:01): It is with profound sadness that I announce the passing on 20 September 2023 of Deputy Captain Peter "Grump" Fenning of Buxton Rural Fire Brigade. A mentor to many and a legend to all, Peter dedicated 43 years to the brigade. His leadership shone in various capacities, most notably during his 13-year stint as our captain, guiding us through some of the nation's worst fires. He was more than a firefighter, he was a friend, father and grandfather—a beacon in our community. Peter was known for his unwavering commitment to training, community engagement and firefighting. His wisdom and counsel were as steady as his resolve, making him an irreplaceable member of our brigade and the larger Buxton community. His legacy will endure in the stories we share, the values he instilled and the community he served. Rest in peace, Grump. Your leadership, friendship and dedication will never be forgotten.

ALYAA ASSAF

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:02): It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the incredible story of a year 12 student, Alyaa Assaf, whom we assisted two years ago when her family was stuck in Lebanon. In 2016 the family departed for a brief vacation to Lebanon; however, due to personal circumstances they found themselves stuck there for five years. The family contacted our office for assistance and the Federal Government assisted them in returning to Australia in October 2021. Alyaa attended Bankstown Senior College in 2022-2023 and completed years 11 and 12.

She is keen to pursue a career in medicine with the goal of becoming a paediatrician. She has performed exceptionally well in several of her subjects and placed first in biology, advanced English, Arabic advanced and second in chemistry. Alyaa was also awarded a scholarship from Youth Off the Streets. Bankstown Senior College Principal John Mazzitelli nominated Alyaa for an Australian Defence Force Future Innovators Award. She also received The Reuben F Scarf Award for Commitment for her dedication and commitment to reaching her goals. I congratulate Alyaa on receiving three early admission offers for the pre-medicine program and the bachelor's degree in advanced medicine.

BILL POULOS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (18:03): I recognise Moree-based author Bill Poulos on his recently published book *Bush Tragedies*, which is a compilation of 23 short stories about historical crimes, murders and tragedies across western New South Wales and south-western Queensland. I congratulate Bill not only for this wonderful account of historical events, but also for his talented storytelling. Bill can turn his hand to anything, whether it is writing a novel, journalism or sharing community interest stories through the Moree Online News page he shares with wife Cindy. His storytelling extends to his everyday life, where often Bill will be seen having a yarn with patrons at his Deluxe Cafe Moree expresso coffee van, with Cindy by his side. I commend Bill for his significant contribution to literature and on his tireless contribution to his local community of Moree.

SCHOFIELDS PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:04): I cannot imagine any lapel pin meaning as much to me as my parliamentary pin, but the one I wear today comes a close second. The Schofields Public School Centenary pin has been crafted to commemorate 100 years of teaching and learning at Schofields Public School. The centennial celebration of any school is monumental, but this pin and the school mean much more to me. Four generations of my family have attended the school; starting with my grandfather—one of the original students—followed by my mother, me and my children. Population growth in the area has taken the school from a small country school, with around 300 students when I attended, to now having 1,016 students enrolled. Despite the challenges of rapid growth, the school enjoys an enviable reputation as one of the best primary schools in the area. Thanks to principal Cathy Thoroughgood and all the teaching staff, Schofields is a very nice place to be. I fondly remember the school and look forward to participating in the centennial celebrations in November.

BLACK COCKATOO FILM SCREENING

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:05): I commend the incredible work of northern beaches resident Jo Mawson Lee, who recently organised a community screening of Jane Hammond's film *Black Cockatoo Crisis*. The documentary details the harrowing plight of the endangered species and the severe impacts of deforestation on our native flora and fauna. Wildlife corridors are vital for black cockatoos to move around. In Wakehurst we are lucky enough to have black cockatoos, including in the bushland surrounding Lizard Rock. The land is facing a development proposal that my community and I strongly oppose. I thank Jo, the Bushland Guardians—Neil Evers, Professor Rico Merkert and David Li—and Federal member for Mackellar Dr Sophie Scamps for their contributions to the event. I admire and appreciate the time, effort and energy that Jo, in particular, put into this important event. It is important our communities are informed and, most of all, actively engaged in protecting our local environment.

HI NEIGHBOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:06): There is no shortage of wonderful community organisations and groups throughout the Heathcote electorate. One of those groups is Hi Neighbour. Hi Neighbour was founded by Yael Stone, a film and television star who has featured in a vast array of productions including *Orange is the New Black* and *Bay of Fires*. The Bulli resident launched the organisation in April this year with the help of core team members Greg Knight, Darryl Best and Xavier Mayes. It would also be remiss of me not to mention board members Steve Blume, Scott Hamilton, Parul Punjabi Jagdish, Tanya Van Der Water and Jennifer Owens. The not-for-profit group is focused on reducing emissions and supporting the transition from traditional fossil fuels to renewables in the region—affectionately referred to as the Coal Coast, for its historic ties to the coal industry. Hi Neighbour works by selecting a business looking to embrace rooftop solar, crowd funding to provide that business a loan and then supporting local workers to train in technical low carbon jobs, with the money repaid by the business for the loan. Well done to all those involved with Hi Neighbour.

POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:07): I was honoured and humbled to recently attend the Brisbane Water Police District and Tuggerah Lakes Police District Remembrance Day Service at the Gosford Anglican Church. Police Remembrance Day is a day of special significance and an annual reminder of the outstanding work performed by our men and women in blue every day to keep our community safe. It is an important opportunity for all to take the time to pay our respects on behalf of our community and to commemorate officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty or through illness or other circumstances. I was grateful to once again attend this moving service to pay not only my respects, but also those of our entire community. I acknowledge the work done every day by the men and women of the Brisbane Water Police District and the Tuggerah Lakes Police District who do an incredible job keeping the Central Coast from one end of our region to the other. They literally don the blue every day not knowing whether they will come home again, protecting other people. Again I acknowledge Police Remembrance Day. Lest we forget.

CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT AWARDS NIGHT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:08): We have another group of wonderful athletes from the Central Coast that I acknowledge in the New South Wales Parliament today. The Central Coast Academy of Sport has shown another year of excellence as it celebrated a night of athleticism, unity and recognition at its 2023 Athlete Celebration and Awards Evening on 20 September. I am delighted to hear that their celebration was more than just the normal dinner and awards night. It was an evening of fun and camaraderie as attendees took part in a series of team challenge events; testing their communication, teamwork and problem solving skills. I extend congratulations to the 30 award winners who received an award for either Athlete of the Year or Rising Star across 12 different sporting categories. Award winner or not, being an individual athlete or part of a team sport is a life-enhancing experience. The discipline, dedication, connections and skills learnt are important for both physical and emotional wellbeing. The athletes should keep doing what they are doing and have fun. I wish the award winners good luck for their shot at Athlete of the Year at the formal awards evening in November. Thank you to everyone at the Central Coast Academy of Sport for their great work.

CASTLE HILL COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (18:09): I recognise the work of the Castle Hill Country Women's Association. On 14 October, the day of the Referendum, the Castle Hill Country Women's Association set up a cake stall at the Castle Hill High School. The stall was a welcome sight for the many people who came to the booth to vote and stand in the heat. I thank the Castle Hill Country Women's Association members who worked at the cake stall for their delicious treats and beautiful crafts. It was certainly appreciated by the community. I also acknowledge the wider work of the Country Women's Association [CWA]. The CWA is the largest women's association in Australia and, from its inception in 1922, has continued to do outstanding work for women, children and the wider community throughout New South Wales and Australia, from small things such as cake stalls to bigger things such as providing social activities, education, recreation and medical facilities to communities. I thank the Castle Hill Country Women's Association and the wider community of the CWA for the work they do in our local and national communities.

BANKSTOWN JETS ALL ABILITIES TOUCH FOOTBALL PROGRAM

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:10): I commend Bankstown Jets for organising its first All Abilities Touch Football program, which commenced this week at the Vale of Ah reserve in Milperra. The program runs for six weeks from Monday 16 October and will be supervised by specially trained referees. The Bankstown Touch Football all abilities program is an inclusive program that provides opportunities for people with intellectual or physical impairments to learn touch skills and to play the sport with their family, carers, friends, and the wider community. As an enthusiastic touch footballer with many years' experience playing socially and competitively, I can attest to the benefits of participating in this great sport. Not only do you make great friends but touch football also improves your fitness, confidence and mental health. This program offers a modified version of the game with an emphasis on fun, participation and socialisation. I say a special thank you to Jets secretary, Mette Kitiona, for her commitment to this program and for working with NDIS providers and special needs schools to promote the benefits of the program.

PARAMOUNT TENNIS CLUB CENTENARY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:11): I congratulate Paramount Tennis Club on its amazing milestone of 100 years. Celebrating a centenary is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the unwavering dedication and passion of everyone who has been a part of the club throughout its history. The club held a fantastic gathering on 14 October, featuring a special long lunch and entertainment, and special guest John Alexander, OAM. From its modest beginnings with just one dirt court in 1923 to five courts at Bultje Street, and then the expansion to Wingewarra Street in 2004, the club's growth has been outstanding. Paramount plays a vital role in fostering the love of tennis and creating a sense of community around the sport. It offers year-round court hire, promotes both social and competitive tennis, and provides coaching in a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere. I congratulate everyone involved in organising the celebrations and thank them for their ongoing dedication to the Paramount Tennis Club. Here's to the next hundred years of success, excellence and many more great moments on the tennis court!

STELLA CHAPMAN

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:12): Through Stella Chapman, the light on the hill shone so bright that everyone could see it. That is a simple summation of the dedication to advancing the cause of Labor of McKell Award recipient and life member of the New South Wales Labor Party, Stella Chapman. Stella was a champion. She was an astute businesswoman who ran pubs in areas where Labor voters were few and far between, but nonetheless she proudly supported Labor candidates in those

toughest of races. More recently, after a period living on the South Coast, Stella became an important part of the Woonona-Bulli branch of the Labor Party, my branch. Always ready to staff the Bulli Public School polling booth with her long-time friend, Annie Wilcox, Stella was also ready and willing to lend a hand in any other way she could to support Labor candidates and advance Labor ideals. Stella's quick wit and sense of humour will be missed terribly, not only by her fellow branch members but also by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On behalf of all Labor Party members in the Illawarra, I thank Stella for her years of tireless dedication and I thank her family for sharing her with us.

JESSICA HULL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:13): Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the remarkable achievements of Australian World Athletics Championships representative Jessica Hull, who resides in Kiama. A Tokyo Olympian, Jessica is a dedicated and accomplished Australian representative, having this year won the Australian 1,500 metres, 3,000 metres and 5,000 metres titles. Jessica went on to achieve great results, including seventh in the 1,500 metres and twenty-sixth in the 5,000 metres at the 2023 World Athletics Championships, less than six months after claiming bronze as part of the mixed relay team at the 2023 World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Bathurst. Successfully competing at such a prestigious international event requires immense commitment, perseverance and talent. Jessica has demonstrated those qualities on the track and has become a source of inspiration for aspiring athletes. Her achievements reflect the values and spirit of the nation, and I believe that acknowledging and celebrating her success will empower others to achieve the same sorts of goals in sport and in active and healthy lifestyles. I give a huge congratulations and well done to Jessica Hull of Kiama.

COBRELOA SOCIAL AND SPORTING CLUB

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:14): I recently had the pleasure of attending a Chilean Independence Day commemoration hosted by the Cobreloa Social and Sporting Club in Fairfield. Founded by a group of Chilean migrants in 1982, the club brings Fairfield residents together to keep the culture and traditions of Chile alive for generations to come. The club offers weekly classes on Chilean folklore, community dinners and much more. The club is open to all and its members participate in many fundraising events, including efforts to bolster volunteering at HammondCare Braeside Hospital. I take this opportunity to thank Jorge Gahona, president of the club, while also acknowledging the work of Fernando Brito, Rodrigo Aburto, Claudia Almendra, Mario Brito, Lucy Tamayo, Roberto Avila, Fernando Rojas and Hernan Lobos. Gracias, mis amigos.

WALK FOR PREMS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:15): On Sunday 15 October 2023 my wife Gessika and I joined many families from the North Shore Sydney Multiple Birth Association [NSSMBA] Walk for Prems at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden in St Ives. The Walk for Prems was in support of Life's Little Treasures Foundation, which supports families with premature and sick babies. Its purpose is families supporting families. Locally, it is run by parents of multiples who volunteer their time to help expectant and new parents of multiples, whether it be twins, triplets or more. Multiples, like all babies, can be born premature. In fact, 60 per cent of twins and 90 per cent of triplets are born premature. I was a premature baby. "Premature" means being born prior to 37 weeks and can involve being placed into neonatal intensive or special care units. I acknowledge the president, Lianda Stoel, and her team: Nigel, Anna, Erin, Anke, Kristina, Amy, Chelsea, Jane, Simone, Edward and Tim. I thank them for all the work they do for families and for our wider community.

PAL BUDDHIST SCHOOL TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:16): I extend my sincere gratitude for the gracious invitation to Pal Buddhist School's tenth anniversary fundraising celebrations. As a school within my Cabramatta electorate, its commitment to education, culture and religion is truly commendable. It is with deep appreciation that I thank the principal, Mr Pal, for including me on this significant milestone. I have known Mr Pal for about 10 years and have seen his determination and hard work in establishing this first Buddhist school. I really enjoyed the event, the performances and the celebrations. It was a success. Such celebrations mark the school's achievements and highlight its positive impact on the area and the community. Once again, thank you for your thoughtful invitation, and my warmest congratulations on a wonderful event. I look forward to witnessing Pal Buddhist School's continued growth and success in the years to come.

COME BY CHANCE PICNIC RACE MEETING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:17): The Come By Chance picnic race meeting is a popular annual event every September, attracting thousands of visitors from all over since its first race in 1947. This year, due to circumstances beyond the committee's control, the event was a little different with no racing horses on the track. Instead, there were wheelie bins, stockhorses and rams. The committee made the event just as great with a live

band, fashions on the field, bar and food outlets, kids entertainment and fireworks. This is an important community event which brings people together to have some fun and support nearby businesses. Despite the challenge of not being able to have racehorses, the event went off without any issues and was successful. I congratulate the committee on again hosting this successful event. Despite obstacles, the bush attitude is to make things happen anyway.

WESTERN SYDNEY MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION ONAM CELEBRATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:18): It was great to join the Western Sydney Malayalee Association's Onam celebrations in Wentworthville on 26 August 2023. Onam is the traditional harvest festival welcoming the mythical King Mahabali. Originating in the Indian state of Kerala, the festival of Malayalees is celebrated by people of all faiths. An occasion for joy, compassion and generosity, Onam embodies India's cultural unity and pluralism. The Western Sydney Malayalee Association is an innovative local organisation. Offering Malayalam language classes and community events, it fosters social cohesion and champions our diverse migrant community. Featuring talented performances and a delicious dinner on banana leaf, the Onam festivities transported me to Kerala. The Indian diaspora in Western Sydney contributes incredible music, food, story and culture, and is integral to Western Sydney's bright future. I thank the treasurer Deepakumar Chithambaranadhan, members of the executive committee and the Western Sydney Malayalee Association for welcoming me to celebrate this wonderful event.

LAYNE BEACHLEY, AO

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:19): I recognise a truly remarkable athlete from the electorate of Manly. Layne Beachley, AO, a seven-time world surfing champion, has this week officially become a legend in the Sport Australia Hall of Fame for 2023, joining elite company, including Sir Donald Bradman, AC; Cathy Freeman, OAM; Rod Laver; and, most recently, Mark Ella, AM. The annual elevation of a Sport Australia Hall of Fame member to legend status is the most celebrated honour that can be bestowed on an Australian athlete, coach or administrator. It is an honour to recognise the outstanding contribution of Layne to the sport of surfing and the impact that she has had on so many people's lives, not only in Manly but around the world.

KING KEBAB HOUSE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:20): It is not too often that a member recognises a kebab shop in this House, but tonight I would like to do it. Campbelltown has a wonderful kebab shop called King Kebab House on Queen Street. Mevlana Cifci is the owner and operator who organises, runs and manages the restaurant. It is not just a restaurant where locals like to go whenever they want a nice kebab; this bloke has gone out of his way to support my community, including homeless people. I draw particular attention to what he did for people during COVID, when he and the organisation gave selflessly. It was amazing seeing my community come together. Mevlana displayed the importance of community in everything he did and I thank him for doing so.

DENISTONE TRAIN STATION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:21): The opening of Denistone station marks not just the culmination of a significant infrastructure project but a triumph for a community that has passionately championed its cause. Having previously worked in disability, I am proud that Denistone station is now a model for inclusivity, with two new lifts seamlessly connecting the station entry to the platforms. This ensures that everyone, regardless of their mobility, can access the station with ease. The upgrades also incorporate new station canopies and accessible seating, while preserving Denistone's historical charm with the reinstatement of the interwar style and Art Deco influences. I acknowledge the previous Liberal Government for funding and delivering the bulk of these works, and I am grateful for its continuity under the current Government. By delivering a new commuter drop-off space on Gordon Crescent, upgraded footpaths and accessible bathrooms, our little local station will hopefully outgrow its status as the go-to victim of Humans of Eastwood memes. Denistone station's opening is more than a milestone; it is a celebration of community spirit and progress, where the past meets the future with accessibility, pride and a little touch of history.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FIRES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:22): On this day 10 years ago, fires ripped through the Blue Mountains. In the villages of Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock and Mount Victoria over 200 homes and many much-loved pets were lost. This demolition obviously caused a huge rift in our community. Many people are still feeling that pain to this day. I take this opportunity to pay my respect to all the exceptional RFS firefighters and Fire and Rescue and national parks crews who swept into action that day. I acknowledge the police, the paramedics, the SES volunteers—all the first responders—the councils, and particularly the schools, which had to care for students because it happened during school hours. They all protected our community as best they could that day. I also thank the many non-government organisations that swept in to help.

ISABELLA DEGEI

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:23): I shine a spotlight on a wonderful young netballer from my community, Isabella Degei. Now aged 17, Isabella imprinted her steps on the netball court at the tender age of seven. She has been unstoppably spirited since, with her prowess and leadership recently propelling her into the New South Wales under-17s team, which secured a silver medal at the 2023 National Netball Championships under her captaincy. Her dedication and impeccable skill led Isabella to be a two-time recipient of the Junior Sports Star award. Recently she received the title of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Senior Sports Star for the first time. I express my heartfelt congratulations to Isabella, who is a fine example of perseverance, leadership and athletic excellence in our community. Her journey amplifies the message that with passion and commitment, our youths can ascend to remarkable heights.

CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:24): Yet again on 11 November Australians all over the nation will stop to remember those who served in World War I and the signing of the Armistice. Pride in that is entrenched in each and every one of us across our country. In Campbelltown we will again gather in Mawson Park. I take this opportunity to thank the Campbelltown RSL Sub-Branch, Campbelltown City Council and all the other volunteers who go to so much effort to put on a ceremony that remembers all of the soldiers who marched from all over New South Wales. They gathered in Waminda park, amongst other areas, before they marched off to Suvla Bay or other foreign places, where they thought they were going on the adventure of their life. I recognise everything they sacrificed and I thank them for it.

WILLOUGHBY THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION OF CATS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:25): The staging of popular, high-quality musicals is a defining feature of Willoughby's cultural life. This October the talented Willoughby Theatre Company is performing the classic musical *Cats*. Inspired by the poetry of T.S. Eliot, *Cats* tells the story in song and dance of the annual gathering of Jellicle cats. As it so happens, it was the first musical I saw in this life. A true musical theatre phenomenon, *Cats* has enjoyed successful runs at iconic theatres around the world with classic tunes like *Memory* and *Mr. Mistoffelees* loved by young and old. I encourage Willoughby locals and visitors alike to support the Willoughby Theatre Company in this reimagined, larger-than-life, contemporary take on this much-loved classic musical at the Chatswood Concourse this month. Joining the whole cast of characters in *Cats* makes for a wonderful, enjoyable night out of fun and entertainment with the family. I can personally attest to that. My daughters and I loved it on Sunday night. They loved the ice creams as well. I am very proud to recommend *Cats* by Willoughby Theatre Company to one and all.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE PEACE RALLY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:26): On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I acknowledge the peaceful rally in support of Palestine organised by Palestine Action Group and Tzedek, an anti-Zionist Jewish collective, last Sunday 15 October at Hyde Park. More than 6,000 community members gathered in solidarity with the Palestinian people to solemnly mourn the rising civilian death toll and call for urgent de-escalation and an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine as the situation in Gaza worsens. Particularly in times of heightened tension, speaking out requires courage and conviction. I acknowledge the staunch and uncompromising activism and words of each of the speakers at Sunday's rally, including Josh Lee, Rand, Michelle, Ethan Floyd, Professor Peter Slezak, New South Wales Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Fahad Ali, Ramia Abdo Sultan. In particular I thank Sheikh Wesam Abdo; Suzan Wahhab, President of Palestinian Christians in Australia; and the Jewish community member who ended the rally peacefully, for the prayers from their respective faiths. I thank all who participated for their unwavering solidarity with and support for Palestine.

FIJI DAY FESTIVAL

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:27): Last Saturday 14 October I had the immense pleasure of attending the 2023 Fiji Day celebrations at Woodward Park in Liverpool. The festival took place over two days, and by the time I got there on Saturday afternoon it was packed with thousands and thousands of spectators and participants. Stores celebrated the best of Fijian culture—the food, the dance, the music and the clothing—and it was a pleasure to be there. Also in attendance were my colleagues the member for Oatley, the member for Liverpool and the member for Holsworthy. Like many other times when we have held this festival, we had a visitor from the Fijian Parliament, Minister Sashi Kiran. I thank Sashi and all the organisers, volunteers, store holders and performers for a wonderful festival.

*Bills***WASTE RECYCLING AND PROCESSING CORPORATION (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION)
AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Returned**

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

DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**Returned**

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

*Private Members' Statements***NEWCASTLE PRIDE FESTIVAL**

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:29): The Newcastle Pride Festival is one of my favourite annual events, and this year's festival is proving to be bigger and better than ever. It was great to see the return of the festival last year after years of postponements and cancellations due to pandemics and torrential rain. But no setback has ever dampened its sparkle, and the 2023 festival is on track to be an event you will not want to miss. On Saturday I was honoured to speak at the festival launch, hosted by local drag queen Miss Indi Pendant. James Street Plaza in Hamilton was jam-packed with wonderful, colourful performers. I was particularly impressed by Pole Dance Dave, who did an awesome dance inside a balloon. Part of what makes this festival so wonderful is how welcome every attendee feels. After last year's event, I came to this place and spoke on how impressed I was by the inclusivity of the festival. This extends beyond offering a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community, to offering an accessible space for people with disabilities and an accepting space for people from diverse backgrounds.

