



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday 18 October 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 18 October 2023**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED SEATBELT ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2023

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jenny Aitchison, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. The bill includes the first legislative changes to deliver on actions in the New South Wales Government's 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. The plan outlines our commitment, through a suite of targeted and proven actions to be delivered by the end of 2026, to improve the safety of our roads and vehicle fleets and the behaviour of road users. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable automated camera detection of seatbelt offences and require those fines to be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund to be directed to road safety programs.

First, I acknowledge the New South Wales Government's 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. The plan includes targets to reduce fatalities on New South Wales roads by 50 per cent and serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030, which is consistent with our overall aim of zero trauma on our roads by 2050. I acknowledge the work of the previous Government in developing the plan. I am pleased to say that the Minns Labor Government supports the plan and that we are committed to delivering the actions in the plan to reduce the road toll and the trauma on our roads and to ensure that our roads are safer.

The New South Wales Government's road safety action plan was developed through extensive engagement with community and stakeholders, analysis of trauma trends, and consideration of best practice and safety evidence. Support for a broad range of measures in the plan is high, as 84 per cent of our community agree that our goal should be to have zero deaths on our roads. Initiatives in the plan focus on stronger engagement through new and enhanced education and local programs, as well as initiatives targeting high-risk offenders, addressing key recommendations of the NSW Sentencing Council.

The plan will mean more action to improve road safety across all areas, including actions to protect vulnerable road users, such as motorcyclists, bicycle riders and pedestrians, by creating safer road environments for them through infrastructure treatments and reduced speed limits, and by raising community awareness of the key risks for those road users. The plan also includes actions to accelerate the uptake of safety features in vehicles, as well as a key action to deliver a Towards Zero Safer Roads Program that will ensure ongoing investment in safety infrastructure treatments across the road network. The program will have a focus on our regional roads, because, sadly, as we all know, two-thirds of New South Wales road fatalities occur on country roads.

The bill that I am introducing today will help us to achieve one of the actions under the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, which aims to bring down the road toll. As of last night, 282 people have died on our roads this year, which is 56 more deaths than the corresponding period last year. Every single death is one too many. The grief, trauma and regret that follow any fatality or serious injury on our roads last for a lifetime. Since I took on this portfolio, I have received notifications of all known fatalities as they occur on our regional roads. Waking up over

the Easter long weekend, a few days after I was appointed as Minister, made it clear how important it is that we all do better when it comes to making our roads safer.

Whenever I talk about safety, I take the opportunity to reiterate the five things that are within the control of all of us to reduce the road toll and make our roads safer, including making sure that, whenever we get behind the wheel, we are not speeding; that we are not using a mobile phone; that we are not using alcohol or other drugs that impair us; that we are not fatigued; and that we always wear a seatbelt. People are surprised whenever I mention that we still have to talk about wearing seatbelts and, in fact, to enforce the 50-year-old, very commonsense law that seatbelts are compulsory. There was palpable surprise in this very Chamber yesterday when I told members 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. As I said yesterday, I had a conversation with his daughter, Karen, and his former electorate officer Mrs Kay Sharp, AM, about this legislation. They were delighted that the New South Wales Government was moving this legislation and that Milton Morris' vision for safer roads through wearing seatbelts was being given a twenty-first century boost. When I spoke to Karen, she told me that she remembered being in the living room when her late father, Milton, called a colleague in the Victorian Parliament, Vernon Wilcox, and urged him to pass the legislation to make wearing seatbelts compulsory in Victoria. At Milton's urging, Victoria became the first jurisdiction in the world to make wearing seatbelts compulsory.

Karen's pride in Milton, as someone who introduced breathalysers and radars in New South Wales, who had worked on this legislation initially and who was known far and wide as "Mr Road Safety", is well placed. Karen told me that she asked her father why he had passed the legislation over to his Victorian counterpart. Milton replied that he was not able to get the legislation through the then Askin Cabinet at the time. He said, "But we are going to save lives, and we will eventually get it into New South Wales; it is just not our time right now. But we will save lives, and that is the most important thing." Milton was—and is—100 per cent right. We have lost too many people who were not wearing seatbelts.

Observational research suggests that over 99 per cent of people buckle up as soon as they get in a car or vehicle. This high rate of compliance has been achieved through a combination of regulation, ongoing education initiatives and police enforcement, as well as vehicle enhancements over time, such as the introduction of seatbelt warning bells. However, there are still some people who do not comply. When we were doing briefings for this legislation, I was surprised to hear that people are clipping their seatbelts behind them so that they do not make the sound and do not have to wear their seatbelts. It is very disturbing.

In the past five years, 15 per cent of people who have died in accidents—142 people—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 look at serious injuries, which have taken a lifelong toll on many people, around 76 people a year are injured by not wearing a seatbelt or wearing it incorrectly. Wearing a seatbelt incorrectly can cause significant injury to the spleen, liver or other abdominal organs, and can even be fatal. Not wearing a seatbelt is a very dangerous habit to get into.

Worryingly, it is happening more and more. The percentage of vehicle occupant deaths in which not wearing a seatbelt was a factor increased from 13 per cent in 2019 to 19 per cent in 2021. Wearing a seatbelt doubles the chance of surviving a crash and reduces the risk of injury. In rollover crashes, wearing a seatbelt is estimated to reduce fatalities by 74 per cent. As well as these horrific injuries and fatalities, there is a financial cost, which represents a total cost to the community of approximately \$1.16 billion. As the regional transport and roads Minister and as a regional MP, I know all too well that one-third of our population in New South Wales lives in the regions, yet represents somewhere in the order of two-thirds of fatalities on our roads. We are implementing this simple, twenty-first century change to legislation that has been on the books in this State for 50 years. It is important to note that over 84 per cent of fatalities and two-thirds of serious injuries where people were not wearing a seatbelt occur on our country roads.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill enables camera detection and enforcement of seatbelt offences, which will enable us to better utilise traffic enforcement cameras already being used across the State and support existing on-road police enforcement. New South Wales police play a key role in keeping our roads safe by ensuring motorists are safely restrained. Supplementing police enforcement with automated enforcement will help ensure efficient, cost-effective enforcement across the State. As our mobile phone detection camera program has already demonstrated, if people believe they are likely to be caught anywhere, anytime and penalised, they are less likely to commit the offence. Data from the New South Wales mobile phone detection camera program shows a positive shift in driver behaviour and significant improvements in compliance with the law.

In the year ending 30 June 2023, over 135 million vehicles were checked. Around one in every 649 drivers checked during this period was issued a penalty notice for illegal mobile phone use, which is an offence rate of around 0.15 per cent. This is a significantly lower rate of offending when compared with the pilot period during which the technology was first tested from January to June 2019. During that period, one in every 82 drivers across New South Wales was detected using a mobile phone illegally, which is an offence rate of around 1.2 per cent. In fact, there has been a steady and consistent increase in compliance, year on year, with these cameras.

Building on the success of the mobile phone detection camera program, the bill introduces provisions to use cameras to also detect seatbelt offences. Independent modelling by the Monash University Accident Research Centre estimates that improved enforcement of seatbelt use could save around 17 to 26 lives and prevent 41 to 62 serious injuries over a five-year period. Just imagine that—17 to 26 people walking around this year, next year and the next three years because of this legislation. Under the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, this will be achieved by using the mobile phone detection cameras that we have rolled out across the road network to also detect seatbelt offences. Transport for NSW spent six months testing the mobile phone detection cameras in the first half of 2021 to see if they could be used to also detect seatbelt offences, and it has proven to be feasible and reliable, with no adverse impact on the detection of mobile phone offences. Cameras that detect both mobile phone use and seatbelt non-use have been used successfully in Queensland since July 2021, and Victoria introduced seatbelt camera enforcement earlier this year.

The bill introduces provisions to enable automated seatbelt enforcement in New South Wales, building on the established legal framework we already have for our road safety cameras. All automated camera devices used for enforcement in New South Wales must be approved for a particular use. The bill will authorise the Governor to approve cameras that have the capabilities outlined in the legislation to detect certain seatbelt offences. As with other traffic enforcement devices, the device must be capable of recording the date, time and location of the photo and, for seatbelt offences, must capture the registration number of the vehicle. The bill clarifies that photos taken by other devices, such as mobile phone cameras or red-light speed cameras, could be used as evidence of seatbelt offences if they are capable of detecting those offences. That is consistent with the existing legislation for mobile phone cameras.

Seatbelt offences are defined as offences against the road rules that require a driver and all passengers to wear an available seatbelt properly adjusted and fastened. That means that, consistent with the road rules, drivers can be fined and receive demerit points for offences involving not wearing a seatbelt themselves and for not ensuring that a passenger wears a seatbelt correctly. It is not proposed to fine passengers directly, as the cameras will not be able to identify the passenger or their age. Under current law, passengers 16 and older could still be fined for not properly wearing a seatbelt if detected by a police officer—as will the driver. Images taken by enforcement cameras for seatbelt offences will be prima facie evidence in court proceedings as is the case for all camera-detected traffic offences. As with other camera-detected offences, so-called owner onus provisions will apply. That means that the responsible person for the vehicle, who is usually the registered operator, is deemed liable for the offence unless they nominate a different driver as responsible for the offence. It provides the avenue for efficient, automated enforcement.

I briefly discuss some of the operational aspects of automated seatbelt enforcement to provide the community with clear information about the steps in the offence detection process and provide assurance that measures are in place to ensure information is dealt with appropriately. I can advise that Transport for NSW has consulted with the Privacy Commissioner as part of the planning for the changes and testing of camera technology for seatbelt offences, building on previous engagement to support the design and introduction of mobile phone detection cameras. In common with all New South Wales camera enforcement systems and current practice for the mobile phone detection camera program, data security measures will be in place to secure data and ensure appropriate handling of seatbelt offence images.

The currently available technology uses software to automatically review images and detect potential seatbelt offences in the same way that mobile phone offences are also detected. The use of artificial intelligence [AI] to screen photographic images as the first stage in identifying potential illegal mobile phone use by drivers was a world first in 2019. The technology removes the requirement for human review of the vast majority of images captured. Coupled with the almost real-time deletion of images of compliant drivers, the use of AI protects the personal information of most drivers. Images that do not contain evidence of a likely offence are permanently and irretrievably deleted, typically within an hour. Images that are automatically deemed likely to contain a mobile phone or seatbelt offence are encrypted and cropped or pixelated so people cannot be identified and are verified by appropriately trained personnel.

As with all New South Wales camera enforcement programs, infringements for seatbelt offences will not be issued based on the technology alone. There are three stages of human review before action is taken against

the responsible person. An infringement notice will not be issued if there is doubt about the offence. Automated detection of seatbelt offences is expected to commence around the middle of 2024. A warning letter period will apply before issuing infringements to give people every chance to do the right thing. The Government wants to ensure that motorists have ample warning before enforcement begins. Most of us automatically buckle up as soon as we get in the car without even thinking about it. If there are people who are consistently not wearing their seatbelt, we want to give them sufficient time to embed that behavioural change so it becomes second nature to them as well.

Alongside that, to raise community awareness and improve seatbelt compliance, a three-phase public education strategy will be developed. First is early education, focusing on the risk of not wearing a seatbelt and how to wear a seatbelt correctly, which would be delivered primarily via digital content and social media. Second is a warning letter period where warning letters are issued in place of fines. That would be supported by a statewide education campaign, including paid advertising to advise that the cameras will soon be enforcing seatbelt offences. Third, when enforcement begins, motorists would be advised that cameras are in operation and fines apply through continued delivery of the proposed statewide education campaign.

To further raise awareness, and in alignment with our approach for mobile phone detection cameras, a small number of permanent advisory signs on major routes across the road network will advise that cameras can detect both mobile phone and seatbelt offences. That is in addition to the more than 300 electronic variable message signs across New South Wales. Together, the measures will significantly raise driver awareness that enforcement is commencing and provide a fair opportunity for any noncompliant road users to change their behaviour and buckle up safely whenever they enter a vehicle. We know that enforcement and education work hand in hand to change behaviour. I am aware that there are limited exemptions to the requirement to wear a seatbelt under the Road Rules. We are developing a process to fairly and efficiently manage the limited number of exemptions that exist. They include historic vehicles where seatbelts are not fitted as well as medical exemptions.

Changes to the Transport Administration Act 1988 will require any fines from camera-detected seatbelt offences, like all other camera-detected road safety offences, to be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund. That fund commenced in 2013. Under current legislation, fines from camera-detected speeding, red-light and mobile phone use offences can only be paid into the fund and used to deliver Transport for NSW road safety measures. Let me be clear that the fines from camera-detected seatbelt offences will not go into consolidated revenue and this amendment bill ensures that. The Community Road Safety Fund, which includes both road safety camera fine revenue and additional investment by the New South Wales Government, is used to deliver a broad range of road safety initiatives, as outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. That includes lifesaving infrastructure safety upgrades and treatments across the network, testing and rating of child restraints, police road safety operations, road safety education programs, school crossing supervisors, and the Driver Licensing Access Program.

The impact of road trauma is real for so many in our communities. In fact, it would be almost impossible for someone alive today to not have been impacted by some significant trauma from a road fatality or serious incident. The introduction of the bill will make progress in helping us meet the targets in our new Road Safety Action Plan to reduce deaths by 50 per cent and serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030 and, most importantly, to work towards that ever important goal of towards zero. The Government takes road safety very seriously and I am pleased and proud to support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **SHERIFF AND COURT SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Dr Hugh McDermott, on behalf of Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:38):** On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. Established in 1824, the Office of the Sheriff of New South Wales has nearly 200 years of history, over which time its role and function has developed to reflect the needs of courts and court users. The bill amends the Sheriff Act 2005 and the Court Security Act 2005 to ensure that the law reflects the contemporary functions of the Office of the Sheriff and the important role that the sheriff and her staff play in the administration of justice in New South Wales.

Sheriff's officers currently operate 59 individual hubs, supporting over 180 courts and tribunal locations across the metropolitan centres of Sydney and throughout regional New South Wales. Proudly, New South Wales hosts the largest sheriff's office in Australia, with over 400 sworn sheriff's officers, court officers and administrative staff.

The bill introduces several amendments to clarify and update the role, function and structure of the Office of the Sheriff. It also introduces amendments to support the continued safety and security of all New South Wales courts, tribunals and, in fact, judicial officers. In addition, the bill introduces amendments to establish a process by which the sheriff may enter into an agreement for officers to assist other public sector agencies in an emergency such as a bushfire. Key stakeholders were consulted in the development of the bill, including close engagement with the Office of the Sheriff, members of the judiciary, the NSW Police Force and Corrective Services NSW. Further consultation was also undertaken on the drafting and final form of the bill with the above stakeholders and other key legal stakeholders, including the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association.

I now turn to the substance of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Sheriff Act 2005. Sheriff's officers are responsible for the safety and security of courts and tribunals across New South Wales. This extends to anyone accessing the court system, including members of the legal profession, victims of crime, witnesses and jurors. Schedule 1 [3] to the bill will clarify and update the role and function of the Office of the Sheriff by clearly embedding identifiable functions in the Sheriff Act 2005. Those functions include providing for the safety and security of courts and tribunals, providing for the effective management and administration of the jury system, civil law enforcement functions, providing protective security services to judicial officers and other functions given to the sheriff under the Sheriff Act or another Act or law.

To ensure that our justice system operates effectively, it is essential that the judiciary is able to fulfil its crucial role free of fear, threat and intimidation. To this end, schedule 1 [3] inserts the specific function of the Office of the Sheriff to provide protective security services to judicial officers. To support this function, schedule 1 [5] to the bill authorises a sheriff's officer to provide protective security services to a judicial officer for their protection outside court premises. The provision of this service must be in accordance with an agreement between the sheriff and the head of the court of which the judicial officer is a member. The bill notes that in relation to this section, "court" and "court premises" have the same meanings as in the Court Security Act 2005, and schedule 1 [1] provides that the definition of "judicial officer" has the same meaning as in the Court Security Act 2005.

The New South Wales Government is dedicated to disaster prevention, preparedness, recovery and reconstruction. We recognise the important role the Office of the Sheriff has played in coming to the aid of New South Wales citizens in previous times of emergency. During the terrible Black Summer bushfires of 2019-2020, the Office of the Sheriff assisted the New South Wales fire service by providing over 80 staff and completing over 120 separate deployments across New South Wales. They provided assistance in diverse areas, including logistics, communications, finance and operational support. During this time the Office of the Sheriff demonstrated its agility by pivoting from its regular operations to provide 24-hour assistance and support to communities when they needed it the very most.

To ensure the Office of the Sheriff is well placed to provide prompt assistance in appropriate circumstances in the future, schedule 1 [5] will allow the sheriff to enter into an agreement with the head of another public service agency to enable sheriff's officers to assist that agency in connection with an emergency. The approval of the secretary will be required for the agreement. Schedule 1 [1] defines that in these circumstances the "secretary" means the secretary of the department that administers the Sheriff Act 2005, being the Department of Communities and Justice. Schedule 1 [7] extends the existing exclusion of personal liability provided to sheriff's officers when exercising a function under the Sheriff Act 2005 to functions exercised by sheriff's officers under other Acts. This will ensure that when sheriff's officers are engaging in lawful functions under the Sheriff Act or other Acts, which are often protective functions to keep people safe or minimise security risks and threats to courts, tribunals and the judiciary, they will be protected from liability.

Schedule 1 [2] and [4] make consequential amendments. Schedule 1 [6] establishes in the Sheriff Act the rank structure or system of leadership adhered to by sheriff's officers. It provides that the sheriff may recommend the issuing of a commission by the Governor to a sheriff's officer in recognition of the seniority of that officer. This amendment will allow the sheriff to recognise the achievements of senior officers and their operational role, experience, knowledge and training. In addition, schedule 1 [6] provides that the sheriff may publish a rank structure for sheriff's officers in the *New South Wales Government Gazette*.

I turn now to schedule 2 to the bill, which amends the Court Security Act 2005. Sheriff's officers provide important support and assistance to police and custodial officers across courts in New South Wales. Effective cooperation with these law enforcement officers is essential to the provision of court security, ensures the safe

and efficient functioning of the courts, and allows court users to access the justice system safely. Schedule 2 [1] to the bill authorises a security officer to provide reasonable assistance to a police or custodial officer, upon a request from a police or custodial officer, during incidents affecting court security in court premises or in the immediate vicinity of court premises. When providing the assistance, the security officer must act under the direction of police or custodial officers attending the incident. A security officer is the sheriff or a person appointed by the sheriff under the Act.

I now turn to powers of arrest. Schedule 2 [2] authorises a security officer to pursue and arrest a person, without a warrant, if that person is attempting to escape lawful custody. This power of arrest may only be relied upon if the security officer pursues the person from a court premises and that pursuit continues to the place of arrest, without interruption. Schedule 2 [3] and [4] make consequential amendments. Together, these changes recognise that security officers may be well placed to assist police or custodial officers in circumstances where, for example, an offender intends to escape from lawful custody by absconding from court premises.

The bill ensures that those officers are able to work with law enforcement agencies to take appropriate action to respond in these circumstances. The bill provides that, if passed, the new provisions will commence on assent. In conclusion, the New South Wales Government is committed to the secure operation of courts and the administration of justice, and recognises that sheriff's officers play a crucial role in keeping our courts and communities safe. This bill supports sheriff's officers to perform their role effectively. It also reflects the Government's ongoing work to update legislation to ensure it continues to meet its objectives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **REVENUE, MINING AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 11 October 2023.**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (10:49):** I make a brief contribution on behalf of the Opposition in support of the Revenue, Mining and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. When I say it is a brief contribution I really do mean it, given that the Minister's contribution on this bill was a staggering three minutes and 37 seconds, or 459 words. I cannot say that I particularly blame the Government for doing so, given that the bill makes an administrative change to various Acts—a naming change necessitated by a division in the union movement. The bill amends the Duties Act 1997, the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013 and associated regulation, the Coal Industry Act 2001 and the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 as a consequence of the withdrawal of the Mining and Energy Division from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMMEU].

The Opposition supports the right of freedom of association, as well as the rights of those who do not wish to associate. This includes the rights of workers to form or join a union as well as the right to not join a union or to withdraw from a union. This principle also extends to a part of a union withdrawing from that union when it feels it is not being well represented, as is the case in the instance of the Mining and Energy Division. In March of this year the Fair Work Commission approved the conducting of a ballot of the Mining and Energy Division on the question of withdrawal from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union. It is not at all surprising that a staggering 98 per cent of votes were in favour of withdrawal.

While a court hearing date has not yet been set in relation to this application, the Mining and Energy Division has applied to the Federal Court of Australia to set a withdrawal date of 1 December 2023. Since its merger with the construction union in the 1990s, some members of the Mining and Energy Division have felt they have not been listened to by the construction arm of the union, which has used its significant numbers to push its own agenda, sometimes at the expense of smaller members like the Mining and Energy Division. Mining and Energy Union general president Tony Maher stated that the union "pursued this path because members told us they no longer felt at home in the CFMEU." He went on to say:

... our members want a union that focuses on the considerable needs and challenges of mining and energy workers.

I do hope that this is achieved by the demerger as this sector faces a time of tremendous change. The amendments to the Duties Act 1997 extend an existing exemption from duty where unions or employer organisations amalgamate to also cover the circumstances where a union or employer organisation subsequently withdraws and forms a new entity. It also clarifies that the exemption applies to trusts holding property on behalf of such organisations. There is no obvious reason to exempt from duty in one case but not the other. The proposed amendment aligns the exemption for registered employee and employer organisations with the exemption that applies to registered clubs. While the withdrawal of the Mining and Energy Division from the CFMMEU is the occasion for introducing this provision, it will be of general application.

The other amendments simply replace references to the CFMMEU with references to the new Mining and Energy Union in relation to responsibilities for mine safety and representation on various boards. For example, this includes changes to the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013 to refer to the Mining and Energy Union instead of the CFMMEU Mining and Energy Division. These provisions relate to the nomination of an industry safety and health representative and service of documents on an industry safety and health representative, thus ensuring representatives of the new union remain in this very important role. The changes proposed by the Government recognise the reality of the Mining and Energy Division leaving the CFMMEU. Therefore, the Opposition supports the bill.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (10:54):** I contribute to debate on the Revenue, Mining and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The amalgamation of employee unions, industrial organisations and employees was an important feature of the Australian economy and our society during the 1990s. Many smaller trade unions decided that the best interests of their members were to be served by amalgamating with other unions of like interest to provide greater resources for them do the job they needed to do for their members on the ground.

The trade union I am a member of, the United Workers Union, is the product of a more recent amalgamation in 2020 between United Voice—a union that most members will recall was in the past called the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, or the "Missos"—and the United Workers Union, itself a product of many amalgamations, and of which I was a member and official. It was an amalgamated union formed in 1992. The United Workers Union can trace its membership back to the first unions formed in this country around the turn of the twentieth century, such as the Pastry Cooks Employees', Biscuit Makers Employees' and Flour and Sugar Goods Workers' Union of New South Wales and other unions with evocative titles that really identified which workers they covered and gave those workers a sense of identity.

One of the things many people found disconcerting about amalgamation was the loss of those lovely terms as a result of the formation of unions with names that were more general in nature. The National Union of Workers, of which I was a member, was a product of dozens of unions forming together: the pastry cooks, as I have recalled; the famous Storemen and Packers' Union, which really formed the core and the fighting force behind that union; the Manufacturing Grocers Union; the Rubber Workers' Union; and the Commercial Travellers Association—I think I have covered them all. Many smaller unions also went into that organisation.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions really tackled amalgamation in the late 1980s and 1990s. I remember attending meetings in Newcastle relating to the amalgamation of the steel industry unions; Bill Kely was there. Everybody in the room was concerned with who would be declared the principal union in the metal industry. We were all worried about losing our turf, as it were. To its credit, the union movement saw that the interests of its members were more important than turf wars. Amalgamation gave unions the strength to be relevant and important players in today's society, which is at the heart of this bill.

The Revenue, Mining and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill amends a number of Acts and a regulation as a result of the withdrawal of the Mining and Energy Division from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMMEU] to become the standalone Mining and Energy Union, which I understand will happen in December this year. Just as union members have determined that amalgamation is in their favour, it sometimes happens that union members will decide that withdrawing from a larger union is also in their best interests. The members of the Mining and Energy Division of the CFMMEU have done that, and I congratulate them on making that democratic decision and moving ahead with their plans and desires. The bill addresses some consequences of the Mining and Energy Division's withdrawal from the CFMMEU.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** It being 11.00 a.m., in accordance with standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** A lot of people have joined us in the gallery today for question time, and I welcome them to the Legislative Assembly. I acknowledge members of the Orange Men's Shed Terry Betts, Alan Campbell, Doug Cole and Ken Murphy, who are guests of the member for Orange. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Wollondilly, Brett Cottee and Carol Tucker, as well as two guide dogs, Ebony and Pip. Many members are excited about them joining us today. I welcome guests of the Speaker, members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. I also welcome 18 guests of the member for Hawkesbury, who are here to attend a Mental Health Hub event. I hope they have a wonderful day and have a chance to catch up with the member for Hawkesbury after question time.



I welcome a guest of the member for Wakehurst, Amy Seedsman. I welcome guests of the member for Parramatta, students from Arthur Phillip High School who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program conducted by the parliamentary education team. The member for Cessnock also has guests here today, Hunter Walsh and his father, Brett. I welcome them. I acknowledge attendees at the Introduction to the Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar, who are watching question time from the public galleries.

*Announcements*

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**The SPEAKER (11:04):** The New South Wales Parliament is twinned with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville House of Representatives under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am pleased to inform the House that members and staff from those Parliaments will visit our Parliament and participate in a professional development program this week and next week. The Solomon Islands delegation is led by their Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Commins Mewa, who is with us in the gallery today. The Bougainville delegation is led by their Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Therese Kaetavara. The delegation will be joining us in the gallery later during question time. I thank members for giving their time and energy to this valuable activity. I also thank the United Nations Development Programme for its support. I welcome members of our twinned Parliaments to question time in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. It is an honour to have them here.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion.

*Notices*

**PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Swansea will come to order.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. Members will come to order and listen to the notice of motion being given by the Leader of the Opposition. Whether members like it or not, it is part of the process.

*Later,*

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. They will respect the standing orders that allow for such a motion to be brought forward. The motion will be dealt with in the appropriate manner and considered in accordance with the relevant standing orders. It will be dealt with at a later time. The member for Shellharbour will relax.

*Question Time*

**MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Did the Minister or her office seek approval from the Premier or his office prior to issuing her media statement last Thursday evening?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:09):** I am sure we did.

**VAPING**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the work undertaken by the Minns Labor Government to address the scourge of vaping in New South Wales schools?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:09):** I thank the member for Prospect for his timely question. I acknowledge that he has been raising concerns about the scourge of vaping for a long time, since the beginning our struggle

with it, and I acknowledge his work on this important issue. As the House knows—and we hope the people of this State are realising—the Government is committed to supporting student outcomes in New South Wales. It is important that we acknowledge that. We are talking about both educational and wellbeing outcomes for young people. Both are critical to the success of students and every school in New South Wales.

One of the most significant challenges for the wellbeing of children is the growing problem of vaping in our community, but particularly in our schools. Let me be clear, the manufacturers of vapes are getting young people addicted by deliberately marketing to teenagers and younger. It is shocking to admit, but it is true. Their business model relies on getting young people addicted, knowing that if they get a teenager vaping, they will probably have them addicted for a long time. The following statistic is truly shocking and a sobering one for us all to take heed of: one in three children aged 14 to 17 has vaped or used a vape. For all members as representatives of our communities and for many of us as parents, that is very concerning. We cannot ignore it.

It is a community-wide issue, but a significant issue in our schools. There would not be a day that I do not go to a school where a principal or teacher is struggling to know what to do about this growing problem. In fact, it has been made worse by the growing teacher shortage that we inherited from members opposite. When there are merged classes, cancelled classes or classes in the covered outdoor learning areas where unsupervised children have lots of time to twiddle their thumbs without the wonderful teachers supervising and teaching them, the issue becomes worse. While principals are trying to get casual teachers to fill merged and collapsed classes, kids are left with minimal supervision. [*Extension of time*]

Listening is a hallmark of this Government. Today we announced that we will be listening to the very best experts on what we can do and what the evidence-based approach is to combat this issue in schools across New South Wales. On 16 November we will hold the State's first ever vaping roundtable with principals, teachers and, importantly, health experts. We need to understand what we can do to educate young people about how dangerous vaping is to help them deal with the onslaught of marketing directed at them to get them addicted to vapes, which we are seeing every day in our schools. As a society we did so much work together to combat the issue of smoking, particularly in our schools. The issue of schoolchildren vaping is our generation's challenge.

In order to make the right decisions based on evidence available to the very best experts, we need a government that is listening and that is what we are doing. I notice for some, including those opposite, it is a novel approach to listen to experts, particularly when it comes to experts inside the school gates. But as education Minister, I know that principals and teachers are crying out for this. Parents are crying out for this. They are going to their children's principals and teachers asking for help. As a government we will help our educational leaders to try to come up with ways to deal with this. It is vital and the Government wants better outcomes in wellbeing and education for our young people. To do that we must be on top of this scourge, which has been ignored for too long. I look forward to reporting back to the House on the roundtable results.

#### MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:14):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Last Friday the Premier said about the Minister, "It is important that we have continuity in place in terms of leadership, and I fully support her." Has the Premier given the Minister any guarantees about how long that continuity will be in place for her as Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism?

[*Government members interjected.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. If the Minister believes the question is out of order, she is entitled to make that point.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:15):** We all know the question is out of order. Yes, I have the support of the Premier. Why would I not? I am doing my job. I am standing up for the police of New South Wales. I am making sure they are properly resourced to do their job. Let me tell members, when I was speaking with them on Sunday, I shook the hands of the police who are here in our city to keep it safe. They acknowledged my hard work and thanked me for it. I feel pretty comfortable. The member for Vaucluse should go back to her development issues.

#### STATE BUDGET AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:16):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on measures taken by the Government in regional New South Wales and the importance of local representation?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:16):** It is an important question from a regional member of Parliament. I announce to the House that as part of the budget the Government has committed \$1.4 billion over four years for a pipeline of new and upgraded schools in regional New South Wales. We have doubled the

incentive for healthcare workers to move to and work in regional New South Wales from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Capital expenditure in the budget for regional New South Wales is up 12 per cent, compared with the previous budget of \$300 million. Of course, we also have \$670 million for regional roads, which provide the crucial interconnectedness that regional communities need to get primary products to the ports to export markets to drive their communities.

It is not just that, though. Important, smaller scale financial commitments can also make a massive difference to regional communities. I particularly refer to the member for Barwon, who has been continually speaking to the Government about Walgett pool. The pool has fallen into disrepair and as a result it would not have been ready for the summer season. As many members know, that community deals with multiple days above 40 degrees Celsius. To have no public pool in place for that community would be intolerable. I report that the previous Government was told about the state of many regional pools, including in Walgett, but the member for Barwon stood up and demanded that his area get its fair share. I announce that, as a result of that advocacy, \$375,000 is available to get the pool up to scratch so it can open for the Christmas period. That is in addition to our other commitments.

Regional representation matters. The former leader of the National Party, Paul Toole, in particular was a tireless advocate for the bush—although I did not agree with him on a lot of issues. Unfortunately, he is no longer in that post; he is not the leader of the National Party anymore. He was asked about the importance of regional representation and missing out on the leadership and he said, "There's a weight that's been lifted off my shoulders." He said, "In politics, there's always people who are ambitious and there's people that are always seeking higher positions." Who could he be referring to, Mr Speaker? Who could he be referring to? Dugald. In response to this, Dugald gave his own exhortation in relation to the leadership of the National Party and said, "I'm not a politician; I'm just a normal bloke having a crack and doing my best."

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

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I will consider granting an additional two minutes, which I think will be requested. The member for Dubbo rises on a point of order. The member for Monaro will come to order. Just because he is no longer Whip does not mean he can involve himself in debate.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Whilst I am happy to hear from the Premier about—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** It is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. We are talking about what is being delivered for regional New South Wales, not why I am the Leader of The Nationals. How is that relevant?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has certainly been directly relevant and is now moving to more general comments, which is permissible.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I seek further information about local representation.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Mr Speaker, he may not be a regular politician but, with all the background briefings and backstabbing, he is catching on fast, don't you think? He looks like a politician to me. The importance of regional representation is about getting out into the bush and speaking to regional communities. I have to say that in the election campaign the now Leader of The Nationals was directly confronted about this issue. An article in the *Central Western Daily* states:

Nationals MP Dugald Saunders was asked why no members of his party had visited bushfire communities in the Central West, particularly Hill End bushfire north of Orange, and he said, "Well, what am I going to do? Hold a hose?"

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will come to order. Government members are far too excited about the Premier's answer. The member for Canterbury will calm down. I need to hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I refer to Standing Order 73. This is an attack on another member rather than an answer to the question that was asked. It is not relevant. If there is a true point to this it should be pursued by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The matter has been in the public domain and is not out of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Mr Speaker, of all the Prime Ministers to quote—I think there are some others. Returning to the article, it says that back in Dubbo on Thursday the member for Dubbo was asked if he stood by his original comments and Mr Saunders said, "I don't think I've committed a ScoMo". That was the quote. Poor old Scott Morrison is getting blamed for everything at the moment—the last election campaign, for example. They are going to fit him up for the Lufthansa heist next. At the end of the day, the party that had decency and honourability at the heart of its purpose and mission, the National Party, has been taken over by a bunch of rank amateur politicians. If you need further evidence, look at the member for Bathurst, backstabbing and conniving. The latest example, if you need any evidence at all, is the member for Tweed, who has had enough and quit. It is time that the people of regional New South Wales understood what the National Party is up to.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will calm down.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (11:24):** Mr Speaker, would you like to hear about my U2 concerts over in Las Vegas at the Sphere? No? Okay. My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government representing the Minister for Energy. In the recent budget the New South Wales Government announced \$100 million in electricity rebates for eligible households. Rather than just short-term relief, will the New South Wales Government consider following the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania in implementing an interest-free loan scheme for rooftop solar and batteries available to everyone to unlock energy independence, lasting household savings and much-needed energy supply for our State?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:24):** I thank the member for Wakehurst and welcome him back from the U2 concert. I hope when he returned he was able to say that he found what he was looking for—a bit of *Achtung Baby*—because, Mr Speaker, I still haven't found what I'm looking for, I can tell you that.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Minister for Energy in this place. I thank the member for Wakehurst for his long-running interest in supporting households with their energy transition. That was well before he came to Parliament and it is well documented. As the question notes, an additional \$100 million has been included in the New South Wales budget this year. That is on top of the existing energy bill relief as we battle the cost-of-living crisis. We know that people are doing it tough and this additional funding will make a serious and material difference to the most vulnerable members of our community.

We also acknowledge the need to deliver both short-term relief and long-term solutions. We know that the best way to do that is by driving down electricity prices through the cheapest form of energy generation as well as firm renewables, which is another part of the budget. We do this at one end of the scale when we have renewable energy zones and, at the other end of the scale and on a smaller level, when we have community energy as well. There is a great deal of enthusiasm in the community to embrace and lead the energy transition through the uptake of small-scale renewable energies, such as solar and things like that, and supporting that with batteries. That is an important point. Households will play a key part in the New South Wales energy transition. We are committed to harnessing this enthusiasm and ensuring that the benefits are shared more widely. That is why we recently announced we will develop a consumer energy strategy.

Just as the road map lays out our plan for large-scale renewable energy power plants, we are developing a strategy to help households and support small-scale renewables. This will ensure that there is a coordinated rollout of rooftop solar, batteries, virtual power plants and electrification. The strategy will make sure that households understand what transition means, how they can embrace it and how we can support them through it. It will also ensure that we have the right programs in place to support households to unlock those opportunities. This includes considering the most effective ways to incentivise the uptake of rooftop solar. The strategy will also put in place the necessary enablers so that governments can trust the grid. The New South Wales Government is always ready to support all households. [*Extension of time*]

That includes supporting renters and those who live in apartments, who we know are traditionally locked out of these opportunities and do not get a chance to harness the benefits of rooftop solar. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting an equitable adoption of changes that will provide benefits across the entire State. The transition for households is truly exciting. It presents a future where communities are empowered to generate locally and store clean and affordable energy. This will put downward pressure on bills as well as reduce pressure on our grid. We have known for a long time that we must transition our energy system to one that is clean and based on renewable energy. It is a key step in supporting households to play a coordinated and active role in the energy transition. The Government looks forward to continuing to work with the member for Wakehurst

as well as members across the entire Parliament on this important issue of making sure that we support all communities as we transition to a cleaner and better energy supply.

### SYDNEY HARBOUR FERRIES

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is making improvements to Sydney Harbour ferry services?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:29):** I thank the member for Parramatta for her question and for her advocacy for better ferry services. She knows, like so many members do, that ferries are a critical part of our public transport system. When it comes to the ferry network—like the rest of our public transport system—this Government inherited a mess that needed major work. Ferry passengers were living through constant service cancellations, breakdowns and failures because of the former Government's obsession with buying overseas-made ferries that were failing passengers again and again—ferries that could not cross the harbour or fit under bridges.

I am pleased to report to the House that we are beginning to see things turn around. In recent months we have seen very strong growth in patronage across our ferry system because passengers are starting to rebuild their confidence in choosing public transport, particularly on the F1 Circular Quay to Manly route, where we have seen an average daily passenger patronage increase of around 30 per cent. That means patronage levels are now higher than pre-pandemic levels. Again, we are seeing that confidence in public transport return. Other key routes are growing in popularity as well—including the F5, the F6 and the Parramatta River route—because this Government is working to make using the ferry network more seamless and as easy as possible for passengers. At the start of this month the Manly Fast Ferry service was integrated into the Opal system, meaning both commuters and tourists alike can now experience the benefits of Opal, including trip caps and discounts, which I know the member for Manly has advocated for and supports.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That integration will mean we can better utilise the capacity of the F1 route, as passengers will now be able to simply choose the next ferry and not worry about costs. In the short time since the integration, the signs have been very positive. In fact, the operator is already reporting a 10 per cent increase in patronage. This summer it will be critical to ensure we can use all available capacity. We all know that in summer people want to get out on our harbour and river system and get on our ferries. The Government's plan has always been to bring back the Freshwater class ferries. The reality is that Opposition members, when in government, left those iconic ferries to rust. Significant work is needed to bring them back, but we are making progress. After months of restoration work, I was able to inspect the *Queenscliff* as it underwent dry-docking at Garden Island. [Extension of time]

I am very pleased to report to the House that the *Queenscliff* left Garden Island this week. She is going to begin her sea trials and will return to provide Freshwater services every hour from December for the busy summer period.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** It was built in Newcastle.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That is right; it was built in Newcastle. The \$71 million budget allocation made by this Government will ensure that these much-loved, iconic, Australian-made vessels are back on our harbour. We are expecting a long and hot summer, and Freshwater services will be able to deal with the demand because they can carry over 1,000 passengers each trip. Think about it: Under the Liberals none of those ferries would be operating. In fact, they retired the *Queenscliff*. Under their plan passengers would have been left in long lines down the Manly Corso or winding through Circular Quay. Instead, because of our investment, we will be able to meet that summer demand.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Members will also be aware that at the end of September the *Collaroy* was taken out of service, when its licence to operate came to an end. The Government has been very open about the operational and maintenance differences between the *Collaroy* and the rest of the Freshwater fleet but, unlike the former Government, we will not be rushing to retire her. Instead, we have commenced work on a long-term strategy for the future of the F1 Manly route, including consulting with industry to develop potential Freshwater-like electric-powered replacement vessels, because we are committed not only to providing reliable ferry services but also to our zero emissions targets, which include transitioning our ferry fleet. The ferry network was left in a

complete shambles, but because of our investment and commitment we are rebuilding confidence in public transport services, including our ferries.

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (11:34):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Did the Minister or her office seek advice from Federal counterterrorism agencies prior to the rally that took place on Monday 9 October?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:35):** That was not a bad question, given what we have been seeing in this place. I got advice from Acting Commissioner David Hudson, who is an internationally renowned counterterrorism police officer. I have nothing but gratitude and thanks for his advice. He was most certainly speaking with ASIO. He actually told me of a conversation he had had with Tel Aviv that very morning. I believe that we are being advised by the best of the best and I am thankful for the advice we get. We continue to get those briefings on a daily basis. As I said to the member for Bathurst this morning, I extend an invitation to him to receive those briefings, even though he has not asked for one—nor has the Leader of the Opposition.

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

### DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:36):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, representing the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement. Will the Minister provide an update to the House on how the Minns Labor Government is rebuilding domestic manufacturing in New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:36):** I am happy to provide the member for Penrith with an update on how the Minns Government is working to rebuild domestic manufacturing. The Minns Government is backing manufacturing in New South Wales and we want everyone to hear about it. We want workers to know about it, we want businesses to know about it and we want investors to know about it, because that is how serious we are. We are committed to supporting the rebuilding of this State's manufacturing capacity in New South Wales. That capacity was undermined, overlooked and decimated by the previous Government, whose ideological default position was to offshore everything and not back those local manufacturers, despite their high skills and great experience and the high quality of their work. The former Government allowed contracts to go overseas, leaving no stone unturned when it came to offshoring jobs and opportunities.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am pleased to report to the House that that stops with this Government.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It will take time, given that we were left with a decimated manufacturing sector, but we are determined to get it done.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We have a new portfolio and a fantastic new, energetic Minister in Minister Houssos. She is backing domestic manufacturing and procurement, which will drive the return of building things in New South Wales, using government procurement power to boost local jobs.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It will be further backed by the establishment of three TAFE centres of excellence in domestic manufacturing by the fantastic new Minister: one in the Hunter—I know they will love it up there; one in Western Sydney, which is a great place for domestic manufacturing; and one in the mighty Illawarra, because that is where stuff really gets done. Ultimately, the Government's effort to rebuild domestic manufacturing is about jobs and opportunities. If we can create good, well-paid, secure jobs right across the State, we will lay the foundation for a new era of economic growth and opportunity for New South Wales. We will also make sure that we have the domestic capability to manufacture the things we rely on today and the things we will rely on into the future. We are backing the innovation, we are backing capacity and we are backing the fact that manufacturing in New South Wales has a strong track record of delivery and a strong future of delivery under this Government. The past decade was a black hole in terms of support for domestic manufacturing. [*Extension of time*]

Not only did thousands of jobs disappear, but—as we just heard from the Minister for Transport—ferries were not working or delivering to the standard that we want, trains did not fit the track and the light rail was cracked, and that is what members opposite wanted. We want workers, investors and businesses to know that we are backing New South Wales. Members opposite talk down manufacturing in New South Wales, but we are not going to do that. Members opposite let down the people of New South Wales and it resulted in cost overruns and blown out schedules. We are going to bring manufacturing back home and get it back on track.

We are setting a 50 per cent local content target on rail rolling stock. We are establishing the NSW Jobs First Commission, an independent expert body to oversee the implementation of growth of local industries, supporting and advocating for local firms bidding on government tenders. Much of that work will be driven by changes in procurement rules because we are going to require our rules to weight tenders in favour of local manufacturers. One particular member opposite said, "Labor is obsessed with the idea of local production." Guilty as charged: We are obsessed. Why? Because it is jobs, it is opportunity and it is a great future for our kids.

The New South Wales Government spends about \$37 billion per year on goods and services construction with other suppliers. For the first time in this State, the Government will be using its purchasing power to favour local manufacturers. We are committed to leveraging the power of government procurement to promote local jobs and foster our manufacturing industry. We are committed to creating good, well-paid and secure jobs around the State. As part of our critical minerals strategy we will be doing the same.

### GAZA CONFLICT

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:41):** My question is directed to the Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister update the House on the support that the Government is providing to Jewish, Islamic and other communities in light of the ongoing events in the Middle East?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:42):** That is a much more decent question from the shadow Minister for Multiculturalism. I thank him for that. It has been a difficult time since 8 October, and we have seen the challenges within the community. Let us put it into perspective. New South Wales prides itself on being the most successful multicultural community in the world. It is exceptionally important that we work with those communities now. We need to draw upon our deep connections and work through this issue. I will be the first to say that this past week I have made some of the most complicated phone calls of my life. But we cannot give up. Many times we have to cop what comes at us. It is a complex situation.

It is important that in this House we are careful about our question time strategy, our messaging and the things we do in between. It is exceptionally important that we do not inflame the situation. It is incumbent upon us to work hard within our ethnic communities, because people are in pain and the crisis in the Middle East is evolving every day. It is important that we care for the loss of all civilian life and we respect that it is complicated. We need to do our best to ensure that we keep the community intact during this difficult period. The New South Wales Government and Multicultural NSW have been engaging with community leaders since Sunday 8 October 2023. We are extending our sympathies, listening to community perspectives and keeping lines of communication open. Multicultural NSW, the NSW Police Force and the Premier's Department are engaging closely with the Commonwealth agencies to monitor the issue and coordinate community engagement efforts.

I have been amazed by the work of the police and the police Minister throughout this period. There has been no better engagement and connection with our community. I reinforce that. Multicultural NSW has activated the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan, COMPLAN. The work of Joseph La Posta and the whole of Multicultural NSW has been exceptional. COMPLAN draws together New South Wales agencies in a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to managing risks to community harmony. The COMPLAN response includes representatives of the Premier's Department, the Department of Education, the Department of Communities and Justice—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired. I thank the Minister. Members will come to order. I recognise the difficult subject matter that the Minister was dealing with. Before I call the member for Gosford, I welcome Anais Carlyle and Olivia Ryan, students from St Joseph's Catholic College East Gosford who are shadowing the member for Gosford in Parliament today. Welcome.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:46):** I thank the Minister for Multiculturalism. I am sad to disrupt his comments, which are important to the House and to the people of New South Wales. My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government in his capacity representing the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Climate Change, and Minister for Energy. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is protecting the environment?

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Who said that?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:46):** It is amazing how no-one on that side of the House owns up to what they say. It is like what we heard last week. It is the cowards castle. We can see it right there.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** There is a bit here for the member for Hornsby. He should hold on and he will hear about it. I thank the member for Gosford and echo her sentiments about the Minister for Multiculturalism. There is something about class: You cannot fake it. That was the perfect example of the class that is required at this time. The member for Gosford too is an ornament to this Parliament. She is one of the most decent human beings that exists. Since being elected into government seven months ago, this Government has been hard at work turning around the 12 years of neglect from the previous Government.

We on this side know that our economic success is also dependent on our ability to keep our natural environment as healthy as possible. We have handed down a budget that shows a commitment to nature and biodiversity across New South Wales. We have made a funding commitment of \$172 million for koala habitat, including \$80 million for the Great Koala National Park and \$48 million for the Georges River National Park. We introduced the net zero bill last week to enshrine our climate targets. We are not going to just talk about it; we are going to enshrine it in law. I imagine that the Opposition, which talks a big game, will actually walk the walk instead of just talking it. This is being enshrined in legislation, which members opposite did not even dream about doing.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

I will wait for them to say their piece. They will have the opportunity to speak during debate, which they will squib like they often do. There is \$22 million for new field officers for our national parks. We are also transforming the Wolli Creek Regional Park. We are spending \$74 million upgrading visitor infrastructure in national parks. But there is more. We have purchased 4,500 hectares of prime koala habitat near Port Macquarie and acquired a 37,000-hectare property in north-western New South Wales to create a new national park. We have awarded \$6 million in grants to help businesses cut their waste, and we are partnering with the Commonwealth for new plastic recycling infrastructure. [*Extension of time*]

For the first time we have halted logging in the most precious koala habitat in our State forests while we do the work to create the Great Koala National Park. But you would not have known this if you listened to Opposition members. I acknowledge the former Minister, the member for Hornsby, who claimed on Monday that Labor is extending big coal, walking back climate targets and cutting environmental staff. That is an extraordinary claim when, in 10 years, the former Government approved 29 coalmines. As Treasurer, the member for Hornsby left unfunded past 30 June this year 85 biodiversity and conservation jobs in the environment department. If our Government had not stepped in to save the funding for those roles, then future crucial biodiversity work would have stopped.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** They do not like hearing about the things that they did. We are actually exposing what a fraudster you were. In addition to saving those jobs, we are funding additional national parks and 31 roles in biodiversity.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Calling the member for Hornsby a fraudster is unparliamentary.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will remain silent. I place the member for Hornsby on two calls to order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Calling a member of this House a fraudster is unparliamentary. The comment ought to be withdrawn. You have made similar rulings about calling people a liar. It is beyond the pale and it ought to be withdrawn.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I ask the Minister to withdraw the comment.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I withdraw it. I will look the member in the face and apologise for that. Obviously, I am referring to the way that things were talked about and the way that it happened. I apologise. As members know,



that is not normally my style. But it is not about the former Treasurer. It is worth commenting about some of the climate change issues. Last week we were proud to introduce our net zero bill into Parliament. I look forward to the bill coming from the other place in due course. When it comes to nature in New South Wales, we are focused on protecting what is left, restoring what has been lost and making sure that our connections to nature are true at their heart. New South Wales needs to start leading the pack. We are a long way behind. We will work to protect the environment and rebuild the environment in the best way possible.

### ROAD USER CHARGES

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:52):** My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Premier, or his Government, made any representations to the Commonwealth Government about a reduction in petrol excise?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:52):** This is a particularly appropriate question, given the Vanderstock case that has been handed down in Victoria in the past couple of hours. It puts pressure on the New South Wales budget, particularly when it comes to revenue and the road user charges that were applied by the previous Government that generate not just hundreds of millions of dollars but billions of dollars to NSW Treasury. It is an extremely complex ruling. There are, at this early stage, different readings of its full implications for the State's finances.

I do not have much more to say other than that we will have to examine that ruling and then speak to the Commonwealth about how we fund future road projects across the State, particularly in regional New South Wales. I do not have easy answers. The ruling has caught everybody by surprise. In fairness to the previous Government, in the run-up to the election, it identified it as a key risk for the State's finances. Previously, when constitutional change had been decided on by courts, there would be an agreement between the States and the Commonwealth for that revenue to be collected at a Commonwealth level and then remitted to the States. But it is too early. The ruling has just been delivered. As for conversations about revenue between the Commonwealth and the States, we are always asking the Commonwealth for money.

### A-LEAGUE UNITE ROUND

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:54):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is helping to deliver the A-League's first Unite Round?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:54):** This is my favourite question from the member for East Hills, who loves her football and her sport. What a year it has been for football around the world, in Australia and in New South Wales. This year we saw the Matildas do Australia proud, playing in the FIFA Women's World Cup. It reminded us once again of the power of sport and how it is a change-maker in our society. That is what the Matildas did for Australian football this year. They created positive change.

The Government is keeping that inspiring momentum going. Earlier this week, I announced that the New South Wales Government is delivering a \$30 million cash injection to improve grassroots sport facilities for young women and girls through the new Level the Playing Field program. But the momentum for football does not end there. In January 2024 football fans will be treated to a jam-packed three-day sporting extravaganza with the A-League's first ever Unite Round. Unite Round is not just another sporting event. It is a three-day extravaganza that promises to bring together football fans from every corner of Sydney and beyond, from grassroots to the professional level. It unlocks the unpopular deal negotiated by the former Government with the football fraternity and makes good on our promise to maintain the momentum for football in this country.

What makes this Unite Round even more special is that it is not just about men's football or women's football. It is both. It is a full men's and women's round with all 24 teams, and it is happening right here in our city. Unite Round will bring together A-League men's and women's clubs, as well as grassroots competitors from the under-8s to the under-18s.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They are unhappy about this, because this is common sense and involves rolling up our sleeves and fixing things. What can people expect from this incredible Unite Round? It is more than just matches. New South Wales will see a football fiesta. It is a time for families to come together, enjoy the game and celebrate the incredible power of football. It brings people together.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Not divide.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, it does not divide. Football is not just a sport; it is a family event. We have seen the proof of that in events like the FIFA Women's World Cup. Over the next two seasons, Unite Round

is expected to attract over 42,000 people to Sydney and generate millions in visitor expenditure for our local economy. *[Extension of time]*

That is a win for New South Wales, not just for football fans. But beyond the economic benefits, the Unite Round offers something even more profound. It is about inclusivity and creating an environment where everyone, regardless of age or background, can be part of a grand football celebration. It is about bringing our community closer together through the love of the game. Many may say that Sydney is missing out on the grand final. Well, we have had a New South Wales team in the grand final every year for 10 years in the men's and six years in the women's, so chances are we will host the grand final anyway. It has not cost us one cent more, but we are most likely going to get double the bang.

So, Mr Speaker, mark your calendar for 11 January and get ready for a football celebration like no other. Unite Round will be a wonderful way to kick off 2024. I cannot wait to see New South Wales celebrate the sport we love and the unity that it brings. Get into the festival of football during the best time of the year, our holiday season. Even non-sportspeople, like the member for Wahroonga—not Maroubra but Wahroonga—will appreciate this wonderful round of football. So get down and enjoy.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:59):** My question is directed to the Premier. Earlier this year the Victorian water Minister stated that no Victorian water could be bought by the Federal Government as part of its disastrous 450-gigalitre water buyback plan. Victorian regional communities now feel safe and valued; in New South Wales, we do not. Will the Premier act to protect New South Wales regional communities in the same way—especially protecting processing jobs, as we talked about before—or will politics and friendships come before protecting the people of New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:00):** Unfortunately, I have to say friendships rarely trump politics in this place, so the member is probably safe on those grounds. It is a fair question from the member for Murray. It is fair to say that the member has been hammering the Government for a long time about this, not just in question time but also through correspondence and the media, and knocking on and barging through our doors. There has been a constant barrage of clear and direct advocacy from the member for Murray, which I understand—conspicuously, and interestingly, not so much from the National Party on any policy issue; it is the crossbench that asks the questions.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The National Party has spent the entire week asking about police issues and has not asked a single question about water issues. It is up to the member for Murray to come along and say, "What about regional communities, particularly in a drought?" I will say this: Notwithstanding the circumstances around what Victorian Ministers are saying about buybacks, the truth is they cannot make a claim that they will not be subject to 450 gigalitres' worth of buybacks; no State can make that claim. Whether or not they are a party to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, State sub-national governments do not have the power to reject the Commonwealth's advances in relation to this. Given that fundamental point, we made the decision that we had to be part of the process, particularly in relation to negotiations.

From the New South Wales Government's perspective, we do not support water buybacks. The Australian Government's water recovery targets must take place through infrastructure diversion projects and other investments. It is the Federal Government's obligation, not ours. That has been clear. Given the choice that the New South Wales Government was faced with, of not being part of a negotiation regarding the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement but being subject to buybacks in any event, we would rather be at the negotiating table to represent our interests and the interests of primary producers in the Murray and irrigators in the southern region of New South Wales than not be part of it. At the end of the day—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** How can Victoria do it?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I just made it clear that Victoria is not. I do not know how it can make the claim that it is not subject to the 450-gigalitre buybacks, because it cannot; no State can do that. That is the clear advice that has been given to all of us. They are not at the table and negotiating on behalf of their State; that is a matter for them. No-one should leave this Chamber after question time with the belief that the New South Wales Government had the obligation to remove itself from the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement and therefore be immune from buybacks. That is not the situation. Evidently, if that was the situation, then the previous Government surely would have done just that.