It seems that Newcastle Pride has once again outdone itself. This year there have been even more family-friendly events. From an education session about the first Mardi Gras, to Pride Youth Formal and Rainbow Storytime, this year's festival has offered so many fun and exciting events for Newcastle's children and teenagers. It is important for young members of the rainbow community to see queer performers be open and proud of their identity. It empowers them to feel safe in doing the same. It is equally as important to educate all young people on LGBTQIA+ rights to ensure that our future generations and communities are inclusive and accepting.

The kind nature of this event is a direct reflection of the kind nature of its organisers. I cannot praise festival co-ordinator Lee-Anne McDougall enough. She is a great activist and advocate for Newcastle's rainbow community, and her ambition and resilience never fails to inspire me or her team at Newcastle Pride. I also thank Newcastle Pride secretary, Dr Jamie MacKee, for his ongoing support of and dedication to our local LGBTQIA+ community and to the festival. I say to everyone at Newcastle Pride that it is their kindness, acceptance and warmth that makes this event truly spectacular.

This Saturday I look forward to attending and launching the Newcastle Pride Fair Day once again. People turn up in droves to watch the performances, from drag shows to live music and the Doggywood parade showing off the most glamorous pups. Local LGBTQIA+ businesses and organisations run stalls and are given a platform to show off all of their amazing work and community contributions. On Fair Day, Gregson Park becomes the most colourful place in Newcastle, and I would not want it any other way. It is going to be a great day and I welcome everyone to come along and enjoy the festivities.

CENTRAL COAST BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:33): I recently had the great pleasure of attending the annual Central Coast 2023 Business Awards to celebrate and acknowledge our outstanding local businesses. Business NSW has been the peak policy and advisory body representing New South Wales businesses since 1826. A recognition from Business NSW is something to be proud of, so I will begin by congratulating all the finalists and winners. The awards are not only a recognition of excellence in business but also a wonderful opportunity to shine a spotlight on the amazing finalists. They help promote businesses to the local community and provide recognition and motivation to business owners and their fantastic staff.

Eco-certified tourism business Sydney Oyster Farm Tours was crowned Central Coast 2023 Business of the Year, as well as winning the award for excellence in sustainability. The independent judges praised Sydney

Oyster Farm Tours' vision, which saw the business innovate to develop sustainable oyster and farming cultivation methods and create New South Wales' first in-water dining experience. I congratulate managing director Sheridan Beaumont, an outstanding person, who accepted the awards on the night.

For excellence in large business, I congratulate Central Coast Mariners. It has been a huge 12 months for the organisation, which has seen success both on and off the field. Who can forget the Mariners' outstanding performance securing the A-League Championship with a dominant 6-1 win over Melbourne City? Off the field the office staff have also been working hard to ensure the Mariners continue to evolve and achieve. I also congratulate the finalists in this category: Archos Group, Central Coast Group Training, Conditis Lawyers, Daytoday, Eastcoast Beverages, Industree Group, Scan2Archive, the Art House Wyong and the Better Clean Team.

The excellence in small business category award was won by the outstanding LEP Digital. The finalists in that category included Central Coast Smash Repairs, Central Telecoms, Conveniently Active Exercise Physiology, Elm Professional Services, Law Team, Lift3, Moxie and Muse, and Sharp DS Central Coast. The Excellence in Micro Business Award was won by the Iris Lodge Alpacas. The finalists in that category were AAGilesberg, Alena Bennett, A2B Trailers, A Way With Words, Cheers Sweetie, Exhaust Notes Australia, Flora Ferments, Koori Curriculum and the Foundry Cowork.

The outstanding start-up category award was won by the outstanding team at SecondLife Recrafted. The finalists in that category were Connect Social Central Coast, Evolve Therapies Group, Mary Catherine Marketing, NeuroKind, Originate Coaching and Consulting, Seton Family Lawyers, Urban and Coastal Real Estate and 24/7 Care Disability Services and Activity Hub. The excellence in innovation category award was won by ARC Ento Tech, and the two finalists were Bioaction and Equilibrium. In the excellence in visitor experience category, the winner was Broken Bay Pearl Farm, which does an outstanding job. The finalists in this category were the legendary Australian Reptile Park, Iris Lodge Alpacas and Naughty Noodle Fun Haus Inc.

In the employer of choice category for businesses with 20 or fewer employees, the winner was Central Telecom, which does an outstanding job. The finalist was the Law Team. The excellence in sustainability category award winner was Sydney Oyster Farm Tours. The finalists were BJ's PJs, Iris Lodge Alpacas, Jasmine Greens, Moxie and Muse, TrendPac and Signarama Tuggerah. The outstanding community organisation category award was won by Pacific Link Housing. The finalists were Central Coast Conservatorium of Music, Coast Shelter, Community Hair Project, Evergreen Life Care, Footprints Early Learning Centre, Gosford RSL Club, Making Footprints and Regional Youth Support Services Inc.

In the excellence in diversity and inclusion category, the winner was Koori Curriculum, and the finalist was Salmon Buckets and Attachments. The outstanding employee category was won by Melinda McCrone from LEP Digital. The finalists were Alan Birnie from Salmon Buckets and Attachments, Emily Beatty from Eastcoast Beverages, Jake Henry from A2B Trailers, Jennene Collins from Scan2Archive, Kasey Halam from Signarama Tuggerah, Terri Knott from Salmon Buckets and Attachments and Thomas Spooner from Green Aspect Consulting.

In the outstanding young business leader category, the winner was Caitlin Vine from the Australian Reptile Park. The two finalists were Jacob Denford from Salmon Buckets and Attachments, and Rhiannon Walton from Conveniently Active Exercise Physiology. In the outstanding business leader category, the winner was Laura Prael from LEP Digital. The finalists included Alena Bennett from Alena Bennett, Allan Gibson from Salmon Buckets and Attachments, Craig Giles from AAGilesberg, Fiona Morris from the Better Clean Team, Isaac Zoaretz Vanunu from Daytoday, Jonathon Fleming from Industree Group, Melanie Archer from the Foundry Cowork, Melissa Scoffield from Moxie and Muse, Shaun Mielekamp from Central Coast Mariners, Sheridan Beaumont from Sydney Oyster Farm Tours and Tim Faulkner from the Australian Reptile Park. I am about to run out of time.

The excellence in local chamber of commerce award went to the Coastal Towns Business Chamber. I again congratulate all of the winners, all those who were nominated and all those who took the time to nominate these incredible businesses from one end of the Central Coast to the other. I thank the New South Wales business chamber on the Central Coast for the great work that it does supporting our businesses on the Central Coast.

ILLAWARRA FOOTBALL TEAMS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (18:38): After that private member's statement, the member for Terrigal might want to get his heart checked at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. As the winter season comes to an end, I recognise some of our local teams for their outstanding achievements during the 2023 football season. The Illawarra is a fantastic place for athletes to get involved and be immersed in our strong local sporting culture. The

2023 season has undoubtedly been a great time for football in New South Wales. From the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup through to a booming local season, participation in sport has been higher than ever, especially for our local women's clubs. That is important to both the member for Wollongong and me.

I take this opportunity to give a special shout-out to all the clubs in and around the Keira electorate and across the Illawarra region, which have just wrapped up a successful season. I am pleased to inform the House that Fernhill Football Club in the member for Wollongong's electorate had an outstanding season, coming out on top in the Illawarra district league first grade grand final last month. Fernhill had an incredible finish in 2022, ending the season just a match win away from finals footy. They were able to seal the deal this year and come away with a grand final win. I congratulate the Fernhill Football Club and wish the best of luck to the mighty Foxes for the next season.

The Tarrawanna Blueys Football Club, which I have been involved in for a long time, has come away with an impressive victory, claiming a spot in the finals for the first time since 2020. After missing out for the past few seasons, the Tarrawanna Blueys can now claim the title of champions after their win in the premier league second grade grand final against the Helensburgh Thistles from my neighbour to the north the member for Heathcote. I congratulate the Tarrawanna Blueys and look forward to seeing them continue with that momentum in the 2024 season.

We have had some fantastic results in our men's division; however, it is our women's teams who have absolutely dominated this past season, starting with the Woonona Sharks Football Club. The Sharkies have had a phenomenal season, claiming premiers of the league and securing a grand final appearance. After falling just short in the women's premier league first grade grand final, the Sharkies are now competing in the Football NSW Champion of Champions tournament. With only four teams remaining, the Sharks are a few goals away from being named the best team in New South Wales in the all ages women's division and capping off an incredible season. From all members in this place, including the member for Wollongong and the other Illawarra MPs, I say well done to the Sharkies. Another team along our coast, the Russell Vale Football Club, saw its taste of finals footy with a win in the women's division second grade grand final for the green-and-white cobras. I congratulate the Russell Vale Football Club and wish it the best for the next season. I have had a lot to do with the club over the past 12 years.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate all our junior sporting clubs, which is where our athletes experience their first taste of success. I take great pride in knowing that residents and families across my electorate in the Illawarra are continuing to get involved in our local sporting clubs and that many of our foundation clubs are still thriving, with registration numbers on the rise. I am pleased to inform the House that Bulli Junior Football Club, Balgownie Junior Football Club, Fernhill Junior Football Club, Thirroul Junior Football Club, Figtree Football Club and the University of Wollongong Football Club all had teams make the junior finals during the 2023 season. That outstanding achievement shows the promising number of junior athletes in our electorate and a potential few Matildas or Socceroos stars in the making.

Lastly, I am overjoyed to inform the House that our Illawarra Hawks under-14s girls have created history in their recent win at the national championships. They have become the first New South Wales country team to take out the gold medal. After becoming State champions for the first time in 11 years, the team are now crowned the best in the nation. This is an incredible achievement that all the athletes, staff, families and friends should be immensely proud of. As female sport is still sweeping the nation, the Illawarra Hawks under-14s girls can now write their names in the history books as well. From all members in this place—including my mate the Minister and member for Wollongong—I congratulate all our athletes, clubs, staff, family and friends for their exceptional efforts during the 2023 season. I wish them all the best for the next season.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:42): I thank the member for Keira for acknowledging some of the Illawarra teams. There is always some friendly rivalry between the teams of the Wollongong electorate and the Keira electorate about who has ascendancy, and it varies from year to year. But we are on a unity ticket about the strength and calibre of the sporting teams, the clubs, the administrative support and the volunteers that support all of those organisations. Week in and week out, not just during the season proper but in the off-season as well, they put in the work to make sure the grounds are ready to go and the clubs are financially viable and ready to support their players. Everything possible is done to ensure that the best quality sides take the pitch or the field or the court—whatever the sport may warrant. It is important to acknowledge those organisations and everyone involved, from players to parents to supporters.

SOUTH TAMWORTH BULLIMBAL SCHOOL

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:44): South Tamworth Bullimbal School is a special needs school that recently took a great leap of faith to hold its first ever spring fair on Saturday 8 October in Bicentennial Park in Tamworth. It was an outstanding success, a wonderful opportunity to bring people together and a chance

for students to showcase their wonderful school to the community. The spring fair featured local stalls, food vendors, live entertainment, showbags, rides and attractions, and carnival games. The new Jurassic Park Jeep and the baby dinosaur puppets, Penny and Bonnie, made their Tamworth debut. There was fun for the whole family.

This was the first time an event like this had been held, organised by P&C president Tim Simpson and P&C parents. They were unsure about what to expect, but the community involvement and the number of people who showed up were amazing. Several thousand people turned up throughout the day for activities and dress-ups, including the 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers Army Reserve, the Rural Fire Service and other organisations. The event clearly showcased the school's support in the community. It was a wonderful day and a great success. I congratulate Tim and everyone involved on an outstanding event.

At Bullimbal School students are faced with challenges on a daily basis. The school strives to create learning experiences that allow students to perform at their best as they move toward becoming independent citizens. Bullimbal School empowers students with a voice to communicate in all areas of their lives, and that is a central focus of the efforts of the staff. It is through autonomous communication that students are able to fully participate in their learning and achieve excellence in their results at school and in the wider community.

The school has a range of facilities for students that include assistive technology, like the hydrotherapy pool and the sensory room. The school's kitchen allows students to prepare and cook a variety of simple, healthy meals. Their popular garden includes a vegetable garden, orchard and chicken coup, which is located next to the extensive outdoor learning classroom. Bullimbal School is a proud partner of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, and weekly kitchen and garden lessons are provided to students. The aim of the program is to engage and educate young students in the growing, harvesting and cooking of fresh, healthy food. The school also has a separate sensory garden, with a covered barbeque area and deck. Bullimbal School is a wonderful school, and the school community are proud to be a part of it. I look forward to continuing to support them.

CENTRAL COAST WOMEN'S MARINERS FC

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:47): Go the mighty Mariners! Our fantastic Central Coast women's Mariners played their first game on Saturday night. While Saturday on a lot of levels was not the outcome we were hoping for, they put in a massive effort. It was fantastic to be at the stadium with a much bigger crowd than anyone expected. It was fantastic to see. When women's rugby league came to the Central Coast, we were expecting 1,500 attendees and we got 3,700. When the Mariners Women played on the weekend, 5,735 fans attended the game. That was our first game. I congratulate and thank the Central Coast.

It was tough because we were looking into the sun, but it was awesome to wheel into the stadium—albeit a little late because I was busy doing other things beforehand—to see the western side of the stadium adorned with a sea of blue and yellow. It was a bit confusing because we were playing the derby against the Newcastle Jets. We have a gold uniform of blue and yellow and so, when our girls ran out to their blue and white, we had to work out who was who on the field.

But we were there with the girls and we have been there with their fabulous coach, Emily Husband, from day dot. She has come to the coast from her beautiful English background and has hand-picked talented players from across Australia and the world to come and play for the Central Coast. That is off the back of the fantastic success of the Central Coast Mariners last year, with a victory at Parramatta stadium of 6-1. That was an absolute record event. The joy wave of soccer is riding high on the Central Coast. That follows on from the incredible success of the Women's World Cup across New Zealand and Australia. I am proud that we were a part of that journey, and I could see the difference that it made.

The English women's team came to Central Coast Stadium and trained. It was amazing to see schools from across the coast come to watch that open training session. Some 5,000 people were invited to come and watch. I asked the young girls and boys what they want to be when they grow up. Those girls and boys, watching women's football training, said, "I want to be a world champion football player." What a joy! That translated to the audiences that were there on Saturday night. To see Sam Kerr and Ellie Carpenter, who spent some time growing up on the Central Coast, was a fairytale result for the Mariners last year. Let us watch the Mariners Women and see what they can do.

I am super proud of the whole Central Coast community getting behind the Mariners Men and now the Mariners Women. The Mariners are a unifying opportunity on the Central Coast. We do not really have anything else that brings the people of the coast together like the Mariners do. To have an opportunity for women to come together is another level again. It is with great pride I acknowledge so many families, mums and daughters in the audience on the weekend, cheering their players on. I must also give credit to the Jets Women and the Jets supporters. My sister, who came down on the train, was among the opposition.

Mr Paul Scully: You can't choose family, can you?

Ms LIESL TESCH: You cannot choose your family, but the derby is super important. The New South Wales Government has recognised the significant value of true inclusion in community sport. It has committed to a \$10 million grant as part of the NSW Football Legacy Program, including \$6.21 million in grants to support pathways for female coaches, officials and leaders in sport, and bolster the involvement and development of women's sport in New South Wales. The Mariners' outstanding football academy on the Central Coast is a credit to them. We also have the Central Coast Sports College, where kids from across the coast come and participate in all sorts of sports, though it was founded on soccer alone. That academy has, I think, under-11s through to under-17 and under-18 teams, which are then pathways to the Mariners.

The Mariners Women, like their counterparts in the Matildas, are role models who show the stepping stones of possibility into future professional football careers. These positive movements in the field of women's sport highlight the exciting prospect of professional women's football on the coast. Thousands supporting and cheering on the Mariners A-League team is an amazing prospect and an inspiring sight to see. I encourage all Central Coast locals to get down and see a game this season. I congratulate the Mariners on their work getting the girls to this stage. I also congratulate them on the ongoing promotion of women's sport at that level on the Central Coast. Go the mighty Mariners!

WAKEHURST ELECTORATE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:52): Today I speak about school infrastructure in my electorate of Wakehurst. Wakehurst has 26 primary and secondary schools in total, comprised of 16 primary schools, four secondary schools, and six combined primary and secondary, and 17 public schools and nine private schools. Through my time as mayor of Warringah and Northern Beaches councils I have visited most, if not all, of those schools. I have seen firsthand the amazing work of teachers, principals and support staff, who, day in and day out, work so hard to provide the best education and wraparound support to our students. More than ever before, schools are crucial social institutions that connect all of us around our most important shared objective: nurturing and supporting children and young people to flourish and to be healthy, productive and well equipped for a fulfilling life.

I am the son of a truly dedicated and passionate public school maths teacher. My dad literally wrote textbooks in his spare time: HSC study guides and computer programming textbooks for dummies—nerd! He even tutored for free and umpired school sport—double nerd!—and also lectured part-time at university. Two of my staff, Sean and Ishbel, are the children of exceptional local schoolteachers, who have positively influenced the lives of thousands of kids on the Northern Beaches. Anyone who has seen the love and the toil of this vocation up close understands the extraordinary contribution that teachers make and why we should value them more.

I very much welcome the Government's clear focus on education and the significant uplift in teachers' wages. I am personally committed to continuing to advocate for teachers and schools during my time in this place. Whilst the human capital in teachers and students is obviously the most valuable asset in any school, the amenity and adequacy of buildings, grounds and facilities is also vitally important to ensure the best possible conditions for our children and young people to thrive. As the local representative for Wakehurst, I wanted to get a better understanding of the school infrastructure needs across the electorate to better inform my advocacy.

Recently my office coordinated a survey that sought feedback from the community on the specific school infrastructure needs across the electorate of Wakehurst. We have had a strong response to the survey so far, with hundreds of responses coming in across no less than 22 schools. I thank everyone who has taken the time to give me and my awesome staff their perspective, and a big thankyou to Sally Claydon from my electorate office—a mother with children at local schools—for leading the survey outreach.

Looking at the results so far, approximately two-thirds of the responses are from one school, Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus, highlighting the need for a new school hall and additional classrooms. Numerous other priorities are identified through the survey, of course, but that is the standout. That response has only reinforced my commitment to advocate for improvements to school infrastructure at Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus, in particular a new hall. The high school has over 1,100 students and is growing again next year, but it has no adequate school hall. The hall's current capacity is around 400 people or fewer. Cromer Campus clearly needs a hall that can comfortably hold its entire student and teacher population. Students want to be able to have performances for their school band and their dance and performing arts classes. As members have heard me say in this House, not everybody plays sport.

I have written to and met with the Deputy Premier, and education Minister, to emphasise that need and to encourage her to visit the school and see it firsthand. I am very encouraged by our discussions to date. I will continue to advocate for that upgrade over the coming months and am determined to see it delivered, along with other projects such as the basketball courts at The Forest High School. The Wakehurst schools survey is still open,

and I encourage all parents and school staff to send in their responses before the end of October. Let us get it done together, and I give another big thankyou to all of our teachers.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:55): Today I reflect on events that have unfolded over the past week, both here and abroad. Logic suggests that as time goes on, progress follows. It saddens me that recent events have instead demonstrated division, violence and, ultimately, regression. Australian society is strengthened by embracing our differences. Through that, we have created the most successful and harmonious multicultural society on the planet, yet recent events have demonstrated how fragile—even tenuous—our way of life is.

Amongst the richness of multiculturalism and diversity, it is sometimes easy to forget that we are all migrants when compared to the traditional custodians. Where I speak now is the land of the Gadigal, and my electorate is on the land of the Dharug. The Indigenous people of this land were subject to some of the most heinous treatment and policies. Whilst we have come a long way, we must not forget that Indigenous people were specifically excluded in the first version of our Constitution and only given the right to vote 60 years ago. The intergenerational effects of their mistreatment live on today.

While the people of Australia have had their say on the Voice to Parliament, we must do what we can in this place to keep progressing towards closing the gap between the first inhabitants and the most recent. Humanity is not bound by differences in place of birth, language, the colour of one's skin or even the God one chooses to pray to. Despite the diversity of people around the globe, even those living side by side, there is only one race, and that is the human race.

While we enjoy a metropole of cultural diversity and a strong multicultural fabric, we must remember that some Australians have families around the globe. Their emotional connection can be just as strong as it is for those who have family living in the same household. When events play out on the other side of the world, which may seem so far away, they can have real and devastating effects on the people here at home. When we see people who are passionate about causes that seem so foreign and distant, we must remember that.

However, there is never any place to perpetrate violence or to vilify or discriminate against anyone on the grounds of the colour of their skin, the language they speak, the country of their birth or their faith. Supporting or celebrating any group, country or individual that commits acts of barbarism is fundamentally un-Australian. In saying that, it is also important to appreciate that the actions of a few should not reflect on the majority—that the disgraceful actions of a small number of individuals on the extreme edges must not undermine a legitimate claim for self-determination and freedom supported by most.

Sometimes it can be hard to understand the complexities associated with geopolitical issues, particularly those affecting the other side of the world. It can be even harder to turn the other cheek when extreme acts of violence are perpetrated against one's brethren, yet we must never fall victim to political apathy. We must remain vigilant and stay consistent in our applications of judgement. The killing of civilians is unequivocally wrong. There is never any justification for the killing of innocent people, no matter who is responsible for it. When there is a humanitarian crisis, we must recognise it for what it is, and politicising such an issue is both dangerous and abhorrent. We must always put humanity first. There is never a place for Islamophobia or antisemitism.

Many in my electorate of Riverstone have come from places ravaged by the horrors of war. They came here to seek a better life for themselves and their families. Indeed, the common thread that connects all of humanity is the desire for a better future for our families. They have come to the land of opportunities, to a place where everybody is accepted. Just like in the rest of our great State, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs and people of no faith at all live together harmoniously. People of different ethnicities learn to appreciate one another's identities. I firmly condemn the targeted killing of innocent civilians, including children, irrespective of who is responsible for it. In this fragile time, we must all come together and put people first. We must remember the words from the second verse of our national anthem:

For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share,
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia fair.

Especially now, we must resist the temptation of enmity and have the courage to stand together in unity to advance Australia. We must combine to put humanity first.

MOSS VALE PLASTICS RECYCLING FACILITY PROPOSAL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:00): Today I express for the third time in this House my strong opposition to the Moss Vale plastics recycling facility. While the concept of recycling and environmental sustainability is commendable, I believe this specific project poses significant concerns and risks to our

community and the environment in which it is proposed. It is the second time that the community has had to respond to the proponent's environmental impact statement [EIS]. I have raised this point in Parliament before: It is not a case of "not in my backyard" because it is not a backyard project; it is a serious industrial operation that has been proposed for a residential area. I have been dismayed at the lack of genuine consultation within the community and by the complete disregard of community sentiment by the proponent's director. That sentiment is that this is not the right site.