**STATE BUDGET AND ILLAWARRA AND THE SOUTH COAST**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast. Will the Minister inform the House on how the Minns Labor Government's first budget delivers for the Illawarra and South Coast communities?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:03):** I thank the member for South Coast. It is great that she has joined our ranks at this year's election, boosting the Illawarra Labor team. She is a fierce advocate for the communities of the South Coast. I acknowledge the nurses and midwives in the public gallery. It is great to have them with us today. I had an opportunity to meet with many of them from the Central Coast. They still have a number of staffing issues up there, which I am working on. I have raised with the member for Gosford, the member for Wyong, the member for The Entrance and the member for Swansea issues around staffing at that hospital.

It is a real honour for all of us to represent the people of the Illawarra and the South Coast. For many of us, it is where we have lived our entire lives. This budget shows our commitment to the people of the Illawarra and the South Coast. For example, in health care we are investing in Bulli Hospital to ensure that its urgent care service goes from the current six days a week to eventually seven days a week. We are investing in Wollongong Hospital, which the member for Wollongong has been a strong advocate for, to improve services and do the planning work for the future of that redeveloped hospital going forward.

The member for Shellharbour has been a fierce, tireless advocate for Shellharbour Hospital, where work will continue over the next few years, and we will start to see that come out of the ground very soon. The member for South Coast, who asked this question, will know very well that her local hospital, Shoalhaven, will be getting an upgrade that is so desperately needed. For the member for Bega, Eurobodalla hospital will be getting significant investment. He has been a fierce advocate and a great Parliamentary Secretary.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Myall Lakes will come to order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The member for Heathcote will know very well the importance of what we are doing around Bulli Hospital to make sure that that urgent care service continues to take the pressure off Wollongong Hospital.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** It is great to see so many of our schools are receiving upgrades and planning upgrades, particularly the mighty Dapto High School, which has produced some unbelievably smart and talented students—and that is just my two sisters. Obviously we are investing in roads, which is important for those of us who live in the Illawarra and the South Coast. [*Extension of time*]

For those living in regional communities, road connection is a key driver of not only passenger movements but also freight movements. We are investing in one of the biggest projects that the Illawarra has seen for some time in the Mount Ousley interchange, which will ensure improved capacity and safety along one of the country's busiest freight corridors. We are investing in the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection, which I know the member for South Coast is particularly interested in. We are also investing in Picton Road, which is another arterial road and freight corridor, as well as roads up and down the Illawarra. We are investing in the planning for the on- and off-ramps at Dapto, which I know that the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wollongong have been strong advocates for. This builds on our investments across key areas of government to ensure that the people of the South Coast and the Illawarra continue to have a growing and thriving community and, most importantly, that they are supported by a government that listens to their needs.

We are a growing community. We are now a very diverse community in terms of our economic agenda going forward. We still have a proud manufacturing base, but we are also innovative. We are concentrating on the next energy waves of the future. The member for Wollongong is doing an enormous amount of work around renewable energy and our renewable energy zone. My colleagues and I will continue to be strong advocates for the people of the Illawarra, the South Coast and the far South Coast in this Chamber because they need and deserve a government that listens to them. They need and deserve a government that will back them, and that is exactly what the Minns Labor Government is doing for the people of the Illawarra and the South Coast.

*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 days after assent as at 18 October 2023.

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL****Inquiry**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General has resolved to conduct its sixteenth general meeting with the Valuer General, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PETITION DEBATE**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** At the request of the member for Sydney, I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to postpone consideration of the petition on paramedics in New South Wales presented by the member for Sydney until Thursday 23 November 2023.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That:

- (1) Michael Joseph Holland be appointed to serve on the Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation in place of Steven James Robert Whan, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

**Motion agreed to.**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL  
HEALTH****Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That Trisha Lee Doyle be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health in place of Steven James Robert Whan, discharged.

**Motion agreed to.**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT****Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That Warren Eric Kirby be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development in place of Steven James Robert Whan, discharged.

**Motion agreed to.**

**STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE****Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That Nathan Matthew Hagarty be appointed to serve on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee in place of Steven James Robert Whan, discharged.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: CENSURE MOTION**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:11):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following procedure for the censure motion moved pursuant to Standing Order 114:

- (1) Mover—Seven minutes
- (2) Member named—Seven minutes
- (3) Two other members of the Opposition—Five minutes each
- (4) One other Government member—Five minutes
- (5) Two members of the crossbench—Five minutes each
- (6) Mover in reply—Three minutes.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:12):** This suspension of standing orders motion is gagging debate.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Under Standing Order 114, the usual time limits given to members in debate are 15 minutes for the mover of the motion, 15 minutes for the member named and five minutes each for four other members, as well as 10 minutes for the member named in response and 10 minutes for the mover in reply. The proposed suspension of standing orders significantly truncates those time periods. The censure motion will raise important and serious matters of public interest. They require proper and full ventilation. This motion, which is seeking to cut debate on the matter, should not be agreed to by the House. In my respectful submission, the appropriate course is for the usual procedure under Standing Order 114 to proceed. They are important matters.

I am very surprised, given the events that have occurred over the past week or so in our State which require a proper scrutiny of the performance of the police Minister, that the Government would be seeking to stifle debate in the manner proposed. We have seen a very poor response to questions. There could be no more serious matter than a censure of a Minister for misleading the House and yet the Government is seeking to silence proper scrutiny in the people's House—the House that represents all of the people of New South Wales, where all of the members are directly elected by the people of New South Wales. The standing orders should be respected. They have a purpose and, in my contention, should stand. This suspension of standing orders should be rejected by the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:15):** In reply: I do not remember a time in the past 11 years that I have been a member of this House when those opposite in government did not truncate debate on a censure motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Manager of Opposition Business was mostly heard in silence by Government members.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Not once do I recall the former Government over the past 11 years that I have been a member of this House not suspending standing orders to truncate debate when a censure motion was moved. The reality is that what the member for Wahroonga just said is the height of hypocrisy. He himself has misled the House. He himself should be subject to a censure motion and should not spew the rubbish that comes out of his mouth simply because he wants to demonstrate his great ability to be the future Opposition leader.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I will tell the member for Wahroonga this: You are not in Speako's class. I wish the member for Wahroonga would actually read the standing orders before he advocates his great knowledge of the procedures of this House because, if he could count—and he obviously cannot count, because Speako is the leader—he would be able to work out that, in the suspension of standing orders I have moved, more speakers will contribute to debate than are provided for in the standing orders.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The motion that I have moved provides for only one member of the Government to contribute in addition to the member named, while it provides for two members of the Opposition and two members of the crossbench to contribute. I do not know how much fairer we could be. The only thing we are doing is providing for an extra speaker and truncating debate because the censure motion will basically take the place of Government business. All it is going to do is eat up Government business time. If members opposite really wanted to have an extended debate, they could have put it in the order of business for tomorrow.

If they wanted to, I could have given them unlimited speakers and we could have talked about it all day tomorrow. If they wanted to do it on private members' day, we would have done it on private members' day. But the reality is the Government has taken the view that matters of censure are extremely important. They should be debated straightaway. That is the basis on which I have moved this motion—simply to allow more speakers to

contribute and to allow this House to treat a censure motion with the seriousness that it is intended in all the circumstances.

I ask that members who participate in debate on the censure motion consider the words of the Minister for Multiculturalism about the difficulties our community currently faces. This is a very vulnerable time not only for people around the world but also for all of us in the community. Although members of the Opposition would hardly see me as impartial in relation to these difficulties, I am conscious of the need for us to preserve unity within our community and the multicultural society that we and all those before us have contributed to. The Opposition wants to hold the police Minister to account for what it perceives to be her substantial failure. While it is entitled to hold the Government to account, I say to the Opposition that it should deal with the matter in all seriousness and remember the vulnerability of our community and our joint responsibility to preserve harmony in our great society.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I put the question, I note this is a very serious matter. I draw the attention of members to the standing orders, as was raised by the member for Wahroonga, and note that they also allow for a suspension of those standing orders. In this case, nothing untoward has been put forward by either side. It is a matter for the House to determine how it wishes to apportion its time.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....52  
Noes .....34  
Majority.....18

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Hannan, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D

O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Regan, M  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Watson, A  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

#### NOES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T

Kean, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)

Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Kemp, M  
Li, J  
Minns, C

Washington, K  
Di Pasqua, S  
Cooke, S

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** Members will leave the Chamber quietly to allow the Leader of the Opposition to move his motion. Members will behave with the appropriate decorum in debate on this difficult matter.

*Motions***MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM****Censure**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:28):** I move:

That this House censures the member for Swansea, as the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism:

- (1) For her failure to take any action to provide the Jewish community at the Opera House on 9 October 2023 with "a place and a space for that community to come together to commemorate the horrific scenes that we've seen in Israel" and instead telling a Jewish community leader that the Jewish community should stay away from the Sydney CBD that night.
- (2) For telling a Jewish community leader on 9 October 2023, "Maybe it'll just be easier if we don't light the Opera House to protect you people".
- (3) For misleading the House on 12 and 17 October 2023 by her denials.
- (4) For her failure to apologise for (1) above until the evening of 12 October 2023, if at all.
- (5) For failing to understand her powers under the Police Act 1990.
- (6) For refusing ever to give a direction to the Commissioner for Police to keep our streets safe.
- (7) For her absence of transparency with the public about the tasing of Clare Nowland.

In moving this motion, I am cognisant of the remarks of the Leader of the House about this debate being conducted against a background of heightened community sensitivity. We all, in a multipartisan way, need to make sure that nothing we say or do in this debate undermines community safety and cohesion at this stressful time. I am also cognisant of the remarks of the Minister for Multiculturalism in question time today. We asked that question because we want to make it clear that we need unity when it comes to community cohesion and safety. It is why I also acknowledge the appropriateness of the apology that the Premier gave twice last week, once at a press conference and once at a rally of Jewish people at Dover Heights. It was an appropriate and I believe heartfelt apology.

However, as I think the Leader of the House said, that does not mean that we should not be hold the Government to account when there has been a failure by a Minister to perform their duties. All members would agree that the scenes we saw on the steps of the Opera House—our most iconic location—last Monday night were appalling. A well-intentioned gesture to light up the Opera House sails in solidarity with the Jewish community and those victims of horrific terrorism in the Middle East turned into a debacle. We saw scenes we thought we would never see in Australia: the lighting of flares, the burning of a flag and the chanting of the most revolting antisemitic remarks. All members agree this is horrific.

The Jewish community was told to stay away, notwithstanding that it had pleaded with the Minister to be allowed to gather at the Opera House. On 12 October Sharri Markson confirmed that the Minister had several telephone conversations and other communications with the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies president on Monday afternoon. Ms Markson stated on her Sky News program:

Catley told Ossip and I quote: "Maybe it'll just be easier if we don't light the Opera House to protect you people."

She also reported the Minister as saying:

It would be better not to light the Opera House in the blue and white of the Israeli flags and told leaders that Jewish families should stay out of the CBD, saying that she wouldn't send her own children to the protest.

On 13 October Ben Fordham on 2GB noted:

David Ossip is not talking publicly about the phone call, but I can confirm that he was left in no doubt that Yasmin Catley didn't think it was a good idea for Jewish people to be out and about. According to Sharri's sources, which I've confirmed independently, David Ossip needed convincing that this was the right call.

On 12 October *The Daily Telegraph* reported:

According to sources familiar with those discussions, Mr Ossip argued with Ms Catley about the security advice urging the community to stay out of the CBD and not attend the Opera House for their own safety.

Last week the Minister was asked about this a couple of times. She refused to give a straight answer on 11 October, and on 12 October she denied saying that. Yesterday, when I asked her whether she had misled the House, she again denied it. She also denied telling Jewish community leaders, "Maybe it's easier if we don't light the Opera House to protect you people." There is an obvious conflict regarding what happened.

Who do members believe? Do they believe a Minister who is fighting to keep her portfolio, who is under fire and who obviously has a self-interest in one version of events? Or do they believe a Jewish community that has absolutely no reason to do anything other than to tell the truth? Do they believe a Minister who issued a statement on Thursday night when the apology she gave—or sort of gave—in that statement was all over the place? At that stage she did not deny having said "you people"; that was a follow-up denial later by her spokesperson, and eventually a denial in the House.

On multiple occasions in this House the Minister has been invited to give her apology, alongside the Premier's, for what happened on the steps of the Opera House—and she consistently refused to do so. On two occasions she said, "I'm sorry if anyone feels scared", or words to that effect, but never apologised for what happened on the steps. Yet in her statement on Thursday night she claimed to have apologised. That inconsistency goes to the believability of this Minister.

She failed in her duty. Of course a police Minister should not be holding the shields and personally stopping the riot, but we expect a Minister to ask her Commissioner of the NSW Police Force—or the most senior police officer available—to do everything they can to stop the sort of event that happened at the Opera House. We knew that the protest was going ahead at Town Hall. It was not a spontaneous decision to march to the Opera House; they knew that was going to happen. There were social media tiles and publicity about this protest and attendance was promoted by The Greens, yet nothing was done to stop the mob descending on the Opera House and chanting the most disgusting things. The absence of the police Minister indicating, under interrogation in this House, what she did to try to stop that happening indicates she did nothing at all.

This is a failure by the police Minister. As I have said, she has misled the House. She failed to give a proper apology; maybe there was a sort-of apology on Thursday night. In question time she appeared to be unaware that she has a general power under the Police Act 1990 to give directions. She now says, "I'm not going to give any such direction about how police keep people safe on the streets." Of course she is not going to give day-to-day operational directions. But if the Premier can say to the media that a violent protest is not going to happen on Sunday and have discussions with the police about that, why could the Minister not do that?

Then there is the unfortunate episode surrounding the tragic tasering of Clare Nowland. I will not comment on the actual incident, which is before the courts. However, it took 36 hours for the critical incident team to meet with Ms Nowland's family. We do not know whether that was the first occasion at which the family knew about the tasering; their absence of knowledge about the tasering is said to be the reason for the delay. In her response to this motion, the Minister needs to tell members what role she had in the initial release and why it took 54 hours for a statement about the tasering to finally be made public. For these reasons, as regrettable as it is and against the backdrop of community sensitivity and tension, this House should censure the Minister.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:35):** I reiterate that what we saw on the steps of the Opera House last Monday was abhorrent. Members of the Jewish community should never feel unsafe in their own city. The NSW Police Force, with the backing of myself and the New South Wales Government, is doing everything it can to ensure that the community is safe. While the Opposition chooses to play politics with community safety, the NSW Police Force has been out doing its job. It has stood up Operation Shelter to coordinate the response and gather all intelligence available in relation to protest activity.

The police response has been extensive. There was an estimated crowd of 6,000 people at the event in Hyde Park on Sunday, including many family groups and representatives from across the wider community. During that high-visibility policing operation, more than 1,000 police were deployed across the city to help manage crowds and provide safety for everybody in that environment. Police have also established Strike Force Mealing to investigate offences at the Opera House. Those officers are meticulously reviewing hundreds of hours of footage of those disgraceful events that members saw. This work is painstaking and time-consuming, but it is absolutely necessary in order to gather evidence and to bring offenders to the court.

Late last night I was advised that police have charged two men over an alleged assault near the Opera House during last Monday's event. They have been charged with common assault and granted strict conditional bail to appear in Downing Street Local Court on Wednesday 8 November. In relation to Sunday's rally at Hyde Park, I am advised that a man has been charged over alleged offensive comments made at the scene of the protest



activity at the weekend. There has been, and continues to be, extensive engagement with the community both by the NSW Police Force and, of course, through the wonderful Multicultural NSW.

These continued attacks on the police are simply outrageous when those officers are working around the clock to keep our community safe. Last week the NSW Police Force ran Operation Amarok, which targeted some of the State's most dangerous domestic violence offenders. During Operation Amarok IV, New South Wales police officers engaged with high-risk domestic violence offenders on—wait for it—2,755 occasions. They made 421 arrests and laid 768 charges. Under Task Force Magnus—another taskforce that got going at the same time—the NSW Police Force has been cracking down on organised crime. There have been arrests, and seizures of weapons and illegal drugs.

We are focused on supporting our police to keep the community safe. Just today, and after the Leader of the Opposition got to his feet to move this shameful motion, I was gladdened to receive a message from the NSW Police Association, which told me that I have its full support. In regard to paragraph (7), I have been totally transparent with the public and the media around the tragic Clare Nowland incident. To say otherwise is an outrageous slur. Those opposite have politicised this tragedy for their own political gain. I think it is important that we hear from the director-general of ASIO. I will quote his reflections. He said:

... it is important that all parties consider the implications for social cohesion when making public statements. As I have said previously, words matter. ASIO has seen direct connections between inflamed language and inflamed community tensions.

...

We do see a direct correlation between language that inflames tension and out of that tension does grow a small number of people who think violence is the answer. It's something that we all have to be mindful of, and that's for all Australians to play their part.

It was reported today that when asked whether this was a message for Australian politicians—some of whom have been accused of stoking tensions with their rhetoric—he replied that it was "for everybody". I encourage those seeking to foster division to heed his words, and to step up and show leadership in this place and in their communities. Every question that has been asked of me by the Opposition over the past two sitting weeks suggests the fundamental implication that they do not trust the judgement or the professionalism of the NSW Police Force. Those opposite have not even asked me for a briefing from the police on this very important matter. This proves the very fact that the Leader of the Opposition is an imposter. This is the biggest issue that he has faced as Leader of the Opposition, and his response proves that he has failed in his leadership.

**The SPEAKER:** I will call members to speak in the debate in accordance with the terms of the motion moved by the Leader of the House. However, I now call the member for Newtown.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:42):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak against this censure motion. Censure motions should be used sparingly and seriously. They certainly should never be weaponised or used for base political pointscoring. This censure motion is beyond disgraceful on that level. This censure motion, and the entire approach of the Opposition in question time for this past sitting fortnight, is nothing short of shameful. On the other side of the world, many civilians have lost, and continue to lose, their lives. The devastation, displacement and death continue. Here in New South Wales, our communities are grieving. They are living in a constant state of anxiety. They are experiencing trauma and re-trauma as a result of the indiscriminate attacks raining down on Gaza and the tragic loss of civilian lives as a result of the attacks on civilians in Palestine and Israel. They are feeling the pain of having lost loved ones or being out of contact with them as a result of horrific acts of violence.

We are also seeing reports here and around the world of increased Islamophobia and antisemitism. I note the Minister's comments in relation to the warning from police for people not to use inflamed language. The result of this is further harm and hurt. There is a privilege associated with those who are able to speak in this place or in society about international issues without feeling the racism, discrimination and vitriol that rains down on people in this country who are not white. In the wake of these events, the fact that the Opposition is seeking to use this censure motion to weaponise this horrific, unspeakable unfolding humanitarian and human rights disaster for its own domestic political agenda, and seeking to undermine the police Minister in the process, is nothing short of shameful.

The fact that the Opposition is focusing on and amplifying the unacceptable, antisemitic activities of a tiny minority at the Opera House last week, instead of focusing on the thousands of peaceful community members who gathered together either in Hyde Park or at Dover Heights to express their grief and despair at the humanitarian and human rights crisis that is unfolding, is amplifying the voices of far-right extremism. That will hurt us all and society. No-one who is grieving, no-one who is watching in horror at what is unfolding right now in Palestine and no-one who is experiencing antisemitism or Islamophobia here in New South Wales or around the globe is benefiting or taking any comfort from the actions of the Opposition. The only thing they are serving right now is their own personal political interests, and it is despicable.

While we in The Greens may have concerns about the unchecked powers of the New South Wales police and may differ in our views on the role of police and the police Minister, this censure motion is just the latest attempt by the Opposition to play the person and not the ball. It is disgraceful. The Greens do not support the censure motion, and we urge the Opposition to stop using such an horrific global humanitarian crisis and disaster for its own political gain. Opposition members should start thinking about the impacts of them referring repeatedly to the horrific comments that were made last week, and the ongoing re-traumatisation that has for communities. The whipping up and amplifying of far-right and neo-Nazi messages does not just harm the Jewish community here. It also harms the peace and community that we are all here to represent.

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:47):** In contributing to this motion, I will reference comments that I made in this Chamber yesterday in response to a very inflammatory question asked during question time. I will also reference comments made by the Minister for Multiculturalism in question time today, comments made by the Leader of the House during debate on today's suspension motion and the contribution of the member for Newtown. I choose my words very carefully, and it would be wise for other members to do the same. This motion needs to be called out for what it is. Hearts are breaking across the world because there is a war on the other side of the world. There are people throughout our country and, more importantly for us as New South Wales parliamentarians, in this State who are directly impacted by what is happening on the other side of the world. For the many people we represent it is not theoretical; it is their family. For some people in this Chamber it is their family and the people they represent. For some people that we represent in New South Wales it is generational trauma. The alternative government of the State of New South Wales is using this conflict to stoke tension in our community—I am sorry, but it has to be called out.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Members opposite are proving my point by their actions right now. This does not sit comfortably with some members of the Opposition, who represent communities that this is genuinely traumatising for—on every side of this very complex, generations-long conflict. I have never experienced this, but I am fairly sure that if people are impacted by what they are seeing on their television screens, if they are desperately trying to get hold of people on the other side of the world who are being impacted by this conflict, if they have been impacted by war or if they have served in a war, they need leadership from their members of Parliament and for us to work together.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will calm down and cease interjecting. The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Only members on one side of the House are interjecting. Opposition members are showing their true colours. For many of the decent people across the Chamber, this is disgusting behaviour on the part of the Opposition. What is our role in this? We are the State Government. Our role is to maintain community harmony. As the Leader of the House said today—and I note that he has personal skin in the game—"Let us reflect on our words and what they mean to the people we represent." We support the New South Wales police. The motion moved by those opposite is absolutely ludicrous. We support the actions of the police to maintain law and order in a very difficult environment. You will not die wondering whether this Government's commitment is to community harmony in New South Wales. We proudly stand by the communities of New South Wales, instead of stoking fear, tension and hatred in them.

**Business interrupted.**

#### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:53):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following routine of business:

- (1) The consideration of the motion of censure currently being debated to continue until its conclusion.
- (2) At the conclusion of the debate on the motion of censure, the House to consider committee reports – take-note debates for up to 30 minutes, then the Speaker leaves the chair.

I move the motion to ensure that the one o'clock hard cut-off does not interrupt debate and it can proceed to conclusion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the motion be agreed.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions***MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM****Censure****Business resumed.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** A number of media representatives are present for this debate. I ask all members to take care and cease interjecting.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:54):** I support the censure motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I do so with some personal perspectives. My electorate of Vaucluse has one of the biggest Jewish populations in the country. About 20 per cent of people identify as being of Jewish faith. The population is much larger when secular Jews are considered and people who still to this day are uncomfortable identifying themselves as Jews in the census. They go to schools that are surrounded by barbed wire. Their places of worship, their synagogues, are always heavily fortified and guarded because the threat is ever-present. Over the past week or so many of them have told me that they have very genuine fears for their safety, to a level that they have not experienced since World War II. It is terrible. The Jewish community has been absolutely shaken to the core, not only because of the events of 7 October by Hamas but also because of what has happened here in Sydney and the response from some sectors of the community. Their safety has felt compromised and they felt like no-one was in charge. The Minister has said that we are attacking the police. We are not attacking the police. We are not, as the Minister has said, undermining their judgement or their professionalism.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. Government members will cease interjecting. They are not helping the situation.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** We are not censuring the police, questioning their judgement or professionalism, or undermining their credibility. We have moved this motion because we are questioning the Minister's credibility. While we talk about suggestions of credibility, I refuse to take lessons on moral judgement from The Greens, the very people who invited and incited people to go to this rally. People in my community have told me that, while they appreciated the genuine outreach and words of respect from the Premier, they felt that the police Minister was out of her depth. Let me be very clear: When the police Minister fails the Jewish community, she is failing every one of us. That is why we are speaking in debate on this motion. Police Ministers are supposed to provide leadership and law and order. They are advocates for what is right and good, they promote accountability and trust, and they should be decisive in a crisis. But the current Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism has demonstrated none of that. She has left us with no option but to move this censure motion. When the Government lit up the Opera House sails and then told the Jewish community to stay away, when it provided safe passage, effectively, for protestors to reach the Opera House—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. I will call the member for Blue Mountains to order if she continues to interject.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** The Government provided safe passage, effectively, for protestors who chanted antisemitic messages such as, "Gas the Jews" and lit flares. When those images were beamed around the world and when the only person who was arrested was a peaceful Jewish man, surely the police Minister should admit that was an abject failure of her leadership. I asked her in this place if she would apologise for that. She said, "Of course I apologise to anyone if they feel unsafe." That is not a real apology. An apology extracted under pressure, with a waiver, and in those circumstances does not feel genuine. The Minister herself said that words matter. Where were her words? Yesterday she denied that she referred to the Jewish community as "you people", yet members of the Jewish community have no reason to lie. Sharri Markson from Sky News has no reason to lie.

*[Government members interjected.]*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I will wait for Government members to come to order.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Let us not forget that Sharri Markson is a well-connected and respected member of the Jewish community in the eastern suburbs as well as a journalist. Who is telling the truth? We do not know, and that further undermines the confidence in, and credibility of, the police Minister.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Blue Mountains, the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Shellharbour will cease interjecting or they will be called to order.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** This is not her first failure of judgement; it is one in a series of failures of judgement. I do not stand here just for my community in the eastern suburbs. I do not stand here just for the Jewish community. I stand here for all people in New South Wales who deserve to feel safe and who deserve leadership in this space.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:00):** The world is going through a terrible time. The unspeakable horrors that we are seeing in the Middle East are breaking hearts around the world. The terror and trauma that the horrific attack by terrorist organisation Hamas on Israel created and the lives that it ended are unspeakable. We know today that in Palestine a hospital full of innocent people has been bombed. How is the New South Wales Parliament dealing with this? We are dealing with a censure motion in which the evidence is reporting from a third-hand source that the Leader of the Opposition would be embarrassed to use in a court of law. We are dealing with a motion that is seeking to stoke further division in our own community at a very difficult and tense time.

In consulting a number of my Independent colleagues on the crossbench, we are horrified by what we are witnessing in this place every question time. Our Parliament should be coming together, showing leadership, bringing people together and supporting communities in need. Instead, the Opposition is engaging in a great deal of political pointscoring, and that comes at a cost. The protest referenced in the censure motion occurred in my electorate. I have a great deal of faith in the NSW Police Force and in its ability to manage protests, which happen all the time in our global city. I have participated in protests and I have been protested against—

**Mr Matt Kean:** It's about the police Minister.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I do not need to be interrupted and lectured to by the member for Hornsby during debate on this very intense censure motion.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! This is my final warning to the member for Hornsby.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** The interjections by the member for Hornsby are an example of exactly the behaviour that we should not be seeing at this time, and many members of the crossbench are completely disgusted by it. As I was saying, we know what happens in protests in the city. We know the difficult role that the NSW Police Force has to undertake on any given day. When there is a protest linked to an international conflict where there has been a terrorist attack, the Police Force is under increased scrutiny at an increasingly tense moment. The police did a great job, as best they could, in de-escalating the situation. But what we are not saying is that things could have been a lot worse.

We know that angry and aggravated people were a part of the protest that occurred. Although the scenes we saw at the Opera House were horrific, the things that were said were horrific, and the burning of a flag should always be condemned, what happened could have been much worse. We certainly do not want a situation where the forward commanders who are dealing with the crowds are somehow compelled to constantly call the police Minister to seek her approval and guidance. We have to be able to trust our police to deal with these difficult situations in difficult times.

What we need from this place is more of the leadership that we saw from people like the member for Davidson in his motion last week. We need the leadership that we saw from the member for Oatley in his question today. We need the leadership that we saw from the member for Riverstone in his private member's statement last night, which I urge all members to read. We need the leadership that we saw from the Minister for Multiculturalism.

In reflecting the views of the member for Wakehurst, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Orange and the member for Barwon, the one thing that this censure motion does do is give us the opportunity to express our confidence in the police Minister, to show our confidence in the NSW Police Force, and to call on all members of this Parliament to put politics aside and to promote harmony. The world is going to become a tougher place. The images we are going to see will be more horrific and heartbreaking. We have to raise the tone for the sake of our communities.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (13:06):** I support the censure motion. I do not do so lightly, but it is a serious issue when we look at law and order in this State, when we see gang warfare in Western Sydney, when we see shootings continue to take place, when we look at issues around racial vilification, when we see police shortages across New South Wales and when we see crime rates escalating in regional communities. We need strong leadership. We need somebody front and centre, who is able to tackle the issues facing our communities. There is not one person in this place who does not want to live in a safe community. There is not one person in

this place who does not want to ensure that there is confidence in the work that our police do. But we need someone who will stand up and provide leadership in that particular role.

Last week we saw some of the most disgusting displays of antisemitism in this State and in this country. They were horrific, disgraceful and disgusting. It was un-Australian. I note the Premier is not in the Chamber, but I acknowledge that he decided to light the Sydney Opera House sails in the colours of the Israeli flag to show the State's support for the victims of attacks that we saw overseas. Those scenes were barbaric and horrific. They have been awful. I do not think anybody denies the horrific nature of those scenes of innocent victims overseas.

However, we cannot deny the fact that the Jewish community was not given the chance to reflect, mourn and come together at the Opera House. They were denied a safe space. A mob descended on the Opera House. They sang chants of hatred. They lit flares. They burnt an Israeli flag. That is unacceptable in this country, and many people in our community still say, "I can't believe that this happened on the steps of the Opera House." Once the decision was made to light up the Opera House sails, the Government and the police Minister needed to be front and centre. They needed to be front and centre to ensure that the communities were strongly communicated with about what was going on. People needed to know that there was a safe space for everybody in that particular area. The police Minister has done very little in this space to communicate about planning and preparation. She has also done very little to provide community confidence in this area.

We all acknowledge that our police do everything they can to ensure that there is law and order to protect our citizens, but they need their Minister to stand up, to stand with them and to support them and not be in the background and go missing in action. She needs to be front and centre. I say to the Minister that she has one of the most important roles in the Government and she should never underestimate it. It is a huge role that comes with enormous responsibility and it is vital for the safety and security of people in this State, irrespective of their race, culture or beliefs.

The police Minister is responsible for 22,000 people, around 18,000 of whom are the men and women in blue. It is the largest police force in the country. The police Minister plays an important role in communicating with the community, and that bridge between the Government and the community is not happening. I support this censure motion because people in our communities are not feeling safe. Kids are not going to school; people are not leaving their homes. We talk about community harmony, but that needs strong leadership, which we are not seeing in a role that is so critical and pivotal to providing confidence in this State.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (13:11):** In reply: Instead of engaging with the subject matter of the censure motion, the Minister and other speakers on her side basically chose to engage in character assassinations of members of the Opposition. We are not here to stoke tension; we are here to hold the Minister to account.

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** Last week the Minister told the House, "My responsibility is to keep law and order in New South Wales as the police Minister." We have bent over backwards to avoid inflammatory language.

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** Every utterance we have made is about community cohesion, community safety and community tension. But the Minister, by her failure, has unleashed that tension and fear in New South Wales, whether in the Jewish community or more broadly. The Minister cannot hide behind slurs and character assassinations.

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

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** We heard all about the police initiatives since this dreadful episode—what they are doing about domestic violence, for example—but never did the Minister engage with the seven elements of the motion. In her speech never did she deny the allegations about what she told the Jewish community, never did she address her misleading of the House and, yet again, never did she give a proper apology to Jewish people who were traumatised by what happened on the steps of the Opera House. She also did not explain what powers she has under the Police Act. Instead, the Minister gave a set speech about what the police have done in a whole lot of areas since Monday last week but failed to engage with the censure motion.

The Minister is clearly out of her depth. She is not up to the critical job of being the police and counterterrorism Minister. It is a time of heightened tension, and people are traumatised by what they are seeing on television in Gaza and Israel, where many people have family connections. We are not trying to inflame that tension, but the fact it exists does not mean that we as the Opposition should not do our job of holding the Minister

accountable. If she is not up to the job, then the Premier needs to cut the community's losses, let her go and put in someone who is up to the job. I commend the censure motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....52  
Majority.....18

#### AYES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T

Kean, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)

Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

#### NOES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Hannan, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C

O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Regan, M  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Watson, A  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

#### PAIRS

Cooke, S  
Di Pasqua, S  
Kemp, M

Li, J  
Kaliyanda, C  
Washington, K

**Motion negatived.**

#### *Petitions*

#### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to an ePetition signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Prue Car—Bungendore High School—lodged 13 September 2023 (Mr Steve Whan)

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

The Hon. Rose Jackson—Yass Valley Water Supply—lodged 13 September 2023 (Mrs Wendy Tuckerman)

**The SPEAKER:** Pursuant to the earlier resolution, the House will proceed with orders of the day (committee reports).

### *Committees*

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:22):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as the chair of the Legislation Review Committee, which tabled its sixth digest yesterday. In *Legislation Review Digest No. 6/58*, the committee examined 10 bills and two regulations. In this instance, the regulations did not require comment. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced in Parliament and all regulations subject to disallowance against a set of issues set out in the Legislation Review Act 1987. The committee's scrutiny of legislation is intended to inform members of both Houses and the community about the potential impact of legislation on personal rights and liberties, and whether they enable the inappropriate use of government or legislative power.

I draw the attention of members to some of the key issues raised in the digest. The Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 seeks to make amendments to strata schemes and community land legislation to implement recommendations made in a report by the Department of Customer Service in November 2021. The amendments aim to provide a regulatory framework to create, terminate and manage both strata schemes and community land schemes. One main amendment clarifies the meaning of a conflict of interest and a pecuniary interest for those persons that are part of a strata committee or strata renewal committee, or a person elected to one of those committees.

Along with clarifications, the amendments seek to create voting limits and restrictions on the use of proxy votes, power of attorney or company nominees to stamp out perceived abuse of process. The committee discussed the partial commitments of this provision by proclamation. In considering this issue, it noted that the bill was part of a tranche of changes to the relevant legislation, which would account for flexibility in the start date. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The Defamation Amendment Bill 2023 seeks to implement nationally agreed changes to the law of defamation in two main areas. First, the amendments intend to strike a greater balance of responsibility for defamatory content posted online. They propose a conditional statutory exemption from defamation liability for digital intermediaries, including caching, conduit or storage services, along with search engine providers. Second, the bill expands the defence of absolute privilege. The committee noted that the exemption from defamation liability does not include a clear reference to whether the defence of knowledge applies. The bill inserts a safeguard allowing the courts to step in and make orders against non-party digital intermediaries. However, the committee noted that this area can be problematic when a complainant is unable to identify the author of the original content or when they are located outside the jurisdiction of the court. Ultimately, the committee referred the right to protect reputation and the subsequent lack of available remedies to Parliament for its consideration.

The committee noted the further issue of the extension of absolute privilege, which may infringe on the right to protect reputation. Ultimately, the bill expands the circumstances where absolute privilege is available as a defence to a defendant in defamation proceedings. The amendments provide a defence for a defendant who has published defamatory material to a specified police officer or official. The committee acknowledged that the policy rationale surrounding this expansion is to protect the privacy of certain vulnerable persons, thereby removing a potential barrier for persons such as victim-survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault in coming forward to a police officer.

Finally, the Surveillance Devices Amendment (Public Interest Exemptions) Bill 2023 seeks to create a public interest exemption for certain offences under the Surveillance Devices Act 2007. The committee recognised that the bill's intention is to allow individuals to report on matters in the public interest, without being subject to penalty. However, the committee noted that there were no safeguards in place that limit information being published or allowances for challenge or review of that information. The committee noted that the amendments may impact on an individual's right to privacy. The exemption could permit individuals, like journalists, to publish personal information obtained unlawfully. The committee referred the issue of an individual's right to privacy to

Parliament for its consideration. I encourage all members to read the full digests, which are available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest and, as always, the secretariat for its exceptional support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:27):** I make a contribution to the debate to take note of *Legislation Review Digest No. 6/58*. Before I begin, I welcome to the gallery Muswellbrook mayor Steven Reynolds and Katie from Muswellbrook Shire Council. It is good to see them. The Legislation Review Committee looks into personal rights and liberties associated with bills and regulations and makes an assessment on them. The committee looked at 10 bills and two regulations and made a number of comments, particularly about amendments to strata scheme legislation and the perceived abuse of that process. It is about getting the right balance between strengthening our strata schemes and protecting the rights of individuals.

The Defamation Amendment Bill 2023 also tries to strike a balance between protecting the rights of individuals and those who have been defamed. The Surveillance Devices Amendment (Public Interest Exemptions) Bill 2023 seeks to ensure that regulations to protect people against crime and maintain law and order are balanced against the right of individuals to privacy in going about their normal business. The committee looked at a number of bills and regulations. I thank the secretariat and I acknowledge the work of the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

**The SPEAKER:** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

### *Bills*

## **CRIME AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:31):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Crime and Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill will introduce several amendments across legislation relating to crime and criminal procedure in New South Wales. The amendments will enhance legislation by providing clarity and updates to the law where needed, rectifying inconsistencies and supporting the operation of agencies across the criminal justice system. In particular, the amendments will support the operation of youth and adult correctional centres; improve and clarify existing protections for victims; add efficiency, clarity and consistency into criminal justice processes; and provide necessary updates to both the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 and the Digital Evidence Access Order Scheme. Laws relating to crime and criminal procedure are critical to protecting community safety and maintaining the integrity of the justice system. Updating legislation through regular review and amendment is an important process to ensure that laws remain fit for purpose and keep pace with developments in the community and the legal system.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 to rectify an inconsistency between provisions relating to orders for the release on parole of a juvenile offender and the discharge of a juvenile offender at the end of their sentence. Section 50 (2) and (3) of the Act will be amended to clarify that a juvenile offender who is being released on parole can also be subject to the early discharge provisions under section 31 of the Act. Streamlining these provisions will prevent incorrect discharge from detention.

Items [1] to [7] of schedule 2 to the bill will amend the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to provide that the release of any inmate from custody can be delayed at the inmate's request or with their consent and to make some consequential amendments. Section 8 (2A) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 currently allows the release of an inmate to be delayed by up to four days if there is a good reason to delay the release, such as a lack of transport for the inmate, and if the inmate requests or consents to the delay. Section 8 (2A) only applies to convicted inmates whose sentences are about to expire. No other inmates, as defined in the Act, including inmates on remand, inmates released under mental health orders or inmates who successfully appeal a custodial sentence, can request to have their release from custody delayed. Inmates subject to unscheduled release are often not released until the evening and may not have access to immediate support such as transport, accommodation, medication and food. Allowing their release to be delayed can allow appropriate arrangements



to be made. This amendment will ensure that any inmate, and not just convicted inmates whose sentences are about to expire, can request or consent to have their release from custody delayed.

Item [8] of schedule 2 will amend section 44 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to provide discretion for the governor of a New South Wales correctional centre to accept or refuse a transfer from the Australian Capital Territory. Section 44 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 currently requires the governor of a New South Wales correctional centre to accept a full-time detainee from the ACT into New South Wales custody. As the provision dates from a time when there was no operational correctional centre in the ACT, and correctional services for offenders convicted in the ACT were provided by Corrective Services NSW, it does not provide governors with the discretion to refuse a transfer. With the opening of the Alexander Maconochie Centre in 2008, operated by ACT Corrective Services, it is no longer necessary to impose a mandatory requirement upon Corrective Services NSW to accept a full-time detainee from the ACT into New South Wales custody. The proposed amendment to section 44 therefore provides the governor of a New South Wales correctional centre with a discretion to accept or refuse an incoming transfer. This will allow them to refuse unsuitable transfers from the ACT.

Item [9] of schedule 2 will repeal section 175 (1A) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, which relates to the State Parole Authority's power to rescind a previous revocation of an intensive correction order. Paragraph (b) of section 175 (1A), which is the only remaining paragraph of section 175 (1A), refers to section 163 (4) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. Prior to sentencing reforms enacted in 2018, section 163 (4) stated that the State Parole Authority must revoke certain reinstated intensive correction orders. Section 163 (4) no longer provides the State Parole Authority with the means of revoking an intensive correction order. There is no equivalent to the former section 163 (4) in the current iteration of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, and it appears that the reference to this section in section 175 (1A) (b) has been retained in error. The amendment repeals section 175 (1A) to rectify this error.

Items [10] to [18] of schedule 2 to the bill will amend the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to allow a person who is not a victim of an offender, but who can demonstrate that their life or safety is reasonably expected to be endangered because of a connection between them and the offender, to be registered as an "interested person" under the Victims Register and receive the same information regarding the offender that is provided to victims, if they make an application to do so. Under section 279 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, eligible victims of an offender who is serving a sentence of imprisonment can request to be recorded on the Victims Register and receive notice of matters relating to the offender which are prescribed by the Act, including changes to the offender's earliest possible release date, the death or escape of the offender and parole decisions relating to the offender.

Proposed new section 279A will allow the Commissioner for Corrective Services, upon application by a person, to record the person as an interested person in the Victims Register if satisfied that the person's life or safety is reasonably expected to be endangered because of a connection between the person and the offender. This will allow interested persons to be provided with the same information that is provided to registered victims and therefore provide a means by which they can obtain relevant information to implement appropriate safety measures. New section 279A includes a non-exhaustive list of examples of the types of connections between a person and an offender that might give rise to a risk to the person's safety, including where the offender has a history of mental harm or physical violence against the person, where the offender had a domestic relationship with the person, or where the person was a witness in proceedings against the offender.

Schedule 2 [19] to the bill will amend section 285 (3) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to refer to the offender being "taken into custody" instead of "returned to custody". Section 285 (3) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 states that a victim who is on the Victims Register for an offender may be notified if, while the offender is serving a sentence of imprisonment in the community under an intensive correction order—which I will refer to as an ICO—they are returned to custody. An offender who is serving an ICO might be required to serve the remainder of their sentence in full-time custody for reasons including a breach of the conditions of their order. Depending on the circumstances, an offender who is serving an ICO in the community may not be considered to have ever been in the custody of Corrective Services NSW; therefore, the existing provision and its reference to the offender's return to custody are inaccurate. The amendment will rectify this by enlivening the notification requirement of section 285 (3) upon the offender being "taken into custody" rather than upon their "return to custody".

Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to strengthen procedural protections for victims in an apprehended violence order [AVO] proceedings and provide clarity for courts to ensure a consistent application of the law. Schedule 3 [2] to the bill amends section 32 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to make it clear that, on the first return date of a provisional apprehended violence order, the court may dismiss the application, revoke the provisional order or make an

interim or final apprehended violence order. If the court does not do any of these things, then the provisional order becomes an interim order on that date and service of the order is not required. There are also two consequential amendments made.

Schedule 3 [1] to the bill amends section 29 of the Act to make it clear that a provisional apprehended violence order is also revoked if the application for an apprehended violence order is withdrawn. Schedule 3 [3] to the bill amends section 34 of the Act by omitting subsection (2), which will not be needed because of the proposed amendments to section 32. These amendments overcome current ambiguities and procedural complications if the Local Court does not expressly make an interim apprehended violence order to replace a provisional order once the matter is before the court, including ensuring that protected persons have standing in apprehended violence order proceedings.

Schedule 3 [4] to the bill amends section 40 (5) (c) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to replace references to specific sexual offences contained in the Crimes Act 1900 with the term "prescribed sexual offence", as defined in the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. Schedule 3 [5] and [6] make consequential amendments. These amendments ensure that section 40 (4) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, which allows the transcripts and any evidence admitted in related proceedings in the District Court or the Supreme Court to be admissible for apprehended violence order proceedings, applies equally to all prescribed sexual offences. Similar admissibility provisions already apply where there are multiple criminal proceedings for prescribed sexual offences under the Criminal Procedure Act. This amendment removes an artificial distinction between apprehended violence order proceedings and criminal proceedings.

The bill also improves efficiency in processes for work health and safety prosecutions by amending the Criminal Appeal Act 1912. Schedule 4 [1] and [2] will allow SafeWork NSW and the NSW Resources Regulator to commence appeals against sentence to the Court of Criminal Appeal where the regulator had carriage of the prosecution. These regulators can commence and conduct criminal prosecutions in the District Court and the Supreme Court for work health and safety offences. However, sentence appeals from these prosecutions must currently be referred to the Attorney General or the Director of Public Prosecutions, as the work health and safety regulators do not have their own right of appeal under the Criminal Appeal Act 1912. This contrasts with the NSW Environment Protection Authority, which can bring its own sentence appeals as a regulatory prosecutor under section 5D (1A). This amendment recognises the expertise of work health and safety regulators and will avoid the inefficiencies caused by the current legislation. It will ensure that sentence appeals from work health and safety prosecutions are conducted in a timely and efficient manner, assisting the regulators in their mandate to protect workers across our State.

Schedule 5 to the bill makes multiple amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide clarity in the law and improve processes. Schedule 5 [1] confirms that, where an accused person enters a guilty plea in committal proceedings, the District Court or the Supreme Court is able to sentence or otherwise deal with the person on the basis of a charge certificate, without the need for an indictment to be filed in that court. Section 102 of the Criminal Procedure Act gives a higher court jurisdiction to sentence or otherwise deal with an offender who has pleaded guilty to an offence in committal proceedings in the Local Court. Following the early appropriate guilty pleas reform, that guilty plea is usually entered to charges as set out on a charge certificate filed in the committal proceedings, in which a senior prosecutor has certified that there is evidence available capable of establishing each element of those offences. The offender is then committed to a higher court for sentence.

In contrast, where there is a plea of not guilty, the accused is committed for trial and an indictment will be presented in the higher court setting out the charges proceeding to trial. This amendment makes clear that the higher court can proceed to sentence on a charge certificate under section 102, removing any doubt that an indictment is not required to be filed to establish the court's jurisdiction where a charge certificate has been filed. Schedule 5 [2] to the bill amends section 268 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that the maximum fine the Local Court may impose for a table 2 offence is 50 penalty units, unless another amount is specifically provided for elsewhere in this section. This will ensure that a maximum fine amount does not need to be separately prescribed for each new table 2 offence and is similar to the approach in section 267 (3), which sets a standard maximum fine for table 1 offences; 50 penalty units is currently \$5,500.

Schedule 5 [3] to the bill will insert new section 281B (1C) into the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. Under the proposed provision, a recording of a child complainant's interview with police for sexual offence proceedings will be classified as "sensitive evidence". This will mean that the prosecution cannot be required, whether by subpoena or any other procedure, to give an accused person a copy of the recording. This protects child complainants by preventing recorded interviews with police from being misused. Importantly, this amendment will not prevent an accused person and their legal practitioner from continuing to have access to these recordings to prepare their matters. Item [4] makes a consequential amendment.

Schedule 6 to the bill makes multiple amendments to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, or the DMTA. Items [1] and [2] of schedule 6 to the bill amend section 25 of the DMTA to expressly authorise the NSW Police Force to provide prohibited drugs to persons who have been granted an authority by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health to possess a prohibited drug. Section 10 (2) of the DMTA provides that possession of a prohibited drug is not unlawful if a person is acting in accordance with an authority granted by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health, where the secretary is satisfied that the possession of the drug is for the purposes of scientific research, instruction, analysis or study. When this type of authority is granted to a person, the person usually obtains the prohibited drug subject to the authority from the NSW Police Force.

However, there is no express statutory authority for New South Wales police officers to supply a prohibited drug to a person who holds such an authority. That means that New South Wales police must apply to the Secretary of the Ministry of Health for an authority to supply. The amendment will remove the unnecessary requirement for the NSW Police Force to seek an authority to supply a prohibited drug that is already subject to an authority to possess it issued by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health. Schedule 8 to the bill makes a consequential amendment to the un-commenced Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022. It is required as the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 amends section 25 of the DMTA. The consequential amendment will ensure the amendment to section 25 in this bill carries over once the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 commences.

Item [3] of schedule 6 to the bill amends section 42 of the DMTA to enable the Secretary of the Ministry of Health, or a person authorised by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health, to issue a certificate as part of legal proceedings to certify that a person is or is not a person who holds an authority under the DMTA for the purposes of scientific research, instruction, analysis or study. The certificate would be prima facie evidence of the fact stated in the certificate. Currently, the DMTA provides that, in any legal proceedings under the DMTA, a certificate signed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health—or by an employee of NSW Health authorised by the secretary to do so—to certify that any person is or is not a person who holds a licence, permit or authority under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 is prima facie evidence of the fact stated in the certificate. However, the secretary can also issue authorities under the DMTA. The amendment will ensure the same treatment of authorities under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 and the DMTA, as evidentiary certificates would be able to be issued in respect of authorities under both Acts as part of legal proceedings under the DMTA.

Items [4] and [5] of schedule 6 to the bill amend section 43 of the DMTA to provide that an analyst who analyses any plant or substance, or who reviews the analysis of any plant or substance undertaken by another analyst or other analysts, may give a certificate of the result of the analysis. Section 43 (1) of the DMTA currently provides that an analyst who analyses a prohibited plant or substance, or who supervises the analysis of a prohibited plant or substance, may give a certificate of the result of the analysis. The certificate is prima facie evidence for legal proceedings involving the prohibited plant or substance. However, the reference to the "supervision" of analysis does not accurately reflect how prohibited plants and substances are analysed in laboratories. In practice, several analysts may be involved in the analysis of a prohibited plant or substance but not necessarily under the supervision of another analyst. Where more than one analyst is involved in the analysis of a prohibited drug, a single analyst is responsible for reviewing the entire case details and the scientific data of the analysis. That analyst provides the scientific conclusion expressed in the certificate of analysis. The amendment more accurately reflects the analysis process in laboratories.

Finally, the bill makes updates to the digital evidence access order scheme, which is set out in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, or LEPRA. Item [1] of schedule 7 to the bill amends section 46 (1) of LEPRA to provide that the New South Wales Crime Commission will be able to apply for a digital evidence access order in connection with a warrant issued under the Criminal Assets Recovery Act. The current definition of "eligible applicant" under section 46 (1) of LEPRA excludes the Crime Commission from applying for digital evidence access orders in connection with a Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 warrant. That was an oversight when the digital evidence access order provisions were introduced.

Items [2], [3] and [5] of schedule 7 to the bill amend sections 46 (1), 76AA and 76AF of LEPRA to enable the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission to apply for a digital evidence access order in connection with a search warrant issued under the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act. Earlier this year, LEPRA was amended to allow the Independent Commission Against Corruption, or ICAC, to apply for a digital evidence access order in relation to a search warrant issued under the ICAC Act 1988. The amendment will give the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission similar powers to the ICAC in relation to digital evidence access orders and ensure the two primary integrity agencies in New South Wales have sufficient powers to investigate corruption and serious misconduct.

Item [4] of schedule 7 amends section 76AB of LEPRA to clarify when an application for a digital evidence access order is considered to be made in connection with a search warrant in an Act listed in section 76AA. The

current wording of section 76AB (2) inadvertently excludes a number of the search warrants listed in section 76AA from being eligible for a digital evidence access order because section 76AB (2) (a) refers to warrants relating to "searchable offences". However, not all warrants issued under an Act listed in section 76AA relate to searchable offences.

The amendment will simplify section 76AB (2) and remove the reference to searchable offences. That will ensure that relevant officers will be able to apply for a digital evidence access order in relation to all warrants listed in section 76AA, which reflects the original intent of the digital evidence access order scheme. Regularly reviewing and updating legislation is a vital mechanism to ensure that the law meets its objectives and is responsive to developments in the community and legal system. The bill makes necessary amendments across eight Acts to enhance the processes and operation of the criminal justice system and maintain its integrity. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **REVENUE, MINING AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:58):** Before question time I had commenced my contribution to debate on the Revenue, Mining and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I was talking about union amalgamations generally and the need for the bill as a consequence of the withdrawal of the mining and energy division from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMMEU] to become the Mining and Energy Union. I had mentioned the pastrycooks union. Before I move on to the detail of the bill, I acknowledge my good friend and colleague from my time as a National Union of Workers [NUW] official, Robert Singh.

Robert Singh was the last secretary of the pastrycooks union in this State. He was a big man in the labour movement and the pastrycooks union. A native of Fiji, Robert came to this country and obtained employment at Arnott's Biscuits. As he worked his way through the union, he saw that it could do better for its members. With the support of his fellow union members, he became the secretary of the union and took it into the National Union of Workers in order to further the interests of his members, which he did with great success. The employees of Arnott's are some of the best paid workers in this State, and members of the National Union of Workers who are employed by Sara Lee are some of the best paid workers on the Central Coast. That is a great tribute to Robert Singh, and I appreciate the opportunity to mention him.

I turn now to the bill, which amends the Duties Act 1997 to address an anomaly in the duty exemptions provided for employee and employer organisations. Currently the exemption applies to transfers of dutiable property that are related to the amalgamation of employer or employee organisations. However, the exemption does not currently apply to transfers related to withdrawal from amalgamations. There is no good policy rationale as to why organisations will be exempt from duty when amalgamating but be liable for duty when there is a withdrawal from amalgamation. Under both scenarios, the ownership of the property is not, in substance, changing. It would appear that a withdrawal from an amalgamation by such organisations was not contemplated when the Duties Act 1997 was drafted. The Duties Act 1997 already has similar exemptions relating to amalgamation and de-amalgamation of registered clubs. The bill corrects this issue for employee and employer organisations. The changes relating to the Duties Act will commence under the amendment bill as of 23 October.

The bill also amends the Coal Industry Act 2001 to refer to the Mining and Energy Union instead of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining And Energy Union. These provisions relate to the company approved by the Minister to perform certain functions in the coal industry related to mine safety. The bill amends the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 to refer to the Mining and Energy Union instead of the CFMMEU mining and energy division. This provision relates to union representation on the NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board.

The bill also amends the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013 to refer to the Mining and Energy Union instead of the CFMMEU mining and energy division. These provisions relate to the nomination of an industry safety and health representative and the service of documents on an industry safety and health representative. Finally, the bill amends the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2022 to refer to the Mining and Energy Union instead of the CFMMEU mining and energy division. [*Extension of time*]

The bill exemplifies that the Labor Government will always seek to support the democratic interests of workers and the democratic decisions made by workers about how they are represented in the workplace and how that is arranged within our State's industrial relations system. The bill supports the decisions made by workers of

the mining and energy division of the CFMMEU, and I commend them on their decision. I hope the bill goes some way to making their decision work in practice. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (15:03):** In reply: I thank the member for Miranda and the member for The Entrance for their contributions to debate on the Revenue, Mining and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The member for The Entrance is enjoying his role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer. Like the Speaker in years gone by, he has immersed himself in the budget and the financial operations of government. It is to his great credit that he has done so with such gusto. The bill amends a number of Acts and a regulation in light of withdrawal of the mining and energy division from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMMEU] to become a standalone union, the Mining and Energy Union.