It is important to ensure that the concerns of local residents are taken into account. The community should have a say in shaping projects that will significantly impact their lives and the environment. Of great alarm is that the proponent has stated that the site was selected mainly due to the fact that the land was for sale and affordable. Furthermore, by the director's own admission, the proponent has no experience in plastics recycling, nor does its operator. As I understand, during an engagement session held in March 2022, the director admitted that having visited recycling facilities in China is the proponent's only experience in the industry. The lack of experience does not give me or the community confidence that the proponent is capable of the successful construction and operation of such a contentious and potentially harmful facility. It concerns me that any proponent can band together a potentially hazardous project on the cheapest land it can find in the most inappropriate location.

I also note that the proposal requires an environmental protection licence, which is yet to be obtained. Although that determination is a separate process to the planning process, much consideration should be given to whether the proponent can be considered fit to hold such a licence. The site is situated next door to the sensitive Garvan Institute of Medical Research—a world-class rodent-breeding facility that supplies mice to many of our vital medical research facilities in Australia. The animals are extremely sensitive to noise, vibration and odours. Any adverse exposure to any of the factors that the plastic recycling facility produces could have long-lasting impacts on the vital research those institutes are carrying out across Australia and the world.

Within the EIS, the proponent details how the project proposes to incorporate noise-mitigation strategies to minimise disturbances. Ironically, it has provided a noise scale, which details the facility being designed to meet the night and day criteria of operating between 38 and 41 decibels and ignores the fact that, on the same scale, a truck is listed as "very loud" at 80 decibels, which raises my next concern regarding the road and transport access to the facility. If approved, the amended project will have up to 100 truck movements per day and 280 additional light vehicle movements, but that is not considered in the noise pollution that the project will contribute while processing such a substantial volume of plastic waste. The proposal advises that a new access road should be provided that extends from the plastics recycling and reprocessing facility site, which is owned and occupied by the neighbouring Garvan Institute of Medical Research, but the institute will not provide landowner's consent for access until the project is supported by council.

The potential environmental consequences, including air and water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to the natural landscape, need to be assessed thoroughly and—I highlight—individually demonstrated. Everything that the proponent has written in the EIS is conceptual and without demonstrated experience. The facility's proximity to residential areas raises concerns about the health and safety of local residents. Furthermore, given that the project is situated in a region with sensitive water resources, it is crucial to evaluate the potential impact of the facility on groundwater quality and availability. Contamination of water sources could have far-reaching consequences for the environment and public health. I support the community in opposing the proposal, and I look forward to a thorough and transparent evaluation process that prioritises the best interests of the local community and the environment. I ask members of the community to make sure they get their submissions in and make sure their voices are heard.

TRIBUTE TO AUNTY MARGARET ANDERSON

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:05): It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Aunty Margaret Anderson. She was a great woman in many ways. Aunty Margaret passed away on 4 October. She was a pillar of the Campbelltown community. I note that she won Female Elder of the Year at the NAIDOC community awards and was instrumental in the early development of the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation. She was also involved with research into dementia through the Koori Dementia Care Project and the Koori Growing Old Well Study. Aunty Margaret will be remembered well for her knowledge, wisdom and sense of humour. I remember recognising Aunty Margaret at many NAIDOC events, along with the many other valued Elders within the Campbelltown community and the Tharawal people.

She was always up for a joke. She always wanted to have a laugh about everything going on. One thing that Aunty Margaret was steadfast about was the support of her community—our community—in Campbelltown and across the Macarthur region. For want of a better term, she was a silent hero. She advocated, lobbied for and achieved many outcomes, going back long before I was in this place and probably long before I was even born. Aunty Margaret will be remembered for her knowledge, her wisdom and, as I said before, her sense of humour.

Most of all, she will be remembered for her kindness and her selflessness towards young families throughout the entire region, particularly in Campbelltown. Indeed, Aunty Margaret will be remembered throughout Airds.

Campbelltown has a large Aboriginal community—one that continues to grow together. At this time, it would be remiss of me not to say how disappointed I am that the yes vote did not get up. I say that because I believe we are all Australians and I believe we should all be recognised in our Constitution. But that did not happen on Saturday. While I accept the outcome, I believe it is a constitutional injustice not to recognise our First Nations people in the Constitution. I take nothing away from what has been said, but I will say that my late grandmother was an Aboriginal woman, and she is not recognised in today's Constitution. I am personally disappointed about that.

I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of Minister David Harris, who is a good mate of mine. He has long advocated for and is a passionate representative for Aboriginal Australians. I know he shares that sadness. I was not able to attend Aunty Margaret's funeral because we were in Parliament, but I send my sincerest condolences to her family—her children and grandchildren—her community, everyone she supported and everyone who loved her. We all loved her, and we will miss her. We will miss her not only because she is not here on earth anymore but also because she will not be advocating in her true voice, as she always did. I know she wanted to see a Voice to Parliament for Aboriginal people. Vale, Aunty Margaret.

REPCO BATHURST 1000

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:11): I talk about an event that took place in Bathurst and highlight the spectacular facilities in our region. The Repco Bathurst 1000 took place at Mount Panorama a couple of weeks ago. Hundreds of thousands of racegoers came to Mount Panorama to enjoy the sixtieth edition of the great race. There were four days of action-packed motorsport racing, including on-track and off-track events. Motorsport racing fans came to see all of the action that was going on in and around the city of Bathurst. The region's population goes through the roof during this time, and the hospitality sector also benefits from the big race.

A lot of people go to our local pubs, clubs and supermarkets. It is a real boost to the local economy. There were 7,100 campsites at the top of Mount Panorama, which equates to about 35,000 campers—almost as many campers on Mount Panorama as people living in Bathurst. The event has transformed over the years. It is now a family-friendly event. Families come from across the State and even across the country to enjoy it. This year's Repco Bathurst 1000 hosted just over 204,000 visitors over the four days. While that it is not a record, it was great to see so many fans back in town having a great time.

It is important to note that we have not had those crowds for a number of years due to COVID and wet weather. The town, in and around the city, was certainly abuzz with lots of activity and colour. The great race brings in around \$21 million to the local economy and \$25 million to the Central West. It also provides \$55 million to the State's economy. Those figures are probably much higher now because the report they were tabled in was compiled around a decade ago. The race took place on Sunday and was spectacular. After 161 laps of Mount Panorama, or 1,000 kilometres, Shane van Gisbergen stood on the winner's podium and held up the Peter Brock Trophy.

While the on-track action was taking place, there was a lot of interest in other events in and around the city. During race week, there was a record number of ticket sales and attendance at the National Motor Racing Museum. Each day was described as a "record breaker" and was bigger than the equivalent day during race weeks dating back to 2012, which is the last time it was that busy. Up until Sunday evening, there were more than 5,200 visitors through the doors of the museum. That figure equates to over 10 per cent of the total annual visitation to the museum in 2022, which was a record-breaking year. We have to remember that the Bathurst economy relies on not just the big race that takes place each year but also all of the other activities in and around the city as well.

We are fortunate to be able to host five motorsport events in Bathurst each and every year. I thank the council for the work it has done. I thank Repco Supercars for bringing the important event to the local area. It is a great event. The teams, drivers and fans all love coming to Bathurst. The event is showcased around the world, and everyone speaks highly of it. They all want to be there, standing up at the end of the day and holding the Peter Brock Trophy. It is a huge spectacle for anyone involved with motorsport. Having been involved in motorsport for a number of years, I say that the event will only continue to grow. It will continue to get bigger and better. I am certainly pleased to see that this year's event was a huge success.

LISMORE ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:16): Tonight I will do a regional round-up because there have been so many wonderful events happening across my electorate. I have been around the track at Bathurst; it is great. Someone drove me. There are so many wonderful events happening. First of all, I put on record the

wonderful Country Women's Association branches across the region, as I have many times. I am a member of the Tabulam branch, which put forward a motion to say that it did not want the Government to establish waste-to-energy incinerators. That went through its annual general meeting. Other North Coast policy positions adopted at the annual general meeting called for telecommunications providers to maintain coverage for disaster-impacted communities. I can say that is happening. They are strengthening. We have all had a briefing by Telstra about that. The branch has also advocated for stronger legislation to protect koala habitat and for ongoing resources for weed management plans. The Country Women's Association has called for a number of things and all branches are very active.

I was recently in Tenterfield to help the community open and celebrate the new water treatment plant. The previous one was 90 years old. The mayor, Councillor Bronwyn Petrie, said that the previous plant was insufficient and unreliable, losing a litre of water for every litre of potable water that was produced. Mayor Petrie said that with the Bureau of Meteorology predicting the current dry weather, Tenterfield could not afford to lose any more water. It was lovely to be there to open the plant. I acknowledge that there was \$7 million from the former New South Wales Government, as well as some support from a Federal Government program. The new plant can treat up to 2.6 megalitres every day and will also treat bore water if the town needs to switch to an alternative source when the dam in Tenterfield gets low. We have all experienced that and know exactly what it is like. It is not a good place to be.

I also mention the newly formed Tenterfield Tourism Collective, which recently met with Southern Downs Regional Council economic development and tourism officers. We are border communities, so there is a lot of cross-border interaction. It was formed by Stuart and Wendy Bell, and Kerri Hampton—good local community citizens—together with Tenterfield Shire Council's tourism councillors Tim Bonner and Kim Rhodes. They met with Southern Downs council workers Adrian Green, Michael Heffernan, Karlie Lane and Amanda Booy, and they discussed a range of things. I also mention the Border Ranges National Park trail signage, which will shortly be in place. That was spearheaded by Stuart and Wendy Bell and members of the Legume and Liston communities. Funding for the signage was made available through council grants following the Black Summer bushfires.

I also note the Kyogle Citizens' Band, which was active for a long time but has been dormant for five or six years because it ran out of players. They are now coming back together. Peter O'Loughlin from the Kyogle Band Committee is calling for members to come together. Peter said that the band will play at public events and gatherings, festivals and commemorations. He recently wrote, "We need players. How many of you have an abandoned instrument in a cupboard or somewhere that you didn't dispose of because you sort of thought you might get back to it? Well, that time has come!" He also wrote, "We are all so busy, but it is important to have a Kyogle band."

A little while ago, the Ladies Golf Charity Day was held in Kyogle. Fifty-nine players attended from across the region, and they donated \$1,000 to Wedgetail Retreat, a palliative care hospice at Murwillumbah, which provides an uplifting environment and respite support for people of all ages experiencing a life-limiting illness. It is all done with volunteers; there is no government funding.

MONA VALE ROAD

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (19:21): The first budget delivered by the new Minns Labor Government was devastating for Pittwater and the northern beaches. The Government played postcode politics with Pittwater. Significantly, Labor cancelled the \$340 million widening of Mona Vale Road West from the Baha'i temple to Kimbriki tip. There is not a cent of funding for the project in the budget for the year ahead, nor is there a cent in the forward estimates. One must ask, if Pittwater shared postcodes with Peakhurst or Punchbowl, would this project have been canned? Locals will know that the \$250 million widening of Mona Vale Road East from Ingleside to Mona Vale is nearing completion. This upgrade came after dozens of near-fatal and fatal accidents. The most tragic incident occurred on 5 June 1998, when an out-of-control truck killed 48-year-old Silverio Garcia before careering into a home on Emma Street, instantly killing 13-year-old Nicole Everson. Nicole would be nearly 40 years old today. There have been countless accidents before and since.

Following 16 years of the Carr, Iemma, Rees and Keneally governments from 1995 to 2011, the Liberal Government planned the project and delivered it. Mona Vale Road East will shortly be the gold standard. The planning for the eastern project started early after the Coalition took government in 2011. The project commenced in 2019, with an original end date of 2022, but with record rainfalls during three years of La Niña, a significant number of days were lost to rain. That said, the project was delivered, which would never have happened under a Labor government. However, Mona Vale Road East is only a part of the solution. Mona Vale Road West from the Baha'i Temple to Kimbriki tip remains a dangerous goat track from a bygone era. This year alone, there have been at least nine serious crashes on this stretch of road.

Lives continue to be put at risk. With every crash, Mona Vale Road is closed for hours, causing chaos on the roads. Locals get stuck in traffic and are kept from their loved ones. The former Liberal Government invested \$17 million doing the studies, planning the works and getting the widening of Mona Vale Road West shovel-ready. Not only that, but the Liberal Government invested \$6.8 million just last year in starting the project. People might ask, "Why hasn't Mona Vale Road West been done already?" It is a fair question. The reality is that the former New South Wales Government had so many major infrastructure projects underway at the same time, there were simply no major project contractors available to do the work. From metro projects, light rail and road projects to new and upgraded schools and hospitals, the former Government was a State-building government. In the cancellation of this project, the Minns Government is showing itself to be a State stopper.

In the 2022-23 budget, with the Mona Vale Road East nearing completion, the west upgrade was fully funded to the tune of \$340 million. There has been \$24 million invested in planning and starting the Mona Vale Road West project. The widening of Mona Vale Road West is lifesaving, congestion-busting and shovel-ready. The Government's failure to continue with the project is an indictment. If life is lost or harmed on this stretch of road—and I sincerely hope it is not—a part of the blame must be on the Labor Government. In the aftermath of the Government's disgraceful decision to cancel the Mona Vale Road West project, in the first nine days of October there were three serious accidents on Mona Vale Road. Lives were put at risk and a community brought to a standstill with the road closed for hours at a time. This keeps families apart.

Government spokespeople have repeatedly said the project is not cancelled but only deferred for two years. This is simply not true. Nowhere in this Government's budget is funding for this project committed beyond the alleged two-year deferral. The Government was caught out in its lie last week when Premier Minns told ABC Radio Sydney that the Mona Vale Road upgrade was not "needs based" and that the issues on the road were not severe enough to warrant an upgrade. So now we have the Premier saying that the Government does not believe the upgrade is needed at all. What is worse, the Premier's comments came after several residents were nearly killed on the road the day before. The Premier was either poorly briefed or simply did not care. I hope it is the former.

As I have asked, if Pittwater shared postcodes with Peakhurst or Punchbowl, would this project have been canned? Rather than funding projects on merits and need, it seems that postcodes are more important to this Government than good policy and good projects. I will continue to advocate and fight for the upgrade of Mona Vale Road West. Our community must show the Government the depth of support for this project. To this end, I encourage all locals to visit my website and sign my petition to the Government.

WESTERN SYDNEY

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:26): As evident from the partisan moaning that we just heard from the member for Pittwater, the divide between the east and west of Sydney is a topic that is often brought up and discussed but, in many cases, is not fully understood. We all know of the latte line or the Red Rooster line that separates the east of Sydney from the west, but it is not just the succulent chicken and delicious coffee that makes those of us in the west different. The divide goes beyond those boundaries. It is about disparities in living and differences in challenges, whether it is public transport accessibility and connectivity, socio-economic inequality—I see the member for Pittwater walked out once I started rebutting some of the stuff he just spouted in the House—job opportunities or cultural infrastructure.

The real challenges that people face every day are linked to those areas. These traditional disadvantages work hand in hand and create wideranging issues. Economic inequality leads to a disparity of quality access to education, health care and employment opportunities. The transport and connectivity divide leaves people in the west with a barrier to employment and education opportunities, not to mention the impact of a long and stressful daily commute. As someone who spent many years trudging on buses and trains to get to and from the city, I certainly know the impact of that.

Bridging this divide means having equitable access to education, healthcare services, public transport and employment. A recent issues paper, *Bridging the Divide*, published by the Centre for Western Sydney, explores the intersections of education, income and identity in Western Sydney. In terms of education, the report shows that Western Sydney has a markedly lower rate of people with a certificate III or above as compared with the rest of Sydney. Only 48 per cent of the population holds a certificate III or higher whereas, in the rest of Sydney, that rises to 63 per cent. Shockingly, the percentage drops further, to 25 per cent, for women in Western Sydney. The disparity extends to Indigenous communities, with 48 per cent of Indigenous Australians holding a certificate III in the east of Sydney and 36 per cent in the west.

The report goes on to show that the economic front is equally concerning. As we are all currently going through a cost-of-living crisis, it is important to recognise that people in Western Sydney are at the centre of this crisis, with 52 per cent of residents earning less than \$800 per week compared with 40 per cent for the rest of

Sydney. Women in Western Sydney, again, fall short. Despite almost half of women holding a certificate III or higher, 60 per cent earn less than \$800 a week.

Indigenous Australians face a similar reality, with 59 per cent earning less than \$800 a week, again despite almost half the Indigenous population in Western Sydney holding a certificate III or higher. In North Sydney alone 75 per cent of individuals hold these same qualifications, showing the glaring contrast dividing Sydney and the disparity of opportunities and prospects based on where someone lives. The issues paper makes a number of recommendations to bridge this gap: removing barriers to work for women; implementing localised job creation initiatives in Western Sydney; supporting skilled migrants for higher paid jobs; and targeted investment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These recommendations will begin to bridge this gap and are crucial steps towards a more equitable Sydney.

I am proud to say that both the State and Federal Labor governments have already begun to implement policies that address some of those recommendations. Federal Labor has reduced the cost of child care and has made it easier for families to get ahead with an investment of \$5.4 billion. This will remove barriers to the entry of women into the workforce. State Labor has announced \$2.7 million to fund 13 projects supporting women to gain employment as part of the Return to Work Pathways Program. The program will support more than 1,000 women over the next two years.

The New South Wales budget delivered the largest investment in education in New South Wales history, focusing on building and upgrading public schools, especially in Western Sydney and most especially in my electorate of Leppington. We have committed over \$7 million for Smart and Skilled-approved training providers to remove the cap on needs-based loadings for the 2023-24 contract period to help VET completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with a disability and the long-term unemployed. I acknowledge and thank the Centre for Western Sydney for the work it has put into this report and for its advocacy on the issue, particularly Dr Rhonda Itaoui. Bridging the gap between western and eastern Sydney will not happen overnight, but with the right government in place we can steadily create a more equitable city.

TAFE AND VET FUNDING

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:31): Today is the day the Federal Government rode to the rescue of NSW Labor and its constrained outlook for TAFE and trade training. The funding for TAFE NSW from the coffers of the Federal Government was announced on the back of the signing of the National Skills Agreement. This follows a disappointing New South Wales budget last month that cut funding for TAFE NSW, both operational expense and capital expense. The Federal Government has had to step in to patch the gap so TAFE and VET can operate. It is not just funding that we are yet to see; we are yet to see a vision beyond the rhetoric. Apart from a review, Labor has not put out any ideas for TAFE and VET.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Point of order: Private members' statements are supposed to be about issues in a member's electorate, not about State budgets.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I am satisfied that the member's speech is related to his electorate. The member for Albury will continue.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: As I have travelled my electorate and the State this year I have had discussions with teachers, students, industry, registered training organisations and group training organisations about their needs and what the future might look like. Several themes have emerged. One is around accessibility. The Country Universities Centre campus in the Riverina is a great example of accessibility when it comes to students in regional areas. Our State needs to lift its speed on recognition of prior learning; on updating migrant qualifications and accelerated bridging; on micro-skill courses and flexible courses that work in well with the lives and jobs of students; on VET organisations becoming known as inclusive organisations; and on how to provide VET students with loans without tears.

The quality of vocational education made available in high schools and the regard with which school careers advisers encourage skills training must improve. A theme through much of this for industry is how to build a modern workforce. In this competitive environment—and skilled workers are in demand—how can a business become known as an employer of choice? We know this means more than wages, as important as they are. Young people and mature workers who are looking for changes want more. It could be environmental awareness and contribution, greater inclusivity or flexible hours. The second theme is to involve everybody. It reminds everyone to "Get back to Gonski". The previous Liberal-Nationals Government established the Shergold-Gonski review:

... to identify opportunities to ensure NSW remains nationally and internationally competitive, and that VET is regarded as a genuine and desirable option for school leavers.

Extensive research was undertaken with stakeholders in education and industry, and a report was delivered in 2020. The previous New South Wales Coalition Government accepted all five recommendations in the 2020 report made by Professor Shergold and Mr Gonski. One particular recommendation that resonates for me reads:

Improve strategic and purposeful industry engagement in VET by ensuring that employers can have a more influential role in planning and designing relevant educational and training courses and have greater involvement in providing on-the-job training and career advice.

Where we can do better, we need to do better—at listening, engaging and collaborating, between governments and with universities, TAFEs, registered training organisations [RTOs], industry and, let us not forget, students. The feedback loop must run in many directions at once. There is a major role for RTOs and not-for-profit trade associations. I am thinking of the Motor Traders' Association of New South Wales and the National Electrical and Communications Association as examples. The better the collaboration the less emphasis that must be placed on having traditional physical spaces for the delivery of training. Embedded learning in the workplace can play a big part in lifting the training experience for students and staff. For example, the new Corowa saleyards incorporate a training room on site. Wagga hospital offers a new level of training for nurses in specially designed facilities within its acute services building.

Thirdly, if you believe in it, fund it. The Coalition's 2022-23 budget made a record investment of \$3.1 billion for skills training in our State. Despite claiming to rebuild TAFE, the New South Wales Labor Government has reduced both the operational and capital budgets for TAFE in this year's budget and has cut revenue to TAFE NSW by nearly 8 per cent. The message that has to reach the Government is "If you believe in skills training, fund it. The Federal Government will not always bail you out." I believe in the Liberal Party value of aspiration—for students and for teachers—and in developing genuine policies and programs on the back of discussions with as many stakeholders as possible. I look forward to continuing to represent stakeholders by bringing their needs to the attention of the New South Wales Government.

TED NOFFS FOUNDATION

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:36): I take this opportunity to speak about the remarkable work that many youth support organisations do for my electorate every day. Regrettably, the outer west area of Mount Druitt has a higher rate of juvenile issues than any of its surrounding suburbs. While it upsets me greatly to acknowledge that, it only highlights the necessity of these organisations and the importance of their work. For that reason, I highlight to the Parliament some of the brilliant organisations that help to make my electorate a better place.

The Ted Noffs Foundation operates statewide, and we are fortunate enough to have one of its centres in the heart of Mount Druitt. The Ted Noffs Foundation is the largest drug treatment organisation for young people in Australia. Whether through at-home check-ins or workshops educating the youth on drug laws and their effects, there has been a proven reduction in youth convictions in communities with youth drug treatment programs. I thank the Ted Noffs Foundation for its impact on my local community. A branch of the foundation, the Street University, is just down the road from the Noffs centre. This branch's goal is to provide our youth with developmental programs to help them to learn, to gain skills to make the most of their education and to achieve better employment opportunities.

An even more personal organisation is the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency—or MECA for short. MECA operates locally within Mount Druitt and within the Blacktown local government area. MECA, which is a not-for-profit organisation, holds a remarkable variety of workshops to assist the youth of Mount Druitt with nearly any problem imaginable. Youth volunteers lead most workshops. MECA has programs to help students with homework and to build skills for seeking employment, to help young parents learn valuable parenting skills, and even to help young people get their learner driver hours up—all free of charge. While not exclusively for the youth, MECA holds free English classes twice a week. It is possibly the most impactful program it provides.