The bill amends the Duties Act 1997 to extend an existing duty exemption for property transfers associated with amalgamation of employee or employer organisations to apply to the withdrawal of such organisations from an amalgamation. It also clarifies that the exemption applies to trusts holding property on behalf of such organisations. This will ensure that the Mining and Energy Union does not inadvertently incur a duty liability when it separates from the CFMMEU. The amendment will apply to any registered employee or employer body that withdraws from an amalgamation. The bill also amends the Coal Industry Act 2001, the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013 and the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2022. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 11 October 2023.**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:06):** The Opposition supports the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which introduces miscellaneous amendments to some key emergency management legislation in New South Wales with the aim of improving the administration of emergency services and emergency management. There is a focus on reducing bureaucracy, removing ambiguity and promoting legislative consistency. The bill is short and will be matched by an equally short speech. Schedule 1 to the bill provides that the commissioner, in exercising their functions, is subject to the control and direction of the Minister under the Fire and Rescue NSW Act, which brings it in line with other emergency Acts concerning ministerial control and directions with regard to the commissioner. This ensures a level of consistency between various emergency services and roles by enhancing the clarity of those roles and responsibilities, which is crucial in emergency situations.

Schedules 2 and 3 to the bill amend the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act and the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023. Basically, the Government is changing the way it deals with local government. Instead of just telling councils to exercise their functions under the Environmental and Planning Assessment Act, the Government can prescribe other functions to councils as well. Schedule 4 to the bill amends the Rural Fires Act. There are quite a few minor amendments in schedule 4. It removes unnecessary administrative burdens and enhances safety by doing that. It amends section 7A of the Act to clarify the local authority in the Western Division. The meatiest part of the bill is the modification of section 27 of the Act to clarify where permissions need to be sought when closing roads. That amendment tidies up legislative changes that were made some time ago. Schedule 4 [6] updates section 62 of the Act by outlining that bushfire management plans are to be displayed online and digitally, thereby bringing that section into the twenty-first century.

Amendments to section 89 ensure that a person confirms they have obtained all approvals, consents and other authorities required under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 or other law with regards to fire permit applications. Schedule 5 amends the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, strengthening governance and promoting operational efficiency by expanding the definition of what a "functional area" is in emergency management planning. It enables the Minister to appoint additional members to local emergency management committees. It also introduces a new employment protection order to protect volunteers for up to 14 days at the discretion of the Minister. These are relatively minor changes, as members will often see in a

miscellaneous bill. I thank the Minister for bringing the bill to the House. I also thank him and his staff for the briefing they provided me and other members of the Opposition. I thank the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:10):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This bill makes minor adjustments to the administration of emergency services and the management of emergencies in New South Wales. Whilst minor, these amendments are expected to enhance the capabilities of our emergency services and supporting organisations in safeguarding our community. These amendments aim to refine processes, eliminate uncertainties and foster consistency across legislation to provide better service delivery associated with emergencies and disasters.

The bill amends the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 to ensure that the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW must operate under the guidance and authority of the Minister for Emergency Services whilst carrying out their duties. The purpose of this change is to promote the consistency of the Fire and Rescue NSW Act with other legislation, such as the Rural Fires Act 1997, the State Emergency Service Act 1989, the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 and the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022. This amendment does not alter the relationship between the Minister for Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW but rather establishes consistency amongst different aspects of emergency services, as well as with the NSW Reconstruction Authority. It also provides clarity to the responsibilities of the State Emergency Recovery Controller and the State Emergency Operations Controller, providing certainty of who is responsible for what, which can be crucial during times of emergencies and disasters.

The bill empowers the NSW Reconstruction Authority to provide instructions to local councils regarding specific functions outlined in the legislation. This pertains to the conducting of development activities under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021. The current language in the Act may be interpreted in a way that inhibits the NSW Reconstruction Authority from providing instructions to local councils relating to actions specified in the regulations. This bill rectifies this potential limitation. This is done to ensure clarity within the legislation, to align the law with the goal of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, to reduce the effects of disasters and to promote effective recovery strategies following such events.

The bill makes various amendments to the Rural Fires Act 1997. The goal of these amendments is to simplify the administrative processes and enhance safety for both volunteers within the NSW Rural Fire Service and the wider community. This involves amending section 7A of the Rural Fires Act to clarify that, unless the Minister for Emergency Services appoints another individual, the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner will act as the local authority under the Rural Fires Act for land within the Western Division that is not within the local government area. Local authorities play a significant role in managing rural fire brigades and implementing bushfire prevention measures. These amendments ensure that these responsibilities are carried out efficiently without the oversight of local government. This guarantees that there is always a designated local authority for the purpose of the Rural Fires Act. Additionally, it provides the commissioner with the ability to delegate their role or specific functions to another member of the NSW Rural Fire Service when it is deemed appropriate. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

The bill clarifies that the Rural Fire Service is obliged to seek permission to close a street or public place to traffic only under the specific circumstances that it pertains to rail services. By specifying that permission is needed only when rail services are involved, this amendment aims to simplify the processing during emergencies, ensuring that the Rural Fire Service does not face uncertainty about which authority to contact regarding road closures. Whilst permission is not needed for the closure of roads, the RFS is still required to notify Transport for NSW of the closure as soon as it is appropriate.

The bill amends the Rural Fires Act to eliminate the mandate to provide bushfire management plans in a printed format. The reason for the change is that bushfire management plans have become more in depth and are now more suitable for digital distribution. The bill will ensure that the Rural Fire Service makes plans accessible on the NSW Rural Fire Service website or on other New South Wales government websites as decided by the Rural Fire Service commissioner. [*Extension of time*]

The bill also amends the Rural Fires Act to specify that individuals or entities applying for fire permits must confirm that they have obtained all the required approvals, consents or other authorisations under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Only after these conditions have been met may the appropriate authority issue a fire permit. The bill amends the definition of "functional area" to make clear that new functional areas can be added to the State Emergency Management Plan. Functional areas represent categories of services related to various aspects of emergency management, such as health, transport and welfare services. The bill also empowers the Minister to appoint representatives from relevant organisations to local emergency management committees.

Amendments are made to grant the Minister the power to issue employment protection orders for volunteers who may face victimisation by their employers. Those protection orders can be effective for up to 14 days, which provides a middle ground between the Premier's potentially unlimited orders and the 48-hour "authorised officer" orders. The bill clarifies that rescue units can comprise individuals from different agencies or non-government organisations, and can be managed or controlled by more than one entity. The amendments in the bill are essential to ensuring that emergencies and disasters are handled quickly and effectively. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:21):** The Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 amends the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 so that the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, in exercising their functions, is subject to the control and direction of the Minister for Emergency Services, in a similar way to the Rural Fire Service commissioner. The bill also amends the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 to expand the ability for the authority to give directions to a local council with respect to other functions of the council, not just those functions covered under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023 is also amended to reflect that change.

The bill amends the Rural Fires Act 1997 to allow the Minister or commissioner to appoint a local authority for the Western Division, an area that is not within a local government area; to change how permission is granted from transport authorities with respect to road closures; to amend how bushfire management plans are displayed; and to specify that applicants for fire permits are responsible for confirming that all necessary environmental approvals have been obtained before an appropriate authority may issue a fire permit. The bill also amends the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 to expand the definition of "functional area" in the State Emergency Management Plan; to allow the Minister for Emergency Services to appoint a representative of each organisation that the Minister determines should be represented on a local emergency management committee; to repeal a redundant provision relating to the provision of financial assistance to volunteer rescue agencies; and to allow the Minister for Emergency Services to issue a 14-day volunteer employment protection order.

The bill introduces amendments to key emergency management legislation in New South Wales. It aims to improve the administration of emergency services and emergency management by focusing on reducing bureaucracy, removing ambiguity and promoting legislative consistency. Schedule 1 amends the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 to bring the Act in line with other emergency Acts concerning ministerial control and direction, and to ensure consistency between various emergency services and roles by enhancing clarity of roles and responsibilities, which can be crucial in emergency situations. Schedules 2 and 3 to the bill amend the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act and associated regulation to enable the Reconstruction Authority to issue directions to local councils, including in relation to developments under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021. Those amendments also clarify existing ambiguity, aligning the Act and regulation with the authority's disaster recovery remit.

Schedule 4 to the bill amends the Rural Fires Act 1997 to remove unnecessary administrative burdens and enhance safety. It amends section 7A of the Act to clarify the local authority in Western Division areas without local governance and modifies section 27 to clarify road closure permissions related to rail services. It also updates section 62 to make bushfire management plans available digitally and revises section 89 (2) (b) to shift the approval burden for fire permits to applicants. Schedule 5 to the bill amends the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 to strengthen governance and promote operational efficiency, expand the definition of "functional area" to allow for adaptability in emergency management planning, and enable the Minister to appoint additional members to local emergency management committees. It also clarifies that rescue units can include members from multiple agencies and introduces a new "employment protection order" to protect volunteers from employer victimisation for up to 14 days.

The bill is crucial. It enables us to bring some common sense into emergency management legislation. I, like many in this Chamber, have witnessed many major emergencies over the years. I have seen six or seven major floods, I have gone through seven or eight bushfires, and to date I have seen two or three cyclones. I do not think we have had an earthquake yet. Members on both sides of the House support and respect our volunteer emergency services. Unfortunately, in recent times we have suffered the tragic loss of two of them. Volunteers give their time and effort for the protection of their local community. Like many regional or rural members, I often attend medal presentations for the RFS and SES, and I am always amazed at the length of service of volunteers. I have given medals to people who have served for 50 years or 60 years, and often it is a husband-and-wife team.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the families that support volunteers, including husbands, wives, partners and children. My son was actively involved in the SES and Rural Fire Service. This will probably show my age, but I remember that when the Hon. Nathan Rees was Premier my son was involved in a rescue in the middle of the night during a fairly significant storm on the Tweed River. There were seas of around three or four metres. He went out in one boat and unfortunately that boat became disabled, so a second rescue boat was

sent and that also became disabled. The group was only moments away from getting swept out to sea, but fortunately they were rescued. The first I knew of it was when the Hon. Nathan Rees rang me at four o'clock in the morning to tell me that my son was okay. I said, "Really? That's good! That's extraordinarily good." We owe a debt of gratitude. Often we stand up in this place and tilt our heads and say, "Thank you so much." This is a commonsense bill. I am sure the member for Shellharbour will like this: I applaud the Minns Government for bringing it to the House and I support the bill.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:29):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The main purpose of the bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989, the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022, the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023, the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, in order to streamline and simplify emergency and rescue management arrangements. The amendments proposed in the bill are important and necessary for a number of reasons. Most important is the need to ensure that our emergency services are best prepared in order to meet the coming fire season, which is likely to be quite serious and significant. We have already seen some initial indications of that.

The bill allows the NSW Reconstruction Authority to have the power to direct local councils and other relevant entities. The primary object of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 is to promote community resilience to the impact of disasters in New South Wales through prevention, preparedness and adaptation, as well as recovery and reconstruction following disasters. The authority has a range of powers and functions under the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022, including the power to direct local councils and other relevant entities to take action in certain circumstances. This power exists to remove red tape when urgent and immediate action is necessary to assist communities to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disasters. The direction power ensures the NSW Reconstruction Authority can work with local councils and relevant entities to unblock the system and keep things moving so that communities are better prepared for and recover more quickly from disasters.

As a local councillor I saw firsthand how emergency responders and local government can work closely together to not only respond to disasters, but also be the initial point of contact for many residents and the source of information, news and other resources that our communities look to during times of great change and natural disasters. The amendment to the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 is required to clarify that local councils, like other relevant entities, can be directed to take action in the exercise of any functions prescribed by the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023.

The bill makes provision for the commissioner to be the local authority for the Western Division for the purposes of the Act. The amendment resolves an unintended consequence of the abolishment of the position of Western Lands Commissioner. The amendment proposes to specify that the Rural Fire Service Commissioner is the local authority for certain lands within the Western Division if the Minister does not appoint someone else to that role. Local authorities have key powers under the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the Rural Fires Regulation 2022 relating to the administration of rural fire brigades and bushfire prevention strategies. Section 7A of the Rural Fires Act 1997 provides that the Minister can appoint a person to be the local authority for land within the Western Division that is not within a local government area. Since the abolition of the role of the Western Lands Commissioner under the previous Government, parts of the Western Division that are not within a local government area have not had a local authority appointed.

The Rural Fire Service Commissioner has the power under section 14 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 to delegate any of the commissioner's powers under the Act to another member of the service. As section 7A is a ministerial appointment, the commissioner is unable to delegate these functions in the Western Division. The amendment rectifies an unintended consequence of the abolishment of the Western Lands Commissioner by making the Rural Fire Service Commissioner the default local authority where the Minister does not appoint someone else to the role, thereby removing an accidental administrative issue. The bill ensures that the commissioner will be able to exercise some powers as the local authority. Local authorities have certain responsibilities in relation to bushfire planning and preparedness under the Rural Fires Act 1997, and this amendment will ensure that the commissioner can exercise these powers in the Western Division or delegate them where appropriate.

The bill removes the requirement for the NSW Rural Fire Service to seek permission from Transport for NSW before closing a road to traffic. The obligation to seek permission before closing streets or public places was originally restricted to lands managed by rail authorities. However, this widened the impact of section 27 to roads not associated with the operation of a railway, which appears to have been unintended and has created operational problems for the Rural Fire Service. I am advised that the requirement to obtain permission from Transport for NSW to close roads has created significant practical difficulties for the Rural Fire Service due to the complexity associated with identifying whether a road is vested in or under the control of Transport for NSW



or a different authority. The bill resolves this issue by allowing the Rural Fire Service to close roads without a requirement to seek permission first. However, it ensures that Transport for NSW will still be advised in a timely manner after a road is closed.

There are a range of administrative issues which the amendments proposed in the bill seek to clarify so that the Rural Fire Service and other emergency services are best prepared to meet the challenges of the coming fire season. I take my hat off to the Rural Fire Service and all other emergency services that have been involved in protecting our community over many years. Last month I visited the Casula Rural Fire Service Brigade for the launch of the bushfire season. The brigade's members included the community in their activities and hosted a much-loved feature of our community, a Bunnings barbecue. As a result, they educated, especially, young families in my community, some of whom may never have experienced a bushfire season like the one we are about to have. That makes community engagement and awareness all the more necessary and important for many people within my community who may have migrated to the country recently, so that we can prevent situations escalating. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:37):** I make a contribution to debate on the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill makes miscellaneous amendments to the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989, the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022, the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023, the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 to provide consistency across our responses to natural disasters and emergencies and to improve processes during and after natural disasters and emergencies. In recent years we have seen many floods, fires and emergencies, largely as a result of climate change making those things worse and more frequent. This bill is part of our evolving response to the needs of our community to keep them safe during such awful situations.

It is very much needed, as we are expecting a terrible fire season this year after heavy rain last year increased fuel loads, and of course the hot and dry weather that has already started. I place on the record my condolences for the loss of two lives in fires recently, Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes and Richard Mainey. The bill amends the Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989 to clarify that the commissioner, in exercising their functions, is subject to the control and direction of the Minister. That is consistent with the provisions in the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the State Emergency Service Act 1989. That will make sure that, in responding to emergencies, there is consistency before and after, between Fire and Rescue and the Rural Fire Service. It is really important that it be handled appropriately so that things can be dealt with as quickly as possible. The bill also amends the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act to clarify that the Reconstruction Authority may direct a local council to take certain actions as prescribed by the regulations.

The bill will amend the Rural Fires Act to make the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner the local authority for the Western Division, which is important for administration across that vast part of our State. It will also provide that the NSW Rural Fire Service no longer requires the permission of Transport for NSW to close roads or public places, but it must advise Transport for NSW as soon as practicable once it does close a road to traffic. This is, of course, incredibly important in making sure that responsiveness is not hampered by bureaucracy and that Transport for NSW is informed as soon as practicable about road closures, and also that things happen in the order in which they must. Road closures are often required at very short notice. The bill requires the publication of bushfire management plans online and requires applicants to confirm that necessary environmental and planning approvals have been obtained before a fire permit may be issued.

The bill also amends the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act to refine the definition of "functional areas" to enable the Minister additional functional areas to be defined in the State Emergency Management Plan. It allows the Minister to appoint representatives from relevant organisations on local emergency management committees and provides for the formation and accreditation of multi-agency rescue units. Very importantly, it permits the Minister to issue volunteer employment protection orders for a period of up to 14 days to make sure that volunteers, be they with the SES, the Rural Fire Service or other organisations, are able to carry out work on which we all rely with protection in their employment as volunteers. That is incredibly important. It is an issue that is important to many members of this House who have witnessed awful natural disasters in their communities in recent years.

While my community has largely been spared awful floods and fires, there was some flooding. Last year the community where my mum lives in the Central West was affected. My mum lives in a nursing home just outside of Canowindra and, on 14 November last year, her nursing home was cut off from the township by floodwater. The staff of the nursing home were being ferried to and from work by the SES. It was a very scary time for me. I was very worried that the staff would decide not to go to work at all, given how dangerous it was. On the same day, only 30 kilometres away in Eugowra, the floods were far worse. The floods in both Canowindra and Eugowra were the worst of all time, but in Eugowra there was flash flooding, half a metre higher than ever before. Waters came down the Mandagery Creek and hit the town, as we have seen in incredible footage, with

bridges and houses dragged down the road. Bridges were dislodged and houses were taken off their piers and left in the middle of the road, 50 or 100 metres away. There was even a brick toilet block that was washed away and no-one knows where it went.

I witnessed how emergency workers respond, because I volunteered for a brief time when I visited my mother after the floods. The coordination between the council and the Reconstruction Authority, which was in its infancy, was working very well. There were a lot of volunteers and I give enormous credit to all of them. People did a lot more than I did to help the community in reconstruction. I note that, when I was offered the choice to help inside or outside, I was told that three people who had been volunteering outside had been bitten by snakes. They are the types of risks that people are taking in supporting others in the community. It is not a risk that I took; I am quite scared of snakes, or brown snakes at least. What we saw then and in the ensuing 11 months has been really challenging for that community. Similarly, in Lismore and all across the State where whole communities were wiped out by fires or floods, we have needed these supports. The bill is just one more step in making sure we can respond more effectively to communities in their hours of greatest need. We will be constantly updating this sort of legislation as we learn from our responses and how to make them better. It is really important. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:45):** I speak in support of the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill contains important changes to the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 and the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023 to assist the NSW Reconstruction Authority to achieve its primary objective. The Reconstruction Authority was established in response to the inquiry into the preparation for, causes of, responses to and recovery from the flooding events of 2022, commissioned and led by former chief scientist Professor Mary O'Kane, AC, and former NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller, APM. Recommendation 15 of the inquiry's final report was to create the NSW Reconstruction Authority, modelled on the Queensland Reconstruction Authority established in 2011.

The primary object of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 is to promote community resilience to the impacts of disasters in New South Wales through disaster prevention, preparedness, adaptation and reconstruction following disasters. The structure, functions and powers conferred on the NSW Reconstruction Authority under the Act provide a single point of reference for rebuilding infrastructure, strengthening the Government's recovery response and rebuilding communities to be more resilient in the face of incredible adversity. The authority has the responsibility and power to facilitate the protection, recovery and reconstruction of affected communities following a disaster; to implement mitigation measures against the impact of potential disasters; and to improve the resilience and adaptation of communities against future disasters.

The NSW Reconstruction Authority has a large range of powers and functions under the Act, including to direct local councils and other relevant entities to take action in certain circumstances. That power exists to remove red tape when urgent and immediate action is necessary to facilitate disaster prevention, preparedness and adaptation, as well as recovery and reconstruction following disasters within New South Wales communities. The direction power conferred under section 13 (1) in part 2 of the Act therefore serves an important purpose that is essential to the NSW Reconstruction Authority achieving its primary object. However, the current construction of section 13 (1) precludes the authority from directing local councils to undertake actions prescribed under section 5 of the Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023. I am advised that this is an unintended consequence of drafting. The power to direct councils, including to undertake actions outlined in the regulation, was intended to be a key function of the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

Schedule 2 to the bill thus amends section 13 (1) (b) to provide that the NSW Reconstruction Authority may, by written notice given to a relevant entity, direct a local council to take certain actions in the exercise of the council's functions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, or other functions of the council as prescribed by the regulation. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023 to give effect to this amendment. It makes it clear that a direction given to a relevant entity to act in the exercise of the relevant entity's function, as prescribed by the NSW Reconstruction Authority Regulation 2023, may also be given to a local council.

The functions prescribed by the 2023 regulation include providing an essential service, such as public transport, energy supply, water or garbage services; and carrying out development under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021, such as the construction of flood mitigation work, public roads, stormwater management systems, and electricity transmission and distribution networks. I understand that the NSW Reconstruction Authority will only use this direction power sparingly. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will only resort to using such power when immediate action is required to respond to a disaster or likely disaster. While it is likely that the authority will rarely need to rely on that power, it is an essential element in the authority's ability to respond to a disaster or an impending disaster quickly and efficiently.

The NSW Reconstruction Authority intends to work in cooperation with local councils and relevant entities. Notably, looking at the Queensland experience, I am advised that the Queensland Reconstruction Authority has used its equivalent direction power only once and that was at the request of the entity involved. The bill restores the original policy intent behind the direction power by rectifying an apparent drafting oversight to ensure that the NSW Reconstruction Authority can work with local councils to strengthen the ability of New South Wales communities to prepare for and recover from disasters as soon as possible. This is a sensible and important amendment that will enhance disaster recovery in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (15:51):** In reply: I thank all the contributors to debate on the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, including members for the electorates of Shellharbour, Granville, Liverpool, Tweed and Mount Druitt, as well as the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, the member for Coffs Harbour. The amendments in the bill have been proposed for an abundance of clarity. The Government brought the bill to the House to try to ensure that we can deliver the best possible emergency services in New South Wales, particularly when it comes to emergency management and the way that we respond to disasters.

I will address a couple of issues that were raised either in members' speeches or with me or my office. The first issue is around whether the legislation of multi-agency volunteer rescue units is designed to replace any single agency. I cannot say clearly enough that that is not the case, and I will talk about the reasons why. The amendments in the bill are made for clarity to ensure that there are no legislative obstacles to the establishment of multi-agency rescue units. It will provide local rescue communities with greater certainty about their options to ensure the provision of local rescue services. That is particularly important and pertinent in regional areas and incredibly important in remote areas, where populations are lower and the recruitment and retention of emergency service workers and volunteers is a lot more difficult.

Recruitment and retention are real issues and a real risk to a rescue service delivery in some parts of the State. I have had many discussions with the member for Barwon about the challenges that his community has faced, particularly in more remote communities where there is a small population to begin with, and about the difficulty of being involved in volunteer or non-volunteer rescue agencies. The bill is not about replacing paid rescue units with volunteer rescue units. I will say that again: It is not about replacing paid rescue units with volunteer rescue units. It is about ensuring that there are options to provide and maintain rescue service delivery.

It is also important to note that the establishment of the local rescue units is locally led. Accreditation of new rescue units occurs after the local rescue committee identifies the need for that unit. I am advised that, at its most recent meeting, the State Rescue Board considered the circumstances of Nymagee, south of Cobar. Cobar is a remote part of New South Wales, so imagine further south of that. Due to the closure of the local Hera mine, many mine workers who would have formed part of the proposed rescue unit have moved out of the area. The State Rescue Board acknowledges that this is a matter for the local rescue committee to drive a solution. This may be a timely example of where clarity around the potential for multi-agency rescue units could assist in solving this problem. I have spoken before about how, for whatever reason, some people want to join one type of rescue agency over another. Then, when it comes to a disaster response, there may not be enough members of one agency. The Government wants to ensure that we have a multidisciplinary rescue unit wherever possible.

Seven years ago the State Rescue Board conducted a capability matrix review, which identified 11 priority geographic areas with response times in excess of 60 minutes. Nymagee was in one of the areas identified. Since that time I am advised that the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW State Emergency Service have established a number of road crash rescue units to provide rescue services within those 11 areas, but gaps in timely service provision remain. Nymagee would have assisted to fill the remaining gaps. Ensuring timely rescue service across the State remains a very real problem, and the changes proposed in the bill will hopefully assist in providing coverage in those difficult-to-service areas.

I state as clearly as possible that the multi-agency component in the bill is for remote communities. We have to try different ways to make sure we can respond to emergencies with different rescue units. We often think about floods and fire, which are obviously front and centre of mind, but these emergency services also respond to road crashes and other forms of trauma. If it takes 60 minutes or longer to get somebody there, I do not think we are giving the person the best chance of the most immediate response. The bill is all about supporting remote communities. It is an idea that has come from those communities and I believe it will at least ensure that we are trying something different, something new, to support those communities.

The other question that has come to the Government has been around why there is no local government representation on the NSW Reconstruction Authority Advisory Board. The board was established under section 24 of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022. Members who were in the last Parliament would know it was one of the last bills passed with bipartisan support in that Parliament. The Minister for Emergency Services and

the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces share joint responsibility for the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act. There are seven members on the advisory board. The Ministers are responsible for nominating the chair and four other members. A further two members are nominated by the Commonwealth. The inaugural advisory board members include chairperson Stephen Murray, Charles Glanville and Professor Mary O'Kane. They are appointed for a term of three years until 1 March 2026. All outstanding appointments are expected to be considered by Cabinet and put to the Governor for approval by the end of the year.

The legislative functions of the Reconstruction Authority make it clear that it is expected to work closely with, to engage with and to support local councils. The authority's functions include: to facilitate information provision and community engagement; to support collaboration and coordination between government agencies, local councils, service providers and communities to improve disaster prevention, preparedness, recovery, reconstruction and adaptation; and to provide advice and support to local communities and councils to help maximise the effectiveness of councils' disaster preparedness and recovery programs, which can also be seen in another part of the bill. Its functions also include: to provide advice to local councils and strategic planning authorities under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979; to ensure alignment of strategic plans prepared under the Act and the State disaster management plan; and to enter into joint ventures, project delivery agreements and other arrangements with landowners, State and Commonwealth government agencies and local councils in relation to disaster prevention, recovery and reconstruction.

The local government runs strong throughout the entire Act. There is an important role for local government to play. We see that in the different emergency management plans, right down to the local emergency management plans. I thank all members who contributed to debate and all the people who put this work together, especially my staff and the team in the Premier's Department who look after emergency management. The Government believes that the bill provides sensible, practical measures to improve the delivery and coordination of emergency services and rescue management in New South Wales. 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 JIHAD DIB:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 10 October 2023.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:01):** I contribute to debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. Too many examples of insubstantial bills have been brought before the Parliament. The Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Appointed Persons) Bill 2023, for example, deals with matters individually that could have been incorporated into a statute review bill along with other similar matters. It is pleasing to see a coordinated approach in the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. The bill seeks to amend 12 separate Acts; however, it still represents some legislative padding out by a government with little to no legislative agenda. At the same time the bill was introduced in this place, the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2023 was introduced in the other place. Both bills should have been in the one bill at the same time, rather than split in that way.

The bill represents significant legal housekeeping by the Minns Government and, to that extent, is a welcome change in pace. It is not pleasing that three of the amendments facilitate the creation or raising of fees to be paid by the public. It is not clear if these are new fees or if the changes are designed to make it easier to increase fees, but the changes to the Civil Procedure Act 2005, the Dormant Funds Act 1942 and the NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009 all appear to be increases in taxes from a government that promised there would be no new taxes. As with Active Kids and a range of other matters that the Opposition brought to the Parliament's attention, this represents another broken election promise by the Minns Government. Worse than that, it represents the tin ear that this Government seems to have towards the number one issue in our State at the moment, which is the crippling cost of living not just for our most vulnerable citizens who are less well off but for all citizens in every electorate.

It is disappointing to see a government propping up its poorly put together budget by increasing taxes and revenue raising. It is important that the Opposition speaks up for the people who are struggling and does not just

wave through legislation that will facilitate an even greater impost on them. The new Federal and State Labor governments have shown a complete inability to provide any cost-of-living assistance whatsoever and a systematic dismantling of the supports introduced by the Coalition in its last budget in 2022. It is disappointing to see Labor governments kick average citizens who are struggling financially in this way. It makes the pre-election promise of no new taxes even more bitter for the people of the State.

Most of the changes introduced by this legislation are sensible reforms that respond to recent developments or recent case law. For example, the changes to the Bail Act clarify that a court must refuse bail on a detention application unless it is established that special or exceptional circumstances justify a decision to grant or dispense with bail. It also allows a bail condition to be imposed, requiring the accused to only be released on bail into the care or company of a specified person or class of persons. The changes to the Children's Guardian Act align that Act with our age discrimination laws and remove the requirement for the Children's Guardian to be under 65 years of age, which will allow the current incumbent—an excellent public servant who has provided great service to the State and the country in many different capacities—to continue in that position if the Government and he desire that he do so into the future.

It is not my intention to discuss each of the changes proposed by the bill because they have been well rehearsed by the Attorney General in the second reading speech. I indicate that we are content to support all of the changes, with one important caveat because of the small amount of incomplete information that we were provided about the changes to the Fines Act. Schedule 3 to the bill seeks to amend the Fines Act by inserting new section 23B, which states:

**Completion of certain activities may be treated as payment**

- (1) A person to whom a penalty notice is issued is taken to have paid the amount specified in the penalty notice if the Commissioner is satisfied that—
  - (a) the person has completed an activity, and
  - (b) the activity is prescribed by the regulations as an activity that may be completed instead of payment for an amount specified in a penalty notice belonging to a particular class, and
  - (c) the penalty notice belongs to the class, and
  - (d) any additional requirements prescribed by the regulations are satisfied, and
  - (e) a penalty notice enforcement order has not been made for the amount.
- (2) The payment is taken to be—
  - (a) for the full amount specified in the penalty notice, and
  - (b) made in accordance with the penalty notice. Although couched in general terms, it would appear, according to the second reading speech, that this is a disguised facilitation of the Government's policy announcement in relation to intervention rather than criminal fines for drugs other than cannabis. The policy was announced by the Minns Government through a media release on 10 October 2023, without any reference to the Fines Act. It has echoes of the Coalition policy announced last year as part of the Coalition's half-a-billion-dollar response to the recommendations emerging from the ice inquiry, but whether it is a complete facsimile of the Coalition policy or something different is not exactly clear.

The Coalition policy was clearly set out in its response to the ice inquiry. In particular, the response to recommendation 11, which was the full decriminalisation of drugs in New South Wales, was not supported by the Coalition. Recommendation 12 was an alternative to recommendation 1—that is, it was an alternative to full decriminalisation. Recommendation 12 stated:

... in conjunction with increased resourcing for specialist drug assessment and treatment services, that the NSW Government introduce a legislated police diversion scheme for use and possession for personal use of prohibited drugs ...

A number of elements were then set out. The Coalition response to the ice inquiry recommendation 12 was this:

The possession and use of illicit drugs in NSW is and will remain a criminal offence. The NSW Government—

that is, the former Coalition Government—

considers that successful implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme is only achievable when relevant services and supports have been established in the health and justice systems. The Government—

that is, the former Coalition Government—

has committed an additional \$499 million to establish new state wide health rehabilitation services and justice initiatives. By 30 June 2023, the NSW Chief Health Officer and NSW Police Commissioner will jointly provide advice to the Government on whether the roll out of services and supports under the Government's commitments is sufficiently advanced to allow commencement of a pre-court diversion scheme. The Government will then make a final decision regarding implementation of the pre-court diversion scheme.

The four elements of the pre-court diversion scheme were then set out, including a maximum of two criminal infringement notices for low-level drug offending statewide and the fine being waived upon completion of a specific health intervention provided by NSW Health. The response then went on to state:

This arrangement will include low level drug offences only, including possession in a small quantity, for self-administration, and possession of certain Schedule 9 or prescribed restricted substances, and operate under existing provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act 1986.

The media release that accompanied that policy relevantly provided a breakdown of the \$499 million commitment. Of it, \$358 million would go to address treatment gaps and improve health and social outcomes; and more than \$141 million would expand justice initiatives to support any introduction of a pre-court diversion scheme. In relation to the \$358 million, the press release specified that it will go towards the following:

... health-related programs including evidence-based treatment support and early intervention services in regional and rural areas for priority populations (including Aboriginal people, pregnant women, young people, and people with co-occurring mental illness); integrating support for people with complex needs; enhancing digital capacity and virtual healthcare; increasing the alcohol and other drug workforce, and improving data utilisation to inform system monitoring and evaluation.

This funding will mean more than 30,000 people impacted by alcohol and other drug use will benefit from additional services. It will also support more than 11,000 people with AOD-related offending behaviour, and create more than 670 new jobs, with more than 63 per cent in rural and regional areas.

Although the member for Albury is sitting behind me and will correct me if I am wrong, my maths on 63 per cent of 670 new jobs is that it was promising 422 new jobs in rural and regional areas of New South Wales. Obviously, the media release had other information, but I think that is the pertinent information for the discussion today.

By contrast, the Minns Labor Government press release gave a broadbrush explanation of its policy. The Coalition policy called for assessment, treatment and support and for drug addiction rehabilitation services to be established, which operated throughout the State, before implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme. The Coalition committed to establishing a specialised drug assessment treatment and support service statewide before a final decision as to the implementation of the pre-court diversion scheme would be made. In the Minns Government media release of 10 October, there is no evidence that this hard and important work has been done. Instead, it notes:

The Commissioner of Police and Chief Health Officer ... have advised the government of their operational readiness to implement the scheme from next year.

There is no detail as to what that operational readiness is, what will be implemented and from what date next year. In particular, would the whole State have access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, or would the existing gaps in the provision of those services in many parts of New South Wales continue, notwithstanding the implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme?

Those sorts of details really go to good government, but they are also important to people's lives. The Coalition scheme was designed to help drug users. It is important that governments do not pretend to help or help only on paper. If the Minns Government is attempting to copy the reform of the Coalition, then any measures need to be properly resourced and supported before they go ahead. The Coalition policy was certainly detailed and, as I have said, whether the Minns Government policy is the same or something different is not entirely clear.

The Coalition diversion policy envisaged that it would apply to certain schedule 9 or prescribed drug substances, which were to be decided as part of the future final decision regarding and prior to any implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme. The press coverage—and the press coverage only—suggests that the Minns Labor Government policy is one that has already decided that it will apply to all illegal drugs. It is not entirely clear whether that has been comprehensively considered. For example, how sure are we that there will be rehabilitation for drug addicts throughout the State before any scheme starts? If a person is arrested with a small quantity of, for example, the notorious date rape drug ketamine, how will it be determined whether that was for self-use or for some more nefarious and illegal purpose? Any broadbrush, poorly considered drug policy could have dangerous and unintended consequences.

The Coalition policy was a whole-of-State policy, offered to all of our citizens. Our regional Liberal and Nationals MPs have made it very clear that drug rehabilitation services are non-existent in many parts of the State. Unless that is rectified, there would be a city diversion policy and a regional diversion policy that operated differently. That offends all notions of equality before the law, which is a hallmark of any rule-of-law system. It is important that all residents from New South Wales would have equal access to any diversion scheme, which means equal access to the drug rehabilitation services that underpin any diversion scheme. What assurances do we have that the diversion scheme and health supports will be in place throughout the entire State, both in Sydney and in the regions? They certainly will not be in place before this Government implements its diversion policy.

We know that the Labor Party has strong and influential elements that want full decriminalisation of drugs in our State. Certainly, that should not happen by stealth but through a transparent and fully considered policy. The Government's recent announcement flagged the introduction of a diversion scheme. It now presents this legislation to amend the Fines Act, but it has provided no other details of its scheme—which drugs, what quantities and, importantly, what interventions will be prescribed—nor has it provided any details of whether or not these yet-to-be disclosed drug interventions would be available throughout all of New South Wales or only in certain places.

After this amendment to the Fines Act, the policy of the Minns Government can then be fully implemented through regulation, so scrutiny by the Parliament will be far more limited than is the case now. That is why I am dealing with this matter in some detail, in the public interest. We need a lot of these details; the public needs a lot of these details. It is undesirable to introduce a major change in drug policy—designed to support users away from addiction pathways rather than criminalise their actions—without ensuring that the proper and necessary supports are in place, have been funded and are available equally throughout New South Wales. The Government simply has not publicly provided those details. It is not sharing with the people of New South Wales the full details of its drug plan. It appears to have echoes of the Coalition's plan, but it is only a faint echo without the necessary detail. The Coalition will support the changes to the Fines Act but with a qualification that we will be scrutinising whether the full elements of the Coalition's policy will be implemented.

We did seek further details from the health Minister as to the Minns Government's proposed expenditure on the health supports, which underlined the press release of 10 October. We thank the health Minister for providing us with some detail. That detail includes two new safe assessment units in South East Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains local health districts, at a cost of almost \$28.5 million over three years; \$58.6 million over four years, plus an additional \$6 million in one-off capital funding, for new residential rehabilitation treatment services for priority populations; \$68 million over four years for new alcohol or drug treatment and support hubs; \$10.25 million over four years for the establishment of an information, access and support model; and \$1.4 million over three years to support public health drug surveillance programs. We were also provided information about other items, which do not appear to strictly relate to drug and alcohol rehabilitation services to support a diversion scheme. The matters that I have just identified add up to \$159.25 million.

There was then a broadbrush assertion of \$147.8 million over four years to provide funding for local health districts across New South Wales and specialty health networks to expand existing programs and deliver new alcohol or drug programs. Again, Dr Clancy will correct me if I am wrong, but my maths add up to a total sum of about \$307 million, which is short of the Coalition's promised \$358 million. In particular, it is not clear whether there will be any gaps throughout the State with regard to those services, because the actual locations of services have not been identified. Within the health Minister's letter was also \$25.3 million over four years for the expansion of Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment [MERIT] and \$20.58 million for the expansion of the Drug Court, which total \$45.88 million of the promised \$141 million in justice initiatives announced by the Coalition in its policy. In both respects, the detail that we have been provided with suggests something short of a full implementation—at least at this stage—of the Coalition policy. That is of some concern to the Coalition, but it should also be of concern to the people of New South Wales.

The Coalition supports a full implementation of its response to recommendation 12 of the "ice" inquiry. In particular, it will hold the Minns Government to account for a full and complete rollout of statewide health rehabilitation services and justice initiatives, with new money of \$499 million to support them. I add that the health Minister gave no detail of even one new job with regard to those initiatives, let alone the 670 new jobs—422 in the bush—that were part of the Coalition policy. It may be that that new employment is there, but that would be an important thing to note in terms of whether the Minns Government's policy is matching the Coalition policy.

It is regrettable that changes to the Fines Act have occurred in circumstances where there has not been full transparency with regard to what is proposed down the track. Health supports for addicts should be provided statewide, especially in the areas where drug and alcohol rehabilitation services currently do not exist. Any proper, principled drug diversion scheme requires those rehabilitation services to be in place before it commences; otherwise, we will not have a consistent justice system in our State. There should not be regional inequities in dealing with drug offenders. With those comments and qualifications, the Coalition will support the bill.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:28):** As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, I support the Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2023. I thank the Attorney General for his work and collaboration with a significant list of stakeholders, including members of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the District Court of New South Wales, the Chief Magistrate's office, the Children's Court, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the NSW Police Force, Corrective Services NSW, Victims Services, Youth Justice NSW, the New South Wales Crime

Commission, the NSW Trustee and Guardian, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association.

The Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2023 provides an important suite of legislative reforms. The bill makes miscellaneous amendments to justice legislation across 15 Acts and five regulations. It addresses developments in case law and supports operational improvements. Justice legislation amendment bills are an integral government mechanism to ensure that laws remain fit for purpose and reflective of legal and social developments. I will now go through the Acts that the bill amends. Firstly, the bill amends the Bail Act 2013. Section 22B of the Bail Act requires that bail be refused following conviction and prior to sentencing where the offender will be sentenced to imprisonment by full-time detention unless special or exceptional circumstances can be established to justify the decision.

In *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Day* [2022] NSWSC 938, Justice Garling described the reference to "decision" as an "infelicity of drafting". Item [2] of schedule 1 to the bill amends section 22B (1) (b) to clarify that "the decision" referred to is "a decision to grant or dispense with bail". The amendment corrects the drafting in the Act as per the original intent of the section and adopts the approach applied by Justice Garling in the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal in *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Van Gestel* [2022] NSWCCA 171. Items [3] to [5] of schedule 1 also amend the Bail Act to allow courts to impose an accompaniment requirement as a pre-release requirement. The existing section 29 of the Bail Act prevents the court imposing this, even where bail concerns are prevalent.

The New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal decision *WR v Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW)* [2023] NSWCCA 38 confirmed that the Bail Act only permits an accompaniment requirement to be imposed as a conduct requirement, which takes effect after release. An accompaniment requirement imposed as a conduct requirement, rather than as a pre-release requirement, means that there is no legal requirement for the accompanying person to be present before the accused is released. That may have the undesirable outcome of an accused entering bail and leaving remand directly into a breach. Amending the Bail Act to make accompaniment requirements available ensures that bail conditions are validly adhered to, as a person cannot leave custody until the nominated person arrives. It provides needed clarity for corrective services to assist compliance with court-ordered bail conditions so bail can continue to be granted appropriately whilst safeguarding our community.

An accompaniment requirement will still be subject to existing limits on bail conditions. A pre-release accompaniment requirement may only be imposed if the court finds it, firstly, reasonably necessary to address a bail concern; secondly, not more onerous than necessary to address that concern; and, finally, reasonably practicable to comply with. As a result, the amendment is unlikely to materially increase the number of people awaiting bail. To support the change, new section 28A will be inserted to define "accompaniment requirement" as a bail condition requiring the accused person to be released into the care or company of a specified person or a class of persons. The reference to "class of persons" provides that an accused person may be accompanied by an NDIS worker or Youth Justice employee.

The bill also amends the Children's Guardian Act 2019. Item [1] of schedule 2 to the bill removes the arbitrary requirement for the Children's Guardian to be under 65 years of age. The current provision contradicts age discrimination laws in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, which make it unlawful to require retirement on the basis of age. The current requirement has no operative effect. The amendment will apply retrospectively to ensure consistent anti-discrimination laws in New South Wales. The bill also amends the Fines Act 1996 to allow completion of activities to be treated as payment of a penalty notice. It introduces new section 23B to allow penalty notice recipients to access support via a pre-court drug diversion scheme to address their behaviour. It also allows the NSW Police Force to issue two criminal infringement notices equivalent to fines of up to \$400 for personal drug use and possession offences involving small quantities of prohibited drugs. The recipient of the criminal infringement notice can either pay the fine or participate in specialist health interventions. If they complete the health intervention, their fine is treated as already paid.

The scheme will improve health outcomes by offering early health intervention. Support from healthcare professionals decreases the risks of people detected with minor quantities of drugs falling through the gaps and experiencing barriers to health interventions, and can prevent further drug use. The scheme also recognises constructive criminal penalties to provide better outcomes for low-level offenders and to reduce the strain of such matters on our courts without compromising community safety. Our courts and law enforcement can focus on prosecuting real risks to community safety, like suppliers and manufacturers of illicit substances. The amendment enables us to fight drug use at its foundation as we continue the war on drugs.

The bill also reforms the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. Amendments to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002—or LEPR—remove the sunset clause at section 60A (9). During the pandemic, section 60A of LEPR was introduced to address requirements for warrants to be applied in person. It allows non-urgent warrant applications to be made by email. A sunset clause



will automatically repeal that provision in December 2023. Schedule 4 to the bill removes the sunset clause so the allowance can continue as a permanent measure in the legislation. Permanently allowing digital warrants was based on recommendations by the Department of Communities and Justice in consultation with the NSW Police Force and local court registries. They advised that the email warrant process is more efficient and cost effective than in-person warrant applications. Email warrant applications have not impacted individual rights, as all existing safeguards in LEPR apply equally to applications made by email.

The bill amends the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 to implement recommendations made by a statutory review, including to extend the preventative detention scheme in part 2A of the Act. The review noted that it would be premature to repeal part 2A before the investigative detention powers in the Act had been operationally tested and would create inconsistencies with the national legislative framework. New South Wales police continue to advise that preventative detention orders are a valuable counterterrorism disruption mechanism in the context of an imminent attack. [*Extension of time*]

In light of those preconditions, item [7] of schedule 5 to the bill amends the sunset clause to extend investigative detention powers for an additional three years. Further, schedule 5 items [1] to [6] to the bill ensure that a person detailed on a preventative detention order in a youth correctional centre or youth justice detention centre, under section 26X of the Act, will be notified of their rights and given opportunities to make complaints to the NSW Ombudsman regarding their treatment. I will not go into all of the Acts that the bill amends, but will focus on the amendments made by schedule 6 to the bill to clarify regulation-making powers across 10 different Acts. These amendments were recommended by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and are largely technical in nature. It is important to note that they will not affect substantial changes to existing policy, practice or legislation.

I outline some notable amendments within this suite of regulation-making powers. Firstly, the bill amends the Civil Procedure Act 2005 to support current civil procedure practices in New South Wales. Schedule 6.5 [3] amends section 18 of the Act to introduce an express regulation-making power to issue fees for functions exercised by the marshal in admiralty or sheriff. This enables retention of safe custody of property under arrest, pending the outcome of litigation. The amendment enables the making of regulations relating to fees for administrative services provided by a court. The bill also amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. Schedule 6.1 [3] to the bill enables the Attorney General to limit an intervention program to a specified part of New South Wales. Whilst limits to the time or location of intervention programs are currently provided for in section 2 (33) of the Criminal Procedure Regulation 2017, this amendment ensures the Attorney General's power is drawn from the relevant Act.

Section 37 of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Regulation 2021 provides exemptions from some provisions of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to facilitate participation in a needle exchange program. Schedule 6.14 to the bill amends the existing regulation-making power in the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act, under which a person may be exempt from certain provisions, to specifically refer to needle exchange programs published on the Ministry of Health's website. This will clarify the existing practice for exclusions from the needle exchange program. The bill expands the definition of "offender information" in section 57 of the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 to better assess an offender's risk. Currently the definition captures "any document, report or other information that relates to the behaviour, beliefs, financial circumstances or physical or mental condition of an eligible offender".

Key offender information prescribed by section 7 of the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Regulation 2018 includes documents about an offender's education, work history and correspondence with associates or family members. The amendment ensures these factors are empowered by the Act as an important measure to assess the offender's risk of committing a serious terrorism offence. As members of Parliament, we are obliged to ensure that the laws developed in this House reflect the values and support the needs of our communities after they come into effect. Laws must be reviewed to respond to relevant decisions and policy changes and provide operational efficiencies to ensure that each Act accomplishes its objectives. In conclusion, the bill is the outcome of important legislative review. The amendments practically clarify legislative provisions and processes and ultimately assist our community to achieve timely, just outcomes. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:43):** I welcome the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2023. The bill presents a number of amendments across a range of pieces of legislation. I contain my remarks to the application of a fines amendment that underpins the State's approach to individual drug users who have been found in possession of a drug in breach of the law. Let us put that in context. The Coalition Government committed to a decision on these matters pending appropriate health services being in place. As a regional member of Parliament, I recognise this is of particular importance in regional areas, where services are not prevalent. Changes to the Fines Act facilitate the Government's policy announcement on intervention rather than criminal fines for the possession of drugs other than cannabis.

The Government has provided no details about what drugs, quantities or interventions will be prescribed. It has also provided little to no detail about whether drug interventions are available throughout New South Wales.

All members seek to develop strong policy in this place. In particular, that requires equitability across the State. We must ensure that not only the most urban communities can access the best aspects of the scheme. All members should take note of that. It is remarkable that we are about to make significant legislative changes to the administration of justice for drug possession matters. This is a moment of adjustment for individuals, law enforcement, the courts and our society at all levels. Yet, effectively, the bill says nothing about the outcomes for justice and health monitoring and law enforcement.

This significant policy adjustment barely leaves a footprint. We will not find answers in the bill or in the Minister's second reading speech. The question that ought to be asked is whether this legislation, as valuable as it is in a policy sense—which I note follows on from the Coalition's policy from last year—should be put forward without thorough debate in Parliament. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report entitled *Drug possession recorded by the NSW Police Force: 2017 to 2021* provides detail around the problem of possession and interaction with justice. In 2021, 16,276 people were proceeded against by police for drug possession and/or use. In the 12 months to December 2021, cannabis accounted for 57 per cent of drug possession proceedings. In the 12 months to December 2021, 80 per cent of adults proceeded to court and 20 per cent were diverted, and 16 per cent of youth proceeded to court and 84 per cent were diverted.

Over those five years the trends for drug possession by substance recorded by the NSW Police Force were as follows: Cannabis went down by 2.9 per cent, ecstasy went down by 33.4 per cent, cocaine went up by 5.1 per cent, and amphetamines went up by 3.1 per cent. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation report from January this year noted that Australia has about 43,000 people in prison, with over 65,000 people going through the prison system each year. Many entering prison have poorer physical and mental health than the general population. A large proportion have a history of alcohol, drug use and dependence. Many also have a mental illness and have experienced social exclusion, disadvantage and trauma before being imprisoned. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation reports:

Australia's alcohol and drug services reach less than half of those who need treatment – and these rates are even lower for people in the criminal justice system.

The foundation looked at the significant drug-related health risks for people entering and leaving prison. It noted:

While some people end up in prison for reasons related to their drug use, others may start their drug use in prison.

Prison experience can exacerbate the problems. On that point the foundation reports:

Around 42% of people leaving prison will reoffend and be reimprisoned within six-months of release. This rate is significantly higher for people with a history of substance dependence.

New section 23B of the bill states:

**23B Completion of certain activities may be treated as payment**

- (1) A person to whom a penalty notice is issued is taken to have paid the amount specified in the penalty notice if the Commissioner is satisfied that—
- (a) the person has completed an activity, and
  - (b) the activity is prescribed by the regulations as an activity that may be completed instead of payment for an amount specified in a penalty notice belonging to a particular class, and
  - (c) the penalty notice belongs to the class, and
  - (d) any additional requirements prescribed by the regulations are satisfied, and
  - (e) a penalty notice enforcement order has not been made for the amount. Under the new section an offender can pay the penalty notice or complete a prescribed activity which, in the case of a drug possession, will form part of a health intervention and prison diversion scheme. Under the scheme, police will be empowered to issue up to two criminal infringement notices, with fines of \$400 for personal drug use and possession offences involving small quantities of prohibited drugs. Complete the drug and alcohol intervention course and the fine will be treated as paid.

But the story does not end there. Members may recall that on 21 September 2022 the Coalition announced a half a billion dollar investment to deliver targeted health and justice reforms as part of its final response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice". This formed a key component of the then New South Wales Government's response to the ice inquiry recommendations. It was designed not to incorporate a simple one-dimensional change but to fund a range of health rehabilitation services and justice initiatives. These included \$358 million to address treatment gaps and improve health and social outcomes, and more than \$141 million to expand justice initiatives that make communities safer by prioritising offenders with intensive health intervention and better addressing underlying causes of offending. Then Premier Dominic Perrottet said illicit drugs would continue to be illegal but that the Coalition Government was determined to tackle the difficult health and justice issues with "the single largest investment in evidence-based alcohol and other drug services in the State's history". The former Premier stated:

We want to see real change in the community—especially vulnerable communities—when it comes to drugs and drug addiction. Our State needs a health response and a criminal justice response, and today's announcement captures both.

This is where I start to struggle with Labor's approach. It is willing to adopt the Coalition's policy for reform—and perhaps match its enthusiasm—but prepared to discriminate on the establishment of wraparound healthcare and education services that make the policy really come to life, particularly for regional areas. There is little in Labor's announcement nor in this bill that will come as a comfort to those living in regional areas.

Compare this with what the Coalition committed to last year: a total of \$358 million for health-related programs, including evidence-based treatment support and early intervention services in regional and rural areas for priority populations—including Aboriginal people, pregnant women, young people and people with co-occurring mental illness—integrating support for people with complex needs; enhancing digital capacity and virtual health care; increasing the alcohol and other drug workforce; and improving data utilisation to inform system monitoring and evaluation. This funding would mean more than 30,000 people impacted by alcohol and other drug use would benefit from additional services. It would also support more than 11,000 people with alcohol and other drug-related offending behaviour and create more than 670 new jobs, with more than 63 per cent of those in rural and regional areas.

A health approach to illicit substances in our State is sensible where we have the right supports in place, not just in one part of the State but across the State. To date, though, the lack of details from the Government—even at the most basic level—is unnecessary and, as a result, problematic. It is vital that the Government maintains scrutiny over whether the desired outcomes have been achieved. Let us hope the Government fills in the gaps quickly so the community can understand and be assured that this reform is the right path forward. I support the bill.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:53):** I support the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. The object of the bill is to make various amendments to Acts and regulations relating to courts, crimes and other Communities and Justice portfolio matters. Regularly reviewing and updating legislation is an important mechanism to ensure the law is fit for purpose and keeps pace with developments in the community and the legal system. This miscellaneous bill is focused on updating legislation within the Communities and Justice portfolios. The bill was developed in consultation with stakeholders across government and external stakeholders in the legal sector.

The stakeholders who participated in the process involved heads of jurisdiction, including the Supreme Court, the District Court, the Chief Magistrates' court and the Children's Court; NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales; Court Services NSW; NSW Police Force; Corrective Services NSW; Victims Services; Youth Justice NSW; New South Wales Crime Commission; NSW Trustee and Guardian; the Cabinet Office; Treasury; Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited; Law Society of New South Wales; and New South Wales Bar Association. Targeted consultation with stakeholders impacted by specific proposals also occurred, including Revenue NSW, the NSW Sheriff's Office and the Children's Guardian.

New South Wales has some of the strongest bail laws in Australia, which are primarily contained in the Bail Act 2013. The bill makes two amendments to the Bail Act. The first amendment brings necessary clarity to section 22B, which was introduced in 2022. Currently it requires a bail authority to refuse bail following conviction and prior to sentencing if the offender will be sentenced to full-time detention unless special or exceptional circumstances can be established to justify the decision. Section 22B does not specify that, for detention applications, "the decision" referred to is a decision to grant or dispense with bail, although this is the intent of the legislation. In *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Day* [2022] NSWSC 938, Justice Garling described this as an "infelicity of drafting".

In applying this provision, courts have adopted an approach consistent with the original intent of the legislation expressed by the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal in *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Van Gestel* [2022] NSWCCA 171. This amendment remedies this drafting anomaly to clarify the legislative text and ensure consistent application of the law. This does not change the substance of the provision. Significant policy changes are outside the scope of the miscellaneous bill process. Repealing or narrowing the application of section 22B would be a significant policy change and is not contemplated as part of this bill.

The second amendment to the Bail Act 2013 is the creation of a new prerelease requirement available to bail authorities to impose when granting bail. A prerelease requirement is a condition that must be met before a person can be released on bail. Unlike other bail conditions, the Bail Act 2013 limits the prerelease requirements that a bail authority can impose when making a bail decision. The available prerelease requirements are listed at section 29 of the Bail Act 2013. Section 29 is not currently drafted to permit a court to make a prerelease requirement that the accused be accompanied by a nominated person upon release. Nevertheless, courts in fact

endeavour to make orders in these terms on a regular basis when imposing such a requirement is considered necessary to meet a bail concern.

The New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal found that, to the extent an accompaniment condition imposes an obligation on the accused, it is a conduct requirement and cannot be imposed as a prerelease requirement. If an accompaniment condition is imposed as a conduct condition rather than prerelease requirement, a person may choose to enter bail and leave custody even if the condition is not met. This has the undesirable outcome of an accused potentially entering bail and leaving remand directly into breach. This bill makes conditions available as prerelease requirements. Where imposed, a person will not be able to leave custody until a nominated person is present for the purpose of accompanying them away from the facility. This will provide clarity for Corrective Services NSW and other law enforcement agencies about when an accused person is eligible to leave custody. This amendment is one of many amendments in the bill that are necessary to bring the law up to current standards and practices that are in place. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:59):** I wanted to speak in debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023 because there are some anomalies in the bill that has been put forward, and a lack of detail. The bill's provisions in relation to intervention services being delivered into regional New South Wales are concerning, and they lack detail. The bill does not detail how those people are going to be supported. In some communities those services are non-existent, and we need to make sure that they have the right support, otherwise we are introducing a fines system that is half-baked. The system should ensure that the services for those communities will help people to break their addiction. We are talking about people that are pregnant, young or dealing with mental health issues. That is why I say that the bill lacks detail. I ask the Government to provide, before this bill is passed, some more detail as to how the services will be rolled out in regional New South Wales.

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

#### *Public Interest Debate*

#### **COST OF LIVING**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (17:00):** I move:

That this House notes that Labor's first budget:

- (1) Cuts cost-of-living relief for families by slashing the Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers.
- (2) Cuts cost-of-living relief for regional New South Wales by axing the regional seniors, regional apprentice and university student travel cards.
- (3) Provides no bill relief to thousands of New South Wales households struggling with rising energy costs.
- (4) Provides no funding for toll relief beyond 2025.
- (5) Leaves household budgets worse off.

I bring this motion to the House following the handing down of Labor's first budget in over a decade. The budget has come at a crucial time, when families across our great State are facing increasing cost-of-living pressures that require the attention and focus of the Government. The budget has come at a time when energy costs are soaring, transport costs are rising and prices of the basics we need like food and groceries are skyrocketing. This Government has delivered cuts to programs that support families and households through such difficult times.

I am proud to be a member of the former Coalition Government, which understood the role of government in supporting families and households in difficult times. It is the former Government that established the Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers to reduce the burden on household budgets and to ensure that kids remained active and were supported in local sporting organisations. The vouchers were a resounding success. At the start of this year, around 4.85 million vouchers had been redeemed, saving families \$481 million and helping relieve the pressure on their struggling budgets. In my own electorate of Winston Hills, countless sporting clubs offer a range of sporting activities, such as soccer, netball, rugby, athletics or baseball. In 2018 families in my electorate with kids at those local clubs benefited from the uptake of over 76,000 vouchers. There was a 76 per cent uptake of vouchers in Winston Hills by families who used them to provide their kids with sporting activities.

Those families are paying more under the new Labor Government. To give an example, there is a fantastic local rugby league club in the heart of the suburb of Lalor Park, a suburb where local constituents are finding the rising cost-of-living pressures on their family budgets difficult. A single mum there had three boys who wanted to play rugby league. She used the Active Kids vouchers of \$100 to help pay the \$105 registration fee for each child, which includes a pair of footy boots. This mother of three boys took her three vouchers to the Lalor Park

facility and, for \$15, her kids played rugby league for the first time. It is a fantastic example of how the former Coalition Government supported families and gave kids the opportunity to be healthy and to participate in sport with their mates. It supported kids to have structured sporting opportunities that they had never had before, and to get exposure to role models that they had never had before.

These are the type of successes the former Government's vouchers achieved, yet they have been slashed by the current Government. Under Labor, families who receive the tax benefit part A will now only receive \$50 vouchers under the combined Active and Creative Kids voucher schemes, while First Lap vouchers, which are important for teaching our young people to swim, will be cut from \$100 to \$50. Under Labor, New South Wales families will pay more and get less. My office has received countless emails from parents outlining the financial stress this has placed them under and their genuine disappointment with the Government about the commitments it made and its failure to deliver them. Later in this debate, the Opposition will also address cuts by the Labor Government to regional seniors, regional apprentice and university student travel cards. I am sure the good member for Myall Lakes will address members on how these cuts have affected people in her local community and right across New South Wales.

The regional seniors card has helped more than one million eligible seniors by providing them \$250 to spend on transport, whether that be petrol, taxis or public transport, to help them get to medical appointments or to the shops to buy weekly groceries. It was a practical measure to support regional seniors with their cost of living, and it made them more independent. Trips to see their grandkids, easy access to shops or medical appointments will be slashed by this Government. The regional apprentice and university student cards have been instrumental in assisting over 5,000 regional apprentices manage the cost of living associated with their studies. Cuts to the regions are a clear example of what a Labor Government does. If a person does not live in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong, Labor leaves them behind.

In this debate we will also talk about rising energy costs facing New South Wales households. Budget papers confirmed that average household energy bills will increase by \$380 next year. Members on this side of the House proposed \$250 of energy bill relief for every single household in New South Wales, a package that would relieve household budgets for all families, no matter where they live. Labor's energy plan is selective; it does not support all families. Families in my electorate will miss out on energy relief and pay more for their bills because of this Government's budget.

Lastly, the Labor budget has left behind commuters. The Government has increased Opal fares by 3.7 per cent, increased tolls on the Sydney Harbour Bridge by 6.8 per cent, and increased fees and charges issued by Transport for NSW. Labor's plan reduces capital investment in Sydney's transport over the next four years, which means that commuters will be paying more, not less, in years to come under this Labor Government. Whilst the Labor Government has scrapped the Coalition's tax relief package, there is no money for toll relief beyond 2025. That is another example of Labor giving with one hand and taking with the other.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:07):** What a great topic for today's public interest debate. Talk about an own goal! I had to double-check whether the member for Winston Hills had quit the Liberal Party and joined the Government. I thought, "What is going on?" What cheek, to stand in this place and talk about the cost of living after 12 years of the most obscene pork-barrelling we have seen in the history of this State. The king of pork-barrelling was the member for Kiama. The Opposition has the hide to talk about the cost of living. It is an absolute joke.

The people of New South Wales can easily unite on this topic, and I am sure that those opposite will agree that we are all striving to relieve cost-of-living pressures for our communities. This is not something new; it has been going on for 12 years. It has not happened in the past eight months since the Labor Government was elected. It goes all the way back to 12 years ago. Let us have a look at who was in charge. It was the Liberal Party, including the member for Oatley, the member for Terrigal, the member for Kiama and the member for Winston Hills. All of them should hang their heads in shame because this is their fault.

Let us have a quick look at the financial position that the previous Government left us with. It is the worst possible scenario. The previous Government left a \$187.5 billion debt, even after all its pork-barrelling. This Labor Government inherited the largest debt in New South Wales history. In addition to that record amount of debt, the Liberal-Nationals also made more than \$7 billion worth of promises that they could not possibly pay for and most were not even in the budget. Members on the other side should not sit there and lecture us about the cost-of-living measures, because they did nothing.

Those opposite are like toddlers. They have spilt their breakfast all over the floor and they blame the dog for the mistake. They are clearly incapable of owning up to their mess. It is those of us on this side—the Labor Government—that have to clean up the mess of those opposite, and that is what we are doing now. I assure every member of my community that the Government is committed to cleaning up the huge mess but also reducing

cost-of-living pressures. Every resident of New South Wales will benefit from a Labor government. Unlike those opposite, who love wasting taxpayers' money, we on this side are committed to spending money in the best interests of every resident in New South Wales.

We are directing money to where it is needed most, to the most vulnerable people in New South Wales. It is not going up to the leafy North Shore, to the eastern suburbs or to the lovely sporting grounds of Kiama. We will assist residents with 130 responsible cost-of-living relief budget measures worth \$8.2 billion that will improve affordability and accessibility to a range of services and programs. Relevant to the Shellharbour electorate, our cost-of-living relief measures will include the Pensioner Concession Subsidy, which provides a rebate of up to \$250 on ordinary council rates and charges for domestic waste and management services.

The Government will assist with bill relief, delivering a one-off \$500 payment to eligible households through the National Energy Bill Relief Fund household payment, a fantastic program and another great Labor initiative. As a passionate advocate for victims of domestic and family violence, I am particularly proud that the Government will provide free ambulance services for victims of sexual violence, sexual assault and child abuse. The Government's record in eight short months speaks for itself. Labor is kicking goals all over the place while those opposite sit there and whinge. The Government is making preschool more affordable for young families in new suburbs such as Wongawilli by providing \$500 per child fee relief for three-year-olds attending eligible preschool programs and long day care from January next year. I will not stand here and be lectured to by those opposite.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:12):** I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Winston Hills. I am quite surprised that those opposite would argue any of the points in the motion as they are all factual points. The Labor Government's first budget is an absolute kick in the guts to families in regional areas. I will start by reflecting on the Premier's clear disconnection with the people of regional New South Wales. Today in question time when asked a question by one of his own, the member for Cessnock, regarding the State budget and regional New South Wales, the Premier spent less than three minutes discussing the actual plan for regional New South Wales and what the budget means, instead spending more time focused on addressing The Nationals and his strange obsession with the member for Bathurst, the member for Dubbo and now the member for Tweed.

The cost of living across New South Wales—and more so across our nation—remains the number one concern for the majority of people. Household budgets are stretched and often are not even meeting. The people of New South Wales deserve to feel that their Government is there to support them, to provide reassurance that there is assistance available to them during times of struggle. But when the budget was handed down, all we saw were cuts: cuts to Active Kids vouchers, cuts to Creative Kids vouchers, cuts to First Lap vouchers—cuts, cuts, cuts. Did the Premier and the Treasurer stop there? No. What did they do next? Not only did they cut the value of the vouchers in half, they then announced they would means test the vouchers, so even more people will miss out. Now not everyone will benefit.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Myall Lakes will be heard in silence.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON:** In fact, 750,000 children will miss out on the vouchers. But it is not only them; it is also small business and sporting clubs. There are so many that are affected by this woeful first Labor budget. Did the Premier and the Treasurer stop there? No. What did they do next? They decided that our youth, trainees, university students and apprentices do not need assistance. "Let's scrap the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card. Let's keep hitting the hip pockets of the mums and dads who top up the fuel for those students. Because with all the other cuts we have made, we will slip this one in and they will not even notice." It seems that those opposite do not have much of a clue when it comes to the regions, because there are not a lot of transport options in regional New South Wales. More often than not, TAFE students and apprentices have to travel away from home at least one day a week for their course. Mums and dads are left to pick up the tab for the kids. This card made a difference.

Did the Premier and the Treasurer stop there? No. What did they do next? They decided to go after our most vulnerable and hardworking constituents, our seniors, and scrap the Regional Seniors Travel Card, cutting the program that has been in place since 2019. There were 1.3 million cards issued. This was a program that made a tangible difference in the lives of seniors across regional New South Wales. What was the offer from Labor? "Grab yourself 4c a litre when filling up at United." That is all well and good, Premier, if there is one on every street corner. What about those who cannot drive and relied on the card for buses, trains, taxis and community transport? What did the Government offer them? That is right. It accused them of using the card fraudulently. Shame on the Government!

Despite 22,000 signatures that we gathered on the petition, all those opposite voted down a public interest debate to keep the travel card—shame, shame, shame! Fuel, food, electricity, rents and mortgages—the cost of living—are soaring but our families, seniors, students and children of regional New South Wales have been heavily impacted by this woeful Labor budget. Day after day in this place Labor members chant the line of the budget black hole. But the Labor Government's first budget is sending the people of regional New South Wales into the depths of budget despair. They deserve better.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:17):** I make a contribution to the public interest debate because the people of New South Wales have spoken about the Coalition's ability to control the cost of living. The people of Camden spoke quite clearly about what they thought the previous Coalition Government was providing for them, which was nothing. The Minns Labor Government understands that people are doing it tough right now. We on this side hear people's concerns and we are working hard to find solutions. I could talk for ages about how the people of Camden have been hard done by, with countless transport opportunities provided in eastern Sydney and not one transport infrastructure project for the highest growth areas of Camden, Leppington and Liverpool—nothing.

Those opposite should not lecture me about what happened in our area. We talk about rebuilding essential services and confronting the housing crisis. The member for Shellharbour outlined how we need to pay down the debt that the Coalition Government left us. We have been talking about reliable and renewable energy and today we will talk about how we are helping with the cost-of-living pressures. When I was doorknocking, many people were telling me how the tolls in our electorate are absolutely crippling.

**Mr Mark Hodges:** Well, fix it.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** We will. The toll cap of \$60 a week will help. One family told me that their child was not able to play sport at all, regardless of what little handout was given to them, because they were paying \$180 in tolls per week, so they can put the \$120 a week that they are saving in tolls towards playing sport. There are two ways that we can address the cost of living: We can lift wages, increasing the amount coming in, or reduce expenditure, decreasing the amount going out. We lifted the wages cap, which means that thousands of people have the opportunity for more money to be coming in. We secured a historic pay rise for teachers, so 95,000 teachers will have more in their pay cheque today—actually, it will be coming on Friday—to relieve the expenditure that is going out.

We have converted teachers and support staff to permanent positions. I am not sure how many members in the House have been temporary teachers, but I can tell the House that the impact it has on the ability to get any help or any loans is quite crippling, not to mention the fact that it is really hard to set up or put down any sort of roots within a community. People are unable to get a loan because banks will not give them a loan if they do not have a permanent position. The conversion of 16,000 teachers and support staff to permanent positions will enable them to get the help that they need. We gave 1,112 nurses security in their positions. They were unfunded and now they know that their positions are secure, so they can make decisions knowing they have a permanent job. We are supporting 12,000 healthcare students with a \$4,000 annual study subsidy. That means 12,000 healthcare students know that they will get help to study and be able to relieve our healthcare system. We have managed to get hold of the largest pay increase in more than a decade for our frontline healthcare workers. All of those things are about getting higher amounts into people's bank accounts.

I now talk about some of the things we are doing to reduce expenditure. We have \$500 childcare relief for eligible parents of three-year-olds in approved preschools, and preschool programs in long day care centres. In my area of Camden, where we have the second highest number of zero to five-year-olds, it makes a massive difference to families that they can get that childcare relief and know that they are not working just to pay for child care. But the toll cap of \$60 a week is what people are talking to me about most, and that is why I have been happy to speak to this public interest debate today.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (17:22):** Misleading Parliament is one thing, but misleading and deceiving the public is quite another. The Minns Labor Government has done both. It has deceived the public by pretending to help with cost-of-living pressures when it has done exactly the opposite. Let us have a quick look at a few of the things that the Minns Labor Government has done with regard to cost-of-living pressures. The Labor State Government promised to address tolls, and it has: It just increased the toll to cross the Harbour Bridge each day—tick! It promised not to increase taxes, but it increased taxes to build a new house by as much as \$50,000 when housing affordability is depriving young families of buying a home—tick! It also promised to keep Active Kids rebates, but 750,000 kids across New South Wales will now miss out on that rebate and potentially will not participate in sport—tick! However, it did give public servants the biggest wage increase in over a decade of up to 10 per cent. That must really make hardworking people across New South Wales feel warm and fuzzy every time they turn up for work.

The great inequity of the Minns Labor Government in addressing cost-of-living pressures can surely be seen in next year's toll rebates. The Minns Labor Government has increased toll relief for some of the wealthiest areas in New South Wales, but at the expense of low income earners who use public transport every day, such as those people in Winston Hills, Parramatta, Penrith, Riverstone, Central Coast and East Hills. Incredibly, from next year, every driver in my electorate of Kellyville who travels to Sydney on a toll road will get a rebate of \$5,000 per year—or \$4,896, to be exact—for 48 weeks' travel.

I would never begrudge any of the hardworking residents in my electorate getting some cost-of-living relief, but I have received a few testimonials from a few of the struggling residents in my patch, and I share a couple of those with the House. Anthony from Bella Vista Waters has written to me. For the benefit of those in the Chamber, Bella Vista is the Mosman of Western Sydney; it just has nicer homes. Anthony is a senior executive at his company in Sydney, earning a large six-figure sum each year. He said:

Ray, cost of living was having an impact on the family, even though we now own our \$5million plus, 6 bed, 5 bathroom home with pool and tennis court, but we will really appreciate the \$5000 Minns Labor Xmas Toll Bonus given I have to do the occasional Saturday commute to the city, as well, Ray, I really luv the Metro but I won't be giving up driving my Humma anytime soon, tell the Premier I said thnx, I won't ever vote for him but luv the extra cash, Cheers, Tony.

Michael from North Kellyville said:

Ray, when developers purchased my rural land for housing, we thought we would use some of the \$12 m windfall to buy a nice home in North Kellyville, while the kids are no longer playing sports due to cancelling Active Kids Rebates, we have utilized the Minns Labor Xmas Toll Bonus to commence Polo and the kids really luv their new ponies. Now loving horses is one thing but we think after a few years of this toll bonus we will be considering making a down payment on Winks first foal. Dragging the horse float has been a bit tough with rising petrol prices, but just wanted to let you know, the kids won't miss a Polo event next year due to the Minns Labor Xmas Toll Bonus, it's a real winner, cheers Michael.

Not to be forgotten, Karen from Rouse Hill, who owns a boutique jewellery store in Pitt Street, wrote:

Ray our kids missed out on learning to swim due to Labor cancelling the First Lap vouchers, however on the bright side we are going to put the Minns Labor Xmas Toll Bonus to good use by purchasing a couple of Jet skis.

P.S we also get a free trip using the Tollways to Botany Bay after reaching the weekly cap, it's a win-win – we luv the Toll bonus! Cheers Karen

Of course, they are very tongue-in-cheek examples, but they highlight the inequality of the broken Minns Labor Government promises to address cost-of-living pressures on behalf of the really disadvantaged families in our community who are doing it tough—families struggling just to pay for their homes and to keep food on the table.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:27):** The contribution by the member for Kellyville was most extraordinary. Hummers, surf skis and a polo pony trailer are just an indication of what the cost is, because it is the savings those opposite are talking about, in the most tolled city in the world. The fundamental problem with the Opposition's argument is that in my electorate, which is not the Mosman of the west, where we do not have pony trailers or exotic jewellery, people are paying \$4,516 a year in tolls from Parramatta to Haberfield. Those opposite want to talk about cost of living. That is the cost of living they put on the people of Western Sydney. If people go to the St Peters interchange it is \$5,328.

We are not talking about small money here. My electors—people who have the second highest unemployment rate and the second highest homelessness rate in the State, and who live in some of the most crowded conditions—have to find the money out of their own pockets just to get to work. They are not working in fancy jobs; they do not have polo trailers and jewellery. They are cleaners who need to get their equipment to work to clean the offices, the Parliament, the schools our kids go to and the hospitals, and this is the money they are paying. I am absolutely shocked that an Opposition member mentioned the Harbour Bridge toll, which those on the other side of the Chamber did not increase for a decade and kept at \$4, while people in the poorest parts of Sydney were paying outrageous tolls. They may call it a Christmas bonus; we call it something to help people get their kids' dinner on the table.

If those opposite cared about kids for just one minute, at some stage when they were in government they would have explained to this Chamber why students at Birrong Boys High School were in the halls with two teachers because they could not get a casual teacher. Surprise, surprise! There was no permanency so casual teachers were on the North Shore and in the eastern suburbs instead of out there teaching kids in Western Sydney. The member for Winston Hills said that he had a 70 per cent uptake of Active Kids vouchers in his electorate, but that was 70 per cent of the kids already playing sport—not new kids, not some other group of kids, but 70 per cent of the kids who were already playing sport.

**Mr Mark Coure:** How do you know that? You just made it up.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** I know that because your Government did a study on it. This is the problem. Data from one university study on the Active Kids rebate showed that it was not driving kids to play sport. My electorate



did not see a 70 per cent uptake of kids playing sport; it was under 40 per cent. In poorer communities across Western Sydney there was not a high uptake of the Active Kids rebate, so it is nice for those on the other side of the Chamber to talk about how much kids in their electorates are getting. Our kids were not even getting teachers or classroom upgrades. The previous Government promised a complete upgrade of Birrong Boys High School, but in its last year in office cut it in half. Do you know what those opposite cut out? It was the special needs kids upgrade. It is an absolute disgrace that Opposition members lecture us about their great commitment to children when out there in the real world everyone knows exactly what happened, which is why they are no longer in government.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:32):** There has been a lot of talk about what this Government is against, but I think we should discuss what this Government is for. It is for the inner-city elites, middle management and the gambling industry. There has been a lot of talk about what the Government is against, but those are the sorts of organisations and groups that it seems to be supporting. Everywhere I look all I see are cuts to government commitments and programs that make a real difference. What did the Premier say prior to the last election when he was specifically asked about cost-of-living measures? He said they would all be rolled over. But, of course, as soon as Labor came to government, the first thing it did was bring down the budget axe and cut programs that it said it would sustain in regional New South Wales.

I notice that there are not too many regional members in the Chamber defending their party's position on cuts to the regional seniors travel card. Only a few weeks ago a pensioner was in my office in tears because she will no longer be able to afford to see her grandchildren because of the cuts by the mean, miserable, malevolent Minns Labor Government that is destroying regional New South Wales.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Wow! You got the thesaurus out.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I'm coming to you; don't you worry about that. The previous Government's cost-of-living measures for household energy bills and its commitments to things like Active Kids, First Lap and the regional student travel card were all cut by this Government. Are we seeing any real initiatives from this Government to deal with the cost of living? Not at all. In fact, the legislative agenda of this Government is so threadbare that some days I feel like I am attending a bad session of a Toastmasters chapter in this Chamber. Where is the major planning reform to see increases in housing supply? The Premier waltzes into question time and parades as if he is the triumphant emperor of New South Wales, without any real or significant planning reform. As for the release of land, during the campaign he talked about build-to-rent schemes. He wants his friends in the trade union movement—who will likely be behind the schemes through super funds—to ensure that people are tied to someone else rather than getting into property and attaining the dream of home ownership.

Where is the investment in infrastructure to make it easier for people to live closer to work? This Government has done nothing but force up the cost of things like home energy bills, which we see in the budget. The Premier and the Treasurer said that they are only going to increase coal royalties by 2.6 per cent. That is a lie because the special levy that was meant to come off after COVID but is still in place will result in coal royalties increasing by over 30 per cent. Seventy per cent of this State's energy is generated by coal-fired power. By increasing that royalty, every single energy contract and every single household will face increases to their electricity bills because of this Labor Government. Labor members try to tell us all the things they are for when all we have seen are cuts not just to things that make a real difference for families and communities in the cities and the regions but also to things they committed to sustaining should they be elected to government. All we heard were excuses from members who are now enjoying the opulence of office rather than delivering for their communities. I think the bravest of all the members who have spoken so far is the member for Shellharbour. I thank her for being here. I know she is destined for greater things.

**Ms Anna Watson:** What about Sally? She was good.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** No, you have been here a long time and you should be on the front bench, in fairness. I look forward to the elevation of the member of Shellharbour to the local government ministry. The Office of Local Government deserves the member for Shellharbour. I look forward to that day. The people of New South Wales do not deserve this Government. They do not deserve its cuts and they do not deserve Labor lies. This Government puts trade unions before people and inner-city elites before regional New South Wales. Labor's definition of New South Wales is Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, and members on this side of the House will not let the Government forget it. At the next election we will be in every single one of the seats that those opposite snared at the last election. We will be reminding people about the cuts to the regional seniors travel card, the Active Kids rebate and the student travel card, and about the promises they made but have not delivered on. This Government should hang its head in shame. In four years' time it will be out the door.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (17:37):** In reply: It has been a long seven months for people paying increased bills not only in Western Sydney but also right across regional New South Wales. In fact, the

only fresh start that people in Western Sydney have had is to get a second job so they can pay for the increases in Labor's bills. Leaving that aside, I thank the member for Shellharbour, who gave us the usual lines that it is all too hard and all too difficult. Our response on this side of the House is that she is in government; it is time she started doing the job. The member for Myall Lakes rightly pointed out that the motion merely sets out the facts. Labor has slashed vouchers and increased costs. The budget has gone down the drain and all it consists of is cuts, cuts, cuts. The member for Camden said, "Don't you lecture me." Is that not right? That is Labor: Those opposite get elected and do not want to listen to any other view.

We heard an unforgettable contribution from the member for Kellyville. He spoke about Labor increasing tolls and the increased cost of housing and then gave the fantastic examples of both his brothers-in-law, Tony and Michael, and his business partner, Karen. The member for Auburn spoke about Sydney being the most tolled city in the world but forgot that the Government just increased tolls on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Government has made the city even more tolled. The great member for Kiama quoted the Premier speaking about relief during the election campaign. He said they would all be rolled over. The member for Kiama quite rightly said that all we got from the budget was cuts. I ask Labor members one question: Why do they inflict cuts and increased costs for seniors, kids and regional communities? Why do they inflict rising costs and cuts, cuts, cuts right across New South Wales?

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....49  
Majority..... 15

#### AYES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T

Kean, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)

Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

#### NOES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

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

## PAIRS

Cooke, S  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Kemp, M

Minns, C  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
Washington, K

**Motion negatived.**

*Bills***JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (17:49):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. As I said from the outset, my largest concern is with the application of the fines amendment. You cannot have an appropriate fines system in place unless there are also health intervention measures in place able to support those in our communities who need it. We do not want to create a two-tiered system, where those living in urban areas are supported by services that those in regional and rural areas do not have access to. The problem arises because of the localities and distances that those in regional areas have to travel for these services. I have seen that people in Bourke, Broken Hill and some of the smaller outlying communities have to travel hundreds of kilometres to get to the services that they need. That is why I am asking the Government to provide the detail about where those services are going to be rolled out.

As a regional member I have, and I think many members have also, seen the hurt and pain that drug-taking has caused to our communities. We have seen the impact that it has had in our local area. I am asking the Government to provide more detail in relation to things like which drugs the fines system will apply to. What quantity of drugs will it apply to? What intervention services will be provided? There is no detail around this. There is no detail as to where they are going to be located in regional communities.

We need to have a strong policy. I think the Minister does want to ensure that is the case, but it has to be an equitable system. It is remarkable that we can make changes to the administration of justice for drug possession matters, but that law enforcement adjustment for individuals is lacking because the bill will not deliver justice and health outcomes for our society. Looking at the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research results, we can see where there are fines. We can see where people who are charged with drug possession do go to the courts. That is what we want to do: We want to divert them away from our court system. But the trends over the past five years show that for cannabis, there has been a decline. For ecstasy, there has been a decline. For cocaine and amphetamines, there has been an increase. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has said that around 65,000 people go through the prison system each year. Those people are the most vulnerable in our communities; they need the most support. But we cannot provide the support if we do not have the health intervention services that are needed in these areas.

This matter is a concern for all people across the State. Last year the former Government announced around half a billion dollars in investment to target health and justice reforms that were well thought out. That was part of a response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice". Illicit drugs will remain illegal. The investment was to go towards breaking the cycle of drug use. We said at the time that successful implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme is only achievable when relevant services and supports have been established in the health and justice system. The four-year \$500 million commitment included \$358 million to address treatment gaps and improve health outcomes and more than \$141 million to expand justice initiatives that make our community safer. The former Government had previously rejected some of the recommendations around pill testing, supervised injecting centres and drug detection dogs. That is because we also said that illicit drugs should continue to be seen as illegal.

When people look at ice in communities, they see that it ruins lives. A lot of regional and rural communities have been devastated by it. Families have been devastated. I have seen communities that have been turned upside down. I have seen young people who break into people's homes. I have seen many cases where young people have stolen cars. I see that people are scared. This is the result of ice, but it is also the result of other drugs in our community. That is why funding is needed to ensure that health intervention services are being provided in the right location at the right time. What the Opposition is asking for is the detail. I heard the Law Society this morning say that it supports the scheme in principle, but it lacks detail. That is why I think there needs to be a clearer explanation of where that support and those services are going to go. Every family grappling with a loved one's addiction wants to know that they will be able to break that cycle. They want to know that they have the right support and services no matter where they live.

We should not be softening our stance on drugs, and we need to make sure that a strong message continues to be conveyed across our communities. In our communities are young people, pregnant women, Aboriginal people and people who have mental health illnesses. All of these issues are complex, and they all have different needs. That is why we need to support the estimated 30,000 people who are going to need that help. That is why I am asking the Government to ensure that it is on the front foot and is putting health front and centre. Let us make sure that our communities are not left behind, because there has been a migration of people into regional communities. I say to the Minister, who I know takes this very seriously, that we need to make sure the services are there to support people to recover. We need that support in rural and regional communities.

As part of the health intervention services, we need to make sure that we have the clinical staff. Whether that is psychologists or clinical nurses, we need to make they will be part of the support that is going to be rolled out by the bill. I know that there is no silver bullet. I know there is no easy way to fix all illicit drug use across the State, but I do know that the funding announced by the former Government was significant. It would have gone a long way. I say to the Minister, and to the Government, that the health intervention services need to be in place when they introduce the fines system; otherwise our communities will fall further and further behind unless they are given the support that they need. I really hope that those communities that I have seen suffering from drug addictions are given the support that they need in regional and rural New South Wales.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (17:57):** I thank the member for Bathurst for his comments. I also thank the Attorney General, his department and his office for their work. I also acknowledge NSW Health. This is very much a joint piece of legislation that our two departments have worked on. I acknowledge the work of Dr Kerry Chant and her team. Many members of this House have had the opportunity to work alongside Dr Chant and think highly of her. I also acknowledge the tremendous work of my senior policy adviser, Vivienne Moxham-Hall, for the enormous amount of work that she has done in this space. She is a professional who has studied in this area, and I am lucky to have someone like her in my office. I appreciate it enormously.

This reform, whilst not revolutionary, is important. I will talk about this piece of legislation mainly from a health perspective and less about the fines and the diversionary process, which have been well ventilated and commented on by the Attorney General and others. The bill comes off the back of the incredibly important Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice". From memory, recommendation 12 was for the introduction of a police diversionary scheme with an accompanying health intervention, which the member for Bathurst talked about, for use and possession for personal use of prohibited drugs.

The way that this will work will be fairly simple. Constable discretion or police discretion, however we may choose to describe it, will still remain, but police will be able to issue an on-the-spot fine of \$400 as an alternative to a mandatory court attendance for personal drug use and drug possession offences. I will go through the minor amounts that people would have to have on them to be eligible for this. People issued with a fine will be encouraged to complete a tailored health intervention—and I will talk about that in a moment. If they complete this intervention, their fine will be treated as paid.

I particularly thank those from NSW Health who, through Dr Chant, have willingly engaged and briefed members of the Opposition and perhaps even members of the crossbench—I am not 100 per cent sure, but I know my office has done that extensively. I thank Dr Kerry Chant and her team for being so willing to do those briefings in a very short period of time. The scheme aims to improve the outcomes for people with low-level drug offending by diverting them away from the court system and providing them the opportunity to engage with health services about their drug use. This is a piece of legislation that I know the Leader of the Opposition has supported in the past in government. I am confident that we can get this right in New South Wales. We can begin to treat these people in a diversionary, health-focused way, rather than clogging up our courts.

Let us be clear about what is excluded from this piece of legislation. We obviously know that it excludes serious drug offences relating to supply, manufacture and production. I should not have to say that, but I will just make that clear for everyone in the Chamber and beyond: Those offences are not part of this scheme at all. We will focus on the delivery of a health pathway that we think will suit the need of these users. Let me explain that in a little more detail, because I think the member for Bathurst would naturally also want to have an understanding of how that would work.

It is expected that most people will have a low level of substance use—because that is the only way they can get into this scheme—and that a brief intervention or motivational interviewing will be an appropriate level of intervention through a health pathway. For those who require ongoing treatment, standard clinical pathways will be used to connect people to the specific service they need—general practitioners, counselling, day programs, withdrawal management and residential rehabilitation. It is important to understand that that will depend on the person we are talking to.

Services are now being expanded across the State as part of the response to the ice inquiry—which the member for Bathurst rightly referred to—and the Government's response in a range of settings, including in the public sector, NGOs and Aboriginal community-controlled services, many of which those of us living in regional, rural and remote communities know all too well. Work is significantly progressed to ensure that the required services, including a major expansion of additional services, are in place ahead of the current proposed commencement of the scheme in 2024.

From a health perspective, it is important for the House to note that treatment will be matched to a clinical assessment of need. Qualified health professionals will provide phone-based assessments and interventions and referral to ongoing services as needed, and then escalating in intensity on each police detection—for instance, the second detection. The intervention includes telephone-based assessment, intervention, education and active referral to treatment, which will be based on clinical assessment of need. It is expected that most people who are seen by this service will have low-level substance use concerns, given that the only people who can qualify for the scheme are people with very low amounts of drugs in their possession at a given point in time.

If required, individuals will be supported to access a range of alcohol and other drug treatment services through local health districts. Members will know about those services that the Government provides in their communities, as well those provided by non-government providers and primary care practitioners that are available across New South Wales. We probably need a few more—let the Federal Government know that. Alcohol and other drug treatment options include counselling, withdrawal management, opioid agonist treatment and day residential rehab for priority populations such as Aboriginal people, parents and young people.

This is an important scheme. It focuses on very low levels of drug use in small amounts. The member for Bathurst talked about quantities. We are talking about under one gram for cocaine and methamphetamine, under 0.25 grams for MDMA and under 30 grams for cannabis. The benefit of the scheme is the potential to divert around 6,000 people away from our courts per year and increase their access to treatment. We will continue to work in this space, but we will do it in a methodical, sensible, calm and controlled manner. We are not in the business of making it easy for crooks, hardened criminals and dangerous bkie operatives to ply their trade across our cities, our towns and our rural and remote communities. I am sure all members of this House would agree that they are in the sights of the Attorney General and the police Minister. In this legislation we are focused on those users of very, very small amounts who we believe we can provide a diversionary pathway for. We are focused on the delivery of health care, healthcare support services and healthcare intervention.

We believe that this is an important way forward. This is not revolutionary; other States and jurisdictions have it in place. We believe that we have reached a point where we can have a similar scheme in New South Wales. We welcome the support from the Opposition. We understand that this was an issue of importance for those opposite at a point in time. We will continue to engage with them and we will continue to engage with the crossbench. We will continue to engage with health experts and with law and order experts. We will continue to engage with our communities to make sure that we get it right in reforming this area.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (18:08):** I speak in support of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. I offer some remarks about the proposed amendments to the Fines Act, which are to facilitate a pre-court diversion scheme for low-level drug use and possession. In 2018 the previous Government commissioned the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice", which delivered its recommendations in 2020. In September 2022 the previous Liberal-Nationals Government released its response to those recommendations and supported, or supported in principle, 86 of the 109 recommendations. Importantly, at the same time, we announced a half-a-billion-dollar investment to deliver targeted health and justice reforms. While illicit drugs would remain illegal, this investment would be aimed at breaking the cycle of drug use. We stated that the successful implementation of a pre-court diversion scheme would only be achievable when relevant services and supports had been established in the health and justice system.

The \$500 million had two major components: \$358 million to address treatment gaps and improve health and social outcomes, and \$141 million to expand justice initiatives that make communities safer by prioritising offenders with intensive health intervention needs and better addressing the underlying causes of offending. The \$358 million was to go to health-related programs, including evidence-based treatment support and early intervention services in regional and rural areas for priority populations, including Aboriginal people, pregnant women, young people and people with co-occurring mental illness; integrating support for people with complex needs; enhancing digital capacity and virtual health care; increasing the alcohol and other drug workforce; and improving data utilisation to inform system monitoring and evaluation. We projected that the funding would mean that more than 30,000 people impacted by alcohol and other drug use would benefit from additional services. It would also support 11,000 more people with alcohol- and other drug-related offending behaviour and create more than 670 new jobs, with over 63 per cent of those in regional and rural areas.

Recommendation 11 of the special inquiry was to decriminalise low-level personal use and possession. The former Government did not accept that recommendation, but it did support recommendation 12 in principle. Recommendation 12 stated:

In the alternative to Recommendation 11, in conjunction with increased resourcing for specialist drug assessment and treatment services, that the NSW Government introduce a legislated police diversion scheme for use and possession for personal use of prohibited drugs with the following elements:

- mandatory referral by police of people detected in possession of a prohibited drug to an appropriately tailored health/social and/or education intervention
- a maximum of three times that a person may be diverted
- threshold quantities that do not unduly limit access to diversion
- no requirement to admit guilt.

Our response to that recommendation was to support it in principle. But we noted that the possession and use of illicit drugs would remain a criminal offence, and we committed to an additional \$499 million to establish new statewide health rehabilitation services and justice initiatives. We said that, by 30 June 2023, the Chief Health Officer and the police commissioner would jointly provide advice to the government on whether the rollout of services and supports under our commitments was sufficiently advanced to allow commencement of the pre-court diversion scheme, after which we would make a final decision. We contemplated a criminal infringement notice scheme introducing penalties for low-level drug offending; allowing police discretion to issue a maximum of two criminal infringement notices for low-level drug offending statewide, with a court attendance notice for subsequent offences; allowing the fine associated with the notice to be waived upon completion of a specific health intervention provided by NSW Health; and retaining police discretion to charge a person and to issue a court attendance notice instead of a criminal infringement notice.

I note that a scheme along those lines, or at least along the broad outline of a criminal infringement notice scheme, was supported by former police commissioner Scipione. It was also supported by the then New South Wales police commissioner, Michael Fuller, in the police submission to the ice inquiry. I do not have a copy of that submission in front of me, but my recollection is that the former police commissioner indicated that, if accompanied by appropriate resourcing, a scheme like that could be transformational in achieving justice and health outcomes. Last week the Attorney General, in his second reading speech, described the scheme that the Government contemplated. It does appear to be an implementation of the scheme that the previous Government announced in principle in September last year. We will continue to monitor the precise rollout of the scheme to make sure that is the case, but it does appear to us to be of a similar nature to the scheme we described last year.

It is important that there is a rollout of services that support the scheme. I am grateful to the Minister for Health for very rapidly arranging a briefing for the member for Hornsby and me by Dr Kerry Chant to describe what was going on. I am also grateful to the Minister for Health for his rapid provision of preliminary detail about what the Government has done to date and what it proposes to do. It appears that the Government remains committed to investing the \$358 million in health outcomes that we had announced in September last year. That is good news. But we will, as an opposition should, hold the Government to account and keep an eye on the rollout of the investments that the Government says it is going to make and, in particular, whether the pre-court diversion scheme has the architecture that has been described and follows what we foreshadowed last year.

The amendment to the Fines Act does not set up the entire scheme. All it does is allow a fine that has been imposed to be effectively waived if the offender undertakes the prescribed activity—that is, the activity that regulations will prescribe as the appropriate health intervention. That will be a tailored health intervention to meet the needs of the individual offender, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. The Government will need to promulgate a regulation to describe what that activity is, and obviously we will keep a close eye on that to make sure that that activity is appropriate. It is unclear whether the Government intends to promulgate further regulations to set up the scheme or whether it is going to operationalise an existing scheme. There is already in place a music festival criminal infringement notice scheme, under which police have a discretion to impose criminal infringement notices of \$400 each time without, it would seem, a cap like the two-strike policy that has been announced by the current Government in relation to this scheme this year, and that was announced in principle by the former Government last year.

This is not going soft on crime. The fact that there are criminal infringement notices indicates society's disapproval of illicit drug use. It is a health scourge. It is a scourge on people's family life and their employment prospects. We want to actively discourage it but, by the same token, we do not want people in the criminal justice system if we can avoid it, with the consequences of a criminal record and the difficulties it creates for employment, renting and travel. On the one hand, we do not want to normalise illicit drug use but, on the other hand, we also do not want people to go down the criminal justice path unnecessarily. Preferably, people should be diverted into

a health response. The criminal infringement notice amount of \$400 and the prescribed activity will need to find a sweet spot where people are encouraged to divert into the health system rather than just pay the fine. Indeed, ideally, no fines would be collected; everyone would be diverted into that health intervention. I encourage the Government to make sure down the track that the scheme is properly evaluated by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research so that we have the very best designed scheme possible. [*Extension of time*]

Police will still retain a discretion to take someone through the criminal justice system. Some people have expressed concern about whether \$400 is too much for people from difficult economic backgrounds or First Nations people. Work and development orders should already be available for those sorts of fines and, in any event, those fines can be avoided if people undertake health intervention. So it is critical that the intervention occurs. It is also critical that NSW Health, or whoever operates the system, has follow-ups with people who have received criminal infringement notices so that time to pay or to be diverted does not run out and people are actively encouraged to undertake intervention.

On one view, this is a very measured reform. It is not normalising drug use but is getting people into a health response. At the end of the day, where someone has an addiction, we should address the causes of that addiction, which is best dealt with through a health response. Where it is not an addiction but something that could escalate into an addiction or is otherwise a risk to the person's health, it should be dealt with through a health intervention rather than through the criminal justice system. I hope this legislation finds a sweet spot. We will keep asking the Government questions about the details of the health intervention rollout and the precise nature of the architecture, but this bill makes excellent progress in tackling the scourge of illicit drugs in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:19):** I contribute to debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023. Having spent a lifetime working in the criminal justice system, I have seen more of the inner workings of the law than most. In my many years as a public defender, as an acting Crown prosecutor, as a public solicitor and as a Legal Aid solicitor, I have encountered some of the most heinous crimes one could imagine. But I have also encountered many low-level offences, many related to drugs, that should never have gone before the courts in the first place. The reforms proposed in this bill, particularly that which is encapsulated in schedule 3 to the bill and that which proposes to amend section 23B of the Fines Act 1996, are an essential vehicle to provide for the pre-court diversion scheme that has dominated much of this debate. I am delighted that the Opposition has chosen to support the bill and the proposed pre-court diversion scheme. I note that on Twitter, or X as it is now called, the Leader of the Opposition announced:

"NSW drug law overhaul" - this looks like another Labor re-announcement of a Coalition policy/project, but it's excellent news. It was part of the Coalition's \$500m investment in addressing the causes and harmful consequences of illicit drug use.

In response to those comments from the Leader of the Opposition, I say that there is no mortgage on good public policy in this State. Beginning the process of implementing this program, which was proposed by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Attorney General, is simply good governance. We are endeavouring to enact good public policy. If such a good policy needed to be implemented prior to the introduction of this bill, and given the views of the former Attorney as expressed in debate, I am sure he would have implemented it at a far earlier stage had he had the support of his colleagues in government. But, in any event, he now sees the Government proposing to implement good public policy.

The Government has a view similar to that of the former Attorney and now he can look forward to the support of the Government, even though he does not have the unanimous support of his own party or Coalition partners. The amendment to section 23B of the Fines Act is the legislative vehicle that enables the establishment of the pre-court diversion scheme. It must be clearly understood, particularly by those members of the House who are opposed to this provision, that this amendment is not about letting people off the hook for breaking the law in relation to drugs.

The scheme is not about drug decriminalisation, and it should not be suggested that it is. It will still be a criminal offence to possess and use illegal drugs. However, the amendment put forward in the bill is an important public health measure. It is a commonsense, evidence-based reform that builds on drug diversion schemes such as the Cannabis Cautioning Scheme, which has operated in this State for some 23 years. It is also an extension of the existing scheme that the NSW Police Force uses at musical festivals around this State. It will bring New South Wales into step with the rest of the country, as all Australian jurisdictions currently operate drug diversion schemes for low-level illicit drug use. Work on this scheme has been underway for quite some time—from before the election of this Government.

The scheme was a recommendation of the ice inquiry and is now supported by both the NSW Police Force and NSW Health. The scheme has been carefully designed with strict parameters in place to deal with low-level drug offenders only. It gives the NSW Police Force the ability to issue up to two on-the-spot criminal infringement

notices, which are fines of \$400, to adults for personal drug use and possession offences. This will apply only for drugs up to the small quantity. It does not apply to serious drug offences like drug supply, and it does not apply to convicted drug dealers. It will enable police to issue fines that do not need to be paid if the person completes a health intervention. However, if the person chooses not to complete the intervention, they will have to pay the fine. If they do not pay the fine, Revenue NSW will take appropriate action.

I cannot stress enough to the House how important it is for low-level drug offenders to be given the opportunity of a health intervention rather than a fine and to provide for health intervention for low-level drug dealers. Many people, often young people, who experiment with illicit drugs or use them at music festivals for the first time or on very few occasions and who ultimately find themselves before the court for that involvement—including some whose families I have known and for whom I have provided references—on most occasions receive section 10s. Those people have had to go through that process and have those matters entered on their criminal record, with no health intervention. Although it depends on a person's demographics, I know for a fact that in some cases that intervention has deterred any further drug use.

This proposal, if implemented, takes those people out of the criminal justice system and gives them the opportunity for health intervention. With a bit of luck, they will not have to tell their parents and that health intervention will deter them from further participation. The police will also retain a discretion to proceed with a matter in the courts, and it is not mandatory for police to issue an infringement notice. There may well be occasions when the NSW Police Force, through intelligence it has received that may not be admissible in court, will decide that, given the circumstances, a particular offender should not receive the benefit of a criminal infringement notice and that proceeding to court would be a better circumstance. In relation to offenders who are before the court, the other issue is that, even if the matters are not serious, it gives the court an opportunity to ensure a health intervention with the court's supervision. Recently I had the opportunity to discuss this with the Deputy Chief Magistrate in respect of a pilot program for other particular offences that might be of a similar category. [*Extension of time*]

There will be a limit of two on-the-spot fines given to an individual. After this, the police will proceed to charge and commence court proceedings. New South Wales is not reducing the maximum penalties that apply for possession of illicit drugs. The maximum penalty will remain 20 penalty units, or \$2,200, and imprisonment for two years. As I said, in my years in the criminal justice system I have encountered many cases of drug offences, ranging from minor infringements to very serious crimes. I am not dismissing the seriousness of drug supply and trafficking. These crimes should be dealt with according to law. But for individuals found with small quantities, these offences should not be clogging up our court system.

The scheme will have the effect of increasing the efficiency of our criminal justice system by diverting low-level offending matters away from the local courts and into health intervention, which is where they should be. It is anticipated that thousands of people will be diverted away from the courts each year. This includes hundreds of First Nations people. The scheme is an important part of addressing target 10 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by reducing over-representation of Aboriginal adults in the criminal justice system. This scheme is evidence based and has been developed by the NSW Police Force in partnership with the New South Wales Ministry of Health. Every interaction with a health professional decreases the likelihood that people detected with minor quantities of drugs will fall through the cracks in care or not be able to access health interventions that could prevent any further drug misuse. The health interventions put forward are well within the scope of practice for qualified and skilled alcohol and other drug specialist services.

The health intervention under the first criminal infringement notice will involve a single session in which a qualified alcohol and other drug professional will provide information about the impacts and risk of drug use, harm minimisation strategies, and ongoing support and treatment options. Where appropriate, active referrals to behaviour-change intervention and further counselling or to an intensive treatment and management program can be made. If an individual receives a second criminal infringement, the health intervention is more intensive. This includes a more detailed assessment of the person's drug use and how this may impact on offending behaviour. It may include a treatment plan, behaviour modification techniques and an active referral to appropriate services. It also includes a follow-up session with the individual.

The implementation of the scheme will require regulations, the allocation of resources and cooperation between various arms of the Executive Government. If this bill is enacted and the pre-court diversion scheme is implemented, I will regard it as a significant achievement of this Parliament. The fact that the Opposition supports the bill—and that therefore the House is likely to support a pre-court diversion scheme—means that we are taking important steps on behalf of the public on the road to law reform. We are starting to move drug use and drug addiction to where it should be: in the health system, rather than the criminal justice system. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:34):** I support the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2023, specifically the provisions that will facilitate a drug diversion program as outlined by the member for Heffron in his contribution to this debate. The changes will give police the discretion to provide people caught using or possessing small quantities of illicit drugs the option of a \$400 fine or a targeted health intervention. The offer would be available up to two times. I have a long history of supporting drug law reform that focuses on reducing harm and replaces criminal responses with social and health responses.

The criminal justice framework has failed to curb drug use. Despite heavy sanctions against use and possession, Australia has one of the highest rates of illicit drug consumption in the world. We know that a broad range of people use illicit drugs for many reasons. Most will continue to function in their everyday lives without problems but some will develop dependence. They all are the family, friends and colleagues of other people. The focus of drug laws and policies should be to keep them safe from harm, with different approaches for social and recreational use than for dependence.

Criminal offences see otherwise law-abiding people incur criminal records, making things like employment and travel difficult. At worst, they see people do time and experience the trauma of imprisonment. The situation can be dramatically life-altering as a consequence of drug use that may not have otherwise been life-changing. If people who experience economic, health, mental health and cognitive disadvantage use drugs, they are forced to deal with another layer of complexity when trying to get on their feet because of the criminal element of their use. Someone who is concerned about their drug use is less likely to talk about it with loved ones because of the stigma associated with criminal activity.

Young people, particularly those experiencing acute health concerns after consuming drugs, are more likely to delay seeking treatment over concerns of getting into trouble. The use of sniffer dogs increases the chances that drug users will get caught and only encourages the intake of high doses. Strip searching of citizens, particularly children and young people, results in trauma. Meanwhile, our already-overstretched courts get clogged with low-level drug use breaches. We know all this. Along with others from across the political divide, I have said it many times inside and outside of this House. We have heard it from experts across the drug and alcohol sector. The comprehensive Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" identified significant harm from punitive responses to drug use and made wideranging recommendations, including decriminalisation. We await the promised drug summit, which will hopefully build on the recommendations of that inquiry.

I remind the House that one of the key recommendations that came out of the previous drug summit was the establishment of the medically supervised injecting centre based in my electorate at Kings Cross. There is no institution in the Sydney electorate that I am more proud of. It is a place that saves lives every day. Other electorates would benefit from such an injecting centre, particularly in those areas where heroin use is on the increase. I welcome the drug diversion scheme which was proposed in the ice inquiry as an alternative interim measure to decriminalisation. The bill will reduce both the number of people criminalised for drug use and the burden on the court system. I hope that the discretionary nature of the scheme will not leave out vulnerable drug users such as people who are First Nations or trans and gender diverse.

The ice inquiry also recommended establishing substance testing at fixed locations and a trial of testing sites at music festivals. This reform is especially urgent given the number of people who have lost their lives at music festivals in this State, including two men in October. Substance testing can alert drug users to contaminants, unexpected substances and dangerously high purity or potency levels. It empowers drug users with information about the drugs they plan to take so they can make informed decisions. It also provides the opportunity to connect services with those who may need them. I hope we can move forward with this vital intervention to reduce the harm of recreational drug use. I would also like to see a trial of this ahead of the drug summit. While diversion is not a breakthrough reform in the drugs space, it takes us a step closer to an approach that is evidence based and seeks to reduce harm caused by drug use rather than penalise those who use drugs. I commend the bill.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (18:39):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Wairoa, Prospect, Albury, Camden, Bathurst, Keira, Cronulla, Sydney and Heffron for their contributions to the debate. The bill has been brought about in an effort to ensure that the law is regularly reviewed and updated so that it is fit for purpose and to deliver on the expectations of the community. While varied in nature, these amendments have been developed to address emerging issues and support operational needs and improvements. They also respond to developments in case law and clarify uncertainty in legislation by closing gaps in the law and correcting errors.

I will briefly address some matters raised by members during debate. The member for Wairoa raised concerns about whether the bill will introduce new fees to be paid by the public. The bill does not do this. The amendments to the Civil Procedure Act 2005, the Dormant Funds Act 1942 and the NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009, to which the member referred, are among those amendments introduced on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office to clarify the scope of the regulation-making powers under those Acts to support

current practice. The bill supports existing practices in relation to the setting of fees and enables ongoing operations to continue. There are no new fees contained within the bill.

The member for Wahroonga and the member for Albury referred to the amendment to the Fines Act 1996. The bill inserts section 23B into the Fines Act 1996. Unlike the existing Work and Development Order scheme, this section will apply prior to fines enforcement processes so that a recipient of a fine will have the opportunity to undertake a prescribed activity, such as a tailored health intervention, as an up-front alternative to payment. The activity will be prescribed by regulation and specifically linked to certain penalties, providing an opportunity to address issues underlying the offending behaviour.

I note that the member for Wahroonga, the member for Albury and the member for Bathurst raised a lack of detail provided concerning the operation of the future diversion scheme. As has been mentioned, the Opposition was extensively briefed by the Chief Health Officer and has already been provided with much of the detail suggested to be lacking. The Minister for Health advises me that yesterday morning, after I received a text message from the member for Wahroonga saying that Opposition members wanted the bill delayed because they were lacking detail—notwithstanding that they had already been briefed by the Chief Health Officer—the office of the Minister for Health provided the office of the member for Wahroonga with even further detail. But today the shadow Attorney General said he does not have enough detail. I am confused by some of the offerings to the debate from members of the Opposition. It looked to me as if the Leader of the Opposition himself had to come to the Chamber and contribute to this debate and clean up the debacle offered by the Opposition.

The member for Albury expressed a concern that it was inappropriate for this scheme to be introduced through the bill rather than through a standalone process. The amendment introduced today is the only legislative amendment required to enable the future diversion scheme to commence. It is appropriate for miscellaneous amendment bills such as this to be brought before Parliament to allow individual proposals, such as the amendment to the Fines Act, to be considered collectively, rather than introducing multiple separate bills.

The member for Bathurst emphasised the importance of not softening drug policy and not being soft on crime. The bill does not do this. This scheme is about getting people who commit low-level drug offences the health support and intervention they need as early as possible. Every interaction with a health professional decreases the likelihood that people detected with minor quantities of drugs will fall through the gaps in care or not be able to access health interventions that could prevent any further drug misuse.

I thank the Minister for Health for his contribution on the health component of this scheme. I thank also the member for Sydney for pointing out the value that came from the last drug summit and that lives have been and continue to be saved every day by the facility at Kings Cross. I look forward to the drug summit. One of the reasons why we committed to it is so that we could listen further to people who know what they are talking about. The ongoing maintenance and improvement of legislation through miscellaneous amendment bills such as this is critical to the work of good governance and effective legislation. The bill provides updates across Communities and Justice legislation and related areas to ensure that the work of government and the legal system can continue effectively. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** 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.**

## HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023

### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

#### *Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 21 September 2023*

**No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[1], lines 8 and 9. Omit "another Act administered by the Minister".

Insert instead "the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*".

**No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[1], line 10. Omit "other".

**No. 3 GRNS No. 3 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[2], lines 16 and 17. Omit "another Act administered by the Minister".

Insert instead "the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*".

**No. 4 GRNS No. 4 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[2], line 18. Omit "other".

**No. 5 GRNS No. 5 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[3], lines 23 and 24. Omit "another Act administered by the Minister".

Insert instead "the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*".

**No. 6 GRNS No. 6 [c2023-079C]**

Page 10, Schedule 8[3], line 25. Omit "other".

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (18:45):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST AMENDMENT (CAR PARKING) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 10 October 2023.**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:46):** On behalf of the Opposition, I make a brief contribution to debate on the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023 and indicate that the Coalition will support it. The bill seeks to amend section 20AA of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983, which establishes deadlines for the closure of on-grass car parking at Moore Park, in light of more recent information on the progress of a new multi-level car park at Allianz Stadium. The new multi-level carpark at Moore Park for use during major events in the Moore Park precinct should provide 1,500 parking spaces to offset the phasing-out of off-grass parking, as set out in legislation, from 31 December 2023. I note that this will offset the 1,300 spaces provided or previously provided by parking at Upper and Lower Kippax. In addition, more time is required to implement alternative arrangements to offset the loss of 950 spaces as a result of the planned closure of on-grass parking to the south of Moore Park East, commonly known as Showground Field, on 31 December 2025.