The focus of the specialised English classes is assisting the ethnic community to learn liveable English so they can integrate comfortably and confidently into the community. In the 2021 census it was reported that over 70 per cent of Mount Druitt residents have both parents born outside Australia. As an example, 10 per cent of Mount Druitt households speak Urdu rather than English, compared with less than 1 per cent in the rest of New South Wales. I am very proud to have such a multicultural electorate, and I am just as proud to have MECA provide the support that my electorate needs for people to live comfortably and confidently as members of the community.

Among the many organisations in my electorate, the Graceades Community Cottage in the suburb of Bidwill provides a unique service. Primarily a community hub for the elderly, the Graceades Community Cottage provides a youth shed from Monday to Friday. The youth shed is a free night-time gym, which acts as a safe

environment for teenagers to socialise while also keeping fit and healthy. I acknowledge Ivanka Pelikan, team leader at Graceades Community Cottage, for all her work in making this program very successful. The program is supported by Mr Peter Cvetkovski, who graciously provides guidance and equipment to the teenage participants.

Last but not least, the PCYC provides a blend of programs and workshops, such as safe driving courses and school holiday support like MECA, and juvenile crime rehabilitation like Noffs. The PCYC is distinct among other youth programs as it is the only one directly partnered with the NSW Police Force. It is no surprise that the PCYC is an invaluable asset to my community, and I am incredibly grateful for all it does. I have only mentioned a few of the many great youth organisations in my electorate that all do such an incredible job without much recognition. I cannot say enough how valuable all those organisations have been for the electorate of Mount Druitt. I thank them all again for their hard work, dedication and selflessness

DROUGHT SUPPORT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:41): I address a critical issue that is impacting farmers across large parts of the State. At least a third of New South Wales is right now drought affected, in drought or in intense drought. That is according to the Department of Primary Industries Combined Drought Indicator. When we compare the current map with the map for March, we see that the State went from being 100 per cent unaffected by drought to the extremely dry conditions we have today. Farmers already knew they were in drought long before the indicator confirmed it. In fact, in early July I visited the small community of Rouchel in the Upper Hunter region where farmers told me they were already in drought. A group of around 30 to 40 people came together at the local hall to talk about some of the issues they were facing. They told me that they had not had any rain since November last year. The warning signs were obvious and imminent, and foreshadowed what will be a challenging spring and summer ahead.

There have already been record-breaking spring temperatures and El Niño has been declared. But the Labor Government's support for farmers seems to be drying up just as quickly as the State is. In the past few months I have also visited communities along the North Coast, Tamworth and the Central Tablelands. From my travels one thing is abundantly clear: Farmers are extremely concerned and screaming for support. They are preparing the best way they can and starting to offload their stock. What is worse is some of them are resorting to offering their sheep for free because livestock prices have already taken a massive hit.

That is why for months now I have been calling on the New South Wales agriculture Minister to come forward with her plan. We want to know exactly what the Labor Government is doing right now and preparing to do to help farmers. So far we have had complete inaction. In fact, on 8 September the Minister held a press conference at the Orange Agricultural Institute, where she was more than happy to tell farmers they need a plan but would not say what the Government is doing to plan. So far there is no plan, no commitment of funding for preparation measures like on-farm infrastructure and no certainty. The last drought was the worst in living memory, and we cannot afford to sit by and wait until it is too late. The former Liberal-Nationals Government had a plan and support on offer, like the highly successful Farm Innovation Fund. This was a vital program to help regional communities survive difficult times like drought. The Farm Innovation Fund gives farmers access to long-term, low-interest loans to futureproof their farms and prepare for, respond to or recover from natural disasters.

During my trip to the Upper Hunter, I caught up with local farmer Peter Campbell and the local member. Peter is a massive fan of the Farm Innovation Fund. He has used it for three separate projects and is hoping for a fourth. He showed me the difference it made to his family farming operation. He now has a huge amount of storage for grain thanks to a new silo and grain shed, along with a new shearing shed. The Coalition Government would have poured another billion dollars into that fund. At my NSW Farmers speech in July, I challenged Labor to match that commitment. But there was no extra funding allocated to it in the budget—no surprises there. There was no extra funding to a program that provides the single biggest opportunity to help the agricultural sector prepare for and remain resilient in difficult times. When you look at what works, resilience building and early planning, like the Farm Innovation Fund, are clearly the best options for farmers and fiscally the best for government.

The figures are pretty clear. In recent times resilience building has seen an outlay of \$531 million and a return of \$1.37 billion. So for every dollar invested, the return is over \$2.50. Waiving rates and fees was a \$250 million outlay for a return of \$250 million—a dollar in and a dollar out. Subsidies were a \$272 million outlay for a return of only \$50 million, so you needed to invest \$5 to get a \$1 return. They are the facts; they are not for debate. So why can't we see some sort of commitment for the future?

Compound that with the fact that Labor is also decreasing water security as we head into a dry spell by cutting coastal harvestable water rights from 30 per cent to 10 per cent. That is the percentage of rainfall a farmer is allowed to keep after it falls on their property. The main areas of drought and intense drought are currently the

North Coast areas that have just had the amount of rain they can store cut. That will leave farmers less resilient because they will have less water to keep their animals alive. Decisions like those are made by a government that is out of touch and does not understand the struggles and challenges facing our regional communities. I call on the Government—and I will keep doing so—to reassess its reckless decisions, provide certainty to farmers and come forward with a drought plan.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (19:46): I did not want to interrupt the speech of the member for Dubbo. However, a couple of private members' statements were not about members' electorates. They were general statements by shadow Ministers about what they have been doing across their portfolios. Mr Temporary Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that that is inappropriate and is not a private member's statement. I do not like taking points of order during private members' statements, but some members are flouting the standing orders.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the Minister for his feedback.

VIRTUAL FENCING TECHNOLOGY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:47): A pivotal change is needed in New South Wales legislation—a change that has the potential to revolutionise the agricultural landscape of our State. I advocate for legalisation on virtual fencing technology and shed light on the many benefits it would offer to our livestock farmers, especially in the Orange area. Before we delve into the significance of this agri-technology, let me provide some context. Virtual fencing is a cutting-edge innovation that has the potential to transform the way we manage our livestock. The technology allows farmers to create virtual boundaries for their animals without the need for traditional physical fences. By using GPS technology, the virtual boundaries are established, and when an animal approaches or crosses the boundary, it receives a mild, safe electrical stimulus to deter it from going further.

The history of the technology is fascinating and illustrates the strides we have made in agriculture. It is a product of meticulous research and development by not only the private sector but also our world-renowned scientific institution the CSIRO. Its work in the field of virtual fencing has been instrumental in bringing this technology to life and giving legitimacy to this advanced farming practice. It is a testament to the power of collaboration between industry and science.

Why is it imperative that we embrace the technology in New South Wales? The benefits are manifold, and they extend to our farmers, economy and environment. First and foremost, virtual fencing offers our livestock farmers a tremendous boost in efficiency and productivity. Traditional fencing is not only costly to install and maintain but also limits the flexibility of grazing areas. Recent flood and bushfire events have exacerbated the impact and costs associated with traditional fencing. With virtual fencing, farmers can adjust internal boundaries and move their livestock with ease, reducing labour and time requirements. That not only makes their operations more cost-effective but also allows them to focus on other critical aspects of their businesses. In light of the numbers of on-farm accidents involving farmers and farm workers engaged in traditionally moving stock, such as quad bike rollovers, a benefit of this technology is a potential reduction in work injuries.

Environmental benefits are another critical aspect of this technology. The reduction in physical fencing allows for more efficient land use and minimises overgrazing and soil degradation. Those positive environmental impacts align with our commitment to sustainable practices and the conservation of our natural resources. A valuable fringe benefit of this fencing technology is a reduction in obstructions to the movements of native fauna. Additionally, the potential for innovation in livestock management is immense. With the data generated by virtual fencing systems, farmers can gain a deeper insight into the behaviour and health of their animals. That data-driven approach can lead to more informed decision-making and improved breeding programs. It is a leap forward in modernising our agriculture sector. The ability to track stock would help farmers sleep better at night, knowing the technology would act as a deterrent to stock thieves. In the event of a theft, the containment breach would immediately trigger an alert.

Incorporating virtual fencing technology into our legislation is not just a matter of economic and environmental progress; it is also about empowering our farmers to compete on a global scale. Other jurisdictions such as Western Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and New Zealand have already embraced and legislated the use of this technology. We cannot afford to be left behind. We must take a proactive approach and create an environment that encourages innovation and adaptation in our agriculture sector. The research conducted by the CSIRO underscores the scientific validity and practicality of virtual fencing. Its work has shown that the technology is not only effective but also cost-efficient. By aligning our legislation with those findings, we can enable our farmers to access the benefits of the technology.

It is clear that the legalisation of virtual fencing technology in New South Wales is not merely a matter of convenience but one of necessity. It is a testament to our commitment to the wellbeing of our farmers, the environment and our economy. By embracing the technology and incorporating it into our legislation, we open the door to a new era of efficiency, productivity and sustainability in our agriculture sector. Let us move forward with the knowledge that we have the means to revolutionise our livestock management practices and support our farmers.

I urge my fellow members to support our farmers by adopting virtual fencing technology. Together we could make our State a leader in modern agricultural practices and in doing so ensure a brighter future for our farmers. Today I gave notice of a motion to the House to introduce the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2023, which proposes to define a virtual stock fencing device and exclude the device from the existing electrical devices prohibited from being used on stock animals. The bill will also outline its purpose: confining, tracking and monitoring stock animals. Support for this bill is support for our farmers and the livestock industry that we all rely on.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:52): I recognise the significance of the Rural Fire Service in Hawkesbury and New South Wales. The volunteer spirit amongst the 71,000 members statewide needs to be acknowledged and appreciated, so I am privileged to be able to speak about the outstanding effort of Rural Fire Service members. Just a few days ago I was honoured to attend a medal presentation ceremony for The Hills Rural Fire Service, where 22 medals were awarded. I was joined by Commissioner Rob Rogers, AFSM; Superintendent Glen McCartney; my parliamentary colleague the member for Castle Hill, Mark Hodges; The Hills Shire Council deputy mayor Councillor Mitchell Blue; and Councillor Jessica Brazier.

The number of dignitaries attending was testament to the high regard held for our RFS volunteers. I never tire of attending RFS awards ceremonies because I learn a little bit more about each individual as an overview of their career is usually read out. I acknowledge how uncomfortable they are at hearing their amazing achievements within the RFS service. The ceremony brought back fond memories of my role as chair of the bushfire management committee whilst a councillor on The Hills Shire Council. For 12 years I worked closely with the brigades and agencies that protected the community, livestock, public and private assets, and bushland.

The event again connected me with many volunteers who had been quietly heroic during Hawkesbury's devastating Black Summer bushfires back in December 2019 and January 2020. Group Captain Rtd Jim Smith was a very special guest on this occasion, and among the familiar faces it was wonderful to see Ken Middleton, Don Langton, Bruce Walter and Antonio Papallo, to name a few. In my address to the guests, I talked about my attraction to living on a bush block. I am a Western Sydney girl who grew up in the Fairfield and Liverpool areas, so it was a real change to move into a property surrounded by trees. It was a very beautiful environment to live amongst the bush, so when my home burnt to the ground in August 2019, it left a wound in my heart that never healed.

Four months later in December 2019, the raging Black Summer bushfires were upon us in Hawkesbury. I found myself hugging families who had just lost their homes and their businesses, and I knew their pain. It brought home the reality that politicians need to walk in others' shoes—whether it be as a result of a tragedy like losing your home in a fire, seeing everything washed away in a flood, being a carer for someone close to you who has dementia or is incapacitated or aged, or losing a loved one to cancer or suicide. No-one is immune to these predicaments, but empathy is an endearing quality and is often earned through the pain of experience.

I take members back to Commissioner Rob Rogers, who, on the night of the medal presentation, had only just learnt of the passing of Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes, who was helping fight the Bean Creek fire about 15 kilometres north of Bonalbo when he suffered a medical episode. Fellow RFS members attempted to administer medical assistance, including the use of a defibrillator until an ambulance arrived at the scene. The New South Wales RFS said Mr Holmes' death was a "great loss" after more than 50 years with the volunteer fire service. Mr Holmes' unwavering commitment was recognised with a life membership in June 2022. John was of course more than a volunteer firefighter; he was a role model and a mentor to many. His exceptional skills and hard work earned him numerous accolades throughout his career. And is that not a common trait of our RFS volunteers? Today in Parliament we fittingly showed our respect for Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes with a condolence motion. As we approach the 2023 bushfire season, already some parts of New South Wales are experiencing drought. It is a reminder to be fire wise and to make our properties ready.

I also want to raise awareness during Mental Health Month of how mindful we need to be of trauma that has impacted on our Rural Fire Service volunteers. They do not talk about it. Often they compartmentalise it. I know our RFS leaders have become aware of this issue, particularly after the Black Summer bushfires. Only 5 per cent of those 24 properties in Hawkesbury that were burnt to the ground have been rebuilt. Severe trauma

impacts not only the firefighters but also those who have experienced this massive loss. I know for me it was a long journey. To be able to just talk about it tonight is quite important for me as my personal growth.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:57): We all know that local businesses are the economic and social backbone of our communities. They provide employment, drive our local economic growth and also support our community growth. Each October we engage in Small Business Month as an annual event dedicated to celebrating and supporting the vital role that small businesses play in the State's economy. I recognise my small businesses in my community of North Shore. The theme for this year is My Small Business, and it is focused on providing assistance and tips on how small businesses can strengthen their business in seven key areas. This month brings together small businesses with our local chambers of commerce, our industry associations, other not-for-profit organisations as well as large businesses and all levels of government, including members in this place.

Recently I was joined by the Leader of the Opposition when I took him around to a number of different businesses across my community, particularly throughout Mosman and Kirribilli. Many of our discussions with local businesses centred around some of their current challenges, which of course include the current cost-of-living pressures that their customers are facing and the effect that is having on commerce. We talked about staffing shortages, which have been a continuing challenge for many years across a range of industries, particularly in our retail and hospitality spaces. We talked about high operating costs that just keep going up and the continuing supply chain issues.

In particular, I thank Tamara Keniry, who is the president of the Mosman Chamber of Commerce. She accompanied Mark and I on the day, introducing us to many local businesses and facilitating conversations. We saw Floriade Florist. We went to Jimmy Stuart, which is for anyone who wants amazing menswear; Vernon Partners, which is one of the many real estate agencies in Mosman; and Pattison's Patisserie. We also met with a number of members from the Mosman Chamber of Commerce to hear from them firsthand about the challenges they are facing and what support we can provide to advocate on their behalf at a State Government level. They were people who ran professional services, had started their own small or online business, or had developed a new product.

I thank Councillor Jilly Gibson from North Sydney Council, who joined Mark Speakman and I in Kirribilli to talk with our local businesses to get their perspectives. We went to Morgan's Cafe to speak to Tony and to Bacari, which is a newly reinvigorated restaurant in Kirribilli. We also went to one of our favourites—Coco Chocolate in Kirribilli. The commercial kitchen for Coco Chocolate is in Mosman, so they are a truly local business in my electorate. We also ran into well-known Australian author Jaclyn Moriarty, who was working on her next novel while enjoying a cup of hot chocolate. We went to Bamfords Kirribilli for happy hour, as do so many people in our community on a Friday.

We know that our small businesses across our local communities face a range of challenges. Recognising and celebrating them in Small Business Month is one of the great ways to engage with our businesses and provide them with the tools to improve their business. I acknowledge this year's North Shore Local Business Awards and some of the fantastic businesses that were recognised. Those awards recognise and respect businesses that become a finalist or a winner, and it adds credibility to their business. The awards logo in my community, as with many others, has become a symbol of an outstanding business. I congratulate Giuseppe's Gourmet Meats in Waverton, which won the butcher category. It is one of my personal favourites, and I can never leave there without a great feed. The quality of Giuseppe's products is fantastic and his interaction with customers is truly second to none. People travel from across town to see Giuseppe—even Matt Kean is a big fan.

I congratulate the following local businesses: Speaking Schools Australasia in North Sydney, who won the education service category; Anthony Tallarida Salon in Mosman, who won the hairdresser category; WOTSO Neutral Bay, who won the most inclusive employer category and is just a block away from my office. I always love interacting with them and love the business they are fostering to thrive in our community. I also congratulate the Next Step Performing Arts in North Sydney, who won the performing arts category; Kyearn Architecture in North Sydney, who won the professional services category; 2020 Projects in North Sydney, who won the service and trade category; and Mosman Travel in Mosman, who won the specialised retail business category and also took out the coveted overall North Shore Local Business of the Year Award. I particularly congratulate Sharyn Kitchener and her whole team, considering the challenging years that they have had through COVID.

I congratulate all of those businesses and acknowledge every single business that we have. I look forward to visiting as many as I can. I thank all of our chambers of commerce for the work that they do; the educational opportunities, networking events and access to resources that they offer; and ultimately for contributing to the success and sustainability of our small businesses across New South Wales and all of our local communities.

OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:02): In my inaugural speech in this place I talked about my passion for the environment. In that speech I said I was a conservationist, not a protectionist. We did not inherit this planet from our parents; we borrow it from our children. I believe in the precautionary principle. I support initiatives that deliver cleaner air and cleaner water. Our State has an ambitious plan for clean energy targets and I strongly support sensible plans for reliable, affordable and cleaner energy.

But I am also a rationalist. A CSIRO report last year put the likely capital costs of offshore wind in 2028 at \$5,356 per kilowatt of capacity installed, which is almost three times higher than onshore wind at \$1,915 per kilowatt. The Australian Energy Market Operator said in its 2022 draft blueprint for the grid, the draft Integrated Systems Plan, that significant reductions in costs would be needed for offshore wind to feature in the energy mix, noting that the economics are not yet proven. The Federal Government is currently considering a proposal for a renewable energy zone off the coast of the Illawarra. To progress offshore wind farms, a renewable energy zone must be declared in accordance with the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act. Whilst this declaration is a decision for the Commonwealth Government, associated onshore infrastructure will be a matter for this Government.

BlueFloat Energy had been investigating the building of floating turbines at two sites off the Illawarra and South Coast, including between Kiama and Jervis Bay. As part of these investigations, I met with BlueFloat and provided feedback I had received about the proposal. Whilst I acknowledge that I had received supportive comments, the vast majority were opposed, raising everything from visual concerns, environmental impacts, shipping line impacts and even impacts on tourism. Following its public consultation in June, BlueFloat announced its preferred location for 100 turbines was about 14 kilometres off the coast between Shellharbour and Clifton, mainly due to its proximity to Port Kembla. On 14 August the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen, said in a statement:

The proposed offshore wind area is 1461 square kilometres with the potential to generate up to 4.2GW from offshore wind farms.

...

The zone open for consultation would be at least 10 km from shore, out to 30km at Kiama, and would be able to deliver up to 2,500 jobs in construction and 1,250 jobs ongoing.

Despite this statement on 14 August, it took the Minister until 11 October to issue a formal notice varying the original area being considered for a renewable energy zone. What intrigues me is that the change to the proposed zone seems to have come solely on the basis of the request of a business that has expressed an interest in establishing an offshore wind farm. Did the Commonwealth independently make this decision to vary the area under consideration or was this decision simply predicated on BlueFloat's decision to turn its attention further north? What evidence, science, research or advice is the Minister and the department considering when declaring these zones? Is this the tail wagging the dog? Did the Minister's department independently consider the best possible location for a renewable energy zone or was this decision simply based on the change in attitude of the applicant? One point that may not be obvious is that, once approved, these zones are permanent. Advice from the Commonwealth on this question is:

When declaring an area suitable for offshore wind development, the Minister is not required to specify for how long the declaration will last. If the declaration instrument does not state an end date, it will remain in force until it is revoked.

A review of 158 scientific publications regarding offshore wind, published in scientific journal *Nature*, identified significant scientific discrepancies in the literature and a lack of evidence on the assessment of ecological risks. This is my most significant concern. I am not the only one to hold these views. Speaking with the ABC, former Greens leader Bob Brown expressed his concern about wind farms. Dr Brown said that wind farms ruin views and kill endangered birds. Dr Brown told the ABC's 7.30:

We have alternatives for renewable energy. We don't have alternatives for extinct species of birds. We're in an age where it's predicted 30 per cent of Australia's birds will go to extinction this century because of human pressures, and we have to think about biodiversity.

I agree with Dr Brown. Given the Illawarra and the South Coast is a migratory species highway, the question of environmental impacts versus environmental benefit must be answered in full. The Government's own guidelines for impact assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act are lengthy and include the consideration of the mortality, injury and behavioural effects of underwater noise; injury and mortality to birds and bats from turbine interactions; electromagnetic fields; and loss of or harm to habitats from seabed disturbance. The list goes on and on. However, there appears to be no effort given to addressing each of these heads of consideration as part of the public consultation currently underway. Dr Neryl East and the Coalition Against Offshore Wind have said:

... we in the Illawarra are like crash test dummies, expected to trust the assurances of politicians and vested interest groups.

Whilst we need all kinds of renewables, are we synthesising our energy strategy or building energy silos piecemeal and putting all our eggs in the wind farm basket? Why not focus on the ability to make blue hydrogen from natural gas, capturing the CO₂, and transitioning to solar as it becomes cheaper? Is there a viable option and a better energy pathway than the privatisation of our oceans? Finally, what is the Government's position? You are more likely to run into Salman Rushdie than a local Labor MP listening to the community. I call on local members opposite to state their position.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:08 until
Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

SAFAL FEST, 2023

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The sixth annual South Asian Film Arts and Literature [SAFAL] Fest 2023 was held over two weeks during September 2023. SAFAL Fest is organised by the Australian South Asia Forum Inc. The Festival Day was held on 23 September 2023 at the North Ryde School of Arts. The Gala Dinner and Awards Night was held in my electorate at the Pioneer Theatre, Castle Hill on 30 September 2023. The SAFAL Fest brings together eight diverse cultures from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Maldives. The SAFAL Fest is a dazzling and colourful celebration of South Asian cultures, fashion, music, and dancing. The festival showcased the artistic talents of South Asian heritage with themes in Dance, Singing, Poetry, Fine Arts, Photography, Film and Literature. The Gala Awards night included wonderful cultural dances and musical performances. I congratulate and commend SAFAL Fest Chairperson Ashi Gholkar, Director of Performing Arts Kedar Pagaddinnimath and Director of Literature Rekha Rajvanshi for a wonderful SAFAL Fest 2023 and Gala Dinner and Award Night. I congratulate all award recipients, and everyone involved in the spectacular festival. We look forward to next year's festival.

WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORTS, AWARDS PRESENTATION

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I attended the Western Sydney Academy of Sports [WSAS], Presentation Awards Dinner held on 29 September 2023 at the Wentworthville Leagues Club. WSAS was incorporated in June 2004 as an independent, not-for-profit community-based organisation and is one of 11 regional sports academies. The Awards recognises 'Excellence' in categories across each program at the Academy. Awards were presented to the following athletes: Tanika Terkildsen, Athlete of the Year and Softball Athlete of the Year; Leila Dickson, Triathlon Athlete of the Year; Charlotte Ward, Netball Athlete of the Year; Amber Goldie Netball Umpiring Athlete of the Year; Luke Csillag, Future Starts Athlete of the Year; Anya Barker, Steafkast Athlete Leadership Award Winner; Daniel Waddell, Steafkast Coach Leadership Award; George Abbott, Western Sydney University Award Winner; Chelsea Cocks, Volleyball Athlete of the Year; Zak March, Golf Athlete of the Year; Ezekiel Pratt, Rowing Athlete of the Year; Alex O'Shaughnessy, Cycling Athlete of the Year; Jack Edwards, BMX Athlete of the Year; Coach Service Awards: Jack Rauhihi, Softball; Daniel Waddell, Rowing; Jason Waddell, Rowing; James Sweeney, Triathlon; and Michelle Bullock, Netball. I also recognise and commend Academy CEO Martin Bullock for service to the community through sport.

SRI LANKAN ASSOCIATION OF NSW, ANNUAL HSC HIGH ACHIEVERS AWARD CEREMONY

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The Sri Lankan Association of NSW held its Annual HSC High Achievers Award Ceremony on 30 September 2023. The Hills Shire Council is fortunate to have a wonderful Sri Lankan community. It was my pleasure to attend the Award Ceremony this year. The Ceremony was held at the Community Centre, Thornleigh to recognise Sri Lankan students who received high ATAR results in last year's HSC exams. I acknowledge the hard work, dedication, and diligence of all students. I particularly acknowledge Baulkham Hills High School Student Janiru Liyanage who received the highest possible ATAR of 99.95, as well as 100 per cent score in his English Extension 1 exam. I also recognise and acknowledge the achievements of the following students: Zaina Aslam, ATAR 99.40; Ravindu Abeykoon Herath, ATAR 99.35; Fathima Amana Yasir, ATAR 99.10; Lithira Mahagoda, ATAR 97.65; Mariam Khadija Mahmood, ATAR 97.65; Dinara Jayarathna, ATAR 97.50; and Safiyyah Musabbir, ATAR 97.10. I thank the President of the Sri Lanka Association of NSW Inc Roshan Wickremanayake and the entire Association for putting on a terrific awards ceremony. I wish all students the very best of luck for their future endeavours.

ABBY AND CHELSEA SCOLAMIERO

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Abby and Chelsea Scolamiero, from Warilla High School, who are members of the NSW Combined High School State Tennis championship winning

team. Abby and Chelsea were also members of the 2022 South Coast team who won last year. This is a great achievement for the twin sisters and a wonderful way to end Year 12. Both girls have represented South Coast for tennis every year of high school. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to express our congratulations to Abby and Chelsea and wish them all the best for their future sporting endeavours.

THE SCULPTURE WALK – SHELL COVE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate the PromenART initiative, launched last month by Frasers Property Australia and Shellharbour City Council, for the region's largest sculpture display - The Sculpture Walk - as part of a major multi-year community cultural initiative. The Sculpture Walk, with more than 40 pieces of art, winds its way along the Shell Cove Marina on pathways and boardwalks and will be in place until 30 October 2023. The artists from across Australia have used everything from steel and bronze to reclaimed railway sleepers and concrete to create their pieces. All of the sculptures are available for acquisition or purchase ranging from \$10,000 to \$224,000 for the headline piece, Michael Van Dam's 3-metre stainless steel and chain Earth's Custodian. Each piece features a QR code link to information about its creation and the artist. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our thanks to PromenArt for this incredible sculpture display and encourage all of the community to visit the Shell Cove Marina before the end of October.

MARIAH STEFANOVIC

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Mariah Stefanovic, from Warilla High School, who was a member of the NSW Combined High School State Tennis championship winning team. This event was held from 19 to 21 September 2023 and was hosted by the Sydney East Schools Sports Association in Rockdale. Tennis is such a fantastic sport that can be played at any age, so I am pleased to see so many school aged children enjoying tennis right across the Illawarra. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to express our congratulations to Mariah and wish her all the best for her future sporting endeavours.

ZOE ONG

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Zoe Ong. Ms Ong continuously gives up her time and energy to volunteer at the Shopfront Art co-operation in Carlton. Shopfront is a not-for-profit community organisation that strives to empower young people through the making of bold and ambitious works of creative expression. Ms Ong began volunteering with Shopfront once a week in the office writing notes, updating databases and attending daily team meetings. These days, Zoe helps organise art shows and events such as their recent birthday fundraiser, set up educational programs and has even started teaching members of the Young Company how to sign words in sign language. Shopfront would not be able to run so successfully without the selfless efforts of volunteers like Zoe. It is truly inspirational, that Ms Ong at such a young age, sacrifices much of her time and energy to serve her local community. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Ong for the wonderful work she does to support our younger community, for which we are extremely grateful.

THERESA TOMAHU

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Theresa Tomahu. Ms Tomahu has been giving up her time and energy to volunteer at the Kogarah Storehouse for more than 5 years. The Kogarah Storehouse is a community based, public benevolent institution that strives to empower people to handle life's struggles by providing relevant and tangible support. Ms Tomahu is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Theresa and her fellow volunteers organise and deliver free parcels of food for families and individuals who are struggling to make ends meet. Without the selfless efforts of volunteers like Theresa, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Tomahu sacrificed her health and wellbeing to continue delivering food parcels during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies her unwavering dedication and commitment to serving her local community. It is such an honour to be able to recognise Theresa's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Tomahu for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

YULIE SUNTARA

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Yulie Suntara. Ms Suntara has been giving up her time and energy to volunteer at the Kogarah Storehouse for more than 5 years. The Kogarah Storehouse is a community based, public benevolent institution that strives to empower people to handle life's struggles by providing relevant and tangible support. Ms Suntara is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Yulie and her fellow volunteers organise and deliver free parcels of food for families and individuals who are struggling to make ends meet.

Without the selfless efforts of volunteers like Yulie, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Suntara sacrificed her health and wellbeing to continue delivering food parcels during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies her unwavering dedication and commitment to serving her local community. It is such an honour to be able to recognise Yulie's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Suntara for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

MT DRUITT ST MARYS LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—Last month the annual Mt Druitt St Marys Local Business Awards took place, which recognises outstanding businesses within the community. I am proud to relay that a number of businesses within my electorate were recipients of these awards. I would like to congratulate the Evergreen Early Education Centre, Laing and Simmons St Marys, Metallum Laser Cutting and Manufacturing, Roberts Air Conditioning and St Marys Village Dry Cleaners for winning an award within their respective categories. It is a great honour to receive one of these awards and acknowledges the hard work of these businesses and their employees in servicing their community. I am proud to be a part of a community that is dedicated to supporting local business and each other. Congratulations to these businesses - keep up the great work!

ATI ART SCHOOL AND CENTRE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was a pleasure to visit the ATI Art School & Centre, Wentworthville on 4th October 2023. ATI Art School & Centre is a vibrant school and gallery proudly run by the multicultural women of Western Sydney. They offer classes in oil, acrylic, watercolour, pencil and charcoal via flexible learning modes to welcome all ages and abilities to hone their artistic skills. A creative hub for our community, the centre provides a safe learning space and welcoming social environment where diverse artistic expressions can thrive. It creates avenues for our vibrant and diverse community to connect and share their stories, histories, culture and experiences through poignant art. Committed to nurturing and amplifying underrepresented voices, ATI Art School provides a platform for culturally and linguistically diverse artists to showcase their talent and share unique perspectives. Championing the untapped well of creativity in Western Sydney, the Centre fosters community, empowerment, and cultural celebration. Thank you to Director Atefah Hekmat and the dedicated ATI Art School team for your commitment to providing engaging, creative opportunities for our community. Thank you as well to the talented students for welcoming me to view their wonderful artwork.

DEPUTY MAYOR SUMAN SAHA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Thank you to Councillor Suman Saha for your proactive and diligent service, while serving as Deputy Mayor of Cumberland City Council. Suman's passion for community motivated him to join local government as a Councillor in 2017. He was elected Deputy Mayor in September last year. After a great year as Deputy Mayor, Suman continues as a Councillor for the Wentworthville Ward. An accountant, Suman prioritises strong economic management and strives to keep community assets with the community. He advocates for road safety improvements, improved service delivery, local parks and playground upgrades. Suman is a thoughtful leader who champions others. With Cumberland City Council the second largest culturally and linguistically diverse community in NSW, Suman's celebration of multiculturalism fosters an inclusive, connected community where everyone is welcome. As a first-generation migrant, Suman builds cultural bridges for our multicultural communities. His genuine understanding of lived experiences informs considerate, meaningful decision-making. Suman is an inspiration to the Sub-Continent Diaspora who call Western Sydney home, and a true example of the value of migration. Thank you again Suman. It's a privilege to collaborate with you on a professional and personal level, as we continue to support our Western Sydney community.

MAYOR SAMEER PANDEY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Thank you to Councillor Sameer Pandey for your proactive and diligent service, while serving as the Mayor of Parramatta. Parramatta's first Lord Mayor of Indian origin, Sameer is an inspiration to the Indian Diaspora who call Western Sydney home. Sameer was a small business owner, whose passion for community inspired him to join local government. First elected in 2017, Sameer progressed into Deputy Mayor in 2022 and became Mayor of Sydney's second CBD in March this year. Home to a vibrant community and the second-largest economy in NSW, Parramatta is abundant with opportunity. Capitalising on Parramatta's potential, Sameer collaborated with Councillors to shepherd key projects, including the Parramatta Aquatic Centre, the Riverside Theatre and Town Hall redevelopments, and embarking on Harris Park's 'Little India' transformation. Sameer joined Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Harris Park this year, supporting bilateral relationships between Australia and India from within Western Sydney. As a first-generation migrant, Sameer helped build cultural bridges for our multicultural communities, exemplifying the value of

migration. Thank you again Sameer. It's been a privilege to collaborate with you on a professional and personal level for many years, on matters to support our Western Sydney community.

A LIFETIME IN LIBRARIES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—If you're a book lover in the Lismore area you probably know Lucy Kinsley, who has been a stalwart of the area's public library system for 45 years and is currently the Lismore Library Manager. I'm very pleased that Lucy has been recognised for her outstanding service with the Woman of Distinction Award – Regional/Rural category in the 2023 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government on 6th October. The award is a fitting tribute to Lucy's long career in our local libraries and comes ahead of her planned retirement in the next few months. Lucy started as a library assistant at Casino Public Library in 1971, before joining Lismore Library in 1974. Since then she has been heavily involved in building our library services, helping to develop popular programs such as Baby Time, Story Time, Indigenous Story Time, Tech Savvy for Seniors, multicultural events and home library services. Having steered Lismore Library through countless challenges including the COVID19 lockdown and the devastating 2022 floods, I offer my congratulations to Lucy for her award and wish her well for the next chapter in her life.

TENTERFIELD RAILWAY STATION MUSEUM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Tenterfield Railway Station Museum is one of Tenterfield's significant heritage features and is beautifully maintained and operated by a team of volunteers. The Museum is an almost intact nineteenth century railway precinct and popular tourist site. It is also popular with locals as the venue for monthly community markets, art workshops and exhibitions at the Engine Drivers Barracks, and occasional Dinner on the Platform functions. Tenterfield Railway Station Museum volunteers are active in many community initiatives. In September they were very involved in Lifeline's "Out of the Shadows Walk" for suicide prevention. The Museum also hosts students from Tenterfield High School as part of the school's independent living and working skills program. Students learn about fundraising and community involvement as well as gaining hands on skills and experience in stripping paint and restoration. Recently ten volunteers were made Life Members of the Tenterfield Railway Museum at a ceremony at the station. Congratulations to Ken Poulson, Lucy Sullivan Ken Kneipp, Jann Newman, Owen Pearson, Ray Love, James Bird, Graeme Hingston, Elizabeth Holt and Ian Wright. These dedicated volunteers have been involved with the Railway Museum in some way or other for more than 20 years

KYOGLÉ CRICKET CLUB

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—As the footy season draws to a close and we turn our attention to cricket, I'd like to acknowledge the good work Cricket NSW is doing to get girls involved in the sport through its girls-only Cricket Blast programs across the state. Among the many clubs involved in Blast is Kyogle Cricket Club, which is making a big push to enrol more female cricketers across all age groups. Kyogle CC and Cricket NSW are hoping to build female player numbers so that an Under 10s girls-only comp becomes feasible across the Northern Rivers. Fifteen girls from Kyogle are taking part in the Blast program and they have as their inspiration local schoolgirl Ruby Nix, who has just been chosen for the North Coast Girls open cricket side to play in the NSW Combined High Schools State Carnival on 6th-9th November. Each Blast program runs for four weeks and is provided free to girls aged 5-12, introducing them to the basics of the game. Congratulations to the Kyogle Club Committee for its efforts, including Club President Josh Vidler, Secretary Tim Somerville, Publicity Officer Sally Joyce and everyone else involved in one of our great local sporting clubs.

JEANETTE CABRERA

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—For more than 30 years, Jeanette Cabrera has supported people with disabilities throughout the Sutherland Shire. Her dedication and passion towards the cause has never wavered and as a result, the local community has benefited greatly. That is why it was so pleasing to see Jeanette receive \$5000 as part of the Westfield Local Heroes program. The funding will go to Jeanette's organisation, Civic Disability Services. The Woronora resident has been involved with many programs over her three decades working in the disability sector. One of those programs which has made an incredible difference is Civic Disability Services' literacy program. The program began in March 2022 at the Civic Masonic Centre. However, it proved so popular that it was expanded and rolled out in the organisation's New Era and Liverpool hubs too. Jeanette told the St George Sutherland Shire Leader the program has made a real difference to the lives of participants. "Learning to write your name, reciting the alphabet and forming small sentences, are big steps for some of our participants," Jeanette said. On behalf of the entire electorate, congratulations Jeanette on a well-deserved award.

WESTFIELD LOCAL HEROES - NELLIE DOUEIHI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate my constituent, Nellie Doueihy of St Declan's Catholic Church in Penshurst. Nellie was recently announced as the 2023 Westfield Local Hero for

Hurstville. The program, which is in its sixth year, celebrates our wonderful local volunteers and their invaluable contributions to our community. The program rewards a \$20,000 grant for the program winner, to support the group or organisation they represent. As one of the coordinators at St Declan's Catholic Church in Penshurst, Nellie provides 300 elderly people with services and support, with the help of 130 volunteers. One of her most successful initiatives has been the 'Tech Savvy Seniors' program, in which school students help elderly people connect with technology. As a recipient of \$20,000 grant, this funding will ensure that Nellie can continue to provide services to seniors in our community who need it most. I would like to once again congratulate Nellie and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

MIGRANT INFORMATION DAY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, Migrant Information Day is an important event in the St George community calendar, aiming to promote cultural diversity and harmony locally. This year, Georges River Council and Bayside Council partnered with Advance Diversity Services to provide support and information to new migrants and refugees. Held at Marana Auditorium in Hurstville, visitors could also enjoy cultural performances and stalls, with bilingual staff ready to offer a helping hand. It was a fantastic turnout on the day, with people from different backgrounds coming to support the event. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I believe that we are stronger when we come together. Despite being from different backgrounds, we thrive in New South Wales because of our commitment to supporting diversity. Of course, migrating from a different culture can be an incredibly difficult process. However, events like 'Migrant Information Day' enable refugees and migrants to settle into the community, whilst also enhancing their understanding of resources that are available to them. I would like to thank Georges River Council, Bayside Council and Advance Diversity Services for continuing to support this wonderful initiative.

WESTFIELD LOCAL HEROES - LALA NORONHA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate my constituent, Lala Noronha, who recently was awarded funding under the 2023 Westfield Local Heroes program. The Westfield Local Heroes programs seeks to acknowledge those who often receive little to no recognition. These are the people in our communities who work day in, day out, to support those in need. As the General Manager at the Kogarah Storehouse, Lala works exceptionally hard alongside her team to deliver emergency food parcels, financial aid and life-enhancing programs to hundreds of people each month. Since starting her role with the Kogarah Storehouse in 2015, Lala has witnessed unprecedented growth, with three times the amount of people seeking emergency support in recent times. Clearly, with the rising cost of living, there are now more people requiring emergency relief and assistance in New South Wales. As a recipient of the \$5000 finalist grant, this money can help Lala and her team continue to support those who are most in need in our community. I would like to once again congratulate Lala, and I wish her and the Kogarah Storehouse all the best.

OLD BAR CELLARS

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Old Bar Cellars, who have won the prestigious Retail Drinks Industry Awards 2023 - Liquor Store of the Year, the highest accolade for small liquor stores. Geoffrey Alrich, the manager of Old Bar Cellars, represented the establishment at the awards ceremony in early October. Winning this award is a testament to the dedication they exhibit year after year, maintaining the highest standards, from providing exemplary customer service to curating an extensive selection of products. Competing against 50 finalists from across Australia, Old Bar Cellars excelled in various criteria, including Responsible Service of Alcohol, store presentation, customer service, product range, staff professionalism, transaction efficiency, and overall customer experience. This victory highlights their commitment to excellence and their dedication to our community. I congratulate the dedicated and hardworking staff at Old Bar Cellars and commend Tim and Cozette Leonard, the store owners, for their leadership. What a fantastic achievement!

RACHAEL ABBERTON

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to congratulate Rachael Abberton for being presented the Alternative Pathways Award – Regional/ Rural at the 2023 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government. The Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government, honour the contributions of female councillors and council staff to their communities. Rachael is the senior water and sewer planning engineer for MidCoast Council and was awarded for successfully challenging gender stereotypes in her role. Congratulations again on your well-deserved recognition and thank you for all the great you have been doing for our local council. It was an honour to have been there to celebrate with you.

LORNA MCDONOUGH-BROWN AND ARAGORN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Lorna McDonough-Brown and her Pyreanean Mountain dog, Aragorn for their efforts in support of the Kids With Cancer Foundation. Their journey began in 2014, and since then they have collected over \$1700 in funds, one pat and a hug at a time, touching the hearts of countless residents and visitors in the Mid North Coast. Aragorn's fluffy fur and soulful eyes have been a source of joy for everyone who encountered him, and the team's commitment to fundraising for children with cancer is inspirational. With Aragorn now at the age of 10 and Lorna at 85, they have made the difficult decision to step aside from their charity work. Thank you, Aragorn and Lorna, for your selfless dedication in supporting children with cancer. I wish you both a peaceful and well-deserved retirement.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR AARON BYRNE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to congratulate Aaron Byrne from Cootamundra who recently received Life Membership of the Cootamundra Rugby League Football Club. Aaron commenced playing as a junior for the Bulldogs in 1990, making his seniors debut in 2002. Throughout his footballing career Aaron also played for the North Coast Sawtell Panthers winning a premierships, the Young Cherrypickers, the Junee Diesels and even dabbled in Rugby Union for the Cootamundra Tri-Colours where he enjoyed another premierships. Aaron is an all-round club legend and is highly revered throughout the club and its loyal supporters. In addition to playing decades of footy, several hundred matches as a junior and senior, Aaron also coached various teams for the club and continues to generously devote his time as a current Committee Member. Aaron is being recognised for his loyal and meritorious service to the Cootamundra Rugby League Football Club and the community. This is truly an outstanding achievement. Congratulations Aaron.

ROYAL HISTORY GIFTED TO JUNEE RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—A piece of royal history has been graciously donated to Junee RSL Sub-Branch by Wing Commander Darren Doolan OA. On 9 September 2022 at 17:00 hours from the forecourt of Parliament House, Canberra, Australia's Federation Guard fired a 96-gun salute to commemorate the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and to honour her lifetime of service to the Commonwealth. Wing Commander Doolan won a ballot and successfully secured the 33rd shell which he gifted back to the Junee community. The 105-millimeter Howitzer shell has been mounted on Junee railway sleepers by students from Junee High School, encased in clear perspex and engraved with the words: 33 of 96 rounds fired in commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth by Australia's Federation Guard at Parliament House, Canberra on September 2022. This piece of history will be on display at the Ex-Services Club in Junee then travel to local Schools, Council and the Library for the community and visitors to see. Thank you, Wing Commander Doolan, Junee can now proudly display its very own piece of Royal history.

VICKY CODDINGTON – 46 YEARS AS A NURSE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to Vicky Coddington of Weedallion as she celebrates her 46th year as a nurse and midwife. Vicky commenced her nursing career in Sydney at just nineteen years old in the year 1977, before later returning to her hometown of Young in 1986 where she has currently spent 37 years at the Young Hospital. In addition to midwifery, Mothercraft and Tresilian nursing, Vicky recently upskilled in child and family nursing and immunisation and currently performs all three roles for the Young Hospital which is incredible. I am pleased that Vicky returned to Young all those years ago to support her hometown, and local community for what has now been more than half of her life. I know Vicky is motivated by helping others, and is a caring, compassionate, and selfless individual and I am in awe of her achievements. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vicky and wish her well in chasing down 50 years. I also extend my thanks to all nurses and health clinicians not just in my electorate, but right across our beautiful state.

MICHELE TAYLOR

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Volunteers really are the lifeblood of our communities, without their tireless unwavering dedication many charities, organisations and institutions would fail to thrive. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of one of Lake Macquarie's true unsung heroes. Michele Taylor, who is an invaluable and long-standing member of Booragul Public School's P and C and currently serves as its treasurer. Michele volunteers her time at the school on a full-time basis, running its uniform shop, canteen and school fundraisers, as well as working behind the scenes on administrative tasks. She is always the first one to arrive at events like school discos and the last to leave. Michele goes above and beyond for the school community, giving so much and asking for nothing in return. She is a wonderful example to students and teaching staff alike. These efforts were recently recognised when she was presented with a Department of Education Regional North

Performance Directorate Excellence Award. Congratulations on receiving this very well deserved award Michele, I thank you for all that you do for Booragul Public School.

PAUL TABAR, ARABIC INTERPRETER - LONG SERVICE AWARD

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Paul Tabar arrived in Australia from Lebanon as a 17-year-old in 1970 and settled in Greenacre. Paul started working as an Arabic interpreter while undertaking part-time university studies. Even after graduating as a Professor of Sociology, working as a teacher, and raising three children, Paul continued to work as an interpreter because his skills were so needed by the community. On 30 September, on International Translation Day, Paul was one of 11 professional interpreters recognised for their tireless efforts in serving Multicultural NSW. Paul's career as an interpreter spans 45 years. Census data shows one in four (26 percent) of people in NSW use a language other than English at home. Over the last four decades, thousands of people have benefited from his bilingual skills. As well as contributing to the development of an Arabic glossary, Paul's work was critical during COVID-19 when keeping the community informed of vital information was a top priority. This is a wonderful achievement. Paul, on behalf of the community I extend our gratitude for the hard work that you have done for the community, and I am thankful for your excellent services.

FAITH COUNCIL DINNER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On 3 October, I had the privilege of attending the Faith Council Dinner held at Sydney Olympic Park, organised by Better Balanced Future, to mark the passing of the religious vilification legislation. This gathering provided a unique opportunity for me to broaden my knowledge and understanding of the diverse range of beliefs present within our community. The presence of my colleagues, representing various faiths, made this evening truly special. Together, we embarked on a journey of exploration, seeking to uncover the similarities and differences that exist within our respective faiths. The purpose of the Faith Council is to safeguard the right of every individual to freely practice their faith, ensuring they can thrive within a secure and nurturing environment. The significance of this event lies in its ability to forge connections with all Members of parliament. By fostering collaboration and unity, we were able to gain valuable insights into the needs, challenges, and opportunities that confront our respective faith communities. This collective effort enables us to strive towards better outcomes for the entirety of our wonderfully diverse and multicultural NSW. I commend the Better Balanced Futures for organising this important occasion.

SYDNEY HOSTS WANITA ISLAM - WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—The Women's Leadership Collaborative Training Program was held in Sydney from 12 - 17 September 2023 for Wanita Islam, the peak Indonesian women's organisation, and a member of the Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. I am pleased to see such an incredible program in Sydney and to learn about the important work that they are doing. Their program included a tour of the Lakemba Mosque and a presentation on the services the Imam provides at the mosque, ranging from leading the prayers to being a marriage celebrant, providing counselling services for married couples, taking care of the youth, and overseeing their activities. A highlight of the program was attending the garden lunch at the house of Keyser Trad, the former Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils who had invited a former Minister of Immigration, the Hon Phillip Ruddock to address the delegation. Mr Ruddock emphasised that Australia is a diverse country, and all citizens have equal rights. Once again, I would like to thank Wanita Islam for accomplishing such an amazing program within Sydney, and appreciate all their hard work.

WORLD PICKLEBALL DAY

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—15 October was World Pickleball Day - a day to celebrate one of the fastest growing and most exciting sports anywhere in the world. Like all great things, Ryde played a central role hosting a 'come and try' event at Brush Farm Park, Eastwood. I was blown away by the attendance, with hundreds of locals turning out to play, some for the first time. I acknowledge Ryde Pickleball in the Park President, Dimitri Dimitriou and his wife Arti who together are leading a sporting revolution in Ryde. In just a few short years, pickleball participation has grown exponentially from just a small handful of players pre-COVID, to well over 300 today. Membership is affordable, and the sport is highly accessible, attracting picklers of all ages and abilities. For those that don't know, it is a cross between tennis, badminton, and table tennis, and can be played either indoor or outdoor using a special paddle and waffle ball. The main challenge for Ryde is finding new and expanded facilities to keep space with the growth - something I am exploring with Ryde Council as we speak. Happy World Pickleball Day, and thank you Dimitri and Arti for having me!

CMRC COFFEE AND CARE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I recently had the opportunity to drop in and observe the first 'Coffee and Care' event held at the Community Migrant Resource Centre at Top Ryde. The event was all about connecting our multicultural community over biscuits, tea and coffee, and to share stories, struggles and ideas around domestic violence and mental health. I was particularly grateful to Kathryn Reddy of RRIC Association, and my friends Poulomee Datta and Gary Patni for hosting the event and for driving a new approach to what can be a difficult and challenging series of topics to address. It is a great tragedy, but rates of domestic violence and mental health concerns are higher than ever - a product of a scourge that does not discriminate, regardless of age, culture, wealth, geography or education. To see people openly share their stories and create a more accessible environment for people to engage with challenges, seek help and share what works with others was highly encouraging. It gives me great confidence that we are a community that cares for one another, and are prepared to try new things to make a difference. Congratulations CMRC, and thanks to Polly, Gary and Kathryn for your service!

TONI COURTELIS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I am privileged to rise in this chamber and acknowledge the tremendous service of Toni Courtelis. In recent years, Toni has moved from Meadowbank to Windsor. However, her legacy remains strong, including in helping pave the way for my own election as the Member for Ryde. Whether it be through her ongoing service to the arts, her local community or the Liberal Party, Toni left a mark on all those she came across, and was a passionate advocate for the causes she believed in. Through her reinvigoration of the Ryde Progress Association, she led important community advocacy work especially in the Meadowbank and West Ryde areas. She also drove strong growth in the Shepherds Bay branch of the Liberal Party - a credit to her strong networks in the local community. Toni was an avid fundraiser, and you could always find one of her terrific and often pioneering paintings available for auction throughout the year. These works were also inspiration for many to take up painting themselves, where Toni offered her services to both young and old. I am grateful to Toni for her strong support over the years, and wish her good health and happiness. Thank you Toni!

WILL LEE

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to recognise Mr Will Lee, who is one of the Operations Officers of the Mount Druitt Clontarf Academy. The Academy was created to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem and life skills of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. Through the organisation of activities such as morning training sessions, homework club, school camps, sport sessions and school carnivals, Will is invaluable to the encouragement of attendance for these young men. Will's dedication to the Academy has seen an average attendance of 82% in term 3 alone. I commend him for his continued support and encouragement.

TOP 20 CAFES IN SYDNEY – KURUMAC MARRICKVILLE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—Congratulations to the team at Kurumac in Marrickville who were recently acknowledged by the Sydney Morning Herald as one of the Top 20 cafes across Sydney! Those of us who are lucky enough to call the Inner West home know all too well how great so many of our local cafes are; our home away from home to catch up with friends, get some work done or just enjoy a quiet coffee and chance to watch the world go by. Kurumac offers a menu with a unique blend of Japanese and Australian style comfort food and provides Inner Westies a chance to taste food Japanese locals would have been served when they were kids. Bringing not just great hospitality to Addison Road the team at Kurumac have regular fashion and lifestyle collaborations to celebrate with their local community. Congratulations to founders Mr Eugene Leung and Mr Dika Priyana and all the team at Kurumac for helping to make the Inner West such a vibrant and great place to live.

TOP 20 CAFES IN SYDNEY – TWO CHAPS MARRICKVILLE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—Congratulations to the team at Two Chaps in Marrickville who were recently acknowledged by the Sydney Morning Herald as one of the Top 20 cafes across Sydney! Those of us who are lucky enough to call the Inner West home know all too well how great so many of our local cafes are; our home away from home to catch up with friends, get some work done or just enjoy a quiet coffee and chance to watch the world go by. Two Chaps has developed a devoted following amongst locals who know all too well how great their coffee and pastries taste. Offering not just their day menu Two Chaps also features their regular night menu of outstanding vegetarian pastas. A standout for their sustainable approach to all aspects of their operation, all of their bread and pastries are made by hand daily and they are the birthplace of Sticky Chai made in their own warehouse and now distributed Australia wide. Congratulations to all the team at Two Chaps for helping to make the Inner West such a vibrant and great place to live.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I encourage everyone to get involved in Mental Health Month this October. Wayahead, the Mental Health Association in NSW, runs Mental Health Month which is a chance to promote activities and ideas that can have a positive impact on our daily lives and the lives of others. This year's theme is "We all have a role to play". I ask everyone to reflect on this theme and consider what role each of us will play in our community, our workplaces and amongst our friends and family. Each of us can take simple steps to support each other; we can learn about stigma surrounding mental health and equip ourselves with the tools to be an ally to those around us. We can share well informed and impactful information about mental health awareness or get involved with one of the many Mental Health Month events happening across NSW. We all have a role to play in raising awareness and helping others and I encourage everyone to get involved this Mental Health Month.

PEARL BEACH EPHEMERAL ART TRAIL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I would like to say congratulations to the winners of the Pearl Beach Ephemeral Art Trail Event that was held on 23 September at the Pearl Beach Arboretum. Kasia Niedezak received the grand prize of \$3000 for her piece 'Where the Seeds Were Born' and two awards of \$1000 were awarded to Georgina Galea and Jonathan Grose for 'Falling' and 'Bowerbird Blues' respectively. I would also like to congratulate all of the other artists who received a well-deserved commendation and recognition for their works of artistic expression based in nurture and nature. Pearl Beach Arboretum have done a wonderful job supporting local artists by providing such a beautiful place for the artists to share their talent and work with the community. The untouched nature of the Arboretum provides a breathtaking backdrop for the ephemeral beauty of the nature-based installations. While the art trail is now over, I encourage everyone to get down to the Arboretum to enjoy the beauty of our wonderful Central Coast. Thank you to all who were involved in creating this fabulous event.

SURF CLUB TEAM WALKS KOKODA TRAIL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—What an exciting adventure to be able to share with you today. I would like to extend a huge congratulations to Mollie Murphy, Bethwyn Caller, Elena Grey, and Erin Scahill from the Umina Beach Surf Life Saving Club for their achievement on the Kokoda Trail. The team led by Mollie Murphy has completed a challenging 9-day trek through the Kokoda Trail taking on the demanding physical elements as well as the embracing history and culture of the track. It is always inspiring to see the next generation of young people challenging themselves, pushing themselves to their limits to conquer great feats and demanding challenges to improve themselves and prove to the world and themselves that they are truly capable of achieving anything they set their minds to. This amazing accomplishment was part of the Surf Lite Saving Central Coast Duke of Edinburgh Gold Program, which encourages participation in such programs for all young people to achieve their best and improve themselves. Well done, Mollie, Bethwyn, Elena, and Erin, I look forward to learning about your next exciting adventure.

TERALBA BOWLING CLUB

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to congratulate Teralba Bowling Club on reaching a wonderful milestone, its 75th birthday. On the 4th October 1948 the club's inaugural members first met, for the purpose of forming a small, friendly community based bowling club. Three years later, in 1951 the first club singles were played, with guests entertained in a large marquee at the site. It was another year before the clubhouse was completed and I note that the club's first acting president was Harris Barnett. Since those early days the club has gone from strength to strength. The Teralba Bowling Club provides the community with so much more than just a physical venue for its members to play lawn bowls. It's also a place for people to meet and friendships to forge and grow. The club is located on Cockle Creek and is one of very few places offering boat access right to its door, and I have had the privilege of attending several award ceremonies there for the Teralba Fishing Club. We've lost so many small clubs over the years; it is heartening to see the ongoing success of Teralba Bowling Club. Congratulations again, on a remarkable 75 years.

CHERYL DIMMOCK

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Congratulations to Cheryl Dimmock who was awarded a prestigious Australasian Women in Emergencies Network Excellence Award for her outstanding contributions to the formation of Iluka Community Organisation Planning for Emergencies [ICOPE]. The idea of forming a group focused on emergency preparedness in light of previous devastating fire/flood events that saw the village of Iluka and surrounds isolated was the brainchild of Cheryl. ICOPE consisted of 16 individuals each with different skills and expertise. Cheryl's dedication was evident in steering a comprehensive action plan that was endorsed by Clarence Valley Local Emergency Management Committee designating Iluka Community Hall as a

community-managed emergency centre, one of few across the State. Cheryl organised community events, enhancing awareness of emergency situations and her meticulous attention to detail and strategic thinking set new standards. Cheryl's dedication to the safety and wellbeing of community has been truly exceptional. Her vision and expertise in establishing ICOPE and her ability to engage with people on so many levels has seen membership soar to 100 members. Cheryl's selfless leadership and unwavering commitment to her local community has not gone unnoticed. She exemplifies the spirit of community service and embodies values that make communities like Iluka more resilient.

THE MOUSSAKA MEETING - THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—It is an absolute delight to recognise two residents of Mareeba Aged Care at Maclean, Lorraine Mitchell and Roy Bowling who along with volunteer, Jenny Homewood entertained other residents, staff, family and friends inhouse with a self-written play called 'The Moussaka Meeting'. The theatrical production told the story of a mother-daughter duo's annual Birthday celebration of at Greek restaurant. By all accounts, they had the audience captivated with plenty of laughs and a wonderful afternoon that lifted the spirits of everyone there. Mareeba Aged Care Director of Nursing Leanne Hancock gave high praise to the resident actors and said the best thing about it was it brought everyone together for a wonderful afternoon of entertainment. Residents and friends of Mareeba are keenly looking forward to the next creative production, which I'm pretty keen to get a ticket to myself! Congratulations Lorraine and Roy for bringing a sparkle to everyone's day.

TARTAN BRUSHY RSL DAY CLUB – NONAGENARIAN CELEBRATIONS

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I congratulate the Tartan Brushy RSL Day Club Coordinator Marja Feeney and all volunteers for their annual nonagenarian celebrations held at the Brushgrove Hall on 12 September. Held each year, the Club puts on a special day to recognise those who have turned 89 years and over. Mona Bowles of Cowper turned 92; Viva Mason of Gulmarrad turned 90; Isabel Buchanan of Ulmarra turned 97; Jack Saint of Ulmarra turned 90; Maggie Combley of Townsend turned 92; Melva Thorley of Brushgrove turned 96; and Colleen Hardy of Brushgrove turned 93. It was an incredible milestone day for all that was accompanied by the cutting of a celebratory cake, a special dance performance by Cowper Primary School students, a round of bingo and listening to some special records on a 1920's phonograph. It is wonderful to celebrate these important milestones. Our nonagenarians continue to lead rich, vibrant lives that inspire the spirit of the Clarence Valley. They demonstrate the values of everyday life and its lessons simply by living their lives to the fullest and celebrating each and every moments. I wish them all good health and happiness into the future.

MRS D'S SUCCULENTS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I rise to congratulate and celebrate a gem within the Badgerys Creek community, Mrs D's Succulents, owned by Christine Daniels. Mrs D's was recently honoured as the winner of the Local Business Awards for Mt Druitt/St Marys in the Outstanding Specialised Retail Business category. For those unfamiliar, Mrs D's Succulents is more than just a store; it's a testament to passion, dedication, and the beauty that thrives in our local community. Their outstanding collection and commitment to excellence have not only greened our homes but have also nurtured a love for nature among the residents of Mt Druitt and St Marys. It's businesses like Mrs D's Succulents that fortify the heart and soul of our community. Their success is a reflection of hard work, a keen understanding of their customer base, and an unyielding passion for their craft. I commend Christine for this well-deserved recognition. May your business continue to flourish, inspire, and be a beacon of excellence in our community.

NIGEL SMITH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I rise to acknowledge the efforts of Nigel Smith, a member of my community, who, through heartache and remembrance, organised the 'Trip to Cape York for Schmitt.' This endeavour, saturated in personal significance, was conceived in memory of his beloved son, Lachlan, who tragically perished in a car crash in Silverdale before realizing his own dream to navigate to Cape York with close mates. Nigel, embodying incredible fortitude, has transformed his personal grief into a communal act of compassion and solidarity, establishing the trip not only as a testament to Lachlan's unfulfilled aspiration but also as a vessel to raise crucial funds for the Road Trauma Support Group NSW [RTSG NSW]. This invaluable organisation provides vital support to those, like Nigel, navigating the turbulent aftermath of road trauma. In the face of profound loss, he has brought to life Lachlan's dream while also illuminating the path for others affected by similar sorrow. My heart goes out to Nigel and his family.

VALLA ROD RUN SHINES AT ANNUAL EVENT

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Bringing colour, classics and crowds to the Oxley electorate for more than four decades. Today, I rise to congratulate the organisers and participants of The Valla Rod Run in its

successful 45th year in the Nambucca Valley. The Valla Rod Run is the Show and Shine. More than 350 of Australia's best and impressive Hot Rods embarked on the vigorous journey to meet at Valla, then took the trek to Nambucca Heads for the grand spectacle. There was the roar of engines, a glimmer of chrome under the Nambucca sunshine and hundreds of happy spectators admiring the dedication and craftsmanship of the Hot Rod owners. This event also showcases dedication of the Drag-ens Hot Rod Club and its president Paul Godfrey for being the driving wheels behind such a beloved community event. We could not have asked for a perfect day, glorious weather and hundreds of magnificent vehicles showing off their motoring history. This 45th anniversary highlighted the love of Hot Rods and gave Bowra Street something to rev about. Well done!

LILLI PILLI LADIES' THOUGHTFUL DONATION TO THE MID NORTH COAST CANCER INSTITUTE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I stand today, applauding the incredible Lilli Pilli Ladies for their remarkable generosity. A donation of more than \$8200 was raised to help our local cancer patients and their families. The Lilli Pilli Ladies' contribution has enhanced the technology in our rural hospitals in more ways than one. The \$8276 has financially contributed to providing Wi-Fi-capable stations that enable data to be downloaded directly to the electronic medical record system – creating a succinct system and minimising human error. This donation has created a significant advance in our regional institutes, and I thank you for the positive impact this will have on cancer patients and healthcare professionals alike. We are truly inspired by the Lilli Pilli's Ladies philanthropy and their visionary approach to healthcare. Their generosity and forward-thinking mindset exemplify the power of community support and assistance. I am wholeheartedly appreciative of Lilli Pilli Ladies for their exceptional service to our region and their unwavering dedication to improve the lives of those living with cancer.

ADEN MILLS SPORTSPERSON AND LOCAL HERO

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, I rise to congratulate a young sporting talent who is making waves in the Macleay Valley. Aden Mills was dubbed the Kempsey Macleay RSL Club Sportsperson of the Month for September – an honour that stems from vigorous work in protecting people along our region's shorelines. The Year 10 Student joined Surf Lifesaving 12 months ago, and this time has achieved new skills and accolades to match the dedication. Aden was not only selected as the South West Rocks Surf Lifesaving Rookie of the Year but also the Surf Lifesaving Mid North Coast's Rookie of the Year for the 2022/23 season. Well done, Aden for stepping up to the plate, adapting and honing a range of skills that benefit our community and all water-lovers alike. It takes courage to put other people first and dedicate time to their safety. I am proud of our youth taking up these roles, especially ahead of a busy summer period where our Oxley beaches are inundated. Aden continues to be an inspiration and a trusted volunteer that our region can happily rely on.

SHORTLAND UJFC GRAND FINAL WINNER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Our local sports have made a strong resurgence following the challenges of the pandemic and extreme weather conditions over the last three years. Participant numbers are increasing and there are wonderful representations of community engagement to be seen around our local playing fields. I wish to praise each and every sporting club, team, player, parent, guardian, spectator, volunteer, referee and organiser for your participation, support and dedication. I am especially proud to recognise the spectacular efforts of all the football teams within the Wallsend Electorate who recently won their Grand Final this season. Congratulations to Shortland UJFC which defeated South Wallsend JSC 3-2 in the Interdistrict Friday O/35 Friday (H) competition. Well done on your success for this season and best wishes for continued success in 2024.

UNI MEN'S FC GRAND FINAL WINNERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Our local sports have made a strong resurgence following the challenges of the pandemic and extreme weather conditions over the last three years. Participant numbers are increasing and there are wonderful representations of community engagement to be seen around our local playing fields. I wish to praise each and every sporting club, team, player, parent, guardian, spectator, volunteer, referee and organiser for your participation, support and dedication. I am especially proud to recognise the spectacular efforts of all the football teams within the Wallsend Electorate who recently won their Grand Final this season. Congratulations to Uni Men's FC which defeated New Lambton FC 4-1 in the Interdistrict AA Saturday (J) competition. Well done on your success for this season and best wishes for continued success in 2024.

NEW LAMBTON FC GRAND FINAL WINNER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Our local sports have made a strong resurgence following the challenges of the pandemic and extreme weather conditions over the last three years. Participant numbers are increasing and there are wonderful representations of community engagement to be seen around our local playing fields. I wish to praise each and every sporting club, team, player, parent, guardian, spectator, volunteer, referee and organiser for your participation, support and dedication. I am especially proud to recognise the spectacular

efforts of all the football teams within the Wallsend Electorate who recently won their Grand Final this season. Congratulations to New Lambton FC which prevailed over Kotara South FC 2-0 in the Under 15 G (B) competition. Well done on your success for this season and best wishes for continued success in 2024.

SEVENTY YEARS OF WINDALE PUBLIC

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Today marks the seventieth anniversary celebrations of Windale Public School! Founded in 1953, Windale Public School has been an important part of the local community for seven decades. The school showcased historical documents in the school hall, starting from when the school was in the planning stages. A display of photos and documents from throughout the years charted the growth of the school and the surrounding community. Included in the documents on display were notes where parents gave permission for their child to get the cane! What an indication of how much has changed over the seventy years of Windale Public School's operations. The seventieth anniversary celebrations included special merchandise, such as canvas bags, pens, mugs and lanyards commemorating the milestone. My thanks to Windale Public principal Craig Atkins and his team for putting on a fantastic anniversary. The Windale Public team has fostered such a beautiful sense of community. Here's to the staff, students and community of Windale Public, past, present and future, and to many more years of educating the local community!

ANN-MARIA MARTIN OF SURVIVOR'S R US

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Ann-Maria Martin is a beacon of light and support for people across Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Lower Hunter who are looking for support as they flee from domestic and family violence, face homelessness or struggle with unemployment. Ann-Maria has been mentioned in this place before, and her work as the founder and leader of Survivor's R Us, a fantastic locally-based non-profit, is well-known in the Charlestown electorate and beyond. I would like to acknowledge Ann-Maria's recent recognition as part of the 2023 Westfield Local Hero program. She was a finalist in the program, sharing in the 126 grants awarded across Australia and New Zealand. Ann-Maria was awarded a \$5,000 grant to assist Survivor's R Us in its important mission, delivering free psychosocial counselling and free meals to those most in need, as well as operating The Pantry discount store and an op-shop. Congratulations, Ann-Maria, on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you once again for all the important work you and your team do for so many.

SIXTY YEARS OF WHITEBRIDGE HIGH

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—As locals had their say in the referendum at Whitebridge High on Saturday 14 October, the school hosted a Community Market Day to celebrate sixty years of educating the community. The Community Market Day welcomed Charlestown Electorate residents to reminisce, with memorabilia from the past and photo displays were set up to show how the school has evolved since it was opened in 1963. The coffee started flowing at 8am as early-bird voters and interested locals first began to arrive, with BBQ bacon and egg rolls, sausage sandwiches and cold drinks also available. The well-loved WHS food truck was also there, serving hot drinks and homemade slices. Whitebridge High is a great local school, which has given so much to the community over the last sixty years and I'm glad they were able to celebrate this important anniversary with the community. My thanks to Whitebridge High principal Nadene Harvey and her team for putting on a fantastic anniversary. Here's to the staff, students and community of Whitebridge High, past, present and future, and to many more years of educating the local community!