By amending section 20AA of the Act, the current dates specified for the closure of parking areas will be replaced with a power for the Minister to prescribe a date by regulation only when a new car park has been built and is operational next to the stadiums and the Minister is satisfied the provision of on-grass parking is no longer required to meet the demand for parking for events. This will not only allow for the completion of construction of the new car park but also provide Venues NSW with more time to find a suitable replacement for the 950 spaces at Showground Field. The Opposition believes this is a proportionate and necessary response.

On-grass parking has been a staple for events at the Moore Park precinct for a century but has also reduced access to green space for those living nearby. That is why in 2021 the Liberal-Nationals Government started the process of phasing out on-grass parking. In doing so, the Government at the time sought to create more open space in the area to transform into training facilities for the professional sports based at the precinct, community open space and parkland. It recognised that it is important to ensure the provision of more open green space to meet demand as communities grow, particularly in one of the most densely populated parts of Sydney.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Coalition has a proud legacy of delivering crucial public transport and pedestrian infrastructure, and the Moore Park precinct is no exception. It is serviced by the CBD and South East Light Rail, which has significantly improved game-day travel experiences to Moore Park with a stop within walking distance of the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium. The previous Government also delivered the Albert "Tibby" Cotter Bridge, improving pedestrian connectivity in the area. In addition, the former Government invested heavily in the Moore Park precinct through the \$874 million redevelopment of Allianz Stadium to create a 40,000-seat state-of-the-art stadium that catered adequately to both men and women, which members opposite opposed.

The former Government also provided \$26 million in funding for the development of the Sydney Swans HQ and Community Centre, which houses GO Foundation, Clontarf Foundation and Lifeblood's largest donor centre in Sydney's east, as well as tenants 98 Gym and Hoops Capital, the owners of the Sydney Kings and Flames, and was officially opened earlier this year. For much of Moore Park precinct's history, patrons have

commonly complained that they are often dissuaded from attending events due to the hassle and difficulty in getting to and from events. In light of that, the Coalition agrees there must be a seamless transition to new parking arrangements to support all fans and welcomes enhanced transport options to reduce the demand on driving for fans attending major events. Parking must be available for people who travel from various parts of Sydney to attend the precinct, as they do from my part of Sydney in the south.

Last year the Legislative Council held an inquiry into the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021, which in part examined the on-grass parking at Centennial Park and Moore Park. The report stated:

Inquiry participants were generally supportive of the proposal to prohibit on-grass parking at Moore Park, however there was significant disagreement over the time frame in which this should occur.

Whilst the Liberals and Nationals note that some would like to see parking removed immediately, that is not a practical measure to support those who need to drive to events, and it would likely greatly impact on surrounding residents, businesses and those attending the precinct for other reasons. That is most notably the case for those with mobility issues, families with young children and people travelling from areas where public transport is not readily available, especially late at night when many events conclude. Dedicated parking is also required to ensure cars are not parked in local streets at increased rates, to the dismay of local residents and to the detriment of surrounding businesses.

I and the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Scott Farlow, recognise the longstanding interest and advocacy of the member for Sydney on the issue, and we understand that he will be moving an amendment to the bill. I acknowledge his presence in the Chamber and say that the Opposition supports his amendment to the bill. I appreciate the advice I have received from key stakeholders, including the Alliance of Moore Park Sports, which met with me and the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces last week to discuss the legislation. Alliance members include the National Rugby League, the Sydney Roosters, the Australian Rugby Union, the New South Wales Waratahs, Cricket NSW, Sydney FC, the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Australian Football League, the Sydney Swans, the Sydney Sixers and Cricket Australia, all of which have a significant stake in the success of the precinct and are committed to getting cars off the grass.

The bill ensures everybody can get to events at Moore Park effectively while ensuring that on-grass parking ultimately ends, allowing for the return of the space to the wider community. The Liberals and Nationals support the bill and welcome its passage through the Parliament. I recognise the presence of both the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in the Chamber for debate on the legislation. I acknowledge their work in supporting all of our communities to attend major sporting events and look forward to continuing to work with them to achieve that outcome for the people of New South Wales. 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) (18:54):** I strongly support the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023 and I commend the member for Miranda for her fantastic representation. In its current state the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act establishes deadlines for the removal of the on-grass car parks that are used by fans attending the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] and new Allianz Stadium. Some 650 spaces have already been removed from the grass opposite Allianz Stadium in the area known as Upper Kippax. The next 350 spaces opposite Allianz Stadium, known as Lower Kippax, are slated to be removed on 31 December 2023. Lastly, 1,100 spaces opposite the SCG, known as Showground Field, will be gone from 31 December 2025.

The prohibition of on-grass parking was overreach by the previous Government, which was focused on keeping a few vocal residents near Moore Park happy when it brought together the Greater Sydney Parklands. Those residents wanted more parkland while living next door to Centennial Park and Queens Park, some of the greatest public parklands anywhere in the world. The SCG precinct is not just for the eastern suburbs; it is for all, whether people live in Moore Park or Mulgoa. Research has been done on where sports fans travelling to Moore Park are coming from and—you guessed it—one in two fans are travelling from Western and south-western Sydney. Surveys undertaken by Infrastructure NSW similarly confirmed that the percentage of fans travelling to Moore Park from Western Sydney and regional New South Wales for major events was 60 per cent, but the former Government pushed ahead with removal of on-grass parking, without consultation and, more importantly, without alternatives in place.

That decision does not impact the residents who are a stone's throw from the SCG precinct and can walk or ride to a world-class sporting and entertainment venue. Instead, it hurts large swathes of Western Sydney and regional residents, as well as young families, the elderly and those with accessibility needs. It takes a family of Sydney Sixers fans who live at Menangle 20 minutes to drive to Macarthur Station, park the car and get on a train bound for Central, which is about the same time it takes to walk to Allianz Stadium from Edgecliff. The train trip from Macarthur Station is an hour, then it is over 20 minutes from Central on the light rail. It takes them close to

four hours of travel to watch their favourite team. If someone is walking around with six or seven grandchildren, like I am, they will know that is a real burden. Alternatively, they can slash that travel time in half and drive down the M5 in a tick under an hour—but they need somewhere to park. Those people were forgotten in the rush to stop cars from parking on the grass. If we make it difficult for them then it hits the sports teams they support and the number of fans they get through the gates.

The Alliance of Moore Park Sports [AMPS] represents the Australian Football League, Australian Professional Leagues, Cricket Australia, Cricket NSW, National Rugby League, New South Wales Rugby Union, the Waratahs, Rugby Australia, Sydney FC, Sydney Roosters and Sydney Swans. It represents their two million fans, 145,000 club members and the more than 1,000 staff that those teams employ and the up to 1,000 casual staff that work at each event. The AMPS fan footprint extends across the State and they have been parking on the grass opposite the SCG precinct since Bradman was a boy. Many of those fans will continue to drive to Moore Park to support their teams because it is the only practical way to get to the grounds. If there is no parking they will not come. It is that simple.

Both Greater Sydney Parklands and Venues NSW recognise that to ensure that the public facilities at Moore Park remain as accessible as possible to all New South Wales residents, including the elderly, disabled and young families who are not able to use public transport due to reasons of disability or practicality, on-grass parking deadlines must be amended until suitable alternatives within close proximity to the SCG and Allianz Stadium are in place. If we make it hard for fans in parts of Sydney and regional areas to get to Moore Park, it hits event attendance numbers, AMPS team revenues, Venues NSW revenues and the local visitor economy, which all depend on bumper crowds regularly packing into the SCG and Allianz Stadium.

Economic analysis undertaken by Venues NSW shows that the potential financial impact is significant, and the numbers add up quickly. The 1,100 spaces at Showground Field provide parking for about 3,000 people. With \$85 per person spent on tickets, food, beverages and merchandise across 66 event days, that is an \$18 million direct revenue hit. That does not factor in the other 350 spaces at Lower Kippax. It also excludes a further \$30 million hit to the local visitor economy. We can help solve that and ensure those venues are accessible to all New South Wales residents by amending two lines in the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act, at no cost to the Government.

Work is underway to support the removal of parking at Lower Kippax. Venues NSW has raised loan funding and gained planning approval for a multi-level car park project on its land at Allianz Stadium that will, once operational, add an extra 1,000 spaces to its own 500-space car park and offset the removal of the on-grass car parks at Upper Kippax and Lower Kippax. Unfortunately, a delay in planning approval by the previous Government means that while construction has commenced, the new car park will not be available until the end of 2025—all going well—as Venues NSW delivers it around a busy event schedule. That is two years after the first deadline that we seek to amend.

Keeping on-grass parking at Lower Kippax until the new multi-level car park is open is critical. As yet, there is no solution for the 1,100 spaces lost at Showground Field, so we seek to have that deadline removed until we are sure an alternative is in place that can cater for those who need to drive and park on the grounds. Randwick Racecourse has been trialled because there is ample space in the infield and it is on the light rail line, but so far the fans have not been interested. There has been a lack of light rail capacity available to support the move and, as members can imagine, the site starts to feel like a fair distance from Allianz Stadium—particularly for people who are out in the middle of the course and have to walk 15 minutes to the nearest light rail station. It is just not a feasible option for the elderly, for those with a disability or for young families.

There are also event-day clashes between Randwick races and the SCG precinct, which means Randwick is not always available. That is expected to become more of a problem if Randwick adds night meetings to its calendar as it is currently attempting to do. Ultimately, we have not solved the problem of replacing the 1,100 spaces at Showground Field, so the deadline must be removed to give Venues NSW, Greater Sydney Parklands, AMPS and other stakeholders time to find a solution. The light rail has been successful in moving people from cars onto public transport, particularly with the introduction of integrated ticketing. But if Venues NSW succeeds in doing the job the Government has tasked it with, car parking demand will be stable or will increase.

Venues NSW is working hard to ensure the Government's investment in its precincts pays off. It wants every event to be a sellout. The closer it gets to that ideal, the more people will be flooding to Moore Park by any and all forms of ground transportation—including by car—and those people will need somewhere to park nearby. Some will say that Government members are reneging on our support for the removal of on-grass parking when the legislation passed in 2022. But the bill does not allow for on-grass parking to continue indefinitely; it is just a matter of time. The bill allows for the removal of on-grass parking near Kippax Lake once the under-construction car park out the front of Allianz Stadium is complete. The bill also encourages all parties to work as quickly as

possible to find alternative parking to offset the removal of on-grass parking in the south of Moore Park East. Venues NSW is now funding a precinct village and a multi-level car park, which will add more green space to Moore Park—including a children's playground—while also supporting the removal of on-grass parking near Kippax Lake.

What if we do not pass the bill? Expert analysis undertaken for the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment planning process confirmed there will be demand for up to 5,500 car spaces on major event days. That is after factoring in integrated ticketing and other transport initiatives that Venues NSW and Transport for NSW have put in place. Without the proposed amendments, parking capacity will shrink to 2,850 spaces during construction of the multi-level car park and settle at 4,350 spaces once the new facility is complete—over 1,150 spaces shy of demand. It will not be local residents who are on the wrong end of that. [*Extension of time*]

I congratulate Minister Scully on bringing this legislation to the House, and I welcome it on behalf of fans of sports and live entertainment across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:04):** The Centennial Park and Moore Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023 is a continuation of the decades-long history of using public open green space for parking for major sporting events. The welcome difference this time is the Government's commitment to an integrated multi-modal transport plan for the precinct to reduce demand for car parking and to help people get there in a cheaper, more efficient way. That has previously been ignored. Public open green space is essential to urban density. Without it, communities become toxic, unhealthy wastelands. People living in apartments need space to get sunshine and fresh air, to exercise, to picnic, to have kids' parties, to walk their dogs and to sit in quiet contemplation. Governments are eager to talk up the benefits of urban density and profit from the stamp duty that it generates, but there always seem to be challenges when it comes to providing the infrastructure and services those densely populated areas need.

The adjacent residents of Moore Park, Paddington, Surry Hills, Centennial Park, Kensington and Redfern largely have little to no private open space and rely on the parklands for their recreational needs. Green Square, directly across from Moore Park, is growing rapidly. About 36,000 people have now moved into the area since redevelopment began, and the number will likely swell to around 70,000 by 2036. They are all in apartments with a small balcony at best. Those communities are lauded as fine examples of urban density, but they need the Government to fulfil its duty and provide them with open green space.

I will take the House through the history of some of the land grabs that have shrunk Moore Park over the past few decades, progressively sacrificing more and more of that rare inner-city parkland. When parts of Moore Park were used as a temporary tram shed, the community was promised they would be returned to the parklands. Instead, when the land was no longer needed for trams, it was sold off and turned into the Supa Centre retail complex. The Eastern Distributor, which opened in 1999, carved 2.2 hectares from Moore Park. To compensate for the huge loss, \$4.5 million was set aside to find alternatives to on-grass car parking at Moore Park. Those 2.2 hectares are now forever lost, and Moore Park remains a car parking place for major events.

Swathes of land were also lost to the busway. In 2010 the sporting trust tried to grab Moore Park East to build a new stadium. The plan was only withdrawn following community outrage and a campaign led by Lord Mayor Clover Moore, the then member for Sydney; former Premier Neville Wran; former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, then member for Wentworth; and Greens Senator David Shoebridge, then a member of the Legislative Council. In 2014 the Tibby Cotter bridge subsumed large parts of grasslands. It continues to only be used by a small handful of people every day. The claims of it being for pedestrians coming from Central Station were at odds with its location and design. The Tibby Cotter bridge was part of yet another plan to annex Moore Park to the stadium. In 2015 those plans were leaked and included a new 65,000-seat stadium at Kippax Lake and an indoor tennis stadium. Parking would be relocated to Moore Park West, where patrons could access the new complex via the Tibby Cotter bridge. Again, the plans were only stopped by a concerted community campaign.

Moore Park lost large chunks of land to make way for the light rail and its associated infrastructure. The community accepted that loss because it provided real transport alternatives to get to the sporting grounds and therefore an opportunity to get cars off Moore Park. Light rail now connects the stadiums to Central Station, providing an easy way for most people in Sydney to get to a match without a car. After years of resistance, all sporting codes and concerts now provide integrated ticketing to their events. Integrated ticketing has been hugely successful and continues to grow in popularity, with record numbers of patrons catching public transport to games.

During the FIFA Women's World Cup, the stadium was full and 11 cars parked on the grass. Integrated ticketing will thrive even further when we solve the remaining teething issues with integrated ticketing, which see patrons unable to access station gates that are not attended, and when there is more publicity and information on the program. Behavioural change has begun, and it has been helped by not only the light rail integrated ticketing but also the staged removal of cars from the grasslands. Since parking was removed from Upper Kippax, the

Lower Kippax and Showground Field areas have been full for fewer than half of the matches that have taken place.

Venues NSW is building a multistorey, 1,500-space car park on its land, and when it opens, even without the parking currently available at Lower Kippax and the Showground Field, there will be more parking than is currently available, and that excludes parking available at the school and Randwick Racecourse. Since Allianz Stadium opened, an average of 1,476 cars have needed on-grass parking. The Venues NSW car park will provide the stadium with ample car parking capacity.

Sporting bodies will always push for more car parking. History tells us this. But governments need to govern and make decisions in the best interests of the community. I acknowledge the strong leadership from the former Minister, Rob Stokes, who recognised the importance of expansive, public green space, and changed the long-running trend of bowing to the sporting codes' every ask. I worked with the former Minister to legislate appropriate dates to remove cars from Moore Park. The dates were not what I and the community called for, but they were fair, giving Venues NSW time to work on behavioural change and explore alternatives, while assuring us that cars would not be there forever.

Unfortunately, for many of my constituents, the bill would replace the guaranteed legislated dates to remove on-grass parking with government discretion. The Minister would only have the power to remove parking from Lower Kippax after the stadium car park is built, or from the Showground Field after the Minister is satisfied that the provision of on-grass parking is no longer required to meet demand. Conditions to get parking off the Showground Field are exceptionally broad as the legislation currently stands.

While I oppose the bill as presented, and oppose the potential return of parking, I thank the Government and the Minister for their willingness to negotiate on a transparent process for the extension of any parking on Moore Park. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to the bill to put in thresholds that must be met before parking can be extended. The amendments would require the removal of car parking on Lower Kippax by 1 July 2026, although the Minister would be able to extend that date until the Venues NSW car park is built and operating. The date for the removal of car parking from the Showground Field would be 1 July 2028; however, the Minister would be able to extend that date until there is an appropriate plan to address the transport and parking needs of the stadium. For every year that such an extension was made, the Minister would need to report the reasons to the Parliament.

The changes represent a fair and reasonable compromise. The stadium and sporting codes assure me they want to be a good neighbour. However, excessive car use harms the local community, and that is what the community has expressed to them. The intense gridlock before and after events makes it impossible for residents to access their homes and pollutes the neighbourhood. Car use is also expensive and adds to the cost of living for people who want to attend the stadium. Greater Sydney Parklands cannot deliver the Moore Park Master Plan, because investing in new sports fields, biodiversity and recreation opportunities for the community is pointless when cars continue to damage the grass every weekend.

There is a huge shortage of sporting fields in the eastern suburbs, and we need to use every parkland we have to its full potential. It is in everyone's best interests that we work together to ensure alternatives to parking. Some people will always need to drive, but we can accommodate them at the Venues NSW parking station, the Entertainment Quarter, the school and Randwick Racecourse. Again, I thank the Government for its willingness to listen to the concerns of my community, negotiate, and finally begin implementing a transport plan that provides cheaper, faster and more environmentally friendly transport options for people attending events at the stadium.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:13):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak briefly in debate on the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023. I say at the outset that The Greens absolutely support the remarks made by the member for Sydney. I thank him and his office for their advocacy around Moore Park over many years, including under the former member for Sydney, Clover Moore. I particularly recognise the critical need for open green space and recreational space in our city, and I recognise the significant increase in density at Green Square. We need to increase the level of delivery of housing in our city to make sure that we are addressing the housing crisis—and I acknowledge the planning Minister is in the Chamber—but we cannot just deliver housing. If we want to do increased density well, we have to recognise that if we are expecting people to live in apartments in high-density environments, as they already are, then open green space and passive recreational space have to be respected as an absolutely critical element of high-density living.

We see it in massive cities like New York, where there are incredible parklands. We see it in big cities around different parts of the world where high density has been designed with large and significant open green space and recreational space as a given. It is critical that we do not see green space as empty space to be used for other things, whether that be temporary car parking or, as we saw once upon a time in this Chamber—the member for Sydney and the member for Heffron, who is now the Minister for Local Government, will recall—a statute

law amendment bill that allowed for the potential for six-storey buildings in areas of Moore Park, introduced by the then member for Penrith, and then Minister for Sport. That was seen as an uncontroversial change that could be made through a statute law bill, and the former Government rammed it through Parliament. The member for Sydney has outlined many other attempts—some of them, sadly, successful—to take away green space from our inner-city communities.

But it is not just our inner-city communities that lose when we take away green space. We lose the ability for family members and friends, and for international visitors, to come and connect with those who live in the inner city. Many people who live in the inner city do not have the space available to them in their apartments or small terrace houses to host gatherings for birthdays or significant events. Passive recreational space is essential to ensure that people have community connection and the ability to engage in those important events. First and foremost, we need to remember that Moore Park is a park, not a car park. We need to remember that it is critical that we respect green space, and that there is a need to address the very low number of sporting fields that are currently available to residents of the City of Sydney, the eastern suburbs and people living around Surry Hills and Redfern on the side that is in the electorate of Newtown.

The Greens do not support the current bill. We acknowledge that the member for Sydney has worked hard to try to get the Government to put some limits on the provisions in the bill. Some might question how long it should take to build a car park, and how much enthusiasm there might be to build a car park when people can just park cars on the lawn. Having a regular requirement to report to Parliament, and having transparency around that, is absolutely critical. I thank the Minister for working with the member for Sydney on that change. The Greens do not support the bill, but we back the member for Sydney's amendment, and we hope to see cars off Moore Park very soon.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:17):** I speak in support of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023 presented to the House by the planning Minister. This is an important, commonsense amendment designed to solve an impending problem relating to parking at Moore Park East. For context, the grass at Moore Park East has been used for parking for over a century, servicing both the SCG, Hordern Pavilion and Allianz Stadium. People parked there to watch the great Donald Bradman in the 1930s and 1940s, or to see the wild jubilation of 11-in-a-row grand final wins by the mighty St George Dragons from 1956 to 1966—a feat that has not been matched by any other team, although the Panthers are giving it a red-hot go, notching up four grand final appearances, with a current streak of three in a row.

Millions of people parked there over the 116 years from 1882 to 1997 when the Royal Easter Show was held at Moore Park, although there were probably more horse and carts than cars between the 1880s and 1920s. In recent years there has been an effort to phase out on-grass parking and transform this land into training facilities for professional sports based at the precinct, and open space for the community. In exchange for the closure of on-grass parking near Kippax Lake, venue-goers have a new car park on Venues NSW land to look forward to, which would offset the closure.

In 2022 the Act was amended to include deadlines for the final closure of parking near Kippax Lake. As the Act currently stands, a legislated deadline of 31 December 2023 would put an end to on-grass parking two years before the expected car park completion date of late 2025. Without this amendment Moore Park would be left with only 2,850 car parking spaces until the completion of the new car park. This is compared to nearly 5,500 parking spaces when Allianz Stadium was demolished in early 2019. When the new car park opens there will be 4,350 spaces in the precinct. However, this is still a significant shortage, a difference of 1,150 spaces.

Measures in the 2017 master plan to improve public transport connectivity to the precinct, such as Venues NSW integrated ticketing with the support of Transport for NSW, is one way the Government is working to bridge the gap. But availability for car parking in the interim is still important for people like the residents of my electorate of Blacktown and Western Sydney more broadly, for whom public transport is not feasible. It would take a cricket fan from the suburb of Colebee in my electorate almost two hours in ideal conditions to navigate from their home to the Sydney Cricket Ground by public transport, versus a 50-minute drive. Personally, when I am in the area for a match I like to park on the grounds at the Sydney Boys High School or the Sydney Girls High School. It is a wonderful way to support our public schools. They utilise volunteers and school students to raise funds for the school. It is an option I encourage others to consider—after I have parked my car there.

I note the strong advocacy of Labor councillor Linda Scott of Sydney city council on this issue for many years. She has long advocated that the space be open for community use rather than being reserved for car parking. She has previously moved that the Sydney city council have green space targets, a proposal which was rejected by the Lord Mayor. Councillor Scott supports the Government's agenda for appropriate density and understands the importance of accompanying green space. Lack of green open spaces makes inner-city living challenging—as the member for Sydney spoke about earlier—especially for all the new young families moving in. This is a rare green space in the City of Sydney and is right across from Green Square, the most densely populated area in



Australia. Successive Liberal Ministers under the former Government made promises for this community and never delivered. Only Labor, under the premiership of Chris Minns and Minister Scully, has delivered where the Liberals have failed.

Finally, on stakeholder consultation for the bill, Venues NSW has worked closely with the Association of Moore Park Sports [AMPS]—a collection of sporting codes and teams based at the precinct—on how to resolve the potential car parking shortage. The AMPS strongly supports these amendments. These are prudent amendments to the legislation to resolve the impending car parking problem at Moore Park, while keeping with the Government's green space commitment. I congratulate the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for his steadfast commitment to the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:23):** In reply: I speak briefly in reply and thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Car Parking) Bill 2023. In particular, I acknowledge the contributions from the member for Miranda, the member for Rockdale and Minister for Sport, the member for Sydney—who has some amendments that I will speak on later—the member for Newtown, and the member for Blacktown and Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces. Each of these members has come to this place and to the debate with the intention of the ultimate removal of parking on the grass at Moore Park. I thank those members of the Opposition and the member for Sydney, who have worked cooperatively bringing about and proposing some sensible amendments, for their support.

The bill amends section 20AA of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act and supports the removal of on-grass parking at Moore Park, but does so when there are suitable alternative parking options in place, to make sure there is no shortfall in spaces for those who need to drive to get to the precinct. There is no point in removing a product when there is not a substitute product available. That is the situation we find ourselves in with the bill before the Parliament. Instead of removing on-grass parking in the north of Moore Park East by the end of this year, with no alternative arrangements in place, the bill will see it happen when Venues NSW's new multi-level car park is built and operational. Similarly, the bill removes the current 31 December 2025 date for the removal of on-grass parking in the south of Moore Park East, and instead positions the timing around demand and provides Greater Sydney Parklands, Venues NSW and key stakeholders time to put a suitable alternative in place.

I emphasise also, as I mentioned in the second reading speech, the Government has directed Transport for NSW to develop a transport plan for the Moore Park precinct. I know the Minister for Transport is diligently working with her agency on that. Without these changes, Western Sydney residents and regional residents will find it difficult, if not impossible, to visit Moore Park or attend events at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] precinct. Those who have had to drive due to a lack of public transport options—young families, patrons with mobility issues or the elderly—have overcome a hurdle that does not exist for those residents who live nearby.

In contributions to the debate we heard from members who represent electorates closer to or right on the Moore Park and Centennial Park area, as well as members representing electorates in Western Sydney. We showed the difference in approach and the experience of those members and their constituencies. It is important when we are considering and contemplating the use and access to venues as significant as the Sydney Football Stadium and the SCG that we are conscious of the fact that patrons from all around Sydney, in fact all around New South Wales, come to those venues and should have readily available access to them. The bill removes the hurdle and makes sure that when the grass is returned to the community there will be somewhere for them to park when they come to watch their favourite team or scream for their favourite performer.

I thank Greater Sydney Parklands and Venues NSW for working together to develop this sensible approach to removing on-grass parking. I note the member for Sydney has an amendment which I will speak to once it is moved. I thank Greater Sydney Parklands Acting CEO Laura Stevens, Greater Sydney Parklands CEO Joshua French, Lachlan Prot and Cathy Hardy from the Department of Planning and Environment, and Jake Nicol from my office, who are in the advisers' gallery. I acknowledge and thank Minister Kamper's chief of staff Ed McDougall and Venues NSW for their efforts. I look forward to the passage of the bill and its eventual proclamation by the Executive Council. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alex Greenwich.**

### Consideration in Detail

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:28):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-086J as circulated together:

**No. 1 Restrictions on parking in Moore Park East**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1] and [2], lines 4–8. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

Omit section 20AA(1)(b) and (c). Insert instead—

- (b) carpark 2, Lower Kippax—from the later of the following—
  - (i) 1 July 2026,
  - (ii) a date prescribed by regulation,
- (c) non-parking grass areas that are not referred to in paragraph (b)—from the later of the following—
  - (i) 1 July 2028,
  - (ii) a date prescribed by regulation.

**No. 2 Restrictions on parking in Moore Park East**

Page 3, Schedule 1[3], lines 12–18. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (1)(b)(ii) or (c)(ii) only if—
  - (a) for subsection (1)(b)(ii)—a new car park on Venues NSW's land adjacent to the Sydney Football Stadium is not built and open to the public and operational, and
  - (b) for subsection (1)(c)(ii)—the Minister is satisfied there is no appropriate plan to address transport needs, including parking, in relation to events at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium.
- (1B) Also, if a regulation is made under subsection (1)(c)(ii), the Minister must—
  - (a) within 1 month after the making of the regulation, give a report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament about why the Minister recommended the making of the regulation, and
  - (b) while the regulation remains in force, give a report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament at least once in each 12-month period about why the Minister considers the regulation remains necessary.
- (1C) A report provided to the Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament under subsection (1B) must be laid before that House within five sitting days of that House after it is received by the Presiding Officer. Since I was elected I have been working to get cars off Moore Park. As I explained in my contribution to the second reading debate, that has been a struggle. The community has achieved a lot in this space. I thank groups like the residents action group Saving Moore Park for their work in this space. I raised concerns with the Government that the bill as drafted would not provide clear enough processes and time lines for the removal of car parking at Moore Park, which it has identified as a priority for the Government.

My amendments will reinstate dates for the removal of cars on Moore Park, with the date set for Lower Kippax as 1 July 2026 and for the showground field as 1 July 2028. The Minister will have the power to extend those dates by regulation. For Lower Kippax, the regulation power can be used until the Venues NSW car park is built and operating. For the Showground Field, the regulation power can be used until there is an appropriate plan to address the transport and parking needs of the stadium and sporting grounds. In the case of the Showground Field, the Minister will have to provide a report to Parliament each year that an extension is in force explaining why it is necessary.

While the amendments do not set in stone a date for the removal of parking, they provide the Government with strong indications of the time frame it should work towards and ensure accountability to the Parliament in working towards those dates. The changes will support the transport Minister's work to get an integrated transport plan for events as soon as possible. I thank the Government, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Sport for their cooperation and negotiation to get the amendments right. I hope we have now established a transparent and clear process towards a time frame to remove car parking on Moore Park. I hope that we do not have to deal with legislation to deal with parking on Moore Park again, but we will see. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:30):** I thank the member for Sydney for moving the amendments and for his cooperative approach in coming up with and developing the amendments. They provide the path to ending on-grass parking at Moore Park. They provide certainty that the community surrounding Centennial and Moore parks and the constituents of the member for

Sydney require. They also provide flexibility—something that the previous Act did not include when it set hard dates for exit, which have never been able to be met. The amendments provide the mix of certainty and transparency that I think all residents of Sydney and all users of the parklands or the stadiums in the precinct are looking for. They provide an opportunity, if for some reason, such as construction problems or the like, we fail to meet the 1 July 2026 date for the opening and operation of the Venues NSW car park adjacent to the Sydney Football Stadium land—which I do not believe we will—for the date to be extended by regulation.

I note the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber, and I reiterate her determination to see a sensible multi-modal transport plan to get people to and from the sporting and venues precinct. But, if that does not happen by the proposed date of 1 July 2028, the date can be extended by regulation. Sensibly, if the date is extended by regulation, there is also a transparency element where the Minister of the day, the responsible Minister, would have to report to the Presiding Officers of each House of the Parliament and explain why that date has been extended. It is a simple mix of certainty and transparency that I believe the member for Sydney has brought to this Chamber, with combined effort, combined intention and a unified approach from the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench to ultimately end parking on the grass at Moore Park in a sensible way, rather than via the hard-and-fast dates that were unable to be met. I note the Opposition has indicated its support for the amendments. I signal the Government's support for the amendments. I commend the amendments to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-086J of the member for Sydney be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2023**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (19:35):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2023 was introduced in the other place on 21 September this year and is in the same form. As the provisions of the bill are minor and uncontroversial, and as substantially the same speech as the one I would make has already been delivered in the other place, I seek leave to have my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

### **Leave granted.**

Statute law bills have featured in most sessions of Parliament since 1984 and are an effective method for making minor policy changes.

They are also significant in maintaining the quality of the New South Wales statute book by removing typographical errors, updating cross references and repealing redundant provisions.

### **Schedule 1**

Schedule 1 to the bill contains policy changes of a minor and non-controversial nature.

The schedule gives effect to proposals that are too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill.

The schedule contains amendments to 21 Acts and a related amendment to one instrument.

Among those are two amendments to the Interpretation Act 1987, including an amendment to clarify what is meant by references in legislation to "the Minister administering another Act" and an amendment inserting a standard definition of "personally insolvent".

The new definition removes the need for the term to be separately defined where an Act or instrument does not already define the term to ensure consistency and certainty in the interpretation of the term across the statute book.

The schedule includes amendments that reflect contemporary practices in the service of documents and provide for the evolving use of technology.

For example, the Community Land Development Act 2021 and Conveyancing Act 1919 are amended to require the electronic lodgement of certain court orders. The Conveyancing Act 1919 is also amended to provide for the possibility of other electronic plan lodgement systems.

The schedule also includes amendments to replace references to Ministers with references to the Minister administering an Act. These amendments are intended to avoid future changes to Ministerial titles affecting the operation of the relevant Acts.

For example, the Animal Research Act 1985 is amended so that a reference to the "Minister for Primary Industries" is replaced with the "Minister administering the Biosecurity Act 2015".

The Schedule includes amendments removing outdated references from legislation.

For example, the Coastal Management Act 2016 is amended to correct outdated cross-references and to correct references to former local government areas that have been amalgamated and renamed.

#### **Schedule 2**

Schedule 2 deals with matters of pure statute law revision consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers are appropriate for inclusion in the bill.

The schedule includes amendments to update references to renamed portfolios and positions and to remove a reference to a body that has been dissolved.

Other examples of amendments include the correction of typographical errors, removing duplicate punctuation, inserting missing punctuation and corrections of cross-referencing errors.

#### **Schedule 3**

Schedule 3 make amendments consequential on the Government Sector Finance Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Act 2018.

That Act repealed the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985 and the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984. The requirement to prepare annual reporting information is now in the Government Sector Finance Act 2018. The amendments reflect that updated reporting requirement.

The amendments also reflect the renaming of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 as the Government Sector Audit Act 1983.

#### **Schedule 4**

Schedule 4 amends legislation consequential on administrative arrangement orders such as the Administrative Arrangements (58th Parliament) Order 2023.

For example, in accordance with that Order, certain references to the Department of Premier and Cabinet have been replaced by the Premier's Department or the Cabinet Office.

#### **Schedule 5**

Schedule 5 repeals Acts that are redundant or are spent and have no ongoing effect.

The schedule repeals the Associated General Contractors Insurance Company Limited Act 1980 and the Bishopsgate Insurance Australia Limited Act 1983, which are spent and have no ongoing effect.

The schedule also repeals the Workers Compensation Amendment Act 2015, which contained a single un-commenced provision to insert proposed regulation-making powers in the Workers Compensation Act 1987.

The proposed regulation-making powers are now redundant as a broader regulation-making power has now been provided under section 32A(2) of the Workers Compensation Act 1987.

#### **Schedule 6**

Schedule 6 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions.

This includes a provision that deals with the effect of amendments on amending provisions.

This schedule also includes a provision allowing for regulations to be made that are of a savings or transitional nature.

I hope that members will appreciate the uncontroversial nature of the provisions contained in the bill.

However, if any amendment causes concern or requires clarification, it should be brought to my attention.

If necessary, I will arrange for Government staff to provide additional information on the matters raised.

If any particular matter of concern cannot be resolved and is likely to delay the passage of the bill, the Government is prepared to consider withdrawing the matter from the bill.

Withdrawn proposals can also be dealt with in a second bill (using the procedure for splitting bills), which can be dealt with in each of the Houses in the same way as an ordinary bill.

I commend the bill to the House.

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:35):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2023. Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) bills are necessary from time to time and are often introduced annually as a way to make minor legislative changes that do not raise substantive matters of policy. The provisions in the bills contain minor changes that are too insignificant to warrant

the introduction of a separate amending bill. I note that the bill makes a number of minor amendments to the operation of a range of Acts in order to clarify meaning and, in turn, ensure that the Acts are effective in operation.

The changes include replacing references to the Minister for Primary Industries with a reference to the Minister administering the Biosecurity Act 2015 in case the names of departments are changed, correcting cross-references, spelling and grammar in several Acts, renaming two Acts and making similar minor amendments. I acknowledge the attention to detail that has gone into this bill and thank those from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office who compile lists on an ongoing basis that form the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. The bill is an important piece of legislation, and therefore the Opposition does not oppose it.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **MICHAEL PARR AND TIHAMAU LLOYD**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:39):** The recent bravery of two local heroes, Michael Parr and Tihamau Lloyd—known as Mau—in Coffs Harbour's busy CBD deserves our recognition and admiration. Michael and Mau, who work at MP Barber in City Square, became aware of a man who was allegedly wielding a knife and threatening nearby members of the public. Michael and Mau were extremely concerned for the safety of the public and both of them acted with complete disregard for their own safety by confronting the man. They managed to disarm him and he ran away from the area. Police from the Coffs-Clarence Police District attended the scene and the man was later located and arrested. I am extremely grateful to Michael and Mau. Not only are they great barbers—as members can see—but also they are two outstanding members of the Coffs Coast community. I congratulate them on their extraordinary and selfless actions that day.

#### **GANESHOTSAVA FESTIVAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:40):** On Sunday 1 October, along with the member for Liverpool, Federal member Anne Stanley and Liverpool Councillor Dr Betty Green, I attended the twenty-eighth annual Ganeshotsava Festival at the Whitlam Centre. The festival has evolved from a humble gathering in a family's garage to one of the biggest festivals of its kind in Sydney, with thousands attending every year over three days to celebrate Subcontinental culture. The event had rich Hindu diversity on display, with a variety of performance, dance, dress, food, culture and prayer spotlighted in this festival dedicated to the Hindu God Ganesh. I thank Friends of India Australia and congratulate the group on organising this event every year for community members to enjoy. Groups like this highlight the best of Australian multiculturalism. I look forward to continuing to attend and seeing the festival grow in the years to come.

#### **MRS TRACEY JAMES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (19:42):** This evening I acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding career of Mrs Tracey James, who is retiring after a remarkable 34 years in education. For the entirety of her career she has been a cornerstone of Orchard Hills Public School, influencing countless lives with her dedication, passion and expertise. Mrs James has not just been a teacher; she has been a mentor, a guide and a source of inspiration for both her students and fellow educators. Her unwavering commitment to nurturing young minds has left a legacy that will endure for generations. It is not often we come across individuals who have dedicated their lives selflessly to the betterment of others, and Mrs James is one of those rare gems. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs Tracey James for her invaluable contributions to education. I wish her a fulfilling and joyful retirement. May the next chapter of her life be as rewarding as the last.

#### **SYDNEY ONNURI CHURCH**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:43):** I commend the Sydney Onnuri Church for the wonderful Botanica Love Sonata concert it held for the local community last Saturday night. It was wonderful to see so many residents, many of whom have never attended the large church, arriving for the concert. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful evening, with impressive performances by soprano Marian Hong and mezzo-soprano Saenuri Son, alongside tenor Nathan Yun, under the leadership of conductor Joseph Cho. Not to be outdone by the singing, the chamber orchestra and choir produced beautiful music led by Jinsook Lee on piano and Brian Evans on trumpet,

who managed to play Handel's *The Trumpet Shall Sound* despite having a broken finger. A special mention should also go to soloist Sun Young Kim. Whilst the program started with Verdi and ended with Handel, there were also some modern touches, with the OnCRW delivering uplifting songs before the full choir closed the night with the *Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's *Messiah*. Congratulations to Reverend Kenneth Chun and everyone from the Onnuri Sydney Church on their warm welcome and thoughtfulness in bringing this event to Lidcombe.

#### DOMONIQUE WYSE

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:44):** I congratulate Domonique Wyse, who has been named the 2023 Taree Young Woman of the Year. Domonique embodies the spirit of a dedicated, accomplished and community-focused young woman. Her educational journey from St Clare's High School to currently working at Yanco Agricultural High School as an agricultural teacher showcases her commitment to academic growth. Domonique's diverse interests, such as livestock showing and judging, sports like netball and hockey, reading and sign language, make her a well-rounded individual. Her community involvement—including roles in the Taree Show Society, as a NextGen VP delegate and as a volunteer in local sports—highlights her dedication to local initiatives. She participates passionately in the cattle team at Yanco, volunteers at local shows and engages in events like the Local Land Services Young Farmer Dinner. Domonique's ambitions to be a role model for rural youth, expand her teaching career and delve into meat science highlight her commitment to personal and professional growth. I congratulate her on her well-deserved recognition. She truly represents the values and aspirations that this competition seeks to recognise and celebrate. I wish her all the very best for the zone finals next year.

#### KAREN LEASK

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:45):** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Karen Leask from Avondale on winning the Mental Health Commissioner's Community Champion Award on World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2023. Karen is a mental health carer who truly goes above and beyond to ensure that the voices of mental health carers are heard. She not only is a mental health carer, balancing all that being a carer is, but also volunteers her own time every single week for Stride mental health charity. Karen has also been instrumental in organising a local carers social group, which is a source of contact and connection for local carers. Karen is a true advocate for mental health carers, she is passionate about sharing her wealth of carer knowledge, and she strives each and every day to ensure that carers do not feel isolated in their caring role. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I convey my heartfelt gratitude and admiration for Karen's amazing work.

#### COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MOSS VALE BRANCH

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:47):** I recognise the Country Women's Association [CWA] Moss Vale Branch. The CWA is well known for the rural, regional and remote regional advocacy it provides nationwide across all levels of government, from aiming to gain better access and treatment within health services and maintaining and improving telecommunication coverage to the cessation of online betting platforms and supporting communities through natural disasters. That is exactly what the CWA Moss Vale Branch did in response to the Condobolin floods, working in collaboration with a local church to deliver donations to those affected by floodwaters. It is always ready to respond to the ever-changing needs of communities that are now experiencing a lack of rainfall, which is having a devastating effect on crops. Heading off in four-wheel drives packed full of donations of linen, shoes, clothing and kitchen items, branch secretary and president Khris Stevens was very grateful for the generous donations from the Moss Vale Harvey Norman, K Hub Bowral and Big W Mittagong. I thank the CWA Moss Vale Branch.

#### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:48):** The month of October is Mental Health Month. We are reminded to think about our mental health and wellbeing, regardless of whether we have a lived experience of mental illness. It also gives us the opportunity to understand the importance of good mental health in our everyday lives and encourages us to reach out for help when needed. The theme this year is "We all have a role to play". Yesterday the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health, together with WayAhead and Relationships Australia, came together to celebrate Mental Health Month at the Parliament. I also recently attended the tenth anniversary of headspace in Penrith and heard some personal stories about how headspace provides free information, support and services to young people aged 12 to 25 and their families and friends. Headspace helps not only with mental health but also with general health and offers the headspace Early Psychosis Program. I congratulate all the team at headspace on the important work they do with the youth in our community.

#### HARRY COZENS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:49):** I congratulate Albury stock and station agent Harry Cozens, who won the 2023 Victorian Young Auctioneer Competition in Pakenham in early October. Harry claimed the

State final award against nine other contenders. Harry is employed as a livestock agent at Elders rural services in Albury and, at only 23 years of age, has displayed remarkable talent and dedication to his work. Having grown up on a sheep farm, Harry entered the Elders traineeship program, which helped him develop the skills involved in selling livestock, mastering the fine arts of judging and understanding the values of the trade. During his time in the industry, Harry has made many valuable connections and developed a strong client base. After winning the competition, Harry was presented with the Graham Lanyon shield, \$500, various prizes and a place in the national Young Auctioneers Competition to be held in 2024. I say well done to Harry as he continues to develop his auctioneering skills and well done to his employers for their encouragement in building a fine career.

#### **TRIBUTE TO CHARLES MUNNERY, OAM**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:50):** I celebrate the life of Charles Munnery, OAM, who passed away recently aged 99. Despite the protests of his father, a World War I veteran who suffered from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder, in 1942 Mr Munnery enlisted to join the army. He fought in the Pacific War in New Guinea in the 2/6th Australian Infantry Battalion. He returned to Australia in 1947 and moved to Merrylands, where he got a job as a floor tiler, joined the Merrylands football team and met his future wife, Betty. Charlie and Betty were married in Granville in 1950 and built a home in Paton Street, Merrylands West. Charlie joined the Merrylands RSL Sub-Branch in 1948 and was honorary secretary from 1960 to 1961. He was president of Merrylands RSL Club from 1960 to 1973 and was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia in June 2010 for his service to veterans, their families and the community. Charlie continued to speak at schools about his service until recent years and had a close relationship with Hilltop Road Public School. My deepest condolences go out to his family and many friends.

#### **WERRIS CREEK CAN ASSIST CHARITY GOLF DAY**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:51):** Recently, I had the pleasure of playing in the Werris Creek Can Assist Charity Golf Day. It was a fantastic day, with raffles and prizes, longest drive and nearest the pin events, and the best barbeque lunch ever. Funds were raised to assist people in the region who are battling cancer. Can Assist Werris Creek was formed in 2009 and covers the Liverpool Plains, including Quirindi and surrounding areas. It is a committed group that raises funds by holding garage sales, catering horse events and organising golf days just like the one at Werris Creek. I thank the group for its efforts. The Werris Creek Golf Club is kicking goals. I have enjoyed working with Warwick and Jan Moore and members of the golf club to attract funding and support the club through difficult times. It was all the more rewarding to be able to get out and play nine holes with two local legends Brian and Vic Porter at the charity golf day. It is a real community club that is blessed with kind, community-minded people. I thank them for the day and look forward to continuing to work with them to keep golf great in Werris Creek.

#### **CRAIG DONARSKI**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:52):** It is my pleasure to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of Craig Donarski, the outgoing director of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in Liverpool. For over four decades, Craig has been a significant contributor to the Australian arts sector. He honed his skills at the ABC, Triple J, the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Film Festival before making his way to Liverpool. Over the past seven years, Craig has helped take Liverpool's arts and cultural affairs to another level. I note the tremendous improvements to programming and connection of Casula Powerhouse to a broader spectrum of our community in recent years. Craig has also established the Casula Powerhouse as a location of choice in south-west Sydney for several major events. Having known Craig for a number of years, I personally attest to his passion for arts in Western Sydney and the indelible mark he has left on Liverpool. His colourful blazers and wonderful personality will be missed by many. I extend my sincere appreciation and best wishes to Craig.

#### **THE BERRY TEA SHOP**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:53):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises The Berry Tea Shop and its owners, Cliff and Paulina Collier. For over a decade, this country tea shop in Berry has been a popular spot for locals and tourists looking for the perfect blend. Now there are big plans brewing for this little store, with its future being backed by customers and the community. Thirteen years ago, Cliff and Paulina Collier left Sydney and moved to Berry. Some critics said that they would not last six months but, on the first day of trading and with just the two of them working, the business was nonstop. Despite the store's popularity, they have had hits and hurdles along the way. Selling wholesale, Paulina and Cliff want to expand their online store and collaborate with other businesses and open more shops. At the top of their list is securing a warehouse, so they opened up to the community the opportunity to invest. They have received 700 expressions of interest from people wanting to get on board and invest. The Berry Tea Shop is located at 66 Albert Street, Berry. It is open seven days a week—Monday to Thursday from 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and Friday to Sunday from 10.00 a.m. to

5.00 p.m. I encourage members to visit the South Coast to enjoy everything that Berry has to offer and stop in at The Berry Tea Shop.

### **HIS HOLINESS BRAHMRISHI SHREE KUMAR SWAMIJI**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:54):** Recently I had the honour of welcoming His Holiness Brahmishi Shree Kumar Swamiji to Parliament, with a special welcome from the Speaker of the House. Swamiji's influence transcends religion, earning him recognition from parliaments and dignitaries worldwide. He is especially revered for his tireless commitment to fostering interfaith harmony, unifying people from diverse backgrounds. Swamiji's conventions, hosted in nations across the world, have disseminated the ideals of equality, brotherhood and human welfare. Along with Swamiji, I had the honour of welcoming a delegation of members from Bhagwan Shree Lakshmi Narayan Dham [BSLND], the spiritual and humanitarian organisation founded by Swamiji. Under Swamiji's guidance, the BSLND is a beacon of spiritual light and compassion, offering a holistic approach to life and encompassing spiritual growth, health and wellness, social welfare, and global unity. The organisation's teachings and activities continue to positively impact individuals and communities, promoting a harmonious and enlightened way of living. I extend my appreciation to Swamiji and the members of BSLND for their invaluable contributions to the wellbeing of humanity. Their teachings and actions inspire us to strive for a more harmonious world.

### **TWEED HEADS CROQUET CLUB**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:56):** I acknowledge Tweed Heads Croquet Club and its commitment to continuing the legacy of two of its long-term members. The club recently held its Spring Golf Croquet Festival, known as the Bryan and Pam Shaw memorial. Bryan and Pam were actively involved in the club for many years and established the tournament 11 years ago. Bryan most recently held the position of treasurer until his passing in August this year and Pam, who was considered the life and soul of the club, unfortunately passed away two years ago. This wonderful event honours a special couple. Croquet creates a great deal of joy for our seniors on the croquet field, but it can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. I am honoured to be a patron of the Tweed Heads Croquet Club and I encourage anyone thinking of having a go to check it out. The club is always welcoming new members.

### **LAPSTONE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:57):** Last month I was invited to attend Lapstone Public School's fiftieth anniversary. It was a pleasure to join with teachers, staff, students and the community at such a special time. I commend them for instilling curiosity and a love of learning at this excellent small school. It was a vibrant day, and I enjoyed the company of those who clearly care deeply for the school. As a former teacher, I understand the importance of providing children with a safe place to thrive, learn and socialise. Lapstone Public School continues to deliver this fundamental support under the leadership of Marvic Aquilina and an active, dedicated P&C. It has a proud history of commitment to education, youth and the community as a whole, encouraging students in their creative expression and academic endeavours. The combined efforts of the local community and the school's staff and students are demonstrated by a nurturing and positive attitude that supports lifelong learning. I congratulate Lappo Public on 50 years.

### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (19:58):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to proceed with the Legislative Council amendments to the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023 and then for the House to proceed with community recognition statements.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:58):** Under Standing Order 180A (9), the Labor Government has made a mistake by failing to seek leave to continue with Government business after community recognitions have already started. That was obviously an error, but we must be careful that we do not erode our democratic values every time the Government makes a mistake. Democracy erodes one speck at a time, and this is a dangerous motion.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It's the death of democracy.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** It is. We are starting to see a government unravel. It cannot do the simplest of tasks, like getting its legislation correct—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Mate, we'll just make you wait 10 hours when you want something next time.



**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** That's why we're waiting for the other Ministers. Mr Speaker, can I have a little bit of silence?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! The member for Coffs Harbour will be heard in silence.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** We would have happily extended this had the correct procedure been followed at the time. But it is dangerous if we start swapping procedures willy-nilly, especially when the Government has the numbers to do whatever it pleases.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Does Alister know you're doing this?

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** No.

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

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** This is another mistake that the Government has made, but it is of little consequence and we can come back to it during Government business tomorrow. However, I do not believe we should be throwing out the standing orders every time the Government makes a mistake.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (20:00):** In reply: A message has come down relatively urgently from the Legislative Council in respect to an amendment to the Waste Recycling and Processing Corporation (Authorised Transaction) Amendment Bill 2023. The bill has been agreed to by the other place and, as I understand it, agreed to by members opposite. The Minister with carriage of the bill is also the Minister for Multiculturalism, and there are considerable issues occurring in the community at this particular time.

Bearing in mind the nature of the people with whom he is dealing, and the harmony he is trying to maintain within the community at this difficult time, it is understandable for him to be otherwise engaged at the very second that the agreed amendments are to be considered. For the member for Coffs Harbour to have behaved in the way he has under these circumstances is extremely disappointing. These are exceptional times and circumstances. The member for Coffs Harbour should reflect on things before he jumps up and makes ridiculous assertions and delays the process while other members are waiting to give their community recognition statements and their private members' statements.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

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

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 17 October 2023*

No. 1      **GRNS No. 1 [c2023-093B]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[3]. Insert after line 9—

#### **3I Requirement to report about acquisitions and disposal of land**

- (1) The WAMC must, within 2 months after the end of each reporting period, give the Minister a report about the following—
  - (a) land acquired, or disposed of, by the WAMC in the reporting period, including land bought, sold, exchanged or otherwise transferred to or from the WAMC,
  - (b) if the WAMC disposed of land to a person other than the State, a government agency or a council within the reporting period—the reason for the decision to dispose of the land to that person.
- (2) The Minister must, within 5 sitting days after being given a report under subsection (1), provide the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament.
- (3) A report provided to the Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament under subsection (2) must be laid before that House within 5 sitting days of that House after it is received by the Presiding Officer.
- (4) In this section—

*reporting period* means the following periods—

- (a) the period starting on 1 January in a year and ending on 30 June in that year,
- (b) the period starting on 1 July in a year and ending on 31 December in that year.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (20:02):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:03):** The amendment contains important accountability measures, in particular that the Minister must provide the report within five days of reviewing it. The Opposition supports the amendment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **THE HILLS FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (20:04):** The Hills Food and Wine Festival was another smash hit event in the Hills. The festival was held at the historic and picturesque Bella Vista Farm on 9 October 2023. There were 100 stalls and vendors in total, with wineries and businesses from the Hunter Valley, Mudgee, Orange, the Hawkesbury and even a stall from Queensland. The event hosted local food stalls and trucks, rides, face painting and more for the kids. Meg Wong, head of the organising team, estimated it drew approximately 10,000 attendees. Meg Wong said this about the Festival:

My intention is to create amazing community events that bring people together, showcase our amazing area and talented business owners. We also want to bring in businesses that are yet to tap into the Hills District market because we have an incredible and diverse demographic. We are so proud of what the event is evolving into and so grateful at the response of the community and their support.

I thank and recognise the organising team: Meg and Bosco Wong, Cherry Fratto and Bella Jamsek. I congratulate them on another successful event. I look forward to other food and wine festivals in the coming years.

#### **MY SKILLS AUSTRALIA**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:05):** I congratulate My Skills Australia on winning the education service category in the 2023 Blacktown Local Business Awards. My Skills Australia has been serving the community for over 22 years. It is a registered training organisation that offers educational training, from one-day courses to full diplomas, with a focus on maximising employment outcomes. Simone Rennocks is the CEO and employs 21 people, most of whom are from the Blacktown area. During 2021, My Skills Australia helped over 7,500 people retrain and reskill, primarily into transport and logistics after they lost their jobs during the pandemic. Currently, information technology and cybersecurity have been the most popular courses. My Skills Australia also offers courses in construction, marketing and supply chain, highlighting the diverse training opportunities across Blacktown city. This is the organisation's first victory in the Local Business Awards and only its second year entering. I look forward to seeing its continued success and contribution to the Blacktown community.

#### **ROHAN BROWNING**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (20:06):** I recognise the great achievements of my constituent Rohan Browning. Rohan or, as he is affectionately known, the Flying Mullet, is Australia's fastest athlete. A 100-metre sprinter, Rohan recently placed fourteenth at the 2023 World Athletics Championships, making it to the semi-final. Whether it has been the Tokyo Olympics, the Commonwealth Games or the World Athletic Championships, Rohan has demonstrated immense commitment, perseverance and talent. Rohan's lightning-fast speeds on the track have inspired Australians and made our local community proud. He has also, no doubt, inspired the rapid uptake in mullet haircut styles for boys and girls around Australia—which, as a mum of three boys who have been inspired by him, I may be slightly less thrilled about. But Rohan's achievements reflect the very best of our nation. Wherever his next race is, when the starter pistol goes, he can be assured he will not just have his local community cheering him on but the entire nation as well.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Just to be clear, the mullet festival is held in Kurri Kurri, which is part of the Cessnock electorate. If Rohan wants to fly that mullet through the main street of Kurri, he is most welcome.

#### **LYNETTE BEDWELL**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:07):** I congratulate and acknowledge teacher of 53 years and Thirroul resident Lynette Bedwell. Lynette has dedicated herself to educating and nurturing our community's

young people. On Friday Lynette will retire and walk out of the school for the last time. Lynette has spent the past 38 years teaching at Stanwell Public School and spent time at other schools in the Sutherland shire local government area prior to that. During her 53-year teaching career the 74-year-old mother of five taught all grades throughout primary school. However, she mainly taught year 6 students and helped prepare them for high school. Lynette's daughter Melissa said her mother embarked on a teaching career due to her love of children. Lynette will be greatly missed by students, parents and her colleagues. The New South Wales Parliament thanks Lynette for her devotion and dedication to her students over the past 53 years. I wish her well with the next phase of her life. On behalf of the entire Heathcote electorate, I congratulate Lynette on a wonderful career.

#### **TYLER WAKEFIELD**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:08):** I recognise the fundraising efforts of Tyler Wakefield of Bangor, who will run 6.3 kilometres each day throughout October to raise funds for Dementia Australia. Dementia Australia is an organisation close to Tyler's heart, as he is running to honour his 63-year-old father, who suffers from dementia and brittle diabetes. Having initially set himself a goal of \$630, he has to date raised \$3,775 to support Dementia Australia. Dementia is a growing health issue in our community, and has a significant impact on the health and quality of life of people with the condition, as well as their loved ones. It is estimated that over 401,000 Australians were diagnosed with dementia in 2022, with that number expected to more than double by 2058. This makes the work of Dementia Australia in providing counselling, support groups, education and training to those diagnosed with dementia and their families all the more important. I commend Tyler for his fundraising efforts and wish him all the best as he continues to raise awareness of dementia within our community.

#### **JENNY-ANN DIXON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:09):** I congratulate this year's Women's Network Hunter NSW Breaking the Barriers scholarship winner, Jenny-Ann Dixon. Each year, the Women's Network Hunter NSW awards a scholarship to a local Hunter woman who is forging a career pathway in a non-traditional field. At the age of 50, after reflecting on her career during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jenny-Ann decided to enter the male-dominated field of landscaping. She rolled up her sleeves, got her hands dirty and has awakened a passion for all things landscaping. With the support of her current employer, she was determined to upskill and enrolled in a TAFE landscape design course; she is now in the final year of her studies. The generous Women's Network Hunter scholarship will financially assist Jenny-Ann to complete her studies. Congratulations to the Women's Network Hunter committee for its continuing and longstanding support of women like Jenny-Ann who are breaking down the barriers.

#### **ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:10):** On Friday 13 October, I was extremely pleased to attend the 2023 Illawarra Business Awards at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong. I acknowledge and congratulate the following winners in each category: Excellence in Customer Service—Highlands Drivesafe; Excellence in Tech—Hysata; Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality—Jamberoo Action Park, and I give a shout-out to Matt George and the team; Excellence in Workplace Culture—IPAR Rehabilitation; Excellence in Innovation—Hysata; Excellence in Sustainability—the Illawarra Hotel; Excellence in International Business—Sicona Battery Technologies; Outstanding Employee—Christine Cross, the Cram Foundation; Outstanding Young Business Leader—Jane Curran, Curran Plumbing and Electrical; Outstanding Business Leader—Jemma Tribe, Nowra Community; Outstanding Start-up—Green Gravity; Excellence in Micro Business—Aquilla Fishing Charters; Excellence in Small Business—Sprout Scientific; Excellence in Large Business—Symbio Wildlife Park, and RMB Lawyers as Highly Commended. The 2023 Business of the Year was Hysata. A huge congratulations and well done to each of the winners and nominees, as well as those highly commended. I acknowledge the Illawarra Business Chamber and its executive director, Adam Zarth, for the outstanding job that they do.

#### **AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:11):** The Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, centred around the Mingyue Lay Temple, is a beacon of compassion and unity in Western Sydney. From humble beginnings in 1982, this place of worship has evolved into one of Australia's largest and most renowned Chinese Buddhist temples. Much of this progress is thanks to the tireless efforts of the society. It truly goes above and beyond, supporting local Fairfield and Braeside hospitals, hosting important community celebrations such as the Lunar New Year festival and providing international aid. I thank chairman James Chan, president Vincent Kong and all society members for their dedication and generosity. I also congratulate the society and temple community on the recent unveiling of a new section of the Tai Sui God Shrine at the temple. I thank them for the work that they do for Fairfield. Xie xie pengyou men.

### TERRIGAL TROTTERS FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:12):** I take this opportunity to congratulate and celebrate the Terrigal Trotters, a local running and walking club, on reaching its fortieth birthday. Terrigal Trotters began with just eight members in 1983, when a group of friends decided to formalise their Saturday runs, eventually coming up with its great slogan, "De Agony of Defeat". Terrigal Trotters meet between the car park and the surf club on Terrigal Esplanade every Saturday morning at 6.00 a.m., come rain, hail, or shine. What is more, people do not need to be fit to join in; they just need to be enthusiastic. From its humble beginnings, the club has grown to over 1,200 members, providing many social and health benefits, and raising over \$1 million for local charities through community events like the annual Bay to Bay Running Festival, the Mingara Relay For Life—which I attended last week—the Cancer Council and the McGrath Foundation. I again congratulate the Terrigal Trotters on this fantastic milestone. I have no doubt that the club will continue to grow. I wish the club all the very best on its fortieth birthday.

### JEMMA TRIBE

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (20:13):** October is National Women's Small Business Month, which means it is time to recognise women and the outstanding progress that female entrepreneurs have made over the years. In particular, I acknowledge Jemma Tribe from Vincentia. Jemma is the current president of the Shoalhaven Business Chamber and freely gives her time to support businesses across the Shoalhaven by running regular events, activities, talks, training and fostering network opportunities. As the managing director of the Nowra Community Food Store, Jemma leads a team which runs a low-cost grocery store for low-income earners. This service is available to anyone doing it tough, while also providing an opportunity for those who are able to pay it forward by purchasing a hamper for a person or family in need. Last Friday at the 2023 Illawarra Business Awards, in recognition of all that she does, Jemma was announced as the winner of the Outstanding Business Leader Award. I congratulate Jemma on her award and the formal recognition of her contribution to Shoalhaven.

### TRIBUTE TO ESME COCHRANE, OAM

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:14):** I recognise the very full and eventful life of Esme Cochrane, OAM. Esme was born in Wauchope in 1925 and passed away in Port Macquarie on 9 September 2023 at the age of 98. Raised on a dairy farm in Byabarra, at 18 years of age she left to join the Australian Women's Army Service. Her main role was to drive prisoners of war to Cowra, in addition to officially driving for the camp's commander. Later in life, Esme drove a taxi at Byabarra and travelled around Australia four times. Being behind the wheel was therapy for Esme, and her adventures were captured in the ABC production *Grey Nomads*. Married three times, Esme raised four children and first became a member of the Country Women's Association [CWA] whilst living in the Illawarra. She managed the CWA kiosk at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, running it so efficiently that she was affectionally referred to as "The Colonel". On moving to Port Macquarie, Esme joined Legacy and continued her dedicated work with the CWA, which bestowed life membership upon her in 2009. Esme can also be credited with creating the support group Grandparents As Parents Again, an initiative that earned her a State award. In 2010 Esme was deservedly awarded an OAM, acknowledging her service to the community and a well-lived life. Vale, Esme Cochrane.

### GRACE SPRING FARMS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:15):** Family businesses play a such an important part in our local economy. Tonight I recognise a fantastic family business in the Gosford electorate, Grace Springs Farm. At Grace Springs Farm, the family focuses on its soil and pastures to ensure that the animals live a happy and healthy life. Besides producing high-quality food, such as grass-fed meats, eggs, milk, various types of vegetables and honey, Grace Springs Farm also runs farm tours, which allows people of all ages to join them and learn about where their food comes from and how it is farmed. In addition to all the wonderful products and services that they provide, what moves me the most is their initiative to work with the young people of The Lakes College at Youth Off The Streets in the past 12 months. These eager learners have the opportunity to get hands-on sustainable farming experiences, while creating their own permacultures, providing valuable learning experiences that transform young lives. I thank Grace Springs Farm for its community-focused dedication and commitment, and I wish it all the best. Grace Springs Farm is a fantastic example of what we have to offer in the Gosford electorate.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### SURF LIFE SAVING

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:16):** The electorate of Shellharbour is blessed with some the most amazing beaches in New South Wales, including Warilla, Shellharbour North, Shellharbour South, and Killalea, also known as "The Farm". When the magnificent Lake Illawarra is added to the mix, it is no surprise

that each summer locals and visitors alike flock to the area on a long, hot day. With the Illawarra expected to have a hot and dry summer, it is important that we all enjoy our beaches in a safe and caring manner this beach season.

The surf life saving clubs of Warilla and Shellharbour spend every summer keeping us safe, and my community is eternally grateful for their amazing work. Members of these two magnificent clubs are among the over 20,000 active Surf Life Saving NSW volunteer lifesavers who will patrol the beaches of our State this season. Surf Life Saving NSW is one of the largest volunteer organisations of its kind in Australia, with a membership of more than 75,000 people. Those volunteers put themselves into dangerous situations every day to help save others. I encourage everyone with some spare time this summer to volunteer. For those keen to help without getting wet, there are plenty of other ways to assist, including administration, first aid, teaching nippers or helping in the club canteen.

The reason we need so many hardworking volunteers can be seen by examining the tragic statistics from last season, when 26 coastal drownings were recorded over the summer months in New South Wales. The Government is committed to saving lives on our beaches. Just last month we announced the biggest funding commitment ever for Surf Life Saving NSW, pledging an additional \$23 million over four years to help keep our beaches safe. The Minns Labor Government's investment includes funds for the upgrade, restoration and construction of Surf Life Saving facilities throughout New South Wales.

I could not possibly discuss our wonderful surf lifesavers in the Shellharbour electorate without mentioning Alan Beveridge from Barrack Heights, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List this year. Alan is a life member of the Warilla-Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club and has been the president since 1996. Alan has also been a patrolling member since 1970 and recently clocked up a half century of years without missing a single patrol. Another legend of surf lifesaving in my electorate is Wayne Cavanagh, president of Shellharbour Surf Life Saving Club, which operates from Shellharbour North Beach. Wayne has been instrumental in many successes over the years, including managing a thriving Nippers program and also ensuring that Shellharbour North Beach is inclusive and accessible to all. That high level of accessibility is obtained by having special purpose beach matting that runs from the paved car park, which has multiple disabled parking spaces, over the sand dune to the surf, allowing "beach chair" access to the sand.

For unpatrolled beaches such as The Farm at Killalea, the Government's funding package will fund additional resources and equipment such as jet skis and emergency response beacons for blackspot locations, helping our surf lifesavers extend services in such unpatrolled areas in an effort to reduce coastal drownings. The Farm at Killalea is one of Australia's most famous surfing beaches and in recent years our community was successful in stopping the former Liberal-Nationals Government from destroying that world-class beach with overdevelopment proposed by Reflections Holiday Parks. Thankfully, common sense prevailed, and the beach and the surrounding park are now safely under the care of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is doing a magnificent job. Finally, I once again say a huge thankyou to all of the volunteers across New South Wales for protecting our beaches this summer. I urge anyone visiting a beach this summer to please listen to our surf lifesavers and swim between the flags.

### EASTWOOD CULTURAL CENTRE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:21):** I have spoken in this Chamber several times about the vibrancy of my local multicultural community. In particular, I have spoken about the wonderful projects and initiatives that have been rolled out over the years by the City of Ryde council and by the former Government—and that I hope the current Government continues—to support the very fast-growing eastern side or, as it is colloquially known, the Korean side, of Eastwood. Before the election a lot of work was done to support and work with that community.

I draw to the attention of the House a particular commitment that was made by this Government in relation to a cultural centre for the eastern side of Eastwood. That important project finds its origins in 2018, when the then Labor deputy mayor of Ryde, former councillor Peter Kim, moved a resolution to facilitate the passage and planning of a cultural centre above what is now the Eastwood east car park. It was supported by the council at the time and enjoyed widespread community support. There was some reluctance from the council, particularly among the bean counters, in relation to the expense and cost of that project as an add-on to the car park. As a consequence, the car park was built, which was highly needed, but the cultural centre above it was not.

However, a decision was made to build the project such that a cultural centre could be retrofitted if at a future date the council found the funds to do so. That was always the plan and would have been a great project for our community. That leads me to the pre-election commitment made by the Government to build the cultural centre. It was announced to the Korean community roughly seven days prior to the election at a candidates forum debate and was received rather positively. As the then candidate, I and the council were happy to support it

because, as I stated at the beginning of this address, there was widespread support for a cultural centre in Eastwood. It was warmly welcomed by the Korean community.

As time has progressed and the details of the project have emerged, it has now become quite clear that the promise was nothing more than a shallow attempt days before an election to win over a cultural group in my electorate of Ryde. I find that highly offensive because our Korean community, like all of our multicultural groups, is not one big homogenous group able to be bought with a project and the flashing of money. Had the Government—then the Opposition—taken the time to consult with council and the community, it would have realised that the \$400,000 that it dangled in front of the community before the election was not even remotely in the ballpark to ensure that the project would be built. We are talking about several millions of dollars worth of cultural centre, which the funding commitment fell well short of.

My concern is that the promise was made to build the cultural centre. The promise was not about giving \$400,000 to the community; it was about building a cultural centre. There was a very strong implication, which was written down and repeated multiple times by councillors and, after the election, by representatives of the Premier's office. Therefore, the expectation has been set that the Korean community in Ryde would be the recipient of a cultural centre built by the Government. Now it has been revealed that insufficient funding has been allocated to achieve that outcome. It is a rank, broken promise. It was an attempt to win a cohort of voters before an election and I am extremely disappointed that more homework was not done prior to the announcement to ensure that my community members in Ryde and specifically in Eastwood could get the cultural facilities they require.

Speaking of the Korean community, the lease of the current home to the Korean Society of Sydney is expiring. It would make perfect use of a facility like the proposed project at Eastwood. Yet the reality is that it will not happen because there has been insufficient funding and insufficient commitment to ensure that the project promised before the election would be delivered after the election. I am very pleased by the response that I have had to a petition, working in partnership with the now Deputy Mayor of Ryde, Councillor Daniel Han, , which has received hundreds of signatures almost exclusively from the Korean community. We are working closely with community members to continue to advocate and fight to ensure that the cultural centre promised to the Korean community in Eastwood is built and fully funded by the Government, as promised before the election. It is over to the Government now to deliver on its commitments.

### GAZA CONFLICT

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:26):** Recent events have had a devastating effect on my electorate of Auburn. The terrible acts of terror committed by Hamas are deeply inhuman. We call for the immediate release of all hostages. I reiterate our condemnation of violence against all citizens. But it is important that all actors comply with international and humanitarian law. I am deeply alarmed by the unfolding catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, which is putting at risk millions of people who were not involved in the acts of terror by Hamas. Thousands of people have been killed, with nearly 10,000 injured and displaced, including women, children and the elderly. Food, water, fuel and medical supplies are running out on the Gaza Strip, compounding an already dire situation in one of the most densely populated places on earth. UNICEF has noted that Gaza's children are paying the heaviest price, with hundreds already dead. I note that half of Gaza's 2.3 million population is under 18 years of age.

Millions of people from the north of the Gaza Strip have fled to the south but there is nowhere in the south to seek safety. Southern Gaza has no means to support them. Many have returned to the north. Trucks carrying aid have been waiting for days at the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza. We urge our Federal counterpart to support the innocent citizens of Gaza and to do its part to urge authorities to allow urgent relief, essential supplies and aid workers to enter Gaza safely and to ensure a safe passage for those fleeing violence. Unfortunately, people in the electorate of Auburn are hit by tragedy and see great suffering often. Our communities were not only affected by bushfires and COVID; during the fall of Kabul, when people were locked in their houses, thousands of my local residents were absolutely devastated by the fate of their families, and I have seen the impact that the invasion of Ukraine has had on our local community. That was followed by earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, and the recent earthquake in Afghanistan that killed 6,000 people.

Only four or five years ago there was the Christchurch massacre. Those have all impacted our community. People are grief stricken and distressed. It is terrible to walk around the electorate and see people who have not slept for days because they are so worried and upset about what is happening. I urge all members to consider the feelings of my community, the wider community and particularly the Palestinian community. They are suffering and they have suffered for a period of time. The director of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation has urged people to consider their language when talking about the conflict. That replicates comments from previous presidents of the United States, such as Barack Obama, who have said that language matters so much when we talk about terrorism. This is a time to bring our community together, to look after the grief stricken and to try as much as possible to provide assistance to those in Gaza who are effectively starving at the moment.

### TWEED HEADS PCYC

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (20:30):** It is an honour to recognise the amazing contribution of my local police. Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the annual City versus Country boxing match from the NSW Police Force along with Police Legacy and PCYC at the Canterbury RSL. I am pleased to say that Tweed-Byron superintendent Dave Roptell and officers Chris Elliot and Simon Metcalfe made it all the way to the Legacy PCYC on the Friday night of the competition. My superintendent lifted the gloves after 1½ rounds, having won. He is commonly known in the boxing fraternity as the Maltese Falcon, being of Lebanese origin. He is a tremendous fellow, as is Chris Elliot. I had the pleasure of being ringside. I was the only politician on either side. A lot of the male competitors trained and took it quite seriously; others did not take it quite so seriously. There was a lot of support from various PCYCs, from the city to the country. I take my hat off to the female officers. They took no prisoners. They were very committed and strong.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Like our police Minister.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Well, they could be. Yes, their dedication and commitment to winning was quite amazing.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Do they support daylight saving?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** No, they do not support daylight saving—that will come up later. Police Legacy provides care and support to the families of police officers who have suffered a loss. The event raised the amazing amount of nearly \$100,000 for Police Legacy. Boxing has long been the sport that police officers use to keep physically and mentally fit. Over the years the event has raised more than half a million dollars for both Police Legacy and PCYC NSW, which provides invaluable assistance. PCYC supports vulnerable, at-risk and disadvantaged young people across New South Wales. With over 66 clubs across the State, PCYC provides quality activities and programs in a fun and friendly environment. PCYC Tweed Heads provides a number of sporting options, including baseball, gym and fitness. For kids who are interested in boxing, PCYC can help. It also offers a big help to parents with learner drivers in the family through the PCYC Safer Drivers Course.

It was tremendous to see both Dave and Chris take home a win. I must acknowledge my superintendent, Mr Roptell. He is very committed to youth crime redirection. I have seen many of those kids. On some mornings the police pick them up and bring them in for breakfast. The kids really respond to that. Although sometimes I worry because some of them are pretty big. They like getting in the ring with the policemen, knowing they can have a good round of boxing with them. I congratulate Dave, Chris and Simon on their commitment to raising much-needed funds for two very valuable programs. I encourage all members of Parliament to speak to their local police and see if they have a contestant in next year's NSW Police Boxing Competition.

### STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (20:34):** I draw to the attention of the House the troubling trend of for-profit student accommodation developers seeking to exploit planning controls that were intended to address long-term housing shortages in Sydney. Current planning controls allow developers specialising in student accommodation to build taller, denser boarding houses than ever before. However, in catering for a transient market, they provide students with fewer advantages for increasingly overpriced fees. The matter is considerably troubling in what is called K2K, or the Kensington to Kingsford planning scheme. Randwick council proposed developing commercial lots and apartments along the Anzac Parade corridor to provide housing for some 5,000 people. It was a difficult exercise because the then Government sought additional density. The council obliged by adding an additional 600 people to the plan. The council's planning work was quite outstanding. In fact, Randwick council received international awards for its planning work on the Kensington to Kingsford town centre.

However, following the success of the local environment plan, Randwick councillors and staff then constituted and proposed development control plans along the corridor that permitted particular overseas developers to acquire land and develop high-density student accommodation along that corridor. Two things flowed from that. Firstly, it is bad planning policy to permit that sort of student accommodation in the Kensington area. Council could have easily selected an area adjoining the university, such as the area between Barker Street and Rainbow Street and Anzac Parade and Botany Street. It could have zoned the area adjacent to the university for student housing. The real sin in the council embarking upon that exercise is that this State is facing a housing crisis, and these high-density sites along the Kensington and Kingsford corridor were ideal for providing much-needed accommodation and affordable housing for the Kensington and Kingsford area.

Affordable housing was particularly important. A number of years ago I announced how successful it would be for nurses at Prince of Wales Hospital and paramedics, teachers and police in the local community to be able to access affordable housing. It would also provide apartments for 5,000 people to ease what many believed

would be a Sydney housing crisis. Apart from anything else, the quality of the design of the high-density student accommodation that is being constructed at Kingsford Nine Ways and at prime residential sites at the corner of Todman Avenue and Anzac Parade in Kensington is nothing short of very poor, to put it kindly. High-density residential apartments could have revitalised a commercial and entertainment precinct at Kensington and Kingsford. That is what was planned and hoped for.

Fortunately, according to discussions with the relatively new general manager of the council, the council intends to address those failures in the development control plans that it developed to encourage those developments. The problem is that the prime sites and the high-density sites in those prime locations are now forever changed. That student accommodation can never again be used for residential apartments. All councils should be aware of those circumstances, and they should provide strategies to avoid developers misusing student accommodation to develop an income for themselves.

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

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:39):** This always was and always will be Aboriginal land. The New South Wales Parliament is on stolen Gadigal land. Sovereignty was never ceded, which is why a treaty with First Nations people is absolutely critical. In the wake of the "no" referendum result and months of ugly, divisive rhetoric in the media and on the streets, we know that many are hurting right now, particularly those within First Nations communities. The harm that has been done cannot be undone. The racist, regressive perspectives given a spotlight in the lead-up to the referendum revealed a side to this settler colony that First Nations people—and indeed anyone from a non-Anglo background—are all too familiar with.

We recognise that, like all communities, the First Nations community is one that contains a diversity of views and cannot be treated as a monolith. We acknowledge that there were staunch First Nations activists, leaders and community members who did not choose this referendum as the first priority—as the path to justice—and I respect their commitment to sovereignty. We acknowledge that many others chose the Voice referendum, with all its significance and potential opportunities for change, as the way forward.

We also recognise that electorates with high populations of First Nations people voted overwhelmingly in support of the Voice, with over 75 per cent voting yes in places like Palm Island, Mornington Island and Yarrabah in Queensland. Of the 22 remote mobile Australian Electoral Commission teams, all but one delivered overwhelming support for yes. The highest support in the Northern Territory came from Wadeye, with 92.1 per cent voting yes. Almost 86 per cent of that population is Indigenous. This overwhelming majority support was reflected in the two Federal electorates that cover the State electorate of Newtown. The yes vote for the referendum was high in our area, with the Federal seat of Sydney recording a 70.8 per cent yes vote while in the Federal seat of Grayndler it was 74.3 per cent. People in our community believed that voting yes in the referendum was the right thing to do. They wanted to back in First Nations people.

While the rest of the nation did not reflect this sentiment, now is not the time for hand-wringing. It is not the time for us to centre our own feelings of hurt or disappointment. Instead, it is time for us to all step up. We need to back First Nations people's calls by joining in their long-held demands for change. Those calls and demands have been chanted on the streets and written on the pages of endless submissions, opinion pieces and representations for decades. It is time for governments to finally implement the recommendations of both the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the 1997 Bringing Them Home report, and meet our international human rights standards and obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was established in 2007.

Here in New South Wales, the Minns Labor Government must not delay in advancing progress on a treaty or treaties with First Nations people in New South Wales. We need truth-telling and we need treaty. This was an election commitment to the people of New South Wales from Labor. It was justifiably paused due to the referendum, but now the Premier must commit to delivering on it urgently. As the member for Newtown and a representative of The Greens in the New South Wales Parliament, I reaffirm our commitment to a truth and justice commission and the need to deal with a treaty process in this State. We need to recognise and acknowledge this and ensure it is done with free, prior, informed and ongoing consent from First Nations people. It must be done within the framework of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If we are to see justice for First Nations people, we also need to create dedicated seats for First Nations people in our New South Wales Parliament, something long called for by First Nations communities and activists.

All of this will be challenging and take time, but that is not an excuse to do nothing. Every day we delay, the inequality, the injustice and the intergenerational trauma will continue. We need to act right now on things that are clearly doable and deliverable—things that have already been consulted on and recommended. We could start today by raising the age of criminal responsibility and ending the incarceration of children in prisons when they actually need a safe, secure and affordable place to live and a supportive family around them. We could



immediately repeal laws that disproportionately impact on First Nations people, such as the so-called local allocation strategy that sees people prevented from living in inner-city public housing if they have a drug-related offence. We could stop the ongoing displacement of First Nations people from their countries and communities and invest in public and affordable housing owned by First Nations people. We need to acknowledge that racism is not only individual but also systemic. We as progressives have a role to play in dismantling racist systems. I urge all who supported a First Nations Voice to commit to dismantling that racism.

### CENTRAL WEST ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:44):** On Friday 29 September I travelled to Orange to meet with the Central West Environment Council [CWEC], an organisation made up of conservation groups and individuals with the shared aim of working together to protect their local environment. When the CWEC first wrote to me as Parliamentary Secretary, its members highlighted the environmental impacts their region has endured for generations. Broadscale land-clearing activities are perhaps at the core of the challenges they face, with agricultural expansion, mining and urban development being some of the primary economic and social controversies for the area.

I often think of the Central West region as a neighbour to my own Blue Mountains electorate, not technically in a geographical sense but more in terms of both places having a common plight. Our communities vie for recognition of our uniqueness and our worthwhile economic and cultural contributions to this State. We want to be celebrated for who we are. We want the distinctive challenges our regions face to be acknowledged and we do not want to be disadvantaged by an urban-centric lens that can at times fail to acknowledge the relevance or value of communities outside of the Sydney Basin.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had a few weeks back to meet with the Central West Environment Council. Conversations around boardroom tables have their place, but they are no substitute for getting out into these places, speaking to people on their own turf and immersing oneself in the environment that the people who you are connecting with are fighting hard to protect. I make mention of the members of the CWEC who attended the meeting, each worthy of acknowledgement for their contributions as individual entities but also as part of this group. I thank them for making the time to share their concerns, suggestions and perspectives with me. Those members are Nick King, President of CWEC and secretary of Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange; Bev Smiles, secretary of CWEC, and president of the Inland Rivers Network and the Mudgee District Environment Group; and Rosemary Stapleton, secretary of Orange Field Naturalists and Conservation Society.

Also in attendance were Andrew Rawson, president of the Canobolas Conservation Alliance; Margaret McDonald, president of the Dubbo Environment Group; Francis Retallack, vice-president of Cadia Community Sustainability Network; Rebecca Price, vice-president of Belubula Headwaters Protection Group; Lisa Paton, cultural heritage adviser with Belubula Headwaters Protection Group; Cheryl and John Neilson, Rylstone District Environment Society and the Mudgee Region Action Group; and Stephanie Luke and Sally Neaves from the Bathurst Community Climate Action Network. I also acknowledge the issues and actions of Lithgow Environment Group, Dubbo Field Naturalists and Conservation Society, and Healthy Rivers of Dubbo.

That day I walked away with a deeper understanding of the issues our Central West neighbours are working tirelessly to tackle through raising awareness, appealing to government and joining together in grassroots, community-led campaigns designed to invoke meaningful action. Our discussions during the day centred around their requests. They called for an end to broadscale clearing and attending to biodiversity destruction. They believe there is a need for an independent review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Their requests also included water management in relation to mining, adding the Indian myna to the invasive species list, seeking oversight on local government around environmental matters related to development, heritage assessments on State-significant developments, and dealing with feral pigs.

They expressed concern with the expansion of coalmines and exploration licences and the need for laws to regulate metalliferous dust travelling kilometres and polluting water. They noted elevated levels of pollution and NSW Health asking them to conduct heavy metal contamination testing. They insisted on consultation and investigation of cultural heritage independent of the proponent, as traditional owners feel that mining companies are running roughshod over Clifden Caves, for example. The destruction of Indigenous sites must end. They called for blood testing for entire communities around contaminated sites near Cadia Valley operations.

They questioned who decides the level of protection of the environment around mines, particularly the cumulative impact of mining in the Mudgee region and The Drip Gorge. They expressed concern over the Bowdens project in the Rylstone area near Lue. Last but not least, they noted the need to protect the Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area. Whatever place we call home, the impacts of the environment's fragility bind us all. I thank all of those I met on my recent trip to the Central West for their hospitality, insight and wisdom, and for their proactive participation in a movement that is dedicated to change. We need to move

away from a Sydney-centric view of the world in terms of the environment. I say to them: I will walk that journey with you.

### **NORTH SYDNEY BEARS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (20:49):** The North Sydney Rugby League Club was formed on 7 February 1908 as a foundation club for the game of rugby league, with its players initially known as the Shoremen. The club was formed by men with a working-class background. Like the other Sydney district clubs, Norths was largely created with players and officials from the local rugby union club, the Northern Suburbs Rugby Club. In their first season the Shoremen performed credibly and qualified for the semi-finals. At the conclusion of the season, the club provided Australia's first captain of a Kangaroo tour squad to England, Dinny Lutge. Norths initially struggled to obtain access to North Sydney Oval, but council obstruction was eventually removed and the Shoremen played their first real home game on the iconic ground in 1910. During the Great War, home spectators were a little thin, which nearly caused the club to be dropped from the competition. However, towards the end of the war the club recovered, with both player availability and spectator numbers improving.

In 1921 and 1922 Norths won successive premierships under coach Chris McKivat, with legendary players such as half-back Duncan Thompson and wingers Cec Blinkhorn and Harold Horder. McKivat was a genius coach who knew how to get the best out of his playing roster. He had previously made history as a player and is still the only man to captain both the rugby union and rugby league national teams. The last time North Sydney qualified for a grand final was in 1943 under the legendary captain and coach Frank Hyde. Unfortunately, the injury-riddled team was defeated by Hyde's former club, Newtown, in the decider, which was played in front of a record crowd of over 60,000. In 1959 the club became known as the North Sydney Bears after accepting a sponsorship deal from the local Big Bear Supermarket at Neutral Bay. Around this time the Bears produced Ken Irvine, one of the greatest wingers to play the game of rugby league. Irvine scored an incredible 171 tries in his 176 first-grade games for North Sydney.

In 1999, North Sydney played its final home NRL game in the top grade at North Sydney Oval in round 25 against Melbourne, winning 24-20. On 28 August 1999, Norths played its final game as a first-grade side against the Cowboys in Townsville, with Norths winning 28-18. Despite regularly qualifying for the NRL semi-finals in the 1990s, in the year 2000, Norths was forced to combine with the northern beaches club, Manly-Warringah, who were its traditional local rivals. The merged club was under the Northern Eagles banner. After three years of poor on-field performances and factional infighting, the Northern Eagles franchise collapsed at the end of the 2002 season, and its licence then reverted to the Manly-Warringah club. This left the North Sydney Bears, a foundation club, out of the top-level rugby league competition. The North Sydney club was relegated to compete in the NSWRL Premier League Competition, where over the years it has had mixed success, including qualifying for the grand final in 2007 and 2023, only to be defeated in the closing seconds of both those premiership deciders.

In addition, the North Sydney Bears should be recognised for the club's exceptional efforts in developing females in rugby league at all levels, including on-field participation. Despite not playing in the NRL competition in any form since 2002, the North Sydney Bears' large army of loyal supporters remains strong. The club retains a healthy active membership and deep affection right across the rugby league community. The once-thriving rugby league nursery of northern Sydney has been largely abandoned by those running the game, which has been a gift to other sporting codes that have stolen the heartland. The North Sydney Bears club has a proud history. For 91 seasons it competed in Australia's premier rugby league competition and made an enormous contribution to the game. The Bears simply need to be back in the NRL. It will energise a huge fan base and mobilise junior talent across northern Sydney and the Central Coast, bringing in significant sponsorship and taking the NRL to the next level.

The Bears have faced many barriers over the years, yet the club is still here and will not go away. It was disappointing that the Minns Labor Government recently placed another barrier in the way of a Bears return to the NRL by ripping away funding to upgrade North Sydney Oval. One would hate to think that Chris Minns is cutting the funding as a Bulldogs fan, not as a Premier who should support a foundation club returning to its rightful position. This is in addition to Chris Minns' heavy cuts to a long list of essential programs like Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers, palliative care funding and energy bill relief. It is time for the Bears to be restored to their rightful place in the NRL. It would be good for North Sydney fans, for rugby league fans and for the game itself. It is time to bring back the Bears. I predict that the club's return will break the game's longest premiership drought by 2030.

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:54):** In 2017, domestic violence was described by The WASH House and Mount Drutt police as Western Sydney's "cancer". Blacktown is one of the areas hardest hit by domestic violence in New South Wales. I recall the police superintendents across the three local area commands

in the Blacktown City Council area saying the combined call-outs fluctuated around 1,000 incidents per month. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research reported that domestic-violence-related assaults across the Blacktown City Council area ranged from a high of 2,222 in 2019 to a low of 2,061 in 2022. That obviously excludes unreported incidences. The crime statistics also showed that over 1,660 women per annum were intimidated, stalked and/or harassed.

We have many important organisations dealing with domestic and family violence as well as empowering women to undertake personal development so they can live life to their full potential. I pay tribute to organisations such as the Harman Foundation, which last week was visited by the Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Jodie Harrison, MP, who heard about the challenges the foundation faces. Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre provides counselling and support services for women experiencing trauma, and The WASH House is working hard to reduce the impact of poverty, social disadvantage and violence on the lives of women and girls. There are many other valuable organisations working in this space across Blacktown City, and I will provide future updates on their work to the House.

Blacktown City Council has also been at the forefront of supporting community organisations dealing with domestic violence and the empowerment of women. Blacktown council has held many events raising awareness about the prevention of domestic violence; it also supports community organisations with vigils when a domestic violence death occurs. Given the good work of council in this space, I was shocked to read an article written by Kate McClymont and published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 August 2023 titled "Teo's 'wolf pack' bares teeth with threats", which implicated Blacktown council. Kate somehow got hold of a text exchange between proponents of a proposed property project called the Blacktown Brain and Spine Institute, or BBSI, who were working with Blacktown council at the time. Kate McClymont had already produced an unfavourable exposé on the proponents in previous articles, and I am unaware of any successful court action initiated by the BBSI proponents to refute her accusations.

An alleged exchange of messages between the three proponents was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The exchange included the words, and I quote, "rifle that bitch Kate" and "Dirty putana lorda will get hers! She will be eating shit for the rest of her miserable life!" I have emailed the Blacktown City Council Mayor and CEO, as well as a representative of Walker Corporation, which has since purchased the BBSI project, and the person who allegedly made these comments. I have only received a response from Walker Corporation, which states that it cannot be held accountable for previous BBSI shareholders, they will not be associated with Walker Corporation or BBSI moving forward, and that "Walker's conducts its business in a manner that is respectful of all people's rights, and does not condone any behaviour that breaches those rights".

According to the article, the person who allegedly made the comments first denied it and then said it was banter. I do not believe words of this nature in any language can satisfy the definition of banter. These people need to be called out, and it needs to be determined whether the statements are true. If so, a heartfelt apology must be issued. It is also incumbent on Blacktown City Council representatives to demand answers to questions, and, if necessary, call for an apology. How can they conduct legitimate business transactions with a syndicate that believes it is okay to intimidate and threaten women?

It is not good enough for Blacktown City Council representatives to make general public statements against intimidation and violence towards women and then remain silent when their business associates have been accused of vile comments. Council's only response to the article so far was words to the effect of "Oh, the article didn't talk about the project's economic benefits or the jobs that it will generate." There was no rejection of the intimidation towards the female reporter. The saying "the standard you walk past is the standard you accept" was coined by Lieutenant General David Morrison during a powerful speech condemning aggression against women. There is no hiding. The mayor, councillors and senior council staff must decide: Stand against the intimidation of women or cower in the corner and say nothing so they do not offend their friends and business associates.

#### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (20:59):** At the risk of sounding like a broken record I highlight the devastation of drought, particularly in my electorate of Clarence and around the centres of Casino and Grafton. The hopeless feeling of drought is not lost on me and is certainly highlighted by those people who are suffering tonight. Those same people are growing the food that is on the shelves at our local supermarkets in the cities. It is more than that; it is villages and towns that support an industry. Living with drought is awful. It is pretty easy to forget how hard it is and to overlook the fact that drought is tough in the bush. Living in the city we turn the water on and it flows out. Thousands of my constituents are surviving on tank water, and when the tank runs dry a truckload has to be bought so they can have a drink and a shower.

Drought is a serious situation. It is constant and unforgiving. We think about it at night and when we go to work. If we are on the land, it is our life. Looking after and being responsible for livestock is tough during times of drought. It is also very costly, whether it is beef or dairy cattle. The sugarcane industry and even the fishing industry suffer in drought. My electorate is suffering as we speak. We have always understood drought but the last couple of years have been particularly tough. Sadly though, in this place it seems that the Government is stalling on even acknowledging that New South Wales is in drought. The Minister is missing in action. I call on the Premier to take action as a matter of urgency.

During the last drought more than \$2.4 billion was injected into rural communities across New South Wales via subsidies and rebates. As The Nationals in government we invested more than \$186 million on transport subsidies, and through the Farm Innovation Fund more than \$436 million was returned to local communities. Almost \$100 million was distributed through the Drought Assistance Fund, and in excess of \$100 million worth of Local Land Services rates and fixed water charges were waived. I say to the Minister: Do something. Borrow those programs, work within them. Something is better than nothing. Many areas of the mid-North Coast and Northern Rivers have suffered great fires in the last week. Sadly, those fires are a product of drought. Those severe fires have burnt out large areas of the Northern Rivers and mid-North Coast and there is no doubt that fauna and flora have been lost, fences burnt and cattle left without any grass or water and with no fodder.

There is no support available from the Government to help. This is a tragedy in the making for those in northern New South Wales and it needs the attention of the Government. Again I plead with the Premier: Something is better than nothing. At the moment there is nothing available to farmers or those on the land who have been burnt out or are suffering intense drought. Let us talk about what has happened in this place. The Government has cut the water harvesting rights from 30 per cent to 10 per cent with no warning or consultation. This is not the right time to do that. Now is the time that infrastructure should be put in place. Farmers in my electorate need a hand. They do not need a handout; they need a hand up. I urge the Premier to do something to help the farmers in my electorate.

#### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (21:04):** October is Mental Health Month. This month has been held in New South Wales since 2010. During this month community events are held to promote mental health. Last week in my community of Maitland the Uniting organisation held a day in Maitland Park where I had a presence with my electorate team. I thank them for that. Various events have also been held in this building. This month we are encouraged to think about our mental health and wellbeing. We are reminded how important good mental health is to our everyday lives and are encouraged to seek help when we need it. These are all important, great messages that seem simple to follow until it directly affects us or someone we love.

In 2022 more than 3,000 individuals were lost to suicide in Australia. To put that in perspective, it is something in the order of 10 times the road toll. Each of those deaths represent an individual who left behind someone who loved them: their partner, their parents, their children, their siblings, their friends. Last week I had the honour of joining Minister Jackson from the other place to share the stories of Sally Beavis and Vicki Mendyk, their stories of the people they loved, their stories of their loss. Now their stories are stories of advocacy for change.

Vicki lost her husband, Peter, to suicide in December 2017. She had no warning. He was just a bit stressed at work. Then, just five months later, her 19-year-old daughter, Chelsey, who suffered from anxiety and was very close to her dad, also took her own life. Vicki's family went from a family of six to a family of four in five months due to suicide. There is no doubt that the lack of support that they experienced was a factor in that. Vicki Mendyk started U\_Matter to put some hope out in the community for people who are suffering and raise awareness of suicide and the impact it has on loved ones.

Sally Beavis also shared her story about her husband, Troy, with the Minister. His story began in March 2022. Up until that point he had never struggled with his mental health. This story is especially close to me because I knew Troy, his wife, Sally, and his broader family for many years. They were one of the first families I met when I moved to Maitland. Despite all her best efforts and the support and love of family and friends, Sally lost her beloved husband to suicide in May 2022. Sally's story is personally strong for me. She talks about the 1,500 or so people who turned up to Troy's funeral.

Troy was the absolute embodiment of joy, success, love, someone who had made good and who had been an amazing and successful son, husband and father. He was someone who always put his hand up for others. He was the goods. The power of Sally in her and her family's grief to share the story of Troy is important. What stood out to me in the story that she told powerfully to the Minister was Troy talking about feeling like a fraud. Like all of us when we struggle with mental health, we just keep going. We keep telling everyone everything is okay. That

disconnect between what is happening for you personally and what is happening in the outside world becomes greater, and greater, and greater.

Troy was an amazing person and I am so sorry that we lost him from Maitland. I am so sorry for Sally and her family that they have had to go through this terrible experience. We will work with her. The conversation with Minister Jackson was very positive. The advocacy of both Vicki and Sally and their lived experience will change the outcomes of people struggling with mental health in our community for the better. It is a pretty tough time for everyone in Maitland at the moment. There are a lot of things going on. But the most important thing is for people to reach out. Sally and Vicki sharing their stories gives us more hope that that will happen in the future.

### FLOOD MITIGATION

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:09):** I begin by acknowledging the very timely and important contribution by the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads on a very important subject. I praise her for her courage and the passion with which she spoke. Floods wreaked havoc across our State last year. It is now time that we acted on the damage done by massive flooding. It might seem odd to speak on this at the start of an El Nino event, with concerns about bushfire and drought in the coming months. But now is exactly the time when we need to discuss these issues. We need to address genuine flood mitigation when things are quiet or heading into a dry period so that we can prepare and be fully armed to carry out flood mitigation when heavy rainfall events return with a vengeance. We know they will as the impacts of climate change increase.

It is timely that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal is undertaking a review of the Water NSW operating licence and the Natural Resources Commission is undertaking a review of the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee. I have taken the opportunity to make submissions to those reviews in the light of what my electorate went through last year in the wake of the floods. The submissions are publicly available on my website, but I wish to make the House aware of the issues I have raised.

First and foremost, there is a critical need to include genuine obligations for flood mitigation in the water licence of Water NSW and the Water Sharing Plan. I have been told repeatedly that the priority for Water NSW is safety of workers and dam infrastructure and the provision of water for downstream use. The legislative framework seems to be concerned with the safety of the dams but not specifically the safety of any communities affected by flooding. It is only right that Water NSW and the Government should consider the economic and social impact of flooding on communities. That appears to be missing in their work, which downgrades the devastating impacts on communities and the amount of disaster relief that has been needed.

I note that one of the discussion papers proposes not doing a cost-benefit analysis if there is no "counterfactual". The flooding issue just does not seem to be on their radar, but it must be and to ignore it is irresponsible. It makes no economic sense and is not socially responsible. There is also a need to identify funding to repair the damage done to riverbanks because of the operation of the dams. There is significant and worsening erosion along the banks of rivers, such as the Tumut River, and I am told that is in large part due to the frequent alterations in water levels because of the operation of the dams.

Secondly, we need to update information systems to better predict risk, especially in the light of climate change. Modelling tools used by Water NSW must be reviewed due to the unpredictability of future flooding, which may not follow past flood data due to climate change. The CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology expect that there will be more extreme weather events as well as more extreme rainfall events. Water NSW needs to not only take into consideration what that means for its modelling tools but also identify and make improvements where necessary. The 100 years of historical flood data used for modelling may not represent the future realities of flood events. Furthermore, Water NSW should have obligations to publish its data in a timely manner depending on the overall flood risk level. That should include carrying out announcements regarding storage release and the timing involved, along with predictions on the spillage for each dam.

Finally, community engagement needs to be extended to genuinely include not just customers but also all those who will be affected by decisions about water release. The current operating licence requires Water NSW to have customer advisory groups; however, that can mean a focus on those receiving water entitlements at the expense of other stakeholders, such as farmers and communities, who are at risk of flooding. Community advisory groups running in parallel with customer groups would allow community consultation in areas that have previously experienced flooding events. Consultations about flood mitigation and management issues pertinent to each region should occur regularly with communities. In summary, the concerns of communities affected by flooding are not given the priority they deserve. We now have the chance to change that. It is time to act.

### WESTINVEST FUND

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (21:14):** Government is about protecting, supporting and doing what is right for New South Wales. When I reference New South Wales, I talk about every person in this State—everyone

from the 93 electorates that make up our Parliament. From my side of the world, Western Sydney has always been at the forefront of disadvantage. With the onset of the COVID pandemic and the ensuing impacts on our way of life, families are at the brink. The \$5 billion WestInvest program was funded from the \$20.4 billion sale of the WestConnex motorway by the previous New South Wales Coalition Government. Putting aside the now enduring toll pressures borne by commuters in Western Sydney because of that sale, WestInvest was pitched to us as an opportunity to transform Western Sydney, to help our vulnerable, make lives better and boost the economic profile of our most disadvantaged areas to support recovery post-COVID; yet the reality could not be further from the truth.

WestInvest was split into two tranches: \$2 billion for council and community projects within 15 local government areas and \$3 billion for New South Wales government projects across Western Sydney. My focus tonight is on the \$2 billion allocation by the previous New South Wales Coalition Government. To put it bluntly, I calculated that out of the 15 local government areas the top three most disadvantaged areas according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics—Fairfield, Cumberland and Canterbury-Bankstown—were three of the four local government areas to be allocated the least WestInvest funding per capita. My electorate, covering both Fairfield and Canterbury-Bankstown, received an average allocation of \$262 per person, compared with the average allocation of \$1,070 per person for every other local government area. On the other hand, Burwood and Hawkesbury were allocated an average of \$2,245 per person, almost nine times that of my community.

I am all for supporting every local government area in our State, but there is a clear disparity in how the proceeds from WestInvest were distributed. Two billion dollars is not pocket change. Families work hard to pay their taxes. In return, they deserve fair investment back into their communities. After all, WestInvest is not the Government's money; it is the people's money. I have been told that funding was based on projects that were assessed on merit. I strongly doubt that, based on four propositions. First, there is a significant funding disparity amongst local government areas. Secondly, at least one successful recipient council wants to repurpose its awarded funds for other projects that it now deems more suitable. Thirdly, approved projects for funding are now suspected to not be viable. Fourthly, despite what I just mentioned, other more worthwhile and ready-to-go projects in disadvantaged areas, such as Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown and Cumberland, were found not competitive by the previous New South Wales Government and therefore rejected.

Western Sydney cannot overcome its economic and social challenges when a government treats it like the former Government did regarding WestInvest. We will not realise our true potential as a State when we leave communities behind. Public investment decisions must be based on the public interest and not on votes. I stand here tonight calling out the WestInvest program as grossly unfair. It represents the very opposite of what good government is about and a wasted opportunity to truly reform Western Sydney. The challenge moving forward is to rectify this imbalance for the benefit of all. That is my mission and I promise I will do my very best. The Premier and my colleagues are also very attentive in that regard. We all know what is right and what is wrong, and the WestInvest allocations are wrong by any definition of the public interest. Such irresponsible and unfair fiscal management must never happen again.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:19):** I commend the member for Fairfield for his strong and passionate speech, especially about how WestInvest impacts his area. He talked about the allocation of the program funds by the previous Government. I add to that by saying that when it was first announced, the WestInvest program gave people only about three weeks to make a bid. It was unseen and untold, and suddenly the previous Government told the entire community, "Here's \$2 billion—make your bid." Those who had the time within the three-week period to make a bid entered a second round in which they had one month or so to put in a detailed bid, whether that was for a \$50,000 or a multimillion-dollar project. The whole project sucks for how it was done. The member for Fairfield should be commended for holding the previous Government to account.

#### **LIZARD ROCK DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (21:20):** Tonight I further express my opposition and concern with the proposed development of bushland in Belrose known as the Northern Beaches Aboriginal land priority growth areas and precincts, informally known as the Lizard Rock planning proposal. Up-front, I make the point that I support anyone or any organisation having the opportunity to submit a planning proposal. In this case, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council has every right to submit a proposal. It submitted a proposal in October 2022 to rezone land to deliver a maximum of 450 new homes, a cultural centre, and new open space and conservation areas. That is its right and now it is up to the planning department to undertake a proper process.

On Thursday 19 October my community is meeting to raise concerns about the planning proposal in Belrose, often referred to as Lizard Rock. I have proudly and consistently been on the record expressing my concerns about the proposal, following in the footsteps of my predecessor, the Hon. Jonathan O'Dea. Over 12,000 members of the community signed a petition requesting that 227 hectares of land on the northern beaches is no longer subject to the proposal. I have three concerns about the proposal: the risk of bushfires and natural

disasters; the lack of supporting infrastructure; and, most importantly, the need to protect our natural environment for future generations. The Lizard Rock site sits alongside the Garigal National Park and Narrabeen Lagoon State Park. It is valuable bushland. The proposal would allow for the destruction of around 45 football-sized fields of bushland. Therefore, I believe the proposal lacks merit.

I encourage everyone in the community to make their voices heard. I also encourage everyone to make a submission, even if it is their second or third one, to the Department of Planning by 7 November 2023. One of the most persuasive submissions against the proposal is from Northern Beaches Council. It shares my concerns about the bushfire, natural disaster risk and the destruction of bushland. It also mentions two further points. First, the proposal is inconsistent with planning strategies. The council states:

The proposal does not demonstrate strategic merit and is inconsistent with key aspects of the Greater Sydney Region Plan, North District Plan, Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement – Towards 2040, and Northern Beaches Local Housing Strategy.

Second, it is inconsistent with conservation zones reform. The council states:

The reform recommends applying a C3 Environmental Management Zone to most of the site due to its high environmental value and the hazards impacting the site.

Overall, I note that the council is in opposition. Before the last election I was proud to advocate, as the Liberal candidate for Davidson, that a re-elected Perrottet Liberal-Nationals Government would protect this bushland. To get that commitment was not easy. I joined fellow Liberal candidates Rory Amon and Toby Williams and the member for Manly in strongly advocating to the then Premier and the then Minister for Planning and their respective offices. The then Minister for Planning, the member for Lane Cove, said on 5 March 2023 that concerns raised by the community relating to bushfires, critical infrastructure and density meant that a re-elected Perrottet Government would not allow the rezoning application to proceed. He said:

I have always advocated for the right developments in the right place with community support, particularly in keeping with local character.

In the petition debate, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces said:

The final authority to determine if and how the land is rezoned will sit with me or my delegate, and the final determination will be based on the advice received following the conclusion of the assessment.

Let me be clear: Whatever happens, the Minister will have the final authority. Finally, I acknowledge the members representing the electorates of Manly, Pittwater and Wakehurst for their advocacy. On 29 June 2023 each of us was proud to unite with the 12,000 people from our communities who signed the petition, which was organised by the Northern Beaches Bushland Guardians. I thank and acknowledge Dr Conny Harris, Councillor Kristyn Glanville, Rachael Jackson, Sarah Baker, Pamela Dawes, Deb Harris, Marion Kiss and Sue Denton. I also acknowledge from the Davidson community Nicole Romain, Ron and Cynthia Patton and Neil Evans for speaking with me about the Ralston Avenue and Wyatt Avenue in Belrose. Let me be clear: I do not support this proposal as it stands. There is a proper process already in place.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:25):** I recognise and understand the concerns of the member for Davidson about protecting the bushlands and having reasonable development, but under 12 years of Coalition Government, 30 to 40 hectares of land in Western Sydney Parklands was converted into shopping centres, industrial parks or housing. At the time I never heard any members from the northern beaches worrying about Western Sydney Parklands being sliced and diced and sold off to generate income for general revenue. The population is increasing rapidly. The last time I looked at the Northern Beaches Council population projections for 2041, they showed a decrease in net migration over the next 20 years, with the only growth taking place through population growth. We need to have a fair balance of population growth across the State.

## GAZA CONFLICT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (21:26):** Last week I spoke in this place to condemn the despicable terrorist attack by Hamas and my fears for the humanitarian disaster that is unfolding in Israel and Palestine—a situation that affects many Jewish and Palestinian Australians, who are grieving and living in fear. The targeting of civilians and the taking of hostages deserves condemnation. Of the thousands and thousands killed in past 10 days, the overwhelming majority have been civilians, and the death toll has only continued to rise. I place on the record my utter condemnation of the bombing of the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza, which killed over 500 people last night. The targeting of civilians is abhorrent—the targeting of the sick and injured and those who care for them even more so. They are protected under international humanitarian law.

About 1,500 Australians have already left Israel and Gaza but dozens are still stuck. Evacuating Australians from Israel is proving difficult—Gaza even more so. Mona Sakr is one of those trying to leave Gaza. Mona runs an Arabic community language school in my electorate at Granville Public School. She has been running the Al-Aqsa community Arabic school for over 10 years. There are five branches of the school across Sydney, at

Granville, Banksia Road, Kingsgrove, Wiley Park and Clemton Park. The school is really popular. When I visited I was greeted by lovely, happy kids enjoying learning.

Mona is stuck in Gaza and her family members are terrified. She was born in Gaza but has lived in Australia for decades. She is a wife, a mother and a grandmother. Mona went to Gaza to visit her aging sister and brother. When the current conflict started, she was evacuated from the north to the south. Some one million Palestinians were instructed to evacuate northern Gaza, and 600,000 have already moved, although there is really nowhere safe for them to go. Mona has moved five times in five days. She is currently living in a garage with 70 other people. Mona has lost all of her belongings and her medications. She has nothing left except the clothes she is wearing and one change of clothes. Mona's family have told me that her medications are vital and she is suffering without them.

Mona has no access to water, while living in the garage with 70 other people, and only bread for food. She can only charge her phone from a car. Mona made her way to the Rafah border crossing to Egypt, only to be sent back because the border remains closed. Even if she makes it to the other side of the Rafah crossing, it is an eight-hour drive to Cairo airport and she would be crossing into the desert. There is no consular assistance once she gets to the other side, let alone a car to take her to Cairo. She is left to fend for herself. Mona's daughter Diyana posted to Instagram five days ago. She said:

My mum is 'trapped' in Gaza Palestine. Today she and 1 million others have been asked 'nicely' to 'relocate' to the desert basically .... by foot. Ya Allah! Give my mother good health, strength to endure the tough circumstances she's in. Ya Allah Ya Kareen – keep her safe and bring her home to me. Ameen.

Mona's family are in constant contact with the Australian consular operation and emergency evacuation, but little help is available. I call on the Federal Government to do everything it can to evacuate Mona and all Australians who are trying to leave Gaza, and to provide the support they need to find safety once they cross into Egypt. I appreciate that the foreign Minister has stated that the Government is lobbying Israel, Egypt and the United States to open the Rafah crossing for Australians to evacuate. The Rafah crossing remaining closed is also preventing the provision of essential humanitarian support into Gaza. Trucks have been waiting for days to enter Gaza with food, water and medicines.

Mona is not alone in this predicament. I have heard from many other people in my community about their concerns for family and friends in Gaza or the West Bank, and I know that many members in this place have had similar conversations with family or friends of those in Israel and Palestine. As I said last week, tensions in our community are high and the Jewish and Palestinian communities in New South Wales need our support. Antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in our society; they are corrosive to the values we all hold dear. More than ever, these communities need us to lead and reach out to one another. It is not a time to inflame those tensions.