JJ PERFORMANCE SMASH REPAIRS: BARGO'S AWARD-WINNING EXCELLENCE

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Last month marked a milestone for JJ Performance Smash Repairs in Bargo, as they won the inaugural Champion Automotive Smash Repairs award at the 2023 Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards. Jason Legg, the company's director, proudly accepted the customised trophy and certificate at the Western Sydney Conference Centre event. With 34 years in business, the award is more than just a trophy; it's a recognition of persistent quality and community service. Remaining a family-run business, JJ Performance focuses on safety and quality over mass production, setting it apart from larger competitors. Jason Legg's vision is not just business-centric; it's community-centric. The company supports local charities and sports teams, showcasing that being smaller can sometimes mean being closer to the community's heart. The awards had 1,000 entries, yet JJ Performance stood out. The honour echoes the resilience of small businesses in tough times and serves as an encouragement for future apprentices in the field of auto mechanics. This win solidifies the company's position as not just a local service provider but a nationally-recognised industry leader, committed to both their craft and their community.

CELEBRATING CODY HASLER: A RISING STAR IN SPRINTING

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I recognise the exceptional talent of Cody Hasler, a year 11 student from Picton High School, who has made an indelible mark on the field of athletics. Cody is a back-to-back double champion in sprinting at the NSW All School Championships, winning the 100-metre and 200-metre races the past two years. His performance at Sydney Olympic Park was remarkable, clocking a personal best of 21.50 seconds in the 200m sprint. Cody's journey is one of dedication and sacrifice. Only two years ago, Cody decided to take running seriously, and his commitment has been unwavering ever since. Coached by Project Elite Track Squad's Rob Marks, Cody's routine includes rigorous training three days on the track and two or three gym days a week. His meticulous approach extends to fueling, consistent training, and appropriate rest and recovery, proving that champions are not just born but made. Cody's aspirations reach beyond the track, he aims to represent Australia and is concurrently pursuing Cert III and IV to further his studies in sports coaching. Well done Cody, not just for your athletic prowess but also for your commitment to excellence in every facet in life.

HONOURING WOLLONDILLY AND SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS DISTRICT RFS VOLUNTEERS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Today, I wish to shine a spotlight on the selfless volunteers of the Rural Fire Service in the Wollondilly and Southern Highlands districts. Recently, a ceremony was held at Mittagong RSL, awarding fifty-one medals to these extraordinary individuals for their dedication to community safety. I'd like to particularly acknowledge Michael Course from Balmoral RFS Brigade for his remarkable sixty-two years of service. He received both Long Service and National medals, a testament to his enduring commitment. Four other volunteers were honoured with the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal and British Columbia II Clasp for their efforts in Canada in 2017. This occasion also marked the handover of new fire tankers for Buxton and Yerrinbool RFS brigades, as well as four logistical supply vehicles. Valued at more than \$650,000, the new additions will replace older models, bolstering emergency response capabilities. Operational Officer Gary Hansen aptly noted, "Tonight is also an opportunity to say thank you to the family, friends, employers, and colleagues of all our members." It indeed takes a village to support these volunteers. May this recognition serve as a small token of our immense gratitude for their sacrifice and dedication.

TUGGERAH LAKES POLICE DISTRICT

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)—Tuggerah Lakes Police District acknowledge a police officer each month for their outstanding contribution to the workplace and broader community. District Commander Superintendent Chad Gillies presented September Champion of the Month to Senior Constable Christopher Houston. Constable Houston has been recognised for high quality of work, solid performer on general duties and submits intelligence reports and leading his career path into more diverse skills and knowledge. Being a police officer is very awarding and challenging at the same time, protecting our community day in and day out. Congratulations Senior Constable Christopher Houston for this outstanding acknowledgement.

COASTAL TOWNS BUSINESS CHAMBER

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)—Coastal Towns Business Chamber are recognised for Outstanding Local Business Chamber in the 2023 Business NSW Central Coast Awards. The not-for-profit organisation is located upper Central Coast to empower, connect and support the business community to shape a better Central Coast. Local businesses are welcome to attend chamber events organised throughout the year, engage with other businesspeople, chamber members can connect, learn from industry leaders and raise their profile. Congratulations to President Julie Watson and members with an amazing outcome to share with the community.

JAKE FITZPATRICK

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)—Central Coast Rugby League grand final winners Toukley Hawks recently announced Jake Fitzpatrick Coach of the Year within the Toukley Hawks Club. Jake began playing for Toukley Hawks at age 4 in 1996 and has a lifelong passion for the club. Throughout Jake's years of playing Rugby League, he has captained Toukley Hawks in 10/1s and 11/1s, made his top-grade debut for the Mark Burns coaching Toukley Hawks in 2009, Toukley Hawks halfback at age 17 kicking sideline conversions to win games, captained the Central Coast Gosford Storm as a junior, played for Canterbury Bulldogs NYC, Ron Massey Cup with The Entrance Tigers and Country NSW tour to Samoa and 100th First Grade game for Toukley Hawks in 2022. Jake has previously been awarded Mod Player of the Year, Player with most Potential, 2014 Premiership and 2016 Club Player of the Year.

Congratulations to Jake Fitzpatrick for being recognised for your determination and talent within in the Toukley Hawks Club. I wish you all the best in your sporting adventures.

DR GRAEME DAVEY RETIRES AFTER 45 YEARS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Dr Graeme Davey of Albury who has decided to retire, after 45 years of dedication and unwavering commitment, whilst serving our Border community in healthcare. As I reflect on Dr Davey's journey as a GP and a trained obstetrician, I am reminded of his humble beginnings. In his early days of practice, doctors were few in numbers on the border. Faced with the challenges of a growing community, he was working 70 hours a week to provide healthcare. Time and again he demonstrated outstanding care and compassion to his patients. In 1978, after extensive travels, Dr Davey joined the Dean Street Medical Group. In his career he delivered over 2,000 babies including his own daughter. Dr Davey also played a pivotal role in the growth of the Gardens Medical Group which truly raised the bar for healthcare infrastructure on the border. Dr Davey - your commitment to your colleagues and to the community has been truly life changing for so many. I look forward to your continued impact as a mentor to young doctors and wish you a retirement filled with new adventures.

INTEREACH ALBURY CELEBRATES HALF A CENTURY OF SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to extend my congratulations to Intereach Albury - a remarkable Border community support agency who have reached a milestone of 50 years. Intereach focuses on outreach services, aiming to bring support directly to those who need it most. The support agency assists those with disabilities, reaching out to our elderly community, offering assistance to families, promoting mental health and nurturing First Nations communities. The organisation also provides vital services such as community transport and Meals on Wheels. The Albury team consists of over 50 staff, and I would like to make special mention of Alex Novak who is the Family and Mental Health Program Manager, Emily Price the Learning and Development Co-ordinator, and Sue Beddowes the Local Area Co-ordinator who helped organise a stall at the Albury Library Museum on Friday 1 September 2023 in celebration of serving the community the last 50 years. I thank the staff of Intereach Albury for their tireless efforts and commitment to our community through service and support.

SHE SHED CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to extend my congratulations to The Corowa and District SHE Shed, for creating a haven for women seeking creativity, practical skills, togetherness, and simply a place where lasting friendships are forged. The SHE Shed was officially opened 16 September 2023. What began as a humble vision in 2017 has since flourished into a thriving community hub. Women of all ages enjoy meeting at the shed to learn an array of practical skills, from metalwork and woodwork to mosaics. The driving force behind this very special community initiative is President Marea Drayton. My appreciation also extends to founder, Rosemary Evans and her husband Donald who generously donated part of their workshop and laid the foundation for the SHE shed experience. I celebrate the opening of the SHE shed and the community of Corowa and District united in skill, creativity and friendship.

TWEED HEADS CROQUET BRYAN AND PAM SHAW

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.

A BLAZE IN THE BUSH

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Kathleen Luyckx from Port Macquarie and congratulate her on her first published book titled 'A Blaze in the Bush' which aims to raise awareness amongst children concerning the dangers of bushfires and the impacts on our environment and human lives. Kathleen Luyckx is a preschool teacher and author, with a passion for educating young children through story-telling and imagery on difficult topics. The first-time author remembers the devastating impacts of bushfire which devastated our communities in November 2019. The smell of smoke and the recent dry weather has prompted Kathleen to compose a children's book for three-eight year olds, which focusses on the causes of bushfire, how to manage a fire and nature's ability to revive itself. To create 'A Blaze in the Bush' Kathleen sought permission from the Port

Macquarie Koala Hospital to reference information obtained by the volunteers who undertook a massive operation providing aid to our injured koala's. Kathleen also received approval from the family to ascribe the main character after Julie Fletcher who was tragically a victim of the 2019 summer bushfires. Congratulate Kathleen on the publication and I wish her every success in the future.

SAM YOUNG

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Hastings Valley Viking Sam Young on his recent selection in the Under 15's NSW Samoan Rugby Union team. Early this month, Year 9 student Sam competed in Sydney for selection in the Pacifica Youth Rugby Union Cup to be held from 24th to 26th November 2023 at Whalan Reserve. Unsurprisingly, the weekend was a huge success for Sam as his natural talents impressed the selection panel to secure him a position in the Under 15s NSW Samoan Rugby Union side. Sam is described as an energetic scrum half who consistently displays great motivation, skills and toughness every time he steps foot on the field. Sam can make a play come to life through his hard-line defence and superior ball-handling skills making him an invaluable asset and formidable player for the Samoan's. Sam is another product of our local Hastings Valley Vikings Rugby Union Club who continue to churn out the next football sensations of the game. Our community is so proud of Sam's achievements. His commitment and determination to improving his game have ensured selection to play on an international level. Congratulations and best wishes for the upcoming tournament with the Pacific nations.

ABEL JAMES JONES – WOLLONGONG ART GALLERY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise today to recognise the talented achievements of Hastings Secondary College student Abel Jones who achieved a third placing at the prestigious Wollongong Art Gallery Photography Competition announced on Monday 9th October 2023. Wollongong Art Gallery's annual, statewide competition offers students from Years 3-12 the opportunity to submit an original, thought-provoking photography image that depicts a storyline based on a new theme announced each year. Year 10 student Abel James was successful with his entry titled "In The Infinite Room" which portrayed a reflection of a young person in a small room, bravely looking up into a light. The young person's image was reflecting from a full-length mirror in keeping with the theme – "Reflection". Students were asked to consider how the theme interpreted; 1. An instance of reflecting, especially the return of light from a surface. The production of an image by or as if by a mirror. 2. Serious thought or consideration. A bright young man with an amazing gift of capturing a striking images through the camera lens, I congratulate Abel on achieving third in his age group and wish him all the success for future competitions.

NARROMINE AVIATION MUSEUM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to congratulate Narromine Aviation Museum for their newly unveiled Memorial Wall. From May 1940 to May 1944, 2,850 pilots went through the RAAF No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School at the Narromine Aerodrome – over 20% of all pilots trained in Australia during that period. This memorial wall is a moving tribute to the region's military history, and the finished product is truly a superb recognition of all those pilots who trained in Narromine. Constructed using old English-style red bricks and standing 1m high, the wall showcases 38 plaques, honouring all 2,850 pilots who trained at the Flying Training School, including 16 who died during training, and about 780 pilots who served but never returned home. For a region that is still internationally renowned for its fantastic thermals and is widely considered one of the top three locations in the world for gliding, this Memorial wall is an incredible way to educate both locals and visitors on the rich history of aviation in Narromine and pay tribute to all of those who served. Congratulations again Narromine Aviation Museum. You should be immensely proud of this achievement.

F45 LEADER LIFE FUNDRAISER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to congratulate Jed Hardiman for his fundraising efforts for local organisation Leader Life and shining a light on the important connection between exercise and mental health. Jed owns the Dubbo F45 gym which recently hit the milestone of 5 years in business, so to celebrate, he and his team decided to mark the event with a fundraiser for another local organisation. Leader Life delivers diversionary and therapeutic programs to children, young males, and young adults, helping them build life skills, find work, and navigate early adult life. Volunteering once a week and sharing his knowledge with young people via Leader Life's programs, Jed decided he could make even more of a difference and engage the incredible community he has built through F45. On Sunday the 15th of October, gym members, family and friends put muscle and heart rates on the line with meters for dollars, followed by an afternoon of auctions and raffles. Well over 200 people supported the event and helped raise over \$14,000. Well done Team F45! What a massive way to celebrate 5 years!

INTERNATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to recognise the work of the National Association for Loss and Grief [NALAG] Dubbo and the remembrance service they hosted for International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. Observed on the 15th October, the day is dedicated to honouring and remembering the little lives that were taken too soon, as well as providing support and comfort to those who have been affected by such a loss. The remembrance service involved lighting candles and participating in the International Wave of Light, where candles are lit around the world, a symbolic way to honour the babies who have passed away. Anyone experiencing the loss of a baby or pregnancy was invited to choose a special stone and arrange to have it engraved to be placed in the NALAG Baby's Remembrance Garden. The garden provides a peaceful and dedicated space where people can reflect, remember, and find solace as they come to terms with their loss. Initiatives like International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day are essential in raising awareness, reducing the stigma surrounding infant loss, and ensuring that families receive the support and compassion they need during one of the most difficult times in their lives.

HELEN HUGHES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Helen Hughes has made an enormous contribution to the hospitality industry in Maitland. For many years Helen has held a teaching leadership role at the TAFE Hunter Valley Hotel Academy. Over the last 25 years Helen has taught front-of-house students and apprentice chefs who have gone on to make their mark in the industry, both locally and across the globe. Helen's students have often come from disadvantaged, migrant, and refugee backgrounds. Many of them have begun their careers in hospitality at entry level and the skills they have gained have allowed them to work their way up in the industry. With a passion for good food & service Helen has been involved in supporting both hospitality and tourism in the Maitland region. Helen has recently taken on the role of assistant leader of the Slow Foods Hunter Valley Team. Helen can be found delivering cooking demonstrations at Maitland Taste, Maitland Riverlights and as an organiser for the Tocal Field Days teaching us how to use those foods that lurks at the bottom of the fridge vegetable crisper. A champion for sustainability and education I recognise Helen for her contribution to the Maitland region.

ST JOHN'S AMBULANCE MAITLAND DIVISION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I wish to acknowledge the volunteers at St John's Ambulance Maitland Division for their compassion and assistance to those in our community who need help. The Division has 21 adult members and 12 Cadets, and have collectively contributed more than 2325 volunteer hours in the field over the last year, not including the countless hours of administration required to keep the division running. Maitland holds so many fabulous events requiring the assistance of the St John's team. Some prominent events they have assisted with this year include Aroma Fest, Steam Fest and the Riverlights Multicultural Festival. In addition, they provide training for community groups to help them be better prepared for an emergency. Members Giverny Chomiszak and Ted Richards recently spent 4 days providing onsite First Aid to the RFS at Mudgee for a Section 44 fire deployment. The Division volunteers work together to help others and have a positive impact in the community and along the way they have become a tight knit crew. My most heartfelt thanks to the St John's Ambulance Maitland Division for their contribution to the community of Maitland.

ST BEDE'S TECHGIRLS TEAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to St Bede's Catholic College, Chisholm, year nine students Ariana Weddell, Isabella Frazer-Mesic, Paige Pannowitz and Ainsley Griffin, who have been named winners in the recent national Techgirls competition. The girls spent 12 weeks developing an original app Hydr8, in response to the challenge of solving a worldwide problem, the aims to improve access to clean drinking water. The app uses location data to inform users where bubblers or hydration stations are on their walking route, and if there are none it will suggest an alternate path. The girls designed, wrote and coded the app themselves. They created a budget, a business plan and pitch video to go alongside their submission, all great skills to learn. Congratulations to science teacher Rebecca Haines who coordinated the school's participation in the competition which is designed for girls from seven to 17-years-old. The team divided tasks with Ariana and Isabella on design and colours, Paige was on app development, using the app development platform Thinkable to code and build Hydr8. It is great to see Maitland girls achieving in STEM competitions on the national stage, congratulations to all involved.

COUNCILLOR TIM ELSTONE OF WENTWORTH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Councillor Tim Elstone of Wentworth. Tim Elstone has been a Councillor with Wentworth Shire Council for seven years, having

served for five years as Deputy Mayor and two as Mayor. His contribution to the community and Shire area representing approximately 8,000 persons in an area of some 26,000 square kilometres has had its many challenges. In the far-west of the state, he worked alongside with locals during drought, rains, flooding of both the Murray and Darling Rivers and add Covid-19 in the mix, his past few years have 'dished out' enormous challenges. I thank Tim for his community engagement, as an inaugural committee member of the Community Bank, supporter of football and cricket clubs and a local real estate agent, his community participation and spirit towards resolving the many issues is valued.

AWS YANCO

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Mister Speaker, Today I would like to congratulate Yanco's Country Women's Association for their contribution to the recording of Yanco's history. The publication 'Yanco CWA, Recipes, Stories, History.' was conceived to commemorate the Country Women's Associations centenary in 2022. The initial concept of a recipes book, then expanded to include stories of history ensuring key happenings of Yanco's past is forever recorded. Ambitious, kind-hearted, and generous individuals encompass the CWA organisation. I value and appreciate your continued community involvement and, on this occasion, your contribution to recording Yanco's history.

ST LUKE'S PARISH FEAST DAY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—On Sunday, 15 October I attended St Luke's Catholic Church's 74th Annual Parish Feast Day in Revesby. I attended the morning mass followed by celebrations that continued with a great feast with song, food stalls, and fun activities for the kids, including a scavenger hunt and raffle. I spoke on the value of serving, through our actions, as we strive to live out the principles of love, compassion, and understanding in our community. My sincere thanks to everyone who attended the event, event organisers and the volunteers who helped make it such an enjoyable occasion. I also congratulate the young children who participated in the special service. I thank local business Richardson and Wrench, Padstow for sponsoring the event and setting up a delicious candy bar and slushie station, which I know the kids very much appreciated. I'd like to acknowledge some of the other distinguished guests who attended including Daryl Melham, parishioner and President of the Revesby Workers Club and Nancy Edmonds, St Luke's oldest parishioner at 102 years old. Finally, thank you to Father Dariusz Basiaga for inviting me to help celebrate this wonderful community event.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENT- THE ART OF MENTORSHIP

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the recent Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce [CBCC] Business After 5 event, 'The Art of Mentorship', and the efforts of Canterbury Bankstown Council, and Western Sydney University, in bringing this event to our vibrant community. The CBCC is a pioneering organisation and has played a significant role in fostering the growth and development of businesses in Canterbury Bankstown. Their commitment to creating opportunities and sharing knowledge has undoubtedly contributed to the prosperity of our business community. I am immensely grateful for the invaluable platform that the CBCC provides. 'The Art of Mentorship' event, that I was fortunate enough to attend on 21 August, was an informative event and provided many opportunities for community members to engage with each other and share their knowledge. To all those who have contributed to the success of the CBCC and this event, I thank you for your hard work. I'd like to recognise Wally Mehanna for his tireless efforts in promoting growth and success in the Canterbury Bankstown business community. I look forward to attending more CBCC events.

MILPERRA NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I extend my deepest recognition and appreciation to the Milperra Neighbourhood Watch for their unwavering commitment to making our neighbourhood a safer and more secure place to call home. The Milperra Neighbourhood Watch has long been the vigilant guardian of our community. Their dedication to fostering unity, vigilance, and communication among our residents has not only strengthened connections between community members but has also served as a powerful deterrent and action against potential threats. The Milperra Neighbourhood Watch keeps locals informed with their monthly newsletters, and their Facebook Group which continues to be a place to share knowledge and help people out in the community. I have witnessed firsthand how their work has had a positive impact on the safety and security of our streets, parks, and homes. Their presence is a source of reassurance and a testament to the power of individuals coming together for the greater good. I am incredibly grateful to every member of the Milperra Neighbourhood Watch for their selfless dedication and for creating an environment where residents can thrive without fear.

GRANVILLE DISTRICT SOCCER AND FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Australian soccer at the grassroots level is improving with every season thanks to the continued efforts of local soccer clubs and associations. Granville and District Soccer Football

Association is Australia's oldest Soccer Football Association representing twenty five Clubs. The association has governed the play between clubs within the Parramatta and Granville Districts since 1900. I had the honour of presenting awards for Granville & District Soccer Football Association's most talented players at the annual awards night on September 28. Congratulations to: Male player of the year – Jordan Hassiem; Male Golden Boot – Bailey Togiavalu; Female Golden Boot and Female player of the year – Sarah Bernard; The exceptional talent that these players displayed on the football pitch will provide them with the confidence, belief and capability to advance their skills in higher levels of future competitions. Perhaps, we may see these names on the backs of Socceroos' and Matildas' jerseys one day. Together with the support of the City of Parramatta and Cumberland City Council, the Granville District Soccer and Football Association continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of Australia's football stars.

BIANCA LUBKE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge Bianca Lubke who has been recognised for her work in founding and creating the 'Alphabet Soup Youth Group' in Wagga Wagga. The youth group was created by Miss Lubke in 2021 and began regular face to face meetings at the start of 2022 at a local café. She founded the group to create a safe space for LGBTQIA+ high school students, with the group helping these students make friends with likeminded people. Bianca has recently been named as an 'Out for Australia' 30 under 30 winner as well as being awarded the Regional Legend award. These awards recognise 30 outstanding individuals under the age of 30 for their contributions to the LGBTQIA+ community and the qualities they exhibit as inspirational role models. Bianca has been specifically recognised for her work in the Wagga Wagga region with the youth group as well as being an advocate for LGBT youth spaces and improving the lives of regional LGBTWIA+ youth. Congratulations to Bianca for her work in founding the Alphabet Soup Youth group and providing a space to support these young people. Her recognition by Out for Australia is well deserved.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Together with Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is a cultural highlight of the year for Willoughby's Chinese community. The Festival is traditionally an evening celebration where families gather together to light lanterns, eat moon cakes and appreciate the round moon. The full moon is a symbol for family reunion, which is why that day is also known as the Festival of Reunion. In my community of Willoughby, the Festival was marked by several events including a Mandarin language learning day and mooncake afternoon tea at Chatswood library, and a Moon Festival Dinner that I attended on 21 September. Joining my state parliamentary colleague, Matt Cross MP, and my Federal colleague, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, at the King Dynasty Restaurant in Chatswood, the Moon Festival Dinner was a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate the special significance of this festival. I thank Michelle Lam for organising such a great evening of celebration with Willoughby's Chinese community.

WORLD SIGHT DAY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I was pleased to mark World Sight Day on Thursday 12 October to raise public awareness of eye health and vision care. This global initiative this year encouraged employers to make eye health initiatives standard practice and to promote eye health to benefit the well-being, safety and productivity of all. I thank Vision 2020 Australia and Guide Dogs Australia NSW/ACT for joining us in NSW Parliament House to raise awareness for this important cause and to celebrate the establishment of the Parliamentary Friends of Eye Health. Vision 2020 Australia is the national peak body for eye health, and I whole-heartedly share its mission to eliminate preventable vision loss, and to promote the full participation of people who are blind or visually impaired. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, based in St Leonards, is critical to achieving this goal by providing highly-trained assistance dogs to people with a visual impairment. Eye health is a cause close to my heart and I am proud to be co-Chair of the group dedicated to improving eye health and vision care.