#### STATE BUDGET AND OATLEY ELECTORATE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:31):** Over the past 12 years I have continued to fight incredibly hard for upgrades in my local community. Since being elected in 2011, the New South Wales Coalition had a proud track record of handing down budgets that invested in what people needed most. That ranged from record funding for local schools, significant upgrades to transform our public transport network, major upgrades to hospitals and significant cost-of-living relief rebates to take pressure off household budgets.

Locally over that time my community and I were able to achieve some remarkable things to improve our area. Those things include delivering over \$740 million to St George Hospital to transform it into a world-class health facility, including a new emergency department, birthing suite and ambulatory care facility; reducing parking pressure on local roads by delivering commuter car parks in Riverwood and Beverly Hills; upgrading every school across my local community, including a record \$45 million for the redevelopment of Penshurst Public School; upgrading Oatley and Narwee railway stations to deliver accessible and modernised transport for locals; commencing the long overdue King Georges Road widening project, which was on the books for over 60 years and will slash congestion by widening the road to three lanes in each direction; and, my favourite, establishing the Dharawal National Park to protect local wildlife and habitat from coalmining operations. Those are a few of the many things that the previous Coalition Government delivered for my electorate over 12 years.

I truly believe the Oatley electorate, as a vibrant and diverse community, is one of the best places in New South Wales to live, work and raise a family. I had continued to campaign for further significant upgrades to our local area as part of this year's State budget. Rebuilding Carss Park swimming pool and upgrading the Oatley-Como walking track were our top priorities, alongside several other important investments that would have enhanced the local area. I was pleased to see Labor promise to rebuild Carss Park swimming pool before the State election. That was a big win for my community, and locals were looking forward to it.



However, I express my deep disappointment that the Oatley electorate received no substantial funding in the 2023-24 State budget. To date, no funding has been committed to Carss Park swimming pool or any other project. Before the budget was handed down, I wrote to the Premier and the Treasurer to outline my community's desires for this year's budget. I had been strongly advocating on my community's behalf for some time to ensure that we continued to receive the same level of investment. However, Labor has once again failed to deliver on its promises, a narrative that is all too familiar to locals.

We received no funding to rebuild Carss Park swimming pool; no funding to acquire Glenlee; no funding to upgrade Peakhurst West swimming pool; no funding to upgrade any of our local schools, including Narwee Public School and Oatley West Public School; no funding to revitalise the Oatley-Como walkway and cycleway; and no funding to significantly upgrade Belmore Road. Instead, the budget was riddled with cuts to funding. We saw cuts to the Active Kids rebate, cuts to critical infrastructure projects, cuts to the Community Building Partnership Program, and cuts to innovation, arts and culture. We even saw cuts to cost-of-living measures implemented by the former Coalition Government that aimed to help families doing it tough.

The Liberal-Nationals Government worked incredibly hard to deliver a secure economic future for our State. This was done by investing in programs that would see real benefits for the people of New South Wales. It is disheartening to see that Labor's significant cuts will hinder that progress. After years of neglect under Labor, the previous Liberal-Nationals Government completely revitalised my local community through strong investment. I am concerned that Labor will once again neglect to invest in our future.

The one thing to be taken away from this budget is undeniably clear: This Labor Government does not care about my community. The feeling in my electorate is unmistakable. This Labor Government's actions—or lack thereof—have left many feeling neglected. Locals are seeking transparency, accountability and, most of all, a government that will prioritise their needs. I call on this Labor Government to step up and answer for its actions and broken promises. We need more than just words and empty promises; we need concrete actions that are reflected in investment. I will not stop working for my local community. On behalf of every person in the Oatley electorate, I will continue to hold this Government to account. I know that we can make a change to ensure that our community's future is strong.

#### GAZA CONFLICT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (21:36):** Last week I spoke about the horrifying situation in Israel and Palestine and about my fears that escalation will impact innocent people. I made my feelings clear, and there should be no doubt regarding my condemnation of the actions of Hamas and those who partake in hate speech locally. I was sad then, but tonight I am heartbroken by what is unfolding in Gaza. I know I am not the only one whose heart aches. I fear what the coming days will bring and I reiterate that the international rules of war cannot be ignored or set aside. We are witnessing the immense suffering of the people of Gaza. The number of dead is around 5,000, with over 500 being innocent children. That is a tragic fact we cannot ignore.

International humanitarian organisations have expressed alarm at the decision to cut medical aid, power, fuel, water and food. This had a deadly effect on residents of Gaza, including children, the elderly, women and men. The World Health Organization raised concerns about orders to evacuate hospitals. Today's destruction of the Al-Ahli Hospital has left around 900 people dead. This is a tragedy beyond imagination and causes every heart to ache. Earlier, residents of Gaza were told to leave their homes to seek shelter. But, as many world leaders have asked, where can they possibly go while borders such as that of Egypt are closed? Where can they possibly go when they are surrounded by war, rubble and flattened towns?

The impossibility of the situation is brought home by stories emerging from Gaza. We have heard heartbreaking stories of death, missile strikes, and psychological and physical warfare tactics. We have heard the story of a convoy of people that came under attack while following instructions to evacuate to the south, leaving 70 people dead. I have heard stories of women forced to sleep in the street amid dead bodies because there is nowhere to go. They have nowhere to hide or flee, while running out of water and food, existing in what they call a living death. People in my electorate are asking me the confronting question: Why must so many innocent people have to die? What Hamas did was horrific and has been rightfully condemned, but all sides must remember that because a person resides in Gaza it does not mean they are a supporter of Hamas.

These people too are the victims of this horror. In times of war and anger, it is easy to lose sight of that. But we must ensure that we do not lose our sense of justice. We cannot forget to humanise each innocent person who is lost. Whichever way you look at this whole situation, it is heartbreaking—everyone suffers. You would be foolish to believe there are winners in this; it is humankind that is the ultimate loser. You do not have to be Arab, nor Muslim, nor Christian to feel the pain of innocent Palestinians; you just have to be human. A person burying their loved one feels the same grief regardless of which side of this conflict they are on. Mothers mourn their

children irrespective of culture or background. In Australia, we are so blessed to call this incredible country home. We have interfaith and intercultural relationships; we are the envy of the world. We have relationships, especially at this time, to maintain and strengthen in the days ahead. In Australia, we can dream of the future. We can have hopes and aspirations. But for those caught up in this conflict, dreams only extend to surviving the day. This is not sustainable or a way forward. The world is at a critical juncture and we face dangerous times. The global community must act to bring about peace. No-one wins in war. But there is always hope. My hope is that innocent people will be spared, and that we can change the trajectory of this catastrophe.

I call on my colleagues to consider the words they use at this time and their positioning on this tragedy. I especially call on my colleagues on the opposite side of the Chamber; we have seen their positioning during question time. I urge them to use their voice for peace and to recognise the catastrophic effect this war is having on innocent people and others around the world. Many charitable organisations are doing good work, but they must be afforded the opportunity to deliver aid to people who are in desperate need. There must be a way that we can create a safe passage on humanitarian grounds.

A friend recently sent me a quote from Bertrand Russell, who said, "War does not determine who is right—only who is left." That is something for all of us to reflect on. Tonight is a time for humanity, for peace. And whilst there may be a sense of helplessness, we should never give up on hope. Collectively, we must do all we can to bring an end to this. Let us not look back in the years to come and think to ourselves, "We could have, we should have, I wish I had done more."

### WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES YOUTH CRIME

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (21:41):** I caught up recently with Assistant Commissioner Brett Greentree, APM, Western Region Commander and corporate sponsor for youth with the NSW Police Force, to discuss the increase in young offenders out west. Communities are experiencing an increase in aggravated offences, stolen cars and break-ins. Kids are breaking into homes, stealing the car keys, taking off with cars and driving recklessly through the community. The NSW Police Force is seeing a prolonged incidence of offences, an escalation of crime and recidivism in young offenders. To tackle the increase in youth crime, Operation Regional Mongoose launched in September this year. The goal of Operation Regional Mongoose is to coordinate from the regions a high-visibility campaign targeting these offences.

I cannot stress enough the importance of coordinating this operation from the regions. Statistically, young people found guilty in New South Wales criminal courts will be reconvicted in the next 10 years. Of these, there is an over-representation of male Indigenous offenders. Young offenders, particularly Indigenous young offenders, often have complex histories and require diverse approaches to intervention at a grass-roots level. In many remote areas, the current justice system offers only two options—bail or custody—which are not working as the rise in recidivism continues. We need something in the middle to deter potential offenders or reoffenders from entering the justice system and staying there.

Earlier in the year I had a casual catch-up in Bourke with President of the Children's Court of NSW Judge Nell Skinner and Tim Chinn, the Orana Mid-Western Police District Commander. The intention of the catch-up was to discuss the third option—something in between bail and custody—that intervenes and resets these kids onto the right path. There are early intervention and diversionary programs out there that fill this void in the justice system. BackTrack in Armidale, Down the Track in Lake Cargelligo and the PCYC in Walgett have all run incredibly successful diversionary and early intervention programs. Superintendent Greg Mohr, Inspector Trent Swinton and Superintendent Tim Chinn from the NSW Police Force are some of the good people with good ideas involved in the programs. Their success relates to community engagement and the programs' ability to address social determinants of crime like education issues, health and homelessness.

Some of the programs fall under the banner of Justice Reinvest, which is based on the premise that imprisonment is expensive and does not offer a return to communities that have high rates of crime and incarceration. Rather than funding more prisons, the funds are redirected to community or diversionary programs that give a higher rate of return to the community. We know that putting a young person in prison statistically means they will reoffend, often with an escalation in crime. Depending on the age at which the criminal behaviour begins, the cost to community of a wasted education and subsequent funding of incarceration can often run into millions of dollars. Diversionary programs target the core issues within a community and engage the kids with a pro-social role model and meaningful experiences that allow them to break the mould.

I am not saying that there is no place for incarceration. If a young person commits a serious adult crime, once that threshold is crossed, custody is the only option. Our communities expect a serious response to protect the most vulnerable in our community. But, for minor offences, there are ways that we can mitigate a lifetime in custody. The *NSW Police Force Youth Strategy 2023-2025* vision refers to:

Work with partners to reduce the number of young people engaging in anti-social behaviour and criminal offending to lessen their contact with the criminal justice system.

The 2018 Law and Safety Committee inquiry into the adequacy of youth diversionary programs in New South Wales made many important findings. I will raise two, which are:

Finding 4

The NSW Government should increase the availability of holistic, community-based programs and services in rural, regional and remote NSW that focus on diversion, early intervention and the prevention of youth offending, and address the underlying causes of crime.

Finding 5

The NSW Government should explore further initiatives to attract and retain suitably qualified people to deliver diversion, early intervention and prevention programs in rural, regional and remote NSW, and to build capacity within local communities.

Some towns have very little to offer their youth. Following the success of the Walgett PCYC, Wee Waa is now ready to have a permanent club in its community as youth crime rates surge. Currently, it has a PCYC outreach club but the community has identified the need for something more sustainable. They are struggling to get funded. Brewarrina is a success story out west. Through community action, it has reduced the crime rate and engaged its youth. Brewarrina also wants a PCYC but, due to its success, is unable to secure the funding.

Not all towns out west are the same. What works for one does not necessarily work for another, even though they may be only 50 kilometres from each other. The success of early intervention and diversionary programs lies in their ability to cater directly to the cultural make-up of a community and engage with kids on emotional, spiritual and cultural levels. Whatever we do, must move the needle on youth crime. We need to make changes, have them reviewed and keep going until we get it right. This means proper resourcing, community consultation and action. We cannot forget our youth.

### LISMORE ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:46):** I am pleased to be able to continue my regional round-up of all the grand events and great local organisations and people who are doing amazing and wonderful things. In response to the contribution by the member for Barwon, I point out that BackTrack in Tenterfield in my electorate does fantastic work. I am pleased to support it. Based on the success of BackTrack, North Track was established in Lismore and then RiverTracks in Murwillumbah. Those organisations need all the support they can get. I thank the member for Barwon.

On 16 and 17 September the Kyogle Motorcycle Club hosted the final two rounds of the 2023 Finance My Bike NSW Off Road Championships. There is a fantastic track on Taveners Road. The incredible range of hilly and flat terrain in the area makes it very suitable for such events. However, like a lot of events, the championships were cancelled for a while because of weather and COVID. It is great to see it back. Also in Kyogle, the students of St Brigid's Primary School dressed up in wonderful and creative costumes to represent characters from their favourite books during Book Week. Reading to children is so important not only obviously for their enjoyment but also for their learning and development. Well done to St Brigid's. I read recently in various media that there has been a return to reading to children—I think some schools never stopped. There is nothing better to develop a lifelong love of reading. Also in Tenterfield, I congratulate the Tenterfield Chamber of Tourism, Industry and Business on hosting the Tenterfield Business and Tourism Excellence Awards on 16 September at the picturesque Tenterfield Golf Club. Like many events, the awards have not been held for a while due to the climate, the weather and the pandemic. But it seems many events are now getting back on track in 2023, which is great to see.

In regional round-up, I turn to Murwillumbah. Some 50 years ago time capsules were buried beneath the Murwillumbah Library. Obviously, they have been through a few floods too—and I will come to that. Recently two of those 50-year-old time capsules were put on display for public viewing. They worked to retrieve them. The time capsules were buried when the Murwillumbah Civic and Cultural Centre—the location of the Tweed Shire Council chambers—was constructed. One was done by Tweed Shire Council and one was done Apex. Apex life member Gary Smith was present at the sealing of the Apex capsule. He said that the service club's capsule had messages from the New South Wales Governor at the time. It was nice to see that on display for people. The Apex reps are also collaborating with council about the best way to preserve the contents of the time capsules.

These are community events. We are lucky to still have local newspapers, as they cover all of these events. I give a plug to our local newspapers, particularly *The Northern Rivers Times*, which covers a vast area and all these wonderful local events. I also mention just briefly another project in Tweed: the \$11.3 million industrial land swap project. I was at the launch of the first big part of that project. I have to say that the funding for it came under the previous Government. It was something I endorsed at the time, and it was great to be there.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** You fought for it, though.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I fought for it, Adam, as I do.

### **BONDI BOWLING CLUB**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (21:52):** For nearly 100 years the Bondi Bowling Club in my electorate has been a central part of our community. Bowling clubs have a special place in the heart of many of our communities. They are part of the DNA of the Aussie culture, whether it is barefoot bowls with friends on the weekend, a Friday night feed with the family, or providing a way for seniors to socialise and stay active. They host birthday parties, anniversaries and grand final parties. I am sure that quite a few members in this place have had the odd election victory party at their local bowlo. They are places that unite communities.

The humble bowlo may not be the ritziest location in any community. We are more likely to find decor in them from the 1970s than from 2023. While they may not be fancy, they are often a place in any community where we will find the greatest amount of warmth and joy. Bondi Bowlo is no different. It is a volunteer-run organisation, it does not have pokies and it genuinely exists to serve the community. From schoolkids to retirees, the Bondi Bowlo offers a lot to the people of our local community. Many of us in this place will remember the iconic Australian film *Crackerjack*. It is the story of the Cityside Lawn Bowls Club fighting to save its beloved bowlo from being taken over. The Bondi Bowling Club in my electorate is now in a similar fight because the Minns Labor Government has hiked its annual rent from \$22,000 a year to \$95,000 a year. That is an increase of over \$70,000 in one hit.

It is not just my local bowlo fighting against these huge rent hikes. Up and down the State, bowling clubs have contacted me to tell me that the Minns Government has also hiked their rents—bowlos like Penrith, Seaforth, Ashbury, Hunter and so many more. All up, under this Government, rents on Crown lands have increased to the tune of \$6 million. Why? The answer that the Premier and the Minister gave to news crews on the day was fire trail upgrades ahead of the fire season. If the Government has to reach into the pockets of local clubs across this State to balance its budget then we are in deep trouble.

Bowling clubs have been part of our Australian history for over 150 years. Sadly, since 1980 Sydney has lost nearly half of its bowling clubs. This recent decision by the Government only puts further pressure on the remaining bowlos in communities across our State. When the president of Bondi Bowling Club, Matty Graham, reached out to me about his huge rent increase, he was genuinely flabbergasted about why the Government had decided to raise rents by such a huge amount. Bondi Bowlo is not saying that it should not have to pay rent increases. It is prepared to pay increases that are fair and reasonable. All the club is asking is for the Government to meet it halfway.

Hiking anyone's rents suddenly by such a huge amount cannot possibly be seen as reasonable. Just a reminder to the Minister that Bondi Bowlo does not have pokies; it is a small not-for-profit, run by volunteers. My local community has rightly been outraged by the Government's decision to go after local clubs. Thousands have signed petitions, calling on the Minister to reverse his decision. So great was the interest that the Bondi Bowlo's fight was picked up on media across the country, from the *Today* show to Sky News to 2GB radio and every news channel. The interest was so strong because we love our bowlos. We love our community organisations. They are the beating hearts of our neighbourhoods, and we do not want to lose them.

Over the weekend, Bondi Bowlo held a community support day to highlight its plight. In doing so, the club offered Crown Lagers on Crown land for a price of \$4.20 to reflect the 420 per cent increase. In today's inflationary environment, no-one was going to knock back a \$4 beer. The reality is that it will be last drinks if the Minister does not reconsider his decision for many bowlos across the State. Matty has told me that if there is not a reduction in their rent hike, they will have to consider cutting back opening hours, run fewer community programs and be unable to invest in our community. Mr Temporary Speaker, I do not want to see that. Please go down to the Bondi Bowlo and have a schnitty and a beer. I am happy to shout.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I thank the member for Vaucluse. I might take her up on that offer.

### **NEW ENGLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (21:57):** I have previously spoken in the House about the importance of the New England Renewable Energy Zone [REZ] in leading or being at the vanguard of transitioning our generation technologies from an old-school way of generating energy to a more diverse energy mix. My strong support for the establishment of the New England Renewable Energy Zone and supporting the passing of the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 through Parliament was because, in my view, it was about bringing order to chaos, instead of the community being on the back foot responding to developers—some good but mostly cowboys, as we see in any new emerging industry, such as when communities were impacted by

coal seam gas, coalmining or other industries. When an industry is starting out and going through that huge growth phase, we get a mixture of good and bad developers.

The whole idea of the REZ was to coordinate the development of renewable energy projects—large-scale commercial projects—in a strategic way. It was to put the community in the driver's seat to determine where the transmission infrastructure went, which then determined where the projects went, and have a process by which an agency in the form of the Energy Corporation of NSW was empowered to build that transmission infrastructure. By virtue of that, it would be able to control who was allowed to connect to that infrastructure and who was rejected—in other words, a process outside and prior to a project entering the planning system, working through EnergyCo, where the community could determine what it accepted and what it rejected. The number of projects that are wanting to develop in our area is eight times the number we need to achieve that eight gigawatts.

The New England REZ is the largest REZ anywhere in the world—eight gigawatts of dispatchable energy through a mixture of wind, solar, hydro and battery technology. It is fantastic, designed by the community and strategically located. The only fly in the ointment, though, is Energy Corporation itself. Despite having power via the Act and despite having bucketloads of money poured into it by the previous Government—and, to its credit, the new Government—to deliver those renewable energy zones, Energy Corporation seems to be the place where good ideas and good intentions go to die a very slow, painful, paralysing death. Nothing seems to happen despite the community wanting to engage and have its say about the location of transmission infrastructure—the large-scale hubs that the projects will connect to—and despite the fact the community just wants to know about community contributions, the councils just want to know about future funds, and the landholders just want to know where transmission lines are going to go, what the compensation is, how the easements work and how the legal process works.

We still do not have the answers that we need from EnergyCo and yet the New England REZ is supposed to be energised by the year 2026. Pigs will fly backwards before that happens. It is just not going to be delivered. The Energy Corporation has such a significant responsibility for delivering the energy generation revolution, which I am a massive supporter of, but at the moment it is letting us down. There are some good people at Energy Corporation, but unfortunately the senior leadership, particularly CEO James Hay, has let our community down. When I say "let down", I do not just mean he has not done the job; I mean that he has made promises that he cannot cash the cheques for and cannot deliver on. He is the gentleman who sat in my office not long after the election and promised that, before the draft transmission line routes would be exhibited to the public, we would have permanent EnergyCo staff based in the New England Renewable Energy Zone in Armidale or some other place.

He promised we would have a fully staffed office, where community members could see who those people were. They would be the face of the REZ. Landholders, councils and local MPs could engage with and build relationships with them. We have none of that and yet EnergyCo is already starting to pull out the Energy Infrastructure Investment Act and say to landholders, "Don't worry. We've got the power under the law to just ram these transmission lines through regardless of what you say. We're just ticking a box." It is using staff and contractors who are not only not from the region; they are not even from west of the Great Dividing Range. The whole damn team is based in Sydney. They catch the Qantas or the Rex planes up when they want to do a bit of consultation to tick that box and then scurry back to Sydney when it is done. James Hay needs to either pull his socks up or get the hell out and be sacked. He is not doing his job. He is letting the community down. We want this to work. We want it to be successful. But while he is in charge, I do not think that is going to happen.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:03 until  
Thursday 19 October at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **CASTLE HILL ART SOCIETY, CHILDRENS ART SHOW**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Castle Hill Art Society has given great service and enjoyment to the Hills District since 1967. Ever since the Art Society was established the Art Society has made its mark in the Sydney Art Scene with great art shows such as the annual Orange Blossom Festival Art Show. This year the Art Society held the Annual Art Awards on 15 September 2023 and the Annual Children Art Awards on 23 September 2023. The artwork this year was great. Childrens Awards included categories for all ages. First Place Awards were given to William Ames (5–8 age category) for 'Ski House'; Pranaya Sree (9–11 age category) for 'The Playroom'; Serena Ratwatte (12–14 age category) for 'Winter Sunset'; and Lauren Jones (15–18 age category) for 'Dancer in Blue'. I thank the Castle Hill Art Society Inc for another fantastic Orange Blossom Festival

Art Show. I give special recognition and thanks Councillor Jessica Brazier for attending and supporting the Annual Childrens Art Show this year.

#### **AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS LUNCH, CASTLE HILL RSL CLUB**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—On 15 October 2023 I was honoured to join Australian War Widows New South Member (AWWNSW) Jenny Ware and Coordinator of Younger Members War Widows Social Club Dianne Vogt at the Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch War Widows Lunch. Across Australia there are approximately 40,000 War Widows. In New South Wales alone there are approximately 15,000 War Widows. AWWNSW is an amazing organisation and inspirations organisation. It is inspiring to see the support given to widows and widowers throughout New South Wales. Since its beginning with its founder, Mrs Jessie Vasey, AWWNSW has devoted time, resources, and funds assisting widows and widowers in their lives across Australia and New South Wales. We will commemorate War Widows Day this year on 19 October 2023. War Widows Day is the opportunity to acknowledge, recognise, and respect the sacrifices made by families in the defence of our nation. We give thanks to the commitment to their dedication to our country. I thank the President of the Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch, Cheryl Hill and the entire Sub-Branch for the opportunity to pay tribute to those who made sacrifices in the defence of our nation.

#### **SAMANTHA RILEY DRIVE SPORTS FIELD, NORTH KELLYVILLE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The opening of the new Samantha Riley Drive Sports Complex at North Kellyville was attended with a large community turnout to celebrate the new sports complex. The new sports complex was officially opened on 23 September 2023. The new complex is The Hills Shire Council newest sports complex. The official opening included ice-cream and facepainting for the children and a great barbeque provided by the Kellyville Rhinos. The finished sports complex looked great, and I know the community will benefit from the latest addition to the local area. The complex includes four multi-purpose turf fields which can be reconfigured into two cricket fields; a basketball half court; a local playground, picnic facilities; a concrete shared loop pathway around the fields; an amenity building and much more. In attendance on the day were the Kellyville Rhinos Rugby Club and the Kellyville Supersonics Sports Club. The Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Dr Peter Gangemi officially opened the new sports complex. Thank you to the staff at the Hills Shire Council for the hard work to complete the sports complex.

#### **SAFFRON GRASS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievements of Saffron Grass who, at just 17 years old has earned the honour of becoming the first Manning footballer to represent the Australian All Schools team as they embark on a tour of the USA next March. Saffron's journey to this prestigious position began with her performance in the Australian Championships in Canberra, where she was a key member of the unbeaten NSW team. Her skill on the field earned her the title of NSW's players' player, a distinction selected by the coaching staff. Her commitment and dedication paid off, granting her a place in the national All Schools squad. Saffron's versatility as a defensive midfielder has already brought her success, including captaining the Maitland Diocese team to victory in the state All Schools tournament. Saffron, your journey is nothing short of extraordinary, with achievements at a national level, and the prospect of university and possible opportunities in the US college system on the horizon. I eagerly anticipate the doors this tour will open for you. I can't wait to see where your football journey takes you next!

#### **WHERROL FLAT SCARECROW COMPETITION**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the community effort at the Wherrol Flat Scarecrow Competition and Spring Fair. This year's competition boasted 54 local "crows" and 22 business entries, far surpassing expectations. The event's success is a result of the collective efforts of our community, where many contribute to make it truly special. This year, approximately \$4000 was raised through entry fees and community stalls at the Spring Fair. These funds are crucial for the upkeep and operation of the Wherrol Flat Hall, a foundation of our community since 1938. The Wherrol Flat Scarecrow Competition and Spring Fair show the spirit of our community, demonstrating unity, creativity, and generosity. Congratulations Wherrol Flat residents on the event's growth and its significant contribution to Wherrol Flat.

#### **TAREE SHOW SOCIETY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the Taree Show Society for the successful execution of the 2023 Taree Show. The Taree Show was a major success, it featured diverse entertainment, including a performance of whip cracking fire stunts, medieval equestrian performers, motocross stunt riding, musical performances, arts, crafts and agricultural displays, amusement rides and side shows. The Taree Show goes beyond entertainment, drawing the local community together to celebrate all that is great about our region. It recognises outstanding individuals with titles like Young Woman of the Year and Junior Showgirl.

The Show Society's commitment to this tradition adopts community togetherness and promotes local businesses. Thank you, Taree Show Society, for your dedication to our community and for providing a platform to showcase local produce, talent, and businesses. I had a fantastic time!

#### **SCOTT AND REBECCA ROWLINGS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I wish to congratulate Narrandera residents for their continued dedication in ensuring members of the community can continue to learn new trades. Scott and Rebecca Rowlings are teachers at Narrandera High School during the day, business owners of MON Repo's and then teachers of trade classes at night. Mr and Mrs Rowlings started running night wood-work classes in their local business, during the Covid-19 lockdown, with many locals taking up the opportunity of learning a trade or further develop their knowledge. Mrs Rowlings handles the background work of the business whilst her husband runs the ever increasingly popular workshops. Both Scott and Rebecca have advised that the most rewarding part of these workshops is that 80% of the participants are female. The couple continue to run these successful classes and are currently offering woodwork and blacksmith courses for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The newest addition to their course list is the 'Grandfather Trades', which is becoming quite popular amongst students. Congratulations Scott and Rebecca once again for this fantastic initiative.

#### **GRENFELL SILO'S RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Many people travel in search of picturesque locations, others like to tick off iconic places to visit. There is a special group of people who enjoy travelling one of Australia's largest outdoor galleries, the Silo Art Trail. Each year, millions of tourists take photos of the amazing silo artwork, which reflect an image related to the area and its surrounds or showcasing our nations heritage. The Silo Art Trail has been turning heads on many dusty regional roads since 2016 with a vast collection of artworks celebrating Australia's people and culture. These road trips have injected new life into rural towns and provide economic benefits through tourism for local communities. One of these masterpieces can be found in Grenfell, the 1926 Grain Silos with artwork completed by Heesco Khosnaran capturing the farming industry and landscape of the Weddin Shire. This outstanding and highly detailed mural took Heesco five weeks to complete using 180 litres of paint and 800 spray cans. This captivating artwork has recently been recognised by Australian Geographic and features in their new book 'Silo Art, Australia's Outdoor Art Revolution'. Congratulations to all who brought these silos to life.

#### **TEMORA INVENTION HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Justin Dunn, a prime lamb lot feeder from Temora has come away with a highly commended award for his invention of 'The Shepherd Feedlot Auto Drafter' at the recent Henty Machinery Field Days. The Shepherd Feedlot Auto Drafter automatically drafts heavier sheep from a lighter pen to a heavier pen, once the appropriate weight is reached, without the need for a producer to intervene. Every time a lamb is handled, they lose weight. Justin has designed a system that allows low-stress handling, whilst also increasing efficiency and productivity and eliminates a vast amount of work for the producer. The electronic system which incorporates a rear sensor to ensure the scales weigh and draft one animal at a time, instantly provides real time information back to the producers mobile. With dry times expected, many producers will direct more sheep off pasture and into pen-feeding situations, so this highly commended invention will provide much benefit to producers and the land. Congratulations Justin on your hard work, and research. I'm so glad it has paid off by being recognised and awarded.

#### **TAHMOOR TAIPANS TRIUMPH IN CHAMPIONS OF CHAMPIONS OPENER**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The Tahmoor Taipans all-ages women's soccer team secured an impressive 5-1 victory against the Callala District Soccer Club last month. Hosted at Lynwood Park Oval, the match was part of the first round of the Champions of Champions competition. The victory was a strong statement of intent as the Taipans displayed their prowess on the field despite challenging conditions. The game started off tight, with both teams battling for possession and showing high intensity, according to Abbey Henry, the team's assistant secretary and a player. Eventually, Tahmoor seized control, scoring twice before halftime. Although Callala managed to pull one back with a sensational goal, Tahmoor remained unfazed. "Returning from the break, we dominated possession and added another four goals," said Henry. The win was a group effort, featuring goals from Kelsea Moore, Jade Curtis, Toni Cooper, and Michelle Friedrich. As they look ahead to their next match against the Woonona Sharks, Tahmoor remains committed to maintaining their winning momentum. The Champions of Champions competition serves as a post-season showdown, allowing top clubs from various districts to compete. For the Tahmoor Taipans, this big win signifies a promising start.

**GOVERNOR-GENERAL INAUGURATES REFURBISHED CWA BOWRAL KITCHEN**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Governor-General David Hurley and his wife Linda visited the CWA Bowral Branch's Tulip Time café last Saturday to officially inaugurate their newly renovated kitchen. The special occasion saw the Governor-General cutting the ribbon, signaling the café's readiness to serve the community with an upgraded facility. This wasn't the Governor-General's first visit; he has enjoyed morning tea at the location before. "It was special to have him do the opening," said a CWA spokesperson. The refurbishment, funded by a government grant, took about a month to complete and includes new equipment such as a dishwasher. The spokesperson mentioned that the layout "worked well" during their popular Tulip Time event. The café experienced an especially busy period last Sunday. "Some days it was absolutely frantic for us," the spokesperson added. Though visitor numbers in the park dipped a bit recently, the café still sold out of jams and pickles by last Friday. The café also offered an array of handicrafts, including knitted items, Christmas decorations, and second-hand books. The updated kitchen and café aim to serve a cozy, community-focused hub, blending tradition with new amenities.

**APPIN'S TIERNEY'S TAEKWINDO ATHLETES SECURE NATIONALS BERTH**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Tierney's Taekwondo Academy in Appin has announced that eight of its athletes will represent NSW in the Australian Taekwondo National Championships in Perth. The championship will be held from October 13 to 15 and will feature athletes Ava Cakovska, Heath Dawson, Saeid Orfali, Grace Rodrigues, Hayley Nonenmacher, Christian White, Damien Cakovski, and Carly Orfali. Head instructor Amy Tierney stated that training sessions at the academy range from one-and-a-half to three hours, covering martial arts skills, self-defense techniques, and sparring. All athletes secured their place in the Nationals by ranking in the top three in their respective categories during the NSW State Championships. Two athletes, Grace and Hayley, received special recognition and support. Both athletes have shown remarkable dedication to their sport and community; Grace has been training for four years and is a provisional black belt, while Hayley has three years of training and holds a two-stripe red belt. "We're a small but mighty club in Appin," said Ms. Tierney, reflecting pride in her students. "They're very community-oriented...these girls go over and above for their community."

**ELLAH COOPER**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises apprentice painter Ellah Cooper who was recently awarded with the Megan Dalley Award for Trainee of the Year. Ellah was nominated for her painting skills and positive approach to her work. Ellah's supervisors said the quality and efficiency of her work are just as good as a fully-qualified painter. Ellah will be rewarded with a certificate of recognition and a \$1,000 prize to be presented at the next meeting of Kiama Council on 17th October 2023. This Award was named in honour of Megan Dalley, a customer service trainee for Kiama Council who was tragically killed in a car accident in November 2007. Kiama Municipal Council resolved the following year to establish the award in her name to be given to a high-performing trainee, apprentice, or cadet along with a \$1,000 prize. As the Municipality's largest employer, Kiama Council has a long history of providing traineeships and apprenticeships as career pathways for young people. A huge congratulations and well done to Ellah Cooper on receiving this prestigious award.

**HELEN RIPPON**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Helen Rippon, a passionate and dedicated swimming instructor at Kiama Leisure Centre. Helen has spent 34 years teaching generations of local residents to swim and over those years, has even started teaching the children of kids who she taught decades ago. 27 of those years have been at the Kiama Leisure Centre. The centre aims to provide a happy and safe environment for children to learn water confidence. It offers swim school classes for children aged 6 months and up with Austswim, Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) and Swim Australia accredited instructors. The toddlers learn basic survival skills of kicking and keeping their heads above water, and Helen has possibly saved a number of young lives over the years with swimming being such an essential skill in our region. The KLC swim school classes help children to progress their swimming skills and learn water confidence. They can then progress to mini squad training eventually which aims to improve stamina and develop a variety of stroke techniques. Helen taught over 300 students just last term! Certainly an icon at the pool. Thank you Helen Rippon.

**JACK NUNN**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama's motocross racing prodigy Jack Nunn who collected victory in the first round of the new 'CR22 85cc Cup' in Adelaide. The CR22 85cc Cup was created by Australian motocross legend Chad Reed to help provide a platform



for young riders aged 12-14 to start performing at a top level during the Australian Supercross Championship. Jack took the top spot on the podium after a superb race on his GasGas MC 85 in front of 7,000 people at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. Jack has two more races. The next on 11th November 2023 in Newcastle at McDonald Jones Stadium in an event expected to draw a crowd of around 25,000. The competition will conclude at Melbourne's Marvel Stadium on 24th November 2023. Jack has already had a busy 2023, having competed in Romania in the World Junior Motocross Championships and placing second in the NSW and Australian titles. A huge congratulations and well done to Jack Nunn from Kiama on his recent achievements which add to his already long list of achievements and impressive results in motocross as he continues on his career development.

#### **FATHER BARRY DWYER, OAM**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise Father Barry Dwyer OAM of Parkes, who has gracefully retired as police chaplain after a commendable 40 years serving the NSW Police as chaplain to the Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes. In his illustrious journey, Father Dwyer pioneered as the first full-time chaplain, counsellor, and lecturer at the NSW Police Academy in Goulburn in 1993. He further elevated to the role of senior state chaplain for the NSW Police Force Specialist Operations in Sydney from 2000 to 2016. Father Dwyer's unwavering presence in times of disasters and critical incidents is an embodiment of his commitment. He stood firm alongside officers during challenging episodes, like the Waterfall train derailment, the Phuket Tsunami Relief Operation, the Quakers Hill nursing home fire, and the Lindt Café siege to name a few. Upon his return to Parkes 2016, he shepherded the Holy Family Parish and continues his esteemed service as the honorary chaplain for the Central West Police District. We are deeply grateful for Father Dwyer's unwavering service and contributions to the NSW Police as chaplain.

#### **ORANGE BUSH NIPPERS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I wish to recognise the Orange Bush Nippers. The remarkable journey of the Orange Bush Nippers underscores a genuine commitment to community wellbeing and drowning prevention in rural and regional NSW. Founded in 2007 with a handful of children, basic equipment and immeasurable passion, the group's growth is a testament to its undeniable impact. Bolstered by the support of Orange businesses and the 'Beach to Bush' program with NSW Surf Life Saving, the Nippers not only hone their skills but also address the alarming drowning statistics, particularly among children in farming communities. Their partnership with Dee Why Surf Life Saving Club further enriched this mission with members from each club patrolling beaches and fostering water safety education. The Bush Nippers fill the gap in education and services in our region by promoting the need for water safety in remote areas. Tragically, drowning remains the leading cause of death for children aged 0 to 14 on farms. With 90 drowning deaths last year and a staggering 40 per cent occurring in NSW, the Orange Bush Nippers' dedication to reducing these harrowing statistics is crucial. Congratulations on all you have achieved and keep up the good work!

#### **KEVIN AND KAY HOWELL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I wish to recognise a salt-of-the-earth couple, Eugowra kelpie breeders Kevin and Kay Howell. The couple's stud 'Karana' secured its 10th national Kelpie Championship in Victoria in March this year, with Karana Roy IV securing the honours. The win was Roy's first national title and illustrates the bond between Kevin and his dogs. Karana's most successful dog Digger II won three titles. Digger's success was a reward for Kevin and Kay's dedication to their kelpies and came after they nursed him back to health after a back injury almost ended his life. Semi-retired from farming, the couple maintains about 200 sheep, a small flock of which are used to train pups from about four months. Now 81, Kevin has owned a dog since he was 16 and has been training and competing for 40 years. A sportsman in his younger days, he says trialling his dogs is an outlet for his competitive side. Awarded NSW Handler of the Year three times, Kevin reckons no matter how bad your day is, dogs always make you feel better. I congratulate Kevin and Kay on their wonderful skills and dedication to a rural way of life.

#### **WONDERING WOMEN SWIM SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise Wondering Women for its efforts to help women learn how to swim. Wondering Women is a local group that brings women together for a range of activities to promote wellness and wellbeing, including its mermaids group that has been doing ocean swimming for about four years. They found there were women who would love to join the mermaids but had never had the chance to learn how to swim. Around the same time Wondering Women founders Lisa Tilsed and Adriarn Crane heard from my office about a newly settled family who wanted swimming lessons and they set about finding a way to set up their own swim school. With the help of a grant through Cronulla RSL and the expertise of Swim Lab, they've now been able to fund swimming lessons for more than 30 women, with more than 40 others keen to join. Feedback from participants so far has been very positive and I commend Lisa, Adriarn and their team for their vision to help

women have the confidence to swim at our beautiful beaches and boost the mental health and wellbeing of Wondering Women members.

#### **LIAM BONETIG**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Liam Bonetig, from Shellharbour, after signing a three-year deal with the Scottish powerhouse football club, Celtic. Liam has been playing with the Western Sydney Wanderers A-League academy for a number of years. The 17-year-old was spotted by scouts while playing in the Australian School Boys tournament and Wanderers Academy where he has worked his way up from the Under 13's to National Premier League first team this season. The Edmund Rice College student was on trial for four weeks in Scotland. The youngster will initially be with the Celtic B team with the opportunity for first team in the future. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Liam and wish him all the best for in his sporting endeavours.

#### **SANDI FOLEY-DE VINCENZO**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Sandi Foley-De Vincenzo, for helping people create a simple life while unleashing their inner wild child in a new series of creative journal-making workshops in Shellharbour. Sandi, who was a 2010 Australian of the Year nominee for her dedication to the healthcare industry through mentoring and training, has blended the health benefits of mindfulness and intuitive creativity for her 'A Simple Life' fabric collage and textile art journal cover workshops. Run through her business The Creative Wild Child, the workshops are being held at the Imaginarium in Shellharbour Village from 7 October and will see participants first create a journal cover. Participants will then learn to bind the journal, which can be used as a gratitude journal, art journal or a gift. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to express our congratulations to Sandi and wish her all the best for all her future workshops.

#### **OLIVIA SALIBA**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Olivia Saliba, from Dapto, for creating the winning dish, seafood gourmet pie, at the national Official Great Aussie Pie Competition. The 18-year-old apprentice from Dapto impressed the judges with her scallop, prawn, and barramundi pie. Apprentices from across the country baked cakes, patisserie items and a pie at Fine Food Australia in Sydney. The competitors had to be under the age of 26 and either an apprentice or newly qualified baker to enter. As well as winning the pie category Ms Saliba won second place overall in the three-day national competition which was held from September 10 to September 12. Olivia has been an apprentice for three years and is working at The Harbourfront Restaurant in Wollongong. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to express our congratulations to Olivia and wish her all the best for her future baking endeavours.

#### **HELENSBURGH STATION 325**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—The importance of emergency services to a community should never be understated - and Fire and Rescue's Helensburgh Station 325 is no exception. The crew at 325 do an incredible job looking after the tightknit community of Helensburgh. Surrounded by bushland to the east, west and north, there is no shortage of potential fire dangers for the crew. The station, like many others, rely on retained on-call fire fighters to ensure the facility can remain operational. Retained on-call firefighters are paid when called upon, which can be any time of the day or night – pending their availability of course. It can be a balancing act with primary employment, family and personal commitments, and firefighting duties. However, the fact is without retained on-call firefighters, stations like Helensburgh would not be able to protect their community as effectively and efficiently as they have done for so long. I would urge all Helensburgh residents that are able, to consider signing up as a retained on-call firefighter at Station 325. On behalf of the community, thank you to all past, present and future members of Station 325.

#### **RIA SIAGIAN**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Ria Siagian. Ms Siagian 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 Siagian is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Ria 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 Ria, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Siagian 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 Ria's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George

community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Siagian for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

#### **YANTI KWAN**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Yanti Kwan. Ms Kwan 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 Kwan is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Yanti 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 Yanti, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Kwan 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 Yanti's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Kwan for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

#### **RITA RACHMAT**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Rita Rachmat. Ms Rachmat 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 Rachmat is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Rita 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 Rita, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Rachmat 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 Rita's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Rachmat for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

#### **COMPETITION SHOWCASES YOUNG TALENT - THE ROTARY CLUB ALBURY-HUME AND BARRY YOUNG**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my appreciation to the Rotary Club of Albury Hume, Albury Library Museum and co-ordinator, event founder and local author Barry Young for Albury's famous writing festival, 'Write around the Murray'. The event nurtures the literary talents of our young minds from Primary to Secondary schools who reside in the Albury Wodonga region. The students are invited to submit short stories or poems relating the theme set for them. This year marks the event's twentieth anniversary and attracted more than 300 entries from 30 local schools. The event encourages our young students to showcase their talent through their creativity, while instilling a love of reading, writing and storytelling. To all the students who participated, well done, may your words have the potential to change the world for the better and to entertain all those around you.

#### **WINNERS IN THE NORTH EAST AND RIVERINA WEDDING INDUSTRY AWARDS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the 2023 Winners of the North East and Riverina Wedding Industry Awards; celebrants Sharon Milsome and Leonie Duryea, videographer Harrison Slattery, Lavington hairdresser Kelsey Lewington, and makeup artist Felicity Cahill of Felicity Cahill Makeup Artistry. The awards were announced online on Tuesday 29 August 2023. The winners were recognised as being our region's best in the wedding industry, a testament to their talents, creativity and craft. Your award is a celebration of your continued success and growth, and I wish you all well as you set the standard for excellence in the wedding industry whilst creating beautiful memories cherished forever.

#### **COROWA SOUTH'S 125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Corowa South Public School, on the celebration of the historic milestone of 125 years of education, community spirit and excellence last month. The festivities held in honour of this milestone embraced the community as it connected with the rich history of this institution which was established back in 1898. Displays of photographs, yearbooks, and antique classroom items took people on a time machine through the past, exploring and appreciating the school's legacy. One of the event highlights was the revival of classic games such as Ring Toss, Hopscotch and Eggs and Spoon races, bringing young and old together. Perhaps the most anticipated moment was the unearthing and opening of a time capsule

buried some 25 years prior, showcasing a journey of the school and how it has evolved over the years. I extend my gratitude to Principal Janet Conibear, the dedicated staff, students and the supportive community members for making this celebration a resounding success. May your commitment ensure the school continues to be loved and valued for generations to come.

#### **REFERENDUM DAY FUNDRAISERS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—With the referendum on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament last Saturday, I would like to acknowledge the great community spirit at local polling places across my electorate. From school P&Cs to churches, there were fantastic grassroots organisations across Willoughby that organised sausage sizzles, cake stalls, and even democracy dumplings! Regardless of how locals voted in the Referendum, they would all agree that the community spirit they encountered at polling places across our community was warm and impressive. The tantalising offer of a 'democracy sausage' on polling day was always welcomed by voters, and I thank all of the selfless volunteers who baked cakes and cookies, sizzled sausages and collected cash to make these events a success. Importantly, the proceeds raised from many of these events went to some great causes from local school improvements to clean water projects in Myanmar and helping the people in Artsakh. The 'democracy sausage' is a celebrated tradition we have here in Australia and long may it continue!

#### **PARTY PROGRAM AT RNSH**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I commend Royal North Shore Hospital and the Trauma Service Team for running the PARTY Program. Standing for the 'Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth', the program started in 2013 and I'm delighted it has returned for 2023 after a Covid-19 hiatus. PARTY is a global in-hospital injury and trauma prevention program focusing on students in years 10, 11 and 12 with the aim to reduce future trauma incidents, hospital admissions and adverse outcomes in our youth population. Based at RNSH, PARTY is of immense value to the youth of Willoughby, with students from St Pius X Catholic College, Cammeraygal High School and Willoughby Girls High School accessing the program. The program includes presentations from trauma doctors, nurses, paramedics, police, a social worker, and a trauma ambassador. I commend the PARTY Program Co-ordinator, Tara Sole, for her dedication to helping our youth and applaud the positive ways in which PARTY is helping young people make wise and healthy life choices.

#### **RESHAPED - CERAMICS ART EXHIBITION AT INCINERATOR**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Showcasing a suite of ceramic artworks by emerging artists Korina Konopka and Michelle Carr, the Reshaped art exhibition at the Incinerator Art Space, Willoughby was a wonderful community exhibition that ran from 20 September to 8 October. Exhibiting their work for the first time, Korina created ceramic art works that captured the beauty and serenity of Willoughby's rock pools, while Michelle's beautiful works portrayed the life cycle of growth, evolution and change. I commend the artistic talent of both Korina and Michelle, each of whom are graduating with an Advanced Diploma in Visual Arts (Ceramics) from Northern Beaches TAFE. In my speech to the Reshaped exhibition, I not only congratulated the two artists but spoke of the value of art to human health and wellbeing. It is important for our community to encourage, nurture and reward artistic talent in the interests of promoting human flourishing. To this end, exhibitions such as Reshaped serve a great purpose and I look forward to supporting many more.

#### **HARRISON EGLON - NSW JUNIOR STATE WIND BAND PROGRAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I proudly recognise the achievements of young percussionist, Harrison Eglon. Harrison attends Hastings Secondary College - Port Macquarie Campus and is currently in Year 7. Most remarkably, this is the second year of Harrison's participation in this select opportunity with only 65 students from across the State chosen for inclusion in the ensemble. The State Wind Band's program is open to Years 5-12 high potential and gifted music students who attend NSW public schools. Students experience an intensive rehearsal schedule, working with professional conductors and tutors in both large and small sessions, culminating in performances at the iconic Sydney Opera House. The band performs repertoires chosen to challenge and extend their skills. In supporting their preparation, students are sent the music prior to rehearsals for them to practise and familiarise themselves with the various pieces. Harrison's specialty is percussion, primarily pitched instruments such as glockenspiel, xylophone and timpani which provides a fitting backing and accompaniment to the wind instruments. I am encouraged and impressed that talented and dedicated young musicians such as Harrison are given can have the opportunity to develop their music skills through such programs. Well done Harrison!

#### **FELICITY BAKER - GOLD AWARD 2023 NSW WRITEON COMPETITION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I am pleased to have the opportunity today to congratulate Year 2 student Felicity Baker from St Columba Anglican School Port Macquarie who recently won a Gold Award at the 2023 NSW WriteOn competition. Felicity Baker is best described as a high achiever, with a

gift for writing and composing an enthralling storyline. On the 15th September Felicity was presented with a Gold Award at the NSW State Library and was among five other contenders from Sydney based private and public schools in the Stage 1 category. All up, Felicity was one of 54 finalists competing for the 2023 NSW WriteOn Gold Award and one of 18 to take home major honours. A summary of the feedback by the judges noted Felicity's ability to coherently develop a clear storyline, using language creatively and purposefully, well-structured sentences and paragraphs and ascribing Stage-appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation. The annual WriteOn competition offers an opportunity for students to become published authors and show creativity, while enhancing their writing skills. Open to Years 1 to 6 in NSW, students compose an imaginative text of up to 500 words, using an image as the stimulus. Congratulations Felicity!

#### **MURPHY DAWKINS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I acknowledge Murphy Dawkins who is a young rising talent of the skateboard world and who recently gained selection in the North Coast Academy of Sport Skate team. Murphy is a young man on a mission to become the next Olympic skateboarding champion for Australia. Already making headwinds in the sport, our local sporting sensation was recently selected from a talent pool of 20 young people to gain entry into the North Coast Academy of Sport. Murphy is a member of the Mid North Coast Skate team under coach Byron Willis. Since taking up the sport three years ago Murphy has won the under-12's division of Street and Bowl in the Ride the Wave Festival and more recently catapulted his way to the finals of the under-12s Bowl-A-Nana (Bowl) 2023 Competition. His triumphs continued this year making the finals of the Koby Mitchell Classic (Street) Competition at Kobbas Skate Fest in September. Committed to a fierce training regime, Murphy practices every day at the local skatepark to maintain his skills. His dedication was rewarded with a trip to the US where he skated on the world-famous Venice Beach, Les Coleman and Pier 62 skate parks. Congratulations Murphy!

#### **MALAEMIE FRUEAN, OAM**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I congratulate my dear friend and dedicated community advocate, Malaemie (Mal) Fruean OAM, on her appointment to the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board. Mal's appointment is well-deserved and acknowledges her strong advocacy for Pacifica communities. Mal is an inspirational and respected leader, who champions multiculturalism and community harmony. Mal has dedicated 30 years to community work in South-West Sydney, including 12 years as South West Multicultural and Community Centre Manager in Minto. In this role, Mal oversees programs for women, youth, and emerging Pacific leaders. A community breakfast and food relief hampers serve up more than a meal, providing connection and care at a time when people need it most. In a voluntary capacity, Mal is Chair of the NSW Council for Pacific Communities and has been an active member of NSWCPCC since its establishment in 2003. A multi-award recipient and a member of various committees, Mal is committed to sharing her knowledge and extensive experience in community engagement to increase cultural awareness. I welcome Mal's appointment to the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board. I commend Mal on her continued advocacy for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

#### **WELCOME BACK TABBY RACES!**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Welcome back Tabulam Races, with horses returning to the track on 30th September after a four-year break caused by two years of COVID and two years of extreme wet weather. The Tabby Races is always a fun-filled day with everyone dressed to the nines, and of course there's also the odd punt happening. This year was the first time the races have been held in September and the weather gods smiled, with a few rainy days in the lead-up putting the racetrack in tip-top condition under sunny skies. In true country fashion many of the spectators camp out in the days leading up to the races which gives the event its unique flavour. Race 4 was the actual Tabulam Cup, and for the punters amongst us the winner was Hardley Grey (who won \$6950) with the runners up being She's Enuff and Kyogle Kid. But for many the real event was the Fashions on the Field judging, with stiff competition for best dressed woman, best dressed man and best dressed couple. Congratulations to Tabulam Racing Club and Secretary Milton King for turning on such a magnificent occasion.

#### **NIMBIN PERFORMANCE POETRY WORLD CUP CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—There's plenty of World Cups going around – think of soccer or the current rugby and cricket contests – but the one that matters most is undoubtedly the annual Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup. This year's event on the weekend of 2nd to 3rd September was a special celebration because it was the World Cup's 20th anniversary. The Cup takes place at the Nimbin School of Arts and draws bards from all over Australia, with 36 entrants in this year's competition. After a tight eight-way tussle in the final the winner was Alasdair Carter, who won with a piece exploring toxic masculinity and took home \$2,000. The People's Choice Award went to Andrew Spencer with his compassionate take on life in Indigenous communities, for which

he won \$500. All the other finalists get a cash prize, which along with the costs of holding the event is all raised from the local community and businesses. A huge thank you to World Cup founder, organiser and driving force Gail Clarke, ably assisted by her support crew Vince Stead, Janie Treasure and Theresa Biko – and yes, they're all poets!"

#### **UKI MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—After many years in the works it was great to attend the official opening of the new Uki Mountain Bike Path in Tweed Shire on 7th October. This world-class facility adds yet another tourist attraction to the North Coast and I was pleased that the NSW Government was able to provide \$430,000 towards its completion. Particular thanks go to the Tweed Valley Mountain Bike Riders Club under the leadership of President Hugh Flower – the club came up with the original idea and contributed plenty of volunteer muscle to get the trails built. Set against the stunning backdrop of Wollumbin/Mt Warning, the park features 8 mountain bike trails for bike riders of all abilities, including the scary-sounding high-difficulty black diamond trail. All 6.4km of tracks have been built to international trail construction standards and there's also a 'pump track' for kids aged 5-12. The bike park is already attracting interest from enthusiasts up and down the east coast, with more than 800 people a week using the park since it was completed a few weeks ago. Best of all, entry is free!

#### **UNITED SERVICES UNION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to attend the United Services Union Conference on August 22nd 2023, in Penrith. 120 years ago, a union to represent wage workers was registered. In 2003, the Municipal Employees' Union and the Federated Clerks' Union merged, creating the United Services Union. The USU empowers 30,500 members in the ACT and NSW. Arming them with skills, knowledge and experience to even out the playing field. Giving a voice to Australian workers, the USU provides protection, advocacy, and support to ensure our members receive fair wages and optimal work conditions. They champion members to fight for their rights at work. A driving force behind Australian labour movements, the USU fought the 1917 Great Strike, the WWI Anti-Conscription Campaign and continues to fight the gender pay gap. The Conference was an opportunity to connect, to celebrate these successes and renew our commitment to workers' rights. Thank you to the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia, for a thought-provoking keynote speech and a rally call to all Labor Parliamentarians. Thank you to President Sharon Sewell, the Executive Team and the hardworking United Services Union for your commitment to the rights and entitlements of employees across Australia.

#### **CHEMISTWORKS WETHERILL PARK - 40TH BIRTHDAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Happy 40th Birthday Chemistworks Wetherill Park! It was great to celebrate this special occasion at Stocklands Wetherill Park, on Thursday 5th October 2023. Chemistworks Wetherill Park is a community pharmacy that provides trusted health advice and 24/7 care. This family-owned business prioritises excellent community healthcare, above commercial gain. They truly put the care in healthcare. Chemistworks Founder, John Bronger was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for his contribution to the pharmaceutical industry. Following the family legacy, his daughter, Catherine Bronger was awarded Young Pharmacist of the Year. Their culture of genuine care, and reputation for expert service has positioned Chemistworks at the forefront of the pharmaceutical industry. This event emphasised the important role Chemistworks plays in Wetherill Park, with their birthday party becoming a vibrant community event. Featuring festive treats, stilt walkers, Latin dancers, give-aways, and a cake cutting ceremony, this event was a great showcase of the fun and engaging community spirit in Western Sydney. Thank you to Chemistworks Founders John and Lyn Bronger, their Business Manager and daughter Cathine and the dedicated Chemistworks Wetherill Park team for the care you offer our community. Once again, Happy Birthday!

#### **PETER JOHNSTON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Peter Johnston has announced his retirement as Chairman of the Barrier District Cricket League. Peter Johnston was born into a cricketing family and started watching cricket from a young age. At 16, he began as a League Delegate culminating in 56 years of cricket stewardship, 42 years as Chairman. Peter Johnston also played over 500 games and has enjoyed the comradeship that being involved in club sport brings. He is also credited with establishing the women's cricket competition. Peter's contribution to the Silver City's sporting scene includes groundskeeping at numerous sporting ovals including the Jubilee Oval where he continues today. I am sure the Cricket League and all sporting clubs in Broken Hill would join me in thanking Peter for his amazing contribution to cricket.

#### **BISHOP FOX MEAL CENTRE**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—On Friday 29 September the Bishop Fox Meal Centre at St Vincent de Paul, celebrated 50 years of providing meals and support to the Broken Hill community. Established in 1973 and

operated by members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and volunteers, the Bishop Fox Meal Centre has played an integral role in supporting people in need by providing meals, food, clothing, accommodation, and other financial assistance to community members. Demand for the Centre's services have increased by nearly fifty percent in the last twelve months. During the current cost of living crisis, it's organisations like St Vincent de Paul and centres like this one, that ease the financial burden on families and assist the homeless community. I congratulate the Bishop Fox Meal Centre on 50 years of commitment and service to the Broken Hill community.

### **2023 GRANNY SMITH QUEEN**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the entrants in the 2023 Granny Smith Queen competition, which showcases the commitment and connection of local young people to our local Ryde community. Over the years, many local success stories have started their journey's as entrants in the Granny Smith Queen competition, and I am confident 2023 will be no different. This year, the contest saw 11 entrants and I acknowledge each and every one of them for their passion and love of Ryde, specifically Imogen Deller, Isabella Zlamal, Mikaela Hooke, Makinlea Durnian, Jessican Ingham, Vanessa Masli, Naive Mackenzie, Sophia Daher, Eloise Rayner, Sarah Turnbull, Angel Chang. With ranging interests and priorities, each of these talented young people are ambassadors for our local community, and the famous Granny Smith Festival held on 21 October this year. I congratulate the 2023 Granny Smith Queen, Jessica Ingham; runners-up, Sophie Daher and Angel Chang, and finalists Sarah Turnbull, Makinlea Durnian, and Mikaela Hooke for their outstanding contributions. Each is an inspiration to others, and I know they will put their newfound titles to good use. May their ongoing endeavors continue to positively shape and influence our community.

### **VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I bring to the attention of the House those in my electorate of Ryde who emerged as finalists in the 2023 Central Sydney Volunteer of the Year Awards. In the category of Young Volunteer of the Year, we acknowledged Adrianna Aynajian and Gian Klapos for their dedication to the TAFE NSW Adult Migrant English Program; Mia Cleary for her commitment to Hunters Hill Swimming Club; and Stephanie Lilin for her volunteer work with the UTS SOUL Award. In the Adult Volunteer of the Year Award, we recognised Katey Chesterton for contribution to AOK Community Outreach; Jai Copelin for services to St Johns Ambulance; and Lisa Teng for her dedication to Buddha's Light International Association of Australia. In the Senior Volunteer of the Year Award category, we celebrated Bernard Cox, Nadheera Dharma, Chris Jackson, Frank Kwon, Jenny Shepherd, and Joseph Sun who each showcased the profound impact of a lifetime of service ranging from work with Disaster Relief Australia, supporting The Centre for Volunteering; and contributing to healthcare at Ryde Hospital. Lastly, a special acknowledgement goes to Eastwood/Marsfield Scout Group, who were finalists in the Volunteer Team of the Year Award. Congratulations to all the finalists from Ryde!

### **ST ANTHONY'S SQUASH**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I bring to the attention of the House the stellar display of talent and tenacity of Annette from year 5 at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Marsfield. Annette has garnered well-deserved acclaim for her outstanding performance at the 2023 Australian Juniors Squash Championships. Despite facing formidable opponents during the holiday tournament, Annette's resilience and exceptional skills shone through, propelling her to the distinguished position of runner-up after a series of closely contested 5-set matches. Annette's remarkable achievement extends beyond the immediate recognition; she now holds the esteemed title as the second-best squash player in Australia in the Under 11 Girls category. This accolade is a true reflection of Annette's unwavering commitment and tireless efforts dedicated to mastering the intricacies of the sport. I know all of the Ryde community and this Parliament will join with me in celebrating Annette's success, and pay tribute to her remarkable journey and accomplishments, especially at such a young age. Annette's triumph not only elevates her status within the realm of Australian junior squash but also serves as an inspiration for aspiring athletes, a testament to the rewards that come with hard work and passion. Congratulations, Annette, on this well-earned honour!

### **GRAFTON CITY RFS JUNIORS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Grafton City RFS Juniors have enjoyed flaming success taking out the 2023 Australian Fire Cadet Championships jointly hosted by the RFS and the Rural Fire Service Association on 26-27 September. The Championships are an opportunity for the firefighters of tomorrow to showcase their technical talent, enthusiasm and leadership. The cadets draw on a range of well-rehearsed skills developed in order to respond to a number of life-like scenarios testing their abilities, initiative and safety procedures. The 12-16 year olds from Grafton City Juniors did themselves proud demonstrating terrific teamwork to excel against 20 other teams from across five other states. Captain of Grafton City RFS Michael Rogan said they put a lot of time into training and practicing ahead of the championships, and it paid dividends. I congratulate Grafton City Juniors team members Chelsea Almond, Bianca Almond, Hayden Almond, Eli Masters, Cooper

Gilkinson and Andrew Hughes on their success. I also acknowledge Denise Pavlovic, Josh Rogan, Jacint Taylor and Tania Preen for their support in preparing the juniors for the championships. Our community will be in good hands in the decades to come thanks to the commitment and dedication shown by these young cadet firefighters.

### CASINO SHOW

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate the Casino Show Society on staging another successful show over two days 13-14 October. Rural shows like the Casino Show are so important in our communities. Events like this bring us together and display the best of the area. It was Casino's 130th Show and it did not disappoint. The displays and exhibits, horsemanship, cattle, poultry and horticulture were all a highlight. The weather was picture perfect with great crowds flocking to the Casino Showground along with outstanding entertainment, including the young auctioneer's competition, the rodeo and mechanical bull along with the stunning fireworks. I offer my congratulations Tayla Dawson who was crowned Young Women of Year and now goes on to represent Casino at the zone competition. I also offer my congratulations to runner-up Portia Bienke. Margaret and Gordon Clarke were awarded life members of the Casino Show Society; a fitting accolade for a lifetime commitment and I offer them both my congratulations. It was my honour to be invited to officially open the Show and I thank President John Broadrick, Show Secretary Taok Clarke, Treasurer Phoebe McMillon and fellow Committee members and volunteers for the work put into make this great event a success.

### TOM HANCOCK

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—The saying you can't keep a good man down certainly rings true for Maclean's Tom Hancock with the 87-year-old athlete winning the 10 events he entered at the 27th Australian Masters Athletics Winter Throws Championships. Not only did Tom win every event entered but he secured four Australian records. This brings his tally of Australian records in the 85-90 year old age group to eight out of a possible 10 events. Tom is no stranger to competing on the national stage having won competition events all over Australia for decades securing numerous national records for his age division. When he isn't competing he shares his wealth of athletic knowledge and techniques training the next generation of aspiring young athletes in the Clarence Valley, something he has done for over 15 years. In 2018 Tom was recognised with an OAM for service to athletics and was recently honoured with part of the sporting fields in Maclean named Tom Hancock Athletics Throwing Area; a very fitting tribute to someone who has no plans to slow down with his eye on competing in the over 90's national records. I congratulate Tom on his success and wish him well.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Ms Menka Dhakal, Ms Lorelei McLannen, Mr. Kaveh Damerchilou, and Mrs Mahshid Mohsenian for receiving their Australia Citizenship at Sutherland Shire Council's Citizenship Ceremony at the Pavillion on 21 September 2023. Our community in Holsworthy has been immeasurably enhanced by the presence of these new Australians. Their diverse backgrounds, unique experiences, and shared dreams have woven a tapestry of greater diversity, creativity, and resilience in our community. I express my sincere gratitude to our newest citizens, and I look forward to witnessing the positive impact they will undoubtedly have on our beloved community in the years to come.

### MOOREBANK-LIVERPOOL DISTRICT HOCKEY CLUB 2023 SEASON

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise the fantastic achievements of multiple teams for the Moorebank/Liverpool District Hockey Club this season. Known as the "The Mighty Poola", I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the PL1 team taking home the championship trophy, the PL3 team for reaching the finals and finishing 2nd, and the ML2 team for winning their competition. I am sure that their success will be extend into the new season next year and beyond. I would also like to extend my warmest congratulations to the 2023 committee, including President Tristan White, Senior Vice President Nathan Gilbert, Secretary Tan Le, Treasurer Stacey Gilbert, Club Captains Craig Coulson and Chelsea Ireland, Club Gear Steward Belinda Howlett, Groundskeepers Ryan Bannerman and Ethan Brooks, Junior Delegate Kate Farrar, Masters Delegate Danny Forman, Women's Delegate Sue Cotterill and Robyn Bow, Men's Delegate David Gilbert, Chairman of Selectors Nathan Gilbert, Website/ Socials Manager Mackenzie Ireland, and Events Coordinator Virginia Ireland. Well done all the best wishes to every participant – go the Mighty Poola!

### WESTFIELD LOCAL HEROES 2023

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate the 2023 Westfield Liverpool Local Heroes, which seeks to acknowledge those who often receive little to no recognition. These individuals work day in, day out, to provide critical support services to those who need it the most. Sharon Stewart from PAWS Pet Therapy was announced as the 2023 Westfield Liverpool Local Hero. As the CEO, PAWS Pet Therapy train and support volunteer people and their dogs to visit people with a range of needs, including lonely people, palliative care patients, those with mental health issues, and children with schooling challenges. PAWS Pet Therapy will



receive a \$20 000 grant to recruit and train additional volunteers to help even more people. I would also like to recognise the finalists for Liverpool Westfield – Grace Fava from Autism Advisory and Support Service, as well as Kim Kelly from the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation. It is great to see the work of three women – Sharon, Grace, and Kim be recognised in our community and I wish them all the best into the future.

### **MASSOUD FOUNDATION AFGHANISTAN DINNER 2023**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the Massoud Foundation's Afghanistan Dinner, organised in conjunction with the Ariana Cultural Association of Australia. This was a fantastic opportunity to reflect on the significance of Australia's role in Afghanistan over the years. It was a wonderful evening, with guest presenters and panellists contributing to a fascinating and lively debate, discussing the real issues that impact those currently living in Afghanistan. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I understand the importance of promoting inclusivity in communities across New South Wales. It is important to reinforce the power of diversity, and this is a principle that both the Massoud Foundation and Ariana Cultural Association hold closely. I would like to thank Bilal Waheed, Executive Director of the Massoud Foundation Australia, Chairman Ahmad Wali Massoud, and the entire team at the Massoud Foundation and the Ariana Cultural Association for their hospitality on the night. I look forward to working closely alongside the Massoud Foundation of Australia and the Ariana Cultural Association well into the future.

### **MARY BOURKE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to thank and recognise Mary Bourke, President of the Association of Independent Retirees, St George Branch. Mary recently announced her retirement from the organisation. I've had the privilege of working closely alongside Mary during my time in Parliament. She is one of the most hardworking and dedicated members of my community that I have had the privilege of meeting. As President of the organisation, her role entailed working with locals aged 50+ who are, or plan to be, self-funded during their retirement. She continued to advocate for issues that are important to retirees, and her work was nothing short of phenomenal. I would like to recognise the new Branch President, Phill Scott, who will continue to develop on the great things that Mary achieved during her time. Phill is an excellent candidate for the role, and I wish him well moving forward. I look forward to continuing to work alongside the Association of Independent Retirees in St George and wish Mary the very best in her future endeavours.

### **LUGARNO LIONS COMMUNITY FAIR 2023**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Lugarno Lions, who are set to smash attendance records again this year at their annual Lugarno Lions Community Fair. Whilst it's been a difficult few years for the event, including issues with cancellations and postponements, our community is so excited to see that this flagship event has returned for 2023. The Community Fair is always a sure sign that spring has sprung, with many in my community cherishing fond memories of the event. The event began in 1979 and has morphed into one of the largest carnivals in South Western Sydney, second to only the Sydney Royal Easter Show. There will be so much for families to do this year, including over 100 stalls, two stages of free entertainment, a classic-car show, and over 25 rides and attractions, including the brand-new 40 metre tall 'Space Jam', providing unparalleled views over the local area. I'd like to thank President of the Lugarno Lions, Mike Butler, alongside the entire committee behind the Lugarno Lions Community Festival for their hard work. I encourage all locals to check out the community fair on Sunday 24th September.

### **ROTARY CLUB OF CRONULLA AND SO SHIRE BEACH CLEANUP**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the hard work by members of Cronulla Rotary and So Shire to lead the way in keeping our beautiful local beaches clean. The dedicated volunteers from these organisations know the terrible impact of litter, particularly plastics, on our natural environment and they meet each month at Wanda to keep our beaches looking beautiful and help protect our natural environment and wildlife. Their most recent collection in September happened to coincide with the annual World Cleanup Day. Under very warm blue skies the team had their work cut out for them and after hours collecting and sorting they logged 1331 pieces of litter, weighing 5.3 kilograms. A large proportion of the collection were hard plastics. I commend members of Cronulla Rotary and So Shire, as well as others from the community who joined the effort for their commitment to our environment and for wanting to make a difference for our community. I particularly recognise Cronulla Rotary President Jean-Philippe de Jong and his predecessor Carol Denison, along with Sarah Jo and Brett Lobwein from So Shire for their leadership in bringing people together to look after our beaches.

### **SCHOOL LAWN BOWLS REGIONAL FINALS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—On Monday 16 October, the Warners Bay High School Lawn Bowls Team competed at the lawn bowls regional finals at New Lambton Bowling Club. The team,

consisting of Ami, Mia, Ned and Alby, had a great day out as they put their skills to the test against other school teams from around the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Lower Hunter regions. In the first round, Warners Bay went head to head with Belmont High. Belmont prevailed after a hard-fought competition, which ended up with a score of 6-4. The WBHS side didn't let this deter them, and even though they went down 6-3 against Glendale Technical High School in round two, they finished up the day with an impressive 7-4 win against the eventual competition champs, Rutherford High. Since WBHS was the only team to beat the championship Rutherford side, I'd say they did pretty well indeed! A big congratulations to Ami, Mia, Ned and Alby, to the teachers and staff who supported them on the day and in the lead-up, and to all their competitors.

### BOCCE COMPETITION

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—On Sunday 15 October, Club Charlestown hosted the Special Olympics State Bocce competition. This event embodies the spirit of unity and inclusivity, bringing communities together through the power of sport. I couldn't think of a better sport than bocce to highlight the uniting power of sport, as it was brought to our shores by Italian immigrants who came to Australia to build a new life. It is a sporting symbol of our multicultural nation! Club Charlestown has a long history with the game, serving as the venue for bocce at the 2013 Special Olympics Asia-Pacific Games. This year's competition was kicked off by a Torch Run, where an athlete and Police officer run with 'The Flame of Hope' before the ceremonial lighting of the cauldron. The torch symbolises hope, determination, and the pursuit of excellence for athletes of all abilities. My thanks to Lake Macquarie Police District Acting Commander Darren Beeche for leading the police delegation from LMPD, to Club Charlestown for organising and hosting the event, and to all the athletes who participated.

### JYE PICKEN

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Warners Bay golfer Jye Pickin has only just won the South Australian Amateurs, but he's already got his sights set on upcoming golfing challenges. The 2024 NSW amateur championships, to be held at Belmont and Pacific Dunes golf courses this summer, will see 23-year-old Jye and more than 260 competitors, including international golfers from as far afield as Europe, tee off for glory. It's been thirteen years since Jake Higginbottom became the last Newcastle-Lake Macquarie local to win the competition, but Jye is aiming to bring the championship home. Jye will be looking to beat his previous best result of making the semi-finals two years ago, and the hometown advantage may help him get there—as Jye has pointed out, he grew up playing on these courses, and the location will mean local friends and family can come and show their support. On Thursday 19 October, Jye will compete alongside the professionals at the Webex Players series in Adelaide. Congratulations to Jye for his most recent win, and I wish him all the best for the upcoming series in South Australia—and here's to a hometown victory next year!

### BEST EVER - MOSQUE OPEN DAY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to congratulate the Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA) on being nominated for the National Mosque Open Day (NMOD). The aim of NMOD is to foster interfaith understanding and cultural exchange by welcoming people of all backgrounds to learn more about Islam, its beliefs, and its culture. The mission of the LMA and all participating mosques for NMOD is to enhance understanding of Islam, empower Australian Muslims, and build a better future for the Australian Muslim community. Also, to facilitate a greater understanding of Islam and Muslims in Australia by opening the mosque to the wider Australian public. The LMA serves to counteract various forms of prejudice, most prominently Islamophobia, whilst nurturing mutual respect and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The event was initiated by the LMA in 2014, five years after the Association held Australia's first-ever Mosque Open Day at Lakemba. These guided mosque tours have become a popular feature of NMOD at Lakemba Mosque, this also gave me an opportunity to learn more about my faith and religion. I am very pleased to see such wonderful events occurring within my electorate that help to bring the community together.

### INDIAN CRESCENT SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I had the fantastic opportunity to attend the Indian Crescent Society in Australia event held on Thursday 12 October 2023 at NSW Parliament House. The Indian Crescent Society in Australia was established to facilitate Indian Muslim integration with mainstream Australians. This organisation was formed in 2016 by a group of Australians of Indian origins in discussion with a group of selected local citizens. One of the key support structures is to dedicate their services to all Australian-Indian Muslim citizens without any recompense or reward and without preference to any creed, ethnic group, or country. According to the Indian Crescent Society in Australia, India has the second-largest population of Muslims in the

world. During the last few decades, Muslims of Indian origin in Australia have contributed to many different fields throughout Australia. The Indian Crescent Society in Australia represents a national networking platform for Indian Muslim migrants in Australia. There are close to 85,000 Indian Muslims in Australia. I would like to thank Abbas Raza Alvi and the Indian Crescent Society in Australia for the hard work and dedication that they put into these events.

#### **FEMALE MUSLIM ARTISTS OFFER FIRST EXHIBITION AS A COLLECTIVE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge Bankstown Arts Centre for hosting the first art exhibition for female Muslim artists. The exhibition is the first by An. Other Collective, is a community of Muslim women creatives that includes 14 artists from Sydney and Melbourne. The exhibition, In Essence, explores the connections and creative experiences of artists by a group of female Muslim artists from Canterbury-Bankstown, wider Sydney, and Melbourne. There were three talented female artists from the Bankstown electorate, which is wonderful to see. Their artworks reflect their experiences as culturally diverse females, children of migrants, and mothers, using methods including installation, sculpture, textile, written word, video, photography, ceramics, printmaking, and painting. I would like to thank the Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown, Bilal El-Hayek, for commissioning this great event for our local community. I would also like to congratulate and thank all the talented artists who were involved in the beautiful exhibition. The positive response from the community is a testament to their hard work and creativity in the making of these masterpieces. I am pleased to see the talent in our community and the positive response from the Bankstown community.

#### **ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED YACHT CLUB - SYDNEY TO AUCKLAND OCEAN RACE 2023**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations to the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club (RPAYC) on hosting the highly successful 'Sydney to Auckland Ocean Race 2023'. Following the success of the Pittwater to Coffs Harbour race, RPAYC decided to offer the sailing community a new challenge. The inaugural race was an exciting addition to the sailing season, with many in the community already eager for the next Sydney to Auckland planned for 2025. Congratulations to all who took up the challenge this year – including former Wallaby, Mick Martin, and the crew onboard the Frantic who took home the Sir Lipton Cup Perpetual Trophy. Congrats also to the crew of Antipodes, Mayfair and Painkiller, as well as Marc Depret and George Martin, who represented RPAYC aboard Intiy. Thank you to all involved in putting the event together: Commodore Robert McClelland, Vice Commodore Julia Hornsby and the rest of the board and committee. Your continued dedication to our local sailing community is to be commended. I look forward to seeing RPAYC continue to go from strength to strength.

#### **PITTWATER HIGH SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS - LILY WATT AND ALICE ROBERTS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations to Lily Watt and Alice Roberts, from Pittwater High School, for the outstanding achievement of having their HSC Visual Arts Body of Work selected for the prestigious "Out Front" exhibition. For three decades, the recently rebranded "Out Front" exhibition has curated a selection of the best artworks by HSC Visual Arts students from the 20 secondary schools across the Northern Beaches. Being selected for this prestigious exhibition is a testament to both Lily and Alice's exceptional talent, creativity and dedication to the arts. Not only will their works be on display at Manly Art Gallery & Museum throughout March and April 2024, they have also been invited to participate in a pilot mentorship program to support them in their journey towards professional creative practices. Thank you to the teachers at Pittwater High School for your hard work supporting young artists in our community. Congratulations Lily and Alice on your momentous achievement. Here's to a bright and creative future for both of you!

#### **OZGREEN YOUTH CONGRESS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the 'Youth Leading the World' forum hosted by OzGreen in Narrabeen. The event was an opportunity for young minds to share their ideas about how we can address pressing local and global environmental challenges, particularly climate change. It was encouraging to see our youth so passionately engaging in discussions about how to create positive changes for our environment. I thank Kylie Hitchman, Vanessa Moskal, Isabel, and the OzGreen team for putting together this important and empowering initiative for young people on the Northern Beaches. By providing a space for like-minded individuals to connect and collaborate, OzGreen have created a community of young people who are ready to drive action. This endeavour is a shining example of how young people can take the lead in shaping a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future. The topics and solutions were interesting and diverse touching on ideas from Project Cycle Sydney - by James and Lachlan, Climate Mindset - by Danielle and Leron, Animal First - by Savannah and Ruilin, and Farmer's Markets Greener Choices – by Emily and Tessa. Congrats to all the young leaders on their engaging presentations!

**AMY KENNEDY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulation to Amy Kennedy of East Hills Girls Technology High School, recently awarded the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship is awarded to Year 10 and 11 history students in NSW, providing them the opportunity to travel the world to learn about Australia's involvement in military conflicts. Amy's tour took place over the most recent school holidays, to learn about the Fall of Singapore and the Bombing of Darwin. Amy's first destination was Singapore where she learnt about the Japanese occupation of Singapore. Amy visited various museums and cemeteries, including Fort Siloso and the Former Ford Factory, where British Lieutenant General Arthur Percival surrendered to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. Amy's next stop was Darwin and Katherine. She visited the Darwin Military Museum and took part in a commemoration ceremony at Adelaide River War Cemetery, which involved the scattering of the ashes of paper stars to symbolise the lives lost. Amy was very moved by her experiences and has a new appreciation and understanding of Australia's military history and culture. A special thank you also goes to Amy's teachers, Ms Hardwick, Mr Lukins and Ms Thumpkins for supporting her application.

**PADSTOW RSL FISHING CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to recognise the Padstow RSL Fishing Club and their recent event, the "Gone Fishing Day". Held on Sunday, 15 October, the event was a great chance for community members to engage and get involved in the art of fishing. "Gone Fishing Day" was a family-friendly occasion that welcomed individuals of all ages, skills and backgrounds to get involved and develop their angling skills. The club kindly gave out 50 fishing rods and reels so everyone could have their own unique fishing experience. Existing club members demonstrated how to use the equipment, shared their knowledge, and offered newcomers the chance to explore the joys of fishing. In addition to the fishing activities, the Padstow RSL Fishing Club held a delightful sausage sizzle. Younger members of the community were also given the chance to unleash their creativity through a colouring competition, with fantastic prizes available to those who got involved. I am grateful for the volunteers at the Padstow RSL Fishing Club for hosting such a fabulous event, and for their dedication to the well-being and connectedness of the community.

**MAX GARTHE**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I'd like to recognise local jeweller, Max Garthe for his contribution to the community. He is a man who loves his job, his family and has dedicated his life to both. At 87, Max has decided to call "time" on the family-owned and run business, Revesby Watchmaker and Jewellers. Max began working as a jeweller and watchmaker at 15. He learnt his craft at TAFE and further developed his skills with Angus and Coote. Max opened his first store at Padstow in the late 60s and a second store in Revesby in early 1970. His son, Warren, started working at the business at 16. Both are looking forward to retirement. Max was President of the Padstow RSL Youth Club and has donated his time to various charities including Padstow Rotary and the Salvation Army. Max and his family say it will be bittersweet closing their doors come December but would like to thank all their loyal customers. Revesby will be losing a rare "gem" of a business. I thank Max and his family for their dedication to their craft and service to the community.

**FINLEY REGIONAL CARE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Finley Regional Care who were recently presented with an Outstanding Regional Community Care Provider award at the prestigious Enablement Awards ceremony in Melbourne. The Enablement Awards were created to celebrate and reward excellence, innovation, and exemplary achievements in the disability care sector in Australasia. The Award recognises Finley Regional Care's shining example of an organisation that goes above and beyond to enrich the lives of the Aged and wider community. The hard-working team of nurses, caregivers and administrative staff provide an array of services including residential care within its Alumuna lifestyle village and the delivery of home care packages. Regional Care's, Finley Medical Centre provides a vital service for residents of Finley and many local towns in the region. This is a fantastic resource with visiting specialists and other allied healthcare workers visiting regularly. I express my admiration and appreciation to the staff and board members of this wonderful organisation and wish them continued success into the future. Congratulations!

**LEETON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker. I would like to recognise the generosity, compassion, and commitment of Leeton High School students on the Leeton student representative council. Students on their committee pledged to help make a difference and offer their support during homelessness week. These students were motivated on their own accords to lead initiatives within their own communities, bringing awareness to issues relating to the homelessness epidemic displaying their unwavering dedication. They encouraged their peers to help and contribute to the cause, whilst they engaged in conversations with the Salvation

Army regarding how their donations will be able to help. It's through the selfless ambitions of individuals and communities such as Leeton High School, that our community will continue to strengthen and support each other. With every step such as the one they have taken in the right direction we get one step closer to securing a safe future for everyone. These students should be incredibly proud of their efforts as what they have achieved is beyond impressive. Congratulations.

#### **ST CHRISTOPHER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I wish to acknowledge the work of St Christopher's Church in Rutherford for supporting members of our Maitland Community. Led by welfare coordinator Kerrie Duffey, the volunteer team support those in our community who are homeless, couch surfing, or struggling financially. Every Tuesday morning the team offer a helping hand to those that knock on their door. They provide groceries to take home, advise on the provision of financial help and support services, or simply share a coffee, a meal and a kind ear. Kerrie and her team are on the front line when it comes to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and the realities of the current cost of living crisis. These needs do not differentiate by age and neither do St Christopher's as they are more recently supporting teenagers and community members of all ages. Thank you St Christopher's for your important work for Maitland.

#### **MAITLAND HOCKEY SUCCESS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Winning a gold or silver medal in a national competition or being chosen to represent your country is a massive achievement at any age, but it's just a bit more special as we get older. I want to acknowledge the achievements of members of my community over the last month on the hockey field. Congratulations firstly to the Aged to Perfection Hockey team who have won a silver medal at the recent Australian Masters Games in Adelaide, beating teams from Australia and New Zealand. The team competed in the over-60s team category, and featured seven players from Maitland. They had a great tournament and only lost the final in a close 1- nil battle. Well done ladies. The Hockey Australia National Masters Championships in Perth, saw Maitland players in the over-70s category go undefeated. Following the tournament Joan Hart, Kate Ryan and Trish McMillan have gained selection in the inaugural over-70s team to play at next year's Masters Hockey World Cup in New Zealand. A special congratulations also goes to Joan's husband Stan for his gold medal performance at the tournament.

#### **THE FAMILY LAW CO - AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION AWARDS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I wish to congratulate The Family Law Co's on their nomination at the recent Australian Women's Small Business Champion Awards. The Family Law Co beat out thousands of entrants across Australia to become a finalist in the Legal Services category. The Family Law Co is a boutique practice that services family law, criminal law, and family provision. It also offers ancillary services including conveyancing and estate planning. It was established by Carla Giles who is passionate about bringing accessible, quality family law and support to people in regional New South Wales. Their all-female legal team provides comprehensive family legal services, to ensure what can be some of the most stressful experiences of a person's life be less so. This month is small business month – and as a former female business owner I believe it's important to recognise women in business. Whilst The Family law Co did not win the Award, their nomination is testament to the great service they provide to the Maitland and Newcastle communities.

#### **HUNTER CREATIVE ARTS CAMP**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—108 Years 5 and 6 students from 36 regional schools attended the 4 day residential 2023 Hunter Creative Arts Camp which was held 4-7 September at Camp Elim in the Booti Booti National Park. Students worked with specialist teachers to expand their skills and experiences in the creative and performing arts. From the Wallsend electorate, students from Lambton, Maryland, Tarro and Wallsend South Public Schools - all passionate about music, visual arts, dance and drama - stayed in small group cabins and worked collaboratively on the theme "Natural Talent", exploring nature and the environment. Each evening after dinner everyone took part in activities to further strengthen student relationships, including a disco, a sandcastle building competition, trivia and lawn games. Some of the impressive artworks produced were a contemporary dance within the trees, a drama piece exploring the impact of nature in our lives, an art exhibition of clay mobiles, paintings and leaf prints, and new music echoing the sounds of the bush. The culmination was a showcase concert for peers and parents in various picturesque locations around the campsite. Well done to all of you!

#### **CALLUM BEASHEL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—University of Newcastle's most prestigious sporting honour, the UoN Sportsperson of the Year for 2023, was presented at their Sports Awards on Friday, 15 September. Callum Beashel, who is studying for a PhD in Biological Sciences, was proud to be recognised among his peers at the

Conservatorium of Music. Fourth-ranked Australia played brilliantly to beat four-time winners and world No. 3 Canada 5-2 to claim the World Baseball Softball Confederation Men's Softball World Cup in New Zealand in December 2022. In this game, Callum, who plays in the outfield, scored an important run in the third inning. He was also a member of the Australian team that won the 2022 Tradestaff International Invitational Series, competing against top-ranked teams from around the world. Australia previously won a Gold Medal in 2009, and Silver in 2017. Callum feels honoured with the award, remarking that it takes a lot of time, commitment and sacrifice to get to the elite level. Congratulations, Callum. It is always so heartening to see sports and academics combining so well. You have done your university, your softball team and country very proud indeed.

#### **MEL WOODFORD**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Volunteering in a children's hospital is at times challenging and sad, but for over ten years, Mel Woodford has made a difference, all the while with a positive and flexible outlook. Mel, previously a teacher/librarian and history buff for 34 years, has supported children's literacy through working in the Book Nook Library at John Hunter Children's Hospital - a contemplative space to read and listen to stories, engaging with young patients and their families. Mel, with her book trolley, visits children on the wards, understanding that books offer a special magic that can fuel a child's imagination, taking them to places away from thoughts of medical care. Mel is highly empathetic, always willing to go that extra mile to help. She is a mentor for new volunteers, assists with visitors in a calm and professional style and is quick to volunteer for more, especially during the busy lead up to Christmas - toy sorting, showing special guests around or simply staying with a child who would like to read a book. Mel, you are an outstanding and giving individual who is making a difference. Thankyou.

#### **FIGHT FOR SUCCESS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I am thrilled to extend my heartfelt congratulations and recognition to the police, Latrell Mitchel and PCYC for their outstanding efforts in launching the "fight for success" youth program in Kempsey. The "fight for success" program serves as a vital outlet for teenagers, providing them with a structured and engaging environment to learn boxing skills, foster discipline, and promote physical fitness. By offering this opportunity, the program not only encourages a healthy and active lifestyle but also instils important values such as perseverance, determination and teamwork. The impact of the "fight for success" program extends far beyond the boxing ring. It provides a safe and inclusive space for young people to build self-confidence, develop life skills and form meaningful connections with peers and mentors. The launch of this youth program is a testament to the collaborative efforts and strong community spirit in Kempsey. It demonstrates the power of partnerships between law enforcements, role models like Latrell Mitchell and organisations like PCYC in creating opportunities that positively impact the lives of young people. I commend all involved for their unwavering commitment to the youth of Kempsey. The efforts are shaping a brighter future for our youth.

#### **TOBY MORN SOCCER STAR**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I am honoured to acknowledge Toby's Morn's exceptional performance in the Joeys Mini World Cup tournament held in Inverell. Toby's unwavering dedication, relentless effort, and remarkable skills showcased his true passion for the sport of soccer. Every year during the September/October school holidays, a unique regional football tournament called the Joeys Mini World Cup is held. The competition of 48 teams and has become one of the biggest regional football events in the country. Toby's outstanding display of talent on the field throughout this event did not go unnoticed, as scouts recognised his immense potential and selected him to join the prestigious All-star's team for an upcoming tour in Germany in 2024. This remarkable achievement is a testament to Toby's commitment, perseverance and the unwavering support from his community. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Toby Morn for his outstanding accomplishments and wish him continued success as he represents his community on an international stage. May this remarkable opportunity be the steppingstone to a bright future filled with even greater achievements.

#### **NETBALL NSW MASTERS STATE TITLES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I want to give a shout out and express gratitude to the incredible two teams that the Macleay Valley could take away to NSW netball masters state titles. My shout out extends to the players, officials, umpires and supports that dedicate this time and effort in representing the Macleay in netball. Masters State Titles is an Association Representative Competition for players aged Over 35 and is a competition played over two days. It is always a challenging weekend for regional teams, going up against some well-drilled metro squads but as a community, the Macleay held their heads high and represented with immense pride. The unwavering determination and a hundred percent effort that was put in over the weekend is truly inspiring. I extend a heartfelt thankyou and well done to each and every player, coach, umpire and supporter for their incredible efforts. It is not just about the wins and losses, but the bonds you formed and the support that way showed to on

another. Each one of you are true champions and I commend the Macleay Masters Representatives on the immense effort they put in. Well done.

#### **NEW ENGLAND GIRLS SCHOOL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF EQUINE HERITAGE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the New England Girls School (NEGS) on their impressive 50 years of equine history. Their world class Equestrian Centre was established in 1973 and in 1974 the riding school started with 44 girls and 12 horses, with some students going so far as to represent Australia at an Olympic level in equestrian. I congratulate NEGS on this wonderful milestone and for your foresight to offer a unique experience to students so they may also develop crucial life skills, whilst pursuing their passion for horse riding and supporting their educational experience. I commend all involved in staging this historical event for NEGS families as well as for the public. Special thanks to Events Officer Connie Twyford, as well as my thanks to NEGS staff, coaches, students, as well as to the members of the Terra Forma band who provided entertainment, along with the whole NEGS community for their support.

#### **WALCHA SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**— I recognise the wonderful achievements of the Walcha Support Group and its members on the important role they play in the Walcha community, by supporting those suffering life threatening or debilitating illnesses. The group was established 34 years ago, with three of the members providing continuous voluntary service over this time. I congratulate all group members: Vaun Gegier, Betty Sweeney, Pat Laurie, Carmel Rizzi, Anne Martin, Aurora Reilly, Carmel Ryan, Christine Hamel, Coll King, Jess Goodwin, Jan Cross, Jo Relf, Linda Ballard, Lorna Egli, Noelene Brady, Kerry Fair, Lyn Burnell, Sue Jackson, Margaret Cawley, Margie Carter, Sue Reardon, Broni Koebel and Carolyn Salter on your commitment to your community and assisting people when they may be at a low point in their lives. The group offer support through provision of equipment and library resources, as well as financial support for medical appointments where possible. I commend all who have supported the fundraising, members hard work and tireless efforts are appreciated by the whole community – country towns cannot function without the enduring support and commitment volunteers such as yourselves give.

#### **WYLIE WRIGHT - YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Whyllie Wright of The Armidale School (TAS) for being awarded Young Volunteer of the Year for the New England and North-West region, held at the Armidale Bowling Club recently. This accolade celebrates a volunteer showing incredible dedication, effort and service to their community. I congratulate Whyllie for taking the opportunity to participate in the TAS volunteering program, 'Cook for the benefit of others' and for playing a part in improving the local community. Whyllie is student leader of the program with approximately 40 students presently cooking around 100 meals a week. I commend TAS and their Challenge and Service Coordinator Jim Pennington, for enabling Whyllie and fellow students to participate in such valuable and life changing experience. I wish Whyllie all the best in the upcoming NSW state final in Sydney in December.

#### **TOP 20 CAFES IN SYDNEY - HAPPYFIELD IN HABERFIELD**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I want to congratulate the team at Happyfield in Haberfield who were recently acknowledged by the Sydney Morning Herald as being in 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. The Sydney Morning Herald have acknowledged the team at Happyfield who have been consistently honoured as one of the best cafes in Sydney. Well known for their bright egg-yolk yellow style and famous happy attitude as much as their delicious food, customers are regularly lined up out the door waiting for a table. Congratulations to owners Mr Chris Theodosi and Mr Jesse Orleans and all the team at Happyfield for helping to make the Inner West such a vibrant and great place to live.

#### **TOP 20 CAFES IN SYDNEY - VALENTINAS MARRICKVILLE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I want to congratulate the team at Valentinas in Marrickville who were recently acknowledged by the Sydney Morning Herald as being in 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. Valentinas is a firm favourite for locals who join the crowd waiting for a table on weekends to enjoy the menu inspired by the nostalgic charm of classic American diners. Opening just six weeks before Sydney went into its second Covid lockdown the team have shown great resilience and ingenuity to build their successful business. Congratulations to owners Ms Elise Honeybrook and

Mr Scott Clark and all the team at Valentinas for helping to make the Inner West such a vibrant and great place to live.

### **HUNTER VALLEY UNCORKED RETURNS TO BALMORAL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Mosman locals will have the ability to sample some of the best wine that the Hunter Valley has to offer with the return of Hunter Valley Uncorked at Balmoral Beach. As one of the flagship events of the upcoming Festival of Mosman, it is not one to be missed enjoying a wonderful Sunday afternoon where the community can enjoy the sunshine with great food and great wine. Some of the Hunter Valley's top hand-picked drops will be in circulation including 1813, Allandale Winery, Bimbagen, Bonvilla Estate, Briar Ridge Vineyard, Brokenwood Wines, Gartelmann Wines, Glandore, Hungerford Hill, Hunters Dream Estate, Mount Eyre Vineyards, Peterson House, Tatler Wines, Thomas Wines, Tulloch Wines and Winmark Wines. This is sure to be a wonderful community event for the Mosman community and visitors alike, and I encourage everyone to head on down and sample the very best of the Hunter Valley while enjoying the spectacular scenery that Balmoral has to offer.

### **ST LEONARDS BLOCK PARTY RETURNS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—After a three year hiatus the St Leonards Block Party is returning to transform Atchison Lane into a vibrant space complete with exhibitions, performance, music, and workshops for the local community. This year will feature more than seventy artists and creative businesses, open studios, workshops, food trucks, and film. One of the highlights will be a roving T-Rex from Erth's puppetry-based theatrical productions as well as a unique night-time experience with self illuminated mysterious Deep Sea Divers which will be a big hit for kids and adults alike. This year will feature the unveiling of the new laneway mural by Helen Proctor, roving performance by Erth, installations by Michaela Gleave, Aly Indermuhle, Thom Roberts from Studio A, and Jamin Tasker, with performances by JustSo Creative, Nicola Heywood, Luke Abdallah and Captain Pipe. I look forward to joining with everyone again in St Leonards on Atchison Lane to welcome the return of the much-loved St Leonards Block Party.

### **PAUL AND SHANNON CHALKER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the support from Paul and Shannon Chalker for Goulburn's Lilac City Festival. Paul and Shannon are a husband-and-wife team, who have contributed an amazing amount of time and support to ensuring the event was a success. It is without doubt that Paul and Shannon have an inbuilt community spirit, with Paul who thrives on the excitement of promoting the festival and the media side of things, whilst Shannon undertakes a secretarial role. Paul and Shannon were also part of the set-up and pack-up teams at the start and end of each day over the three-day event. The festival could not do without individuals such as Paul and Shannon and their contributions and hard work. Their input has been immeasurable and so greatly appreciated by all involved in the festival. I take this time to thank Paul and Shannon and recognise their team and community spirit. They are the reason why the Goulburn City Lilac Festival continues to be such a great success for the community and region.

### **MR SAM ROSS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Mr Sam Ross. Mr Ross has been a member of the Goulburn Lilac City Festival Committee for the past three years. Mr Ross is a tireless worker and now holds the role of Vice President of the committee. Over the years Mr Ross has demonstrated an indelible passion to continue to develop the festival and is always willing to support and assist others with the parade, markets and any other tasks required to be completed. Mr Ross particularly enjoys organising the Carnival, Battle of the Bands, and other entertainment. Mr Ross's enthusiasm is contagious, and his overall manner, attitude and personal attributes are to be commended. Having individuals on the Goulburn Lilac City Festival Committee like Mr Ross, is the reason that there is a foreseeable longevity to the festival for many years. I take this time to thank and recognise Mr Ross for his work and attributes and the wonderful community spirit and enjoyable atmosphere that is generated from this.

### **GOULBURN MULWAREE YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Goulburn Mulwaree Youth Council. The Goulburn Mulwaree Youth Council played a vital role in the success of the Goulburn City Lilac Festival, they oversaw the Laser Tag Challenge on the Friday night at Back to Arcade, judged and took on the role of Master of Ceremony at the Battle of the Bands. The Youth Council served mocktails at the Conservatorium and lead the Lilac Parade and did a Showcase in the park, dressing in character costumes, which delighted the children in the audience. It is important to recognise the cross-generational and cultural attributes of the many individuals and groups who undertake a variety of roles at the festival to make it such an enormous success for those attending. I take this time to thank each member of the Goulburn Mulwaree Youth Council for making the



festival the success that it is and recognise your community mindfulness of just how important such events are to our community and beyond.

#### **TYSON CARTER**

**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)**—Congratulations to Warnervale Bulls Junior Rugby League Under 12 player Tyson Carter celebrating his 100th game along with team players Jarrod Goodall and Kayleb Hasell at Warnervale Athletics Field on 15 July 2023. On the same day to top off the celebration, the bulls had an extraordinary win against Kincumber Colts 40 to 10. Tyson contributed to the game with other team players scoring a double and one conversion. The home crowd had the privilege to cheer on the 3 local juniors in their 100th game of Rugby League. The Warnervale Bulls Club commenced its first year in the Junior division in 2010 and has now grown to more than 10 teams. Well done to Tyson Carter in reaching this great achievement celebrating a well-earned milestone.

#### **KAYLEG HASELL**

**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)**—Congratulations to Warnervale Bulls Junior Rugby League Under 12 player Kayleb Hasell celebrating his 100th game along with team players Jarrod Goodall and Tyson Carter at Warnervale Athletics Field on 15 July 2023. On the same day to top off the celebration, the bulls had an extraordinary win against Kincumber Colts 40 to 10. Kayleb contributed to the game with other team players kicking a successful conversion. The home crowd had the privilege to cheer on the 3 local juniors in their 100th game of Rugby League. The Warnervale Bulls Club commenced its first year in the Junior division in 2010 and has now grown to more than 10 teams. Well done to Kayleb Hasell in reaching this great achievement celebrating a well-earned milestone.

#### **JARROD GOODALL**

**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)**—Congratulations to Warnervale Bulls Junior Rugby League Under 12 player Jarrod Goodall celebrating his 100th game along with team players Tyson Carter and Kayleb Hasell at Warnervale Athletics Field on 15 July 2023. On the same day to top off the celebration, the bulls had an extraordinary win against Kincumber Colts 40 to 10. Jarrod contributed to the game with other team players scoring a double. The home crowd had the privilege to cheer on the 3 local juniors in their 100th game of Rugby League. The Warnervale Bulls Club commenced its first year in the Junior division in 2010 and has now grown to more than 10 teams. Well done to Jarrod Goodall in reaching this great achievement celebrating a well-earned milestone.

#### **DENISE ROBENS, PMS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to extend my warmest congratulations to a diligent educator and a truly inspirational individual, Denise Robens PSM, who was deservedly recognised on the King's Honour Roll earlier this year. Denise, a cherished resident of Glenmore Park, was awarded the Public Service Medal, acknowledging her outstanding public service in classroom teaching at Regentville Public School. Her exceptional devotion to fostering an enriching and supportive learning environment for her students exemplifies the quintessential qualities of a remarkable teacher. Denise has, without doubt, made a significant and lasting impact in our community, influencing countless lives through her commitment to imparting knowledge and shaping the future of our youth. Her persistent efforts to ensure that each child has the opportunity to thrive in a nurturing educational setting have left an indelible mark on the hearts of students, parents, and colleagues alike. Today, I celebrate Denise's illustrious career and the invaluable contributions she has made to our community and the field of education.

#### **PENNY LEES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I extend warm congratulations to Penny Lees, a Glenmore Park local, for her remarkable participation in The Riverland Harmony Chorus. This stellar group, known for their exquisite barbershop melodies, not only entertain but also bind our community through the universal language of music. Penny, along with her talented peers, have showcased their musical prowess at the Wallacia Festival and various other venues throughout the year, enchanting audiences with their harmonic blends and uplifting performances. The Riverland Harmony Chorus, a women's barbershop chorus, is acclaimed for its dedication to not merely singing but creating memorable moments that resonate deeply with all who have the pleasure of listening. Penny's dedication and the heart-warming performances of the Chorus embellish our community with joy, unity, and a shared appreciation for the arts. We are privileged to bear witness to such talent and camaraderie in our midst.

**ANTHONY CRITCHLEY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Anthony Critchley for his outstanding hard work and contribution to Mental Health and healthcare services here on the Central Coast as he steps down as the District Director of Mental health for the Central Coast Local Health District. There is no doubt Anthony's compassion, advocacy and drive have left an indelible mark on improving access to quality mental health services for our community on the Central Coast. I also want to take this time to thank Anthony personally for the great work that he and the team did putting the business case together the innovative Police Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER) program, a police and mental health partnership implemented right across the Central Coast. It's because of all of Anthony's hard work and dedication that we were able to secure more than \$1.4M worth of funding to help make the trial of the PACER a reality for our region. From there, the program has gone from strength to strength and is a significant game changer in how police engage with people with mental health issues here on the Central Coast. Thank you, Anthony.

**JON HARKNESS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Jon Harkness for his hard work and contribution to Surf Life Saving as he steps down as CEO of Surf Life Saving Central Coast after nearly 4 years. We have been very fortunate to have Jon at the helm at Surf Life Saving Central Coast. There is no doubt Jon's dedication and vision have left an indelible mark on Surf Life Saving Central Coast. Under Jon's leadership, we witnessed a transformation of Central Coast Life Saving, pioneered new initiatives and strategically guiding the organisation through effective collaboration to deliver improved outcomes and safety for

**COAST AND COUNTRY PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH ART WORKS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate Coast & Country Primary Care, and everyone involved in the recent launch of the 24th annual Mental Health Art Works Exhibition at the Gosford Regional Gallery. The Mental Health Art Works Exhibition provides an opportunity for people whose lives have been affected by mental illness to tell stories of hope, recovery, and growth through art. It's my great pleasure to acknowledge the artists, their incredible artworks, volunteers and all the sponsors involved in the program. I would like to thank Coast & Country Primary Care and their CEO Kathy Beverley for organising such a fantastic community event.

**SYLVANALE PRE WWII CAR SHOW**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Sylvanvale for hosting another successful Pre-WWII Car Show on 17 September 2023. The Sylvanvale Pre-WWII Car Show is a popular annual event which raises funds for Sylvanvale to continue to support more than 750 people with special needs to live and participate in our community as they choose. This year's event showcased more than 100 vintage cars in addition to food stalls and raffles, with all proceeds going to improving the lives of those moving into Sylvanvale's new state-of-the-art specialist disability accommodation in Illawong. Of course, such an incredible day would not have been possible without the contribution of the exceptional event organisers. I acknowledge Ken Warburton, John Bateman, Geoff Craddock, Trevor Eisler, along with some representatives from Qantas. I also recognise Sylvanvale's dedicated staff and volunteers including Leanne Fretten, Cathy Quinn, Deirdre Young, Alison Bolton, Tamara Arentz, Scott Williams and Andrea Mackay for their efforts. There are many in our community who look forward to the annual Pre-WWII Car Show and I commend all involved for putting on this successful event.

**AUSTRALIAN COPTIC HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the incredible efforts of Australian Coptic Heritage and Community Services at Taren Point in preparing Christmas hampers for those in need. Founded in 2017, Australian Coptic Heritage and Community Services prepare hundreds of personalised Christmas Hampers each year which are distributed to those in need including families, seniors, newly arrived migrants, refugees, children and carers in hospital and those impacted by natural disasters. Every effort is made to tailor each hamper to the recipient, with age appropriate items and toys which have been donated by businesses and individuals. Of course none of this would be possible without the work of the incredible team. I recognise the Australian Coptic Heritage and Community Services executive committee members, namely Hanan Ghabour, Ranya Guirguis and Rose Alligiannis, as well as the exceptional team of over 120 volunteers who have been working tirelessly to prepare this year's hampers. I commend the team at Australian Coptic Heritage and Community Services for spreading a little Christmas joy to those in need and extend my best wishes for the future.

### COMO JANNALI FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the Como Jannali Football Club on being named Sutherland Shire Football Association's "SSFA" 2023 Over 35 and 45 Champion Club. Throughout the 2023 season, the club's 768 players performed exceptionally and outperformed the larger clubs in the SSFA, particularly in the over 35 and 45 competitions. The season saw Como Jannali's 35A and 35C men's teams win Premierships with the 35A team securing the Minor Premiership. Such success would not have been possible without the dedication of the incredible players. I recognise the Como Jannali 35A Premiership winning team of Ryan Butler, Christopher Clarke, Mitchell Cole, Ryan Davies, Andrew Head, Brad Heffernan, Michael Keep, Andrew Keep, Mathew Keep, Andrew Paine, Monte Prefengle, Matthew Pickover, Dayne Singleton, Paul Stuart, Ashley Thacker, Zeb Thornton, Ryan Wells and Dominic Young. I also recognise the 35C Premiership winning team of Darren Blake, Sebastien Broomham, Chris Burns, Andrew Byrnes, Joel Cook, Christopher Dillon, Thomas Finlay, Luca Finotti, Christopher Ford, Hugh Glynn-Baker, Daniel Gray, Matthew Harvey, Brendan Johansen, Matthew Luttrell, Timothy Nash, Peter O'Brien, Cameron Pope, Alexander Vasik, Scott Ward and Steven Wittingslow. I commend the Como Jannali Football Club for fostering a love of football amongst our community.

### PETER COX

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to note the passing of Peter Cox, a much-loved teacher and highly renowned member of the performing arts community in Wagga Wagga. Peter was the drama teacher at Koorringal High School for many years, where the schools performing arts centre is named after him. He was highly regarded within Koorringal High for including students and teachers from all departments for each school production and helping the school become known for its performing arts department and facilities. Peter was the director of many plays at the Wagga Civic Theatre and wrote many original plays and cabarets. He also wrote and produced the film Backyard Ashes which was also filmed in Wagga. He was well known in the region for his talent in selecting roles for performers, and the shows he directed at the local theatre often had a full audience and received standing ovations. Collaborators, friends and past students have all said he will be sorely missed. His work in stage productions will fondly be remembered by all who knew and worked with Peter.

### WAGGA WAGGA LEGACY TORCH RELAY

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Wagga Wagga had the privilege of hosting the Legacy Torch Relay in August. The relay was to mark 100 years of Legacy service and the incredible work the organisation has done for the hundreds of thousands of families they have supported over the years. The relay started in Pozieres, France, moving through Belgium and London before coming to Australia. Wagga Legacy president, Doug Conkey, was the final torch bearer for the Wagga leg, with 30 other participants acting as torch bearers and 40 volunteers from the area helping as support walkers. The volunteers included local RAAF personnel and local families who have been beneficiaries of Legacy. Wagga was one of three cities in the region to be selected to participate in this event with the 9km relay beginning at the Wagga Botanical gardens and concluding at the Wagga Wagga Legacy club. Thank you to Janet Scobel, John Ferguson and the Centenary Torch Relay Committee for organising this event alongside Doug Conkey, Nicole Stanton from Wagga Legacy and also many thanks to the work Wagga legacy does to support its 340 families in the region.

### TIBETAN BOOK COLLECTION

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to recognise the Wagga Wagga Tibetan Community for their achievement alongside the Wagga Wagga Library in bringing to the community library a collection of Tibetan language books. The collection is on loan from the NSW state library and every 6 months new Tibetan language books will arrive and refresh the collection. These books include a collection of children's picture books, non-fiction and fiction novels and the library has stated they intend to start their own collection of Tibetan language books in the future. Thank you to Wagga Tibetan Community President Jinpa Gyatso and the Wagga Wagga City library who were able to bring this book collection to the city. The Wagga Wagga Library are only the second in the country to hold a book collection like this. Mr Gyatso told the Daily Advertiser newspaper that these books have the ability to educate the next generation of local Tibetan children. There are currently 13 Tibetan families in Wagga Wagga and they along with the rest of the community will all benefit from this book collection. These books will be a great resource for anyone wanting to learn the Tibetan language or about the Tibetan culture.

### KU-RING-GAI WILDFLOWER GARDEN

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—The Davidson electorate community is truly blessed to have the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden in St Ives. I believe it is one of the North Shore's best kept secrets, and I was blessed to first visit the Wildflower Garden as a child some 30 years ago. It was established in 1966 by John Wrigley. It is Ku-ring-gai's own and local botanic garden. It has native flora and fauna – whether it be swamp wallabies,

honeyeaters, cycads, mossy ponds and ferns. The Wildflower Garden sits on 123 hectares of natural bushland next to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. It is a perfect place to set down a picnic blanket, take a bush walk, celebrate an event such as a wedding, or even physically push yourself for a Park Run. The Wildflower Garden offers many programs for pre-schoolers, kids and seniors with trails, workshops, a nursery and community events like the annual Wildflower & Garden Festival in August, or the upcoming 'Trick or Treat' in October. I recommend all of our local community to check out the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden - and have a great day with family and friends.

**MR NICHOLAS LAPSLEY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In March 2023 I first met Davidson constituent Nicholas Lapsley at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA) in Allambie Heights on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Nicholas is an entrepreneur, CPA Champion, and works at the CPA in their marketing and communications team. Among his many achievements, he has organised charity events such as the 20 Kilometres with 20 Mates where he helped raise over \$13,000. The CPA is a global centre for cerebral palsy support, services, research and innovation working to deliver opportunities previously unthinkable to people with cerebral palsy and their families. Nicholas and the CPA are working hard to educate the wider community that individuals with a disability, such as cerebral palsy, can reach for the stars. I thank Nicholas for his ongoing work and advocacy. I look forward to continuing to work with him in our community to enrich the lives of individuals, families and carers.

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