CROWS NEST FEST

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—A highlight on the local calendar, the Crows Nest Fest on Sunday 15 October brought together 30,000 attendees and more than 150 stalls on a glorious spring day filled with tantalising food, live entertainment and family-friendly activities. Highlights of the 2023 festival included a petting zoo, pony rides, a licensed zone with boutique marquees and the ever-popular food alley offering delicious culinary delights. Festival goers of all ages were kept amused by street entertainers, musicians and a circus featuring juggling toys, stilts, unicycles and spinning tops. I was once again delighted to host a stall. The success of the Crows Nest Fest was a tribute to the community spirit of Crows Nest locals who turned out in droves to savour everything on offer. I would like to thank Crows Nest Mainstreet, organisers, stallholders, entertainers, performers and local businesses for their wonderful contribution to a great day of fun and festivity.

SARAH SMITH – ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Local Girl Guides Senior Member Sarah Smith who hosted a high tea in Wagga Wagga last weekend to raise funds and awareness for Endometriosis Australia and to highlight the lack of support for patients with this condition in the health system especially in regional areas. Sarah herself has been diagnosed with endometriosis and has had to seek a private practitioner to be diagnosed and then travel to Sydney for treatment. Sarah's own experience with the systemic issues led her to hold this event at the local Girl Guides Hall in Wagga Wagga. She hopes that by holding this event a local endometriosis hub can be created in Wagga so that local residents are no longer required to drive to Canberra or elsewhere for this service. I was delighted to be able to attend this fundraising event over the past weekend. Well done to Sarah for her efforts to raise awareness and fundraise for endometriosis Australia and for her work in the Girl Guides movement over many years. I commend her on the leadership she has shown.

WARRANT OFFICER LOUIS DEBONO

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge Warrant Officer Louis Debono who has been a long time Wagga Wagga Airforce Officer. He has just been recognised for 50 years of service with the Airforce and was awarded the Third Federation Star for this milestone of service. His father strongly encouraged him to join the Airforce rather than the army as a teenager and Mr Debono is grateful with the choice he made. According to the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, he trained and worked in Adelaide, Sale, Perth and Canberra before settling in Wagga Wagga where he has stayed for the past 32 years. Mr Debono retired seven years ago but has remained at the Wagga RAAF base as a reservist. He also spends his time at the RAAF Wagga Aviation Heritage Centre where he is second in charge. In this role he regularly meets former servicemen along with people from the community who are interested in the history of the Wagga RAAF. Congratulations on this special honour and thank you for your many years of service with the Royal Australian Airforce Warrant Officer Louis Debono.

RECOGNITION OF DARIUS NAYLOR

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Walcha Central School student Darius Naylor for his impressive achievement in the University of New England School Acquisitive Art Prize. Darius was runner-up in the Senior Secondary section of the competition, with his acrylic artwork titled 'My Story.' I congratulate Darius on taking the opportunity and the challenge. Darius' artwork was among 500 pieces from students aged between 5 – 18 years, across 50 rural and regional NSW schools. I commend all involved in the competition, including the panel of judges, the various schools, the University of New England in conjunction with New England Regional Art Museum, for staging this event and supporting the young artists of tomorrow.

BUNGONIA RFS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the NSW Rural Fires Services [RFS] Get Ready Weekend held by the Bungonia Brigade. The bush fire danger period is here and has already seen some communities within NSW and other States hit with devastating ferocity. The NSW RFS Get Ready Weekends see local brigades open their doors to the community to provide a range of activities for children, demonstrations, workshops, as well as sharing and providing information of how to prepare yourself, family, and property from the threat of fire. With warnings of increased fire risk this season, it is essential that our communities understand their environmental surroundings, fire behaviour, understand and know their risks and how to prepare and develop their fire plans. I had the pleasure of attending the Bungonia RFS Brigade, where I was able to discuss the fire threats that we may face through the coming months and see first hand the informative and educative role that they have taken within the community. I sincerely and thankfully acknowledge the work of the RFS Brigades. Our communities are fortunate to have the support, assistance, and fortitude of excellent RFS members.

YAN LANDCARE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Yass Area Network Landcare and the Climate Ready Revegetation [CRR] Project which has been undertaken by a small team, most of whom are volunteers from across the Yass Area Network Landcare group. The project aims to enhance the genetic diversity of selected native plant species, which is understood to assist species to adapt to climate change through natural selection over generations. The project commenced in 2018, seeing analysis of the future climate tolerance of more than eighty species and guiding the sourcing of seed for the Yass area. Germination testing, with thousands of tubestock from seed, using an 'admixture provenance strategy', that combines seed from both local and non-local plant populations. In collaboration and with support from local landholders and volunteers, 1,729 tubestock have been fenced, planted, and continue to be monitored, in a trial planting exercise. Further collaborative and educative work was undertaken with local landholders regarding seed collection and with Landcare nursery managers to refine and standardise nursery practices and adopt use of admix seeds.

I congratulate the work of all team members and look forward to learning about the successful project outcomes in the future.

MR ROY JAMES ALEXANDER

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the late Mr Roy James Alexander. Mr Alexander took on a variety of roles in his working life. After leaving school began a career in infrastructure, seeing the demolition of old roads and the construction of new roads, across NSW. Always willing and able to learn new skills, Mr Alexander went on to work as a mechanic and then found a new lease of working life as a landscaper, an area that he excelled in. Mr Alexander became highly regarded for his work as a landscaper, seeing his works across Canberra. Mr Alexander was also known to have an array of interesting stories to tell and a wonderful sense of humour. He was able to engage openly and respectfully with a broad range of people and personalities, ranging from dignitaries visiting to those working on the ground. Continuing his thirst for learning new skills he entered the building industry, named the Chief Superintendent at New Parliament House, assisting to shape Lake Burley Griffin. Mr Alexander's indelible work ethic is to be congratulated and his work with the Theiss Brothers saw his zest for work and life. Vale Mr Alexander.

GUYRA TROUT-FEST

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Guyra Trout-Fest committee and volunteers for staging an outstanding weekend of activities for the annual festival held recently. The event celebrated the commencement of the trout season, along with all that is on offer in the Guyra district to locals and visitors alike. I congratulate the committee for coordinating the many events, including: trout fishing, market stalls, an art exhibition, paint and sip afternoon, country music entertainment, karaoke, poet's competition, window competition, Rotary Club book fair, vintage car exhibition, historical machinery display, heritage train rides and tomato farm tours. Special thanks to the committee members: President Dot Vickery; Treasurer Jenny Cummings; Secretary and Marketing Coordinator Michelle Murray; Marketing Coordinator Michelle Stanley; Art Co-ordinator Lyn Chapman; James Warren Poetry Coordinator and Design; along with members Robin Godlinton and Brian McDonald, each working tirelessly behind the scenes. I commend all those involved in the successful weekend - events such as this in regional towns, cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment their volunteers give.

PORT HACKING LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre which recently kicked off its 46th season of competition on 7 October 2023. Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre encourages children aged 5 to 17 to participate in athletics and improve their skills, forging lifelong friendships along the way. This was on full display on 7 October, when many of the Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre's registered competitors along with their families and friends gathered at the Sylvania Waters Athletics Track to mark the beginning of the competition season. The day included a full program of activities and an opening ceremony in which I was please to participate. I take this opportunity to commend the hard-working volunteers behind the Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre. I recognise executive committee members Matt Cook, Trevor Orsaris, Phil Turpin, Sharon Potts, Cameron Burne, Nicole Orsaris, Leni Vilivli, Ray Russell, Matt Jupp, Ozkan Eren, Pete Galanopoulos, Sonia Lewis, Annette Kersselring and Melissa Mullin for their efforts. Grassroot sporting organisations like the Port Hacking Little Athletics Club are an important part of our local community and I extend my best wishes for the 46th season.

SYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Sylvania 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 2023, namely School Captains Thomas Gibson and Arsenia Gatziastras, Vice Captains Hannah Gibson and Chloe Myrianthis and the Prefects Tenisha Cola, Damijana Ralevski, Joycelyn Sibabiat-Rondon, Amaris Fotoulis, Flynn Porter, Calista Wong, Marcus Rezitis and Isaiah Noonan. With the guidance of their Principal Renée Holz, 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 Sylvania High School's motto of 'Scholarship, Honour, Service'.

MIRANDA MAGPIES FOOTBALL CLUB W12 TEAMS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the Miranda Magpies Football Club on being named Sutherland Shire Football Association's 2023 Junior Women's Champion Club. The Magpies have seen many successes in women's football and have developed a reputation for being our local leader in this space. It is little wonder that the 2023 season saw four of their junior women's teams finish as Premiers, namely the W12B, W12C, W14B and W14C teams. Such success would not have been possible without the talent and dedication of the incredible players. I recognise the Magpies W12B team of Olivia Bolling, Chloe Casaceli, Poppy Clark, Marlee Davenport-Smith, Lily Ernest, Ella Gardiner, Kayla Hill, Scarlett Kordovolos, Olivia Middleton, Allira O'Connor, Neva Spence, Isla Vilivili, Lilly Walker, Jordyn Webb, Sophie Wheatley, Manager Rochelle O'Connor and coaches Craig Smith and Adam Webb. I also acknowledge the W12C team of Caitlin Chew, Taylor Defries, Isabella Egulian, Maya Gallagher, Elsa Georges, Phoebe Hunt, Summer King, Claire Markellos, Evie Moody, Taylah Namroud, Alexandra Pont, Nellie Schembri, Willow Tennant, Ava Weatherburn, Mia Wettengel, Manager Carl Tennant and Coach Scarlett Tennant. I commend the Miranda Magpies Football Club for fostering a love of football amongst our local women.

RECOGNITION OF GWYDIR INDUSTRIES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Moree's Gwydir Industries for the valuable and meaningful work offered to adults with a disability, through supported employment and providing an opportunity for members to give back to the community. I congratulate Gwydir Industries on their fundraising evening, Cocktails for a Cause - by all accounts it was wonderful. I thank the team at Gwydir Industries led by Antoinette McNamara for their hard work in staging the event. Special thanks to Moree Real Estate for holding an online auction and the Town and Country Club for providing an exceptional venue. Thank you to the Board for driving this event: President Bill Crawford, Vice Presidents Peter Burey and Hugh Ball, Secretary Bethelle Picone, Treasurer Jodie Crowe, along with members: Greg Humphries, Jamelie Dudley-Smith, Toni Munroe, Paul Kelly, Scott Carrigan, Peter Weal, also Claude McGarry and life member Eric Carrigan. I commend all involved, for your commitment and enduring support to your members. Thank you also for your efforts to promote the longevity of the organization for its members, their families/carers, it is appreciated by the whole community.

SEASIDE SCAVENGE RETURNS TO BALMORAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—There is no better way to take an active part in coastal conservation and community collaboration than the Seaside Scavenge at Balmoral run by Take 3 for the Sea. They are an organisation that is determined to ensure that our marine environments remain pristine with a simple message of taking three pieces of rubbish with you whenever you leave the beach, waterway, or anywhere that can make a difference. So what is the Seaside Scavenge? It is a waste education event where every bit of rubbish and litter that is collected becomes currency to use at a pop up market where you can purchase second hand clothes and items donated by the community. This year it returns to Balmoral as part of the Festival of Mosman that is finally returning to our local community after a few years hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I want to acknowledge the incredible work that Take 3 for the Sea do in ensuring our marine environments remain pristine and for educating our local community on the importance of protecting our oceans from plastic pollution.

LIVING FUTURES SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—The Coal Loader in Waverton will once again play host to the Living Futures Sustainability Festival this October, with a full day of activities aimed at securing a more sustainable future. Locals will be able to learn how the smallest of changes can leave a big impact on your health, budget and the planet. The event is being run in partnership with North Sydney Council and media star and avid gardener Costa Georgiadis is excitingly one of this year's festival ambassadors. You will be able to attend cooking demonstrations by OzHarvest and the Sustainable Food Kitchen, browse clothing swaps, and attend a range of talks on topics including the top five ways to achieve net zero, how to achieve an all-electric home to reduce your bills, and sustainable tips and tricks for the whole family. These events are fantastic in providing information and advice for families and individuals to take the next step in leading a more sustainable life, because every little bit helps. I look forward to joining our local community in beautiful Waverton at the Living Futures Sustainability Festival.

SHADOW MINISTRY AFTERNOON TEA

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I would like to acknowledge those who attended the Afternoon Tea I hosted alongside Opposition Leader Mark Speakman SC MP at Liverpool RSL on 16 October 2023. The afternoon tea was attended by community and religious leaders, local stakeholders, and the shadow ministry. It was certainly an insightful afternoon, where I outlined my vision for the Sutherland Shire, Liverpool, and broader South-West Sydney to become a better and brighter place to live and raise a family. As Leader Mark Speakman

stated in his remarks, "We are not here to give you a political pitch, we are here to listen to you". This was a catalyst for stimulating conversations, ranging from small business red tape to religious and faith-based freedoms. It was a pleasure to introduce my parliamentary colleagues in the shadow ministry to Liverpool and I look forward to the next opportunity into the future.

FOODIE AND FARMERS MARKET MENAI

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Friday 13 October 2023 I attended the Foodie and Farmers Market at Parc Menai. With over 70 stalls ranging from face painting to healing crystals, everyone of all ages and interests had something to enjoy! There was also live music, a jumping castle, and multiple food stalls including dumplings, churros, slow cooked meats, gelato, and so much more. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Christina and Nic Chakos for their work, they have organised multiple foodie and farmers markets in Menai, Peakhurst and Bayside in the past. I look forward to attending the next one in Menai on 10 November 2023!

JOE PRIDE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Saturday 14 October 2023 Joe Pride became the first Warwick Farm trainer to win the Everest, the world's richest race on turf with his sprinter Think About It. This is a testament to Joe's exceptional horsemanship and the outstanding abilities of Think About his horse. Joe not only won the race but also had the third placed horse in Private Eye, a further testament to the dedication and skill of Joe and his team. The Everest, whilst a new race is fast becoming the pinnacle of Australian racing, brings together the best sprinters in the country. I would also like to make special mention of the other people behind the scenes of this remarkable victory. The trackwork rider and strapper of Think About It, Justin McIntosh, and the Trackwork rider for Private Eye, Michelle Read, and the strapper Jeffrey Purce. All the early mornings and hard work truly showed on Saturday. Once again congratulations to Joe and all the team, as they continue to race with pride.

LAKESIDE FISH MARKET

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge a true gem in the Narrabeen community, Lakeside Fish Market. For years, Lakeside Fish Market has served locals an array of delicious options, from fresh seafood to its famous tray of fish and chips. Lakeside Fish Market is a classic Aussie-style institution. Locals know that Lakeside Fish Market has the most friendly and efficient service around, offering only the best quality seafood as well as a great range of sides and salads. Beyond its culinary offerings, Lakeside Fish Market is also actively engaged with our local community. I thank Lakeside Fish Market for their sponsorship of the wonderful Narrabeen Football Club and dedication to supporting our local community. We extend our deepest appreciation to Lakeside Fish Market for being a true culinary and community treasure.

ROYAL MOTOR YACHT CLUB BROKEN BAY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge the Royal Motor Yacht Club Broken Bay ['RMYC'] for their longstanding contribution to and significance in the boating community of Pittwater. Situated on the beautiful waters of Pittwater, RMYC is widely recognised as one of Australia's premier Motor Yacht Clubs. RMYC's commitment to nurturing a love for boating, safety, and seamanship is evident in its diverse programs, training opportunities, and events. It has played an integral role in educating both seasoned boaters and those new to the world of motor yachting, instilling valuable skills and a deep appreciation of the water. Since opening in the 1920's, RMYC has undergone many changes, transforming from a small semi-rural establishment into the modern facility we know it to be today. Thank you to Commodore David Rogers, Vice Commodore Laurie Puddy, Rear Commodore Karen Robinson, Treasurer Tom Muir and Directors Phil Alchin, Peter Haig, Chris Lee, Greg Reid, and Andre Sekulich for your tireless efforts to foster such a welcoming atmosphere. Pittwater is fortunate to have such a wonderful community hub. I wish the Club all the best for their 97th Season and into the future.

JOHN FORBES

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I congratulate Bayview local, John Forbes on his induction into the NSW Sport Hall of Champions. John's journey through the world of catamaran sailing is nothing short of remarkable. From his early introduction to the sport at just 12 years old to his three World Championships and an Olympic Silver Medal, John's dedication, talent, and perseverance have been an inspiration to many. John's sailing career is a testament to his unwavering commitment to excellence. His success spans from regional championships to international titles, with a particular highlight being the 1998 World Championship victory in Buzios, Brazil, where he became the first Tornado sailor to win three world championships. Despite the ups and downs of Olympic selection criteria, John's determination never wavered, leading him and his partner, Darren Bundock, to a well-deserved Silver Medal at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Beyond his many accolades, John has also contributed significantly to our local sailing community at Palm Beach Sailing Club. Congratulations, John, on your

remarkable achievement. I am pleased that acknowledgement of your inspirational career is now preserved in the oldest parliament of our nation.

ALBION PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Albion Park High School students. Congratulations to Zach Keen and Keeley Nolan of Year 12 from Albion Park High School for receiving an Encore nomination after their Music HSC Exams. Encore recognises the exceptional major works created by HSC Music Students. If they are successful, they will be performing their HSC pieces at the Opera House in Sydney in February 2024. What an outstanding and distinguished achievement. Year 9 students from Albion Park High School also had a wonderful excursion on Friday 15th September 2023 to Sydney to the ANZAC Memorial Monument. Also a huge congratulations and well done to all of Albion Park High School's Year 12 'Class of 2023' which officially graduated on Thursday 21st September 2023 during a special school assembly. I would also like to acknowledge the Principal of Albion Park High School, Mr Neal Reed and acknowledge the wonderfully dedicated, hard-working and compassionate teachers, office staff, students and parents who all help to make Albion Park High School such a supportive and caring environment for its students to reach their full learning potential, who strive hard to achieve incredible results.

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises World Migratory Bird Day which was celebrated on 14th October 2023. This year, as local MP, I've been asked to join the Aussie Bird Count. The survey data enables us to track population changes and identify migratory trends. This then guides the development of actions to help save threatened native birds – including backyard birds like Silvereyes and Powerful Owls. The Illawarra Bird Observers Club are another organisation who lists location and numerous photos of the various birds that can be found in the Shoalhaven and Illawarra. The BirdLife Shoalhaven Branch has also created a list of common backyard birds from across the Shoalhaven and I acknowledge the President Rob Dunn, Vice President Phil Hendry, Secretary Brett Davis and Treasurer Karen Davis. Spring Creek Wetlands and Bird Hide in Kiama is a popular location between the lagoon and freshwater lake get a close-up view of waterbirds and common bush birds including cormorants, chicks, moorhens, mistletoe birds, coots, swans and other local species. Located just off the Spring Creek Wetlands walk, the path meanders through the restored wetlands through to the southern end of Bombo Beach.

BOMADERRY HIGH SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Bomaderry High School students Samuel K and Daniel M who are the 2023 recipients of The Berry Men's Shed Scholarship. They were both awarded \$600 to assist with their future education and career aspirations. Bomaderry High School would like to thank the Berry Men's Shed and the Berry Uniting Church for their contribution to the Berry Men's Shed Scholarship programme and for their continued support of its students. Thanks to Richard and Brett for coming to present these Awards. I would also like to acknowledge the Principal of Bomaderry High School, Mr Ian Morris, and the wonderful, hard-working, compassionate, and dedicated teachers, office staff, students and parents who make Bomaderry High School such a terrific place to learn and to reach your full potential as a student. A huge congratulations and well done to Samuel K and Daniel H from Bomaderry High School on this outstanding achievement. Bomaderry High School also recently held its Year 12 Graduation Assembly on Wednesday 20th September 2023 and I would like to wish every Bomaderry High School student all the very best with their future endeavours in the Shoalhaven.

WORLD SIGHT DAY 2023

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Thursday 12 October 2023, the Parliamentary Friends of Eye Health and Vision Care was launched on World Sight Day. It was an honour to join this parliamentary friendship group. This year's World Sight Day was themed 'Love your Eyes at Work'. It highlights the prioritisation of eye care in the workplace. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet leaders from the peak eye health organisation, Vision 20/20, as well as some very cute puppies from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. I am a strong believer in the importance of keeping health vision – and that prevention is key. I recognise the many optometrists and ophthalmologists in the Davidson electorate community, as well as the co-chairs of the group, the Member for Willoughby Tim James and the Member for Bega Dr Michael Holland. I do note the Member for Willoughby's keen interest in this space, as he spoke passionately in his inaugural speech about his experience as an 11-year-old being told by an eye doctor that he would go blind. I am glad he has his full vision. I encourage Davidson electorate residents to keep a check on their eye health at home and in the workplace.

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—Hungary hosted the 2023 World Athletics Championships from 19 to 27 August 2023. Proudly, three Davidson electorate constituents proudly represented Australia. These included: Dr Mackenzie Little, a Tokyo Olympian, won her first World Athletics Championships medal by placing third in Javelin. Whilst competing at an international level, Mackenzie has recently graduated from the University of Sydney Medical School – a remarkable achievement in isolation. Cameron McEntyre, who started athletics at Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics was selected for his 5th Australian team placed 19th in the Javelin. Jacob McCorry, an Alumni of Barker College placed 28th in the 110m hurdles during his senior team debut. He previously after previously representing represented Australia at the World Junior Championships and World University Games. Mackenzie, Cameron and Jacob should be proud of and congratulated for their achievements, they have made our local community proud. They will undoubtedly be inspirational for our Davidson electorate community who want to take their sport to the next level and represent Australia.

UNITED WITH ISRAEL

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On the evening of Wednesday 11 October 2023, I joined over 10,000 people from Sydney's Jewish community at Dover Heights to hold a vigil for those killed and kidnapped in Israel last week, and to stand united with Israel. We need to stand unequivocally with our Jewish community against the re-emergence of antisemitism and violence. I recognise: the Jewish community within the Davidson electorate community, in particular rabbis Schapiro, Friedler, Koncepolski and Lewin. NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President David Ossip and Acting CEO Michael Gencher. Executive Council of Australian Jewry President Jillian Segal AO. Federal Minister for Health Hon. Mark Butler MP, Federal Leader of the Opposition Hon. Peter Dutton MP, Premier Hon. Chris Minns MP, Leader of the Opposition Hon. Mark Speakman SC MP, and all my parliamentary colleagues at a state and federal level who attended. We stand united with Israel.